

***Givim lo Aza* (Give It to the Mother): Oro Women in
the 2017 Papua New Guinea National Elections**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
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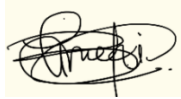
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Declaration

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Theresa Meki

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Theresa Meki'.

December 2021

Dedication

To my dad, the late Jonah B Meki — cherished memories of your journey have accompanied me through this, you would have been very proud.

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Abstract

This thesis is a political ethnography examining how women candidates campaigned in the 2017 national elections in Oro Province, Papua New Guinea (PNG). While the number of women candidates in PNG elections has increased significantly in the last 20 years, the political culture and electoral environment are progressively more inhospitable spaces for women to contest and participate in politics effectively. With no temporary special measure legislated in PNG to date, women vying for national representation are encouraged simply to keep contesting until they get elected.

This research illustrates that campaigning today is fundamentally about establishing leadership credibility, a process that is both expansive and expensive. Definitions of leadership credibility vary, but ultimately, to have credibility is to demonstrate and show evidence to voters that one can deliver or provide services if elected. Organic demonstrations of credibility are achieved over a significant length of time by meeting sociocultural obligations through acknowledgement (*luksave*) and subsequent appropriate action (*hanmak*). *Luksave* and *hanmak* are derivatives and extensions of reciprocal relations that engender debt creation, a concept intrinsic to Papua New Guinean and, more broadly, Melanesian relations. While the concept of debt creation has sustained money politics, the proliferation and normalisation of money politics has also redefined the relational aspect of building credibility, even reducing it to a mere transaction and destabilising previous voting patterns. Moreover, this underlying structure presents a significant barrier for women candidates.

In examining the campaign procedures from the perspective of women candidates, the gendered nuances and gender bias of PNG politics become apparent. In building credibility, in recruiting *komiti* (a campaign committee), in organising travel logistics, and even in campaign rhetoric, gender-specific accommodations must be made. Voters use implicitly or explicitly gendered measures to evaluate candidates. This thesis provides further contextual evidence and empirical analysis of the claims that the PNG electoral space is not a level playing field, women candidates are not equal participants and 'campaigning like a man' will not necessarily benefit women competing in a hostile political environment.

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List of Abbreviations

ANU	The Australian National University
DSIP	District Services Improvement Program
FPP	first-past-the-post [voting system]
LLG	local-level government
LPV	limited preferential voting
MP	member of parliament
NCD	National Capital District
OLIPPAC	Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates
Pangu	Papua and Niugini Union [Pati]
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PNC	People's National Congress
PNGEC	Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission
SDP	Social Democratic Party
UNRE	University of Natural Resources and Environment
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea

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Chapter 1 Introduction

In the second week of March 2015, I was in Port Moresby to attend the country's second Women's Forum. This event, organised by the Department for Community Development in partnership with the United States Embassy, was held at the Crown Plaza Hotel. The theme for 2015 was 'stronger together: partnering for equality for women'. Attendance was free, but there was a rigorous nomination process to participate. Priority was given to women serving in leadership roles, individual women leaders, women business owners, young emerging women leaders and men working in the gender space. It was exciting to see such a large event bring women leaders from various sectors under one roof to discuss nation-building issues, network and empower one another. Although the nomination process was perhaps necessary, not least to cater for venue capacity and forum administration, the selection criteria had an air of elitism, inadvertently gathering a crowd of mostly educated, successful, affluent women. This meant that there was a sense of preaching to the choir or talkfest throughout the forum. Moreover, it illustrated, and in a sense perpetuated, the divide among Papua New Guinea (PNG) women. Noted PNG expert on gender Orovu Sepoe (1996) has long written about the issue of elitism, particularly for women in politics, and the rural/urban divide that challenges women's solidarity and the so-called women's vote. Ironically, as elite women gathered to express the need for national representation for women, average PNG women voters whose awareness of women's national underrepresentation and support would make a difference in this endeavour were missing from the discussion.

As of January 2021, PNG, along with Vanuatu and the Federated States of Micronesia, ranked equal last in the Inter-parliamentary Union (2021) global table of women's national political representation, with zero women in its national parliament. From PNG's first post-independence national election in 1977 to 2021, only seven women have been elected to the PNG parliament: Dame Josephine Abaijah (1972–77, 1997–2002); Nahau Rooney (1977–82); Waliyato Clowes (1977–82); Dame Carol Kidu (1997–2012); Delilah Gore (2012–17); Loujaya Kouza (2012–17);¹ and Julie Soso (2012–17). Despite the landmark election of three women in the 2012 national elections — the best result since 1977 — and the increasing number of women that contest each election year, women's overall performance in relation to their men counterparts remains relatively stagnant. For example, during the 2007 national elections, the 103 women candidates (3.7 per cent of the total 2759 candidates) received on average less than three per cent of the total allowable ballot, with figures as low as 0.3 and 0.6 per cent (Meki 2015). A decade later, in the 2017 national elections, only 10 of the 179 women

¹ Kouza contested the 2012 election as Loujaya Toni.

candidates (5.4 per cent of the 3340 nominated candidates) won more than five per cent of the primary vote share (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:77).²

At the time of the PNG Women's Forum in 2015, the 2017 national elections were fast approaching; hence, the forum organisers included a panel on 'Women and Elections'. This session was hosted in the biggest conference room of the Crown Plaza with over 500 women in attendance. Speakers for the panel included then member of parliament (MP) Delilah Gore (Sohe Open) and then governor of the Eastern Highlands Julie Soso. These two women politicians shared their political journeys with the women in attendance. They reflected on their personal desires to represent their electorates as MPs as long-held goals or childhood ambitions. While it was certainly inspiring, these women politicians did not disclose to the audience the hard realities of campaigning in a highly competitive electoral environment. Perhaps that was in keeping with the tone of the session and the forum in general as a space to celebrate and encourage. Their motivational speeches had undertones of 'if I can do it, you can do it', 'women can get into parliament just like men' and 'if at first you don't succeed, try, try again'.³ But the fact is that Julie Soso and Delilah Gore are the exception, not the norm. PNG's political system discriminates against women, and women candidates encounter significant barriers in contesting elections.

1.1 Papua New Guinea's gendered political space

The public decision-making space in PNG is predominantly reserved for men, a situation that stems from a combination of influences: colonisation, missionisation and sociocultural beliefs and practices. Under colonial rule (1884–1975), most women were excluded from the nation-building process (Dickson-Waiko 2010, 2013). Apart from the few that were recruited and educated by mission institutions, women were left to mind the children and maintain their livelihoods while men were recruited to work on plantations or go to school. Dickson-Waiko (2013:177) wrote that 'for PNG's female citizens, colonisation, independence and decolonisation occurred simultaneously after 1975'. Mission institutions introduced and perpetuated the image of the good, domesticated housewife with sewing and cooking lessons. This had the effect of placing women firmly in the private sphere, while the image of men as priests and bishops solidified the concept of men always being in the front, deliberating and speaking to and on behalf of the community. This indoctrination, combined with the dominant

² The PNGEC officially recorded 167 women candidates. However, upon closer inspection by the Department of Pacific Affairs election observation team, it was discovered that 15 woman candidates were recorded as men while three men candidates were recorded as women. Hence, the correct figure is 179.

³ Personal notes from forum attendance, March 2015.

patriarchal culture of many Papua New Guinean societies, established an enduring public/private gendered demarcation that limits perceptions of women's leadership.

While certain aspects of missionisation can be lauded for liberating women in terms of education and providing a venue for them to convene as a group (Dickson-Waiko 2003), their training was directed towards gendered vocations like nursing or teaching. Furthermore, while certain aspects of modernisation, specifically education, health services and the role of religion, may have benefited women (Korare 2002), for the most part, their education and employment opportunities are not on par with those of men (Sepoe 2002). After PNG's independence in 1975, and even with the second goal of the National Goals and Directive Principles in the constitution calling 'for all citizens to have equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the development of our country' (King et al. 1985), progress towards this goal has been limited. More than 40 years of modern statehood later, PNG is still traditional in the sense that perceptions such as 'politics is a man's game' or 'a woman's place is in the kitchen' are pervasive (Fairio 2019a). The demarcation of women into local, domestic, private spaces versus men occupying public decision-making spaces is a stigma for women intending to enter the masculinised space of parliament house.

1.2 The culture of Papua New Guinean politics

PNG's political landscape and the way campaigning has evolved over time present significant challenges for women aspiring to enter parliament. To begin with, voting is intensely local, and personal interest and local relationships tend to take precedence over national issues. Voters generally vote along family, kin and clan lines (Ketan 2007). This is the first challenge for women in a predominantly patriarchal society, as leadership is tied to the male head of the family (or tribe or clan). Therefore, men are generally more likely than women to receive and maintain the support of their kin and clan.

The second key challenge for women is that the relationship of voters (and groups of voters) to a candidate in contemporary politics has become that of a patron–client arrangement. Clientelist and patronage systems are common throughout the world and present gendered barriers, as they tend to entrench the dominance of men in politics (see Bjarnegård 2013). In PNG, these arrangements build on traditions of big-man political organisational systems (Ketan 2004; Rynkiewicz 2000) in which people choose leaders who have demonstrated their ability to deliver services and material goods to their personal kin and clan networks. These leaders are usually men, with women generally blocked from accessing this type of leadership position.

To add more fuel to a political environment that culturally discriminates against women candidates, the political space is now rife with illegal activities, including widespread voter fraud and a proliferation of money politics. After the 1982 national elections, misappropriation and bribery started to become major issues (Standish 2007). Over time, elections in PNG became notorious for intimidation, violence and money politics. The 2002 national elections were recorded as the worst in the country's short history (Chin 2003; Gelu 2003; May 2003; Standish 2003). There was evidence of widespread voting irregularities and manipulation, voter intimidation and the hijacking of ballot boxes. In the Southern Highlands, six of the nine electorates were declared failed elections, which later necessitated supplementary elections (May and Anere 2011:9). One of the primary causes of the chaos was the grossly inaccurate electoral rolls inflated with 'ghost' names. In 2005, the then PNG electoral commissioner decided to completely discard the 2002 electoral roll and commenced the huge task of creating a new electoral roll before the 2007 national elections. The new roll had a total of 3,938,839 voters, compared to the previous roll of about five million voters (Trawen 2011).

The 2007 national elections saw a marked improvement from the previous election. This was attributed to various factors, including the presence of heavy security, better coordination between electoral officials, the efforts of dedicated polling officials and improved public awareness in the months leading up to the election (Haley 2011). The 2007 elections were also the first time the limited preferential voting (LPV) system was utilised nationally.⁴ Some polling officials and candidates claimed that the 2007 elections were more accommodating and friendly than previous elections administrated under the first-past-the-post (FPP) voting system. Proponents of LPV also argued that women candidates and voters would be liberated with LPV, as women could use their first vote preference to fulfil their family or kin obligations and their second and third preferences according to their own choice. Post-LPV election studies, however, reported otherwise (May et al. 2011). Of the 103 women (3.7 per cent of the total candidates) who contested in 2007, no new women were given a mandate, while the sole woman incumbent, Dame Carol Kidu, retained her seat. Administrative problems such as the politicising of electoral rolls and bloc voting persist (May 2008). Money politics has increased exponentially since the introduction of LPV (Baker 2018; May et al. 2011), to the extent that it is often claimed that one cannot campaign effectively without money.

⁴ In the era of self-government, PNG has utilised three different types of voting systems: alternate or optional voting from 1964 to 1972; FPP from 1977 to 2002; and the LPV system from 2002 to present. Further explanation of the changes to the voting system is in Chapter 2.

Notwithstanding the amount of research that has been done on barriers for women as political aspirants on this unequal playing field (Fraenkel 2006; Huffer 2006; Kidu and Setae 2002; Pollard 2003; Sepoe 2011; Wood 2014a; Zimmer-Tamakoshi 2011) and the failed or ineffective attempts to promote women's political participation through legislative means (Baker 2019; Fairio 2019a), the expectation that women candidates should just keep trying until they are given a mandate appears to be pervasive. This has the effect of reframing women's absence from PNG politics as an individual rather than structural problem. This view came out strongly during the debate on the 2011 Equality and Participation Bill, known as the 'Women's Bill', an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to institute 22 reserved seats for women in parliament led by Dame Carol Kidu, the sole woman parliamentarian at the time. None of the three women who had been elected in the 2012 elections revived the proposal for reserved seats during their five-year parliamentary term. Their views against the proposal were mirrored by many other Papua New Guineans, who rationalised that it would be undemocratic and tokenistic to give women candidates 'special treatment'. Former member for Lae Open Loujaya Kouza's 2012 comments reflect a common public sentiment about the bill:

Olgeta man sai get their hands dirty, come through and the people will vote for you. They will give you the confidence in the ballot box that yu bai kam in. Na long kisim natin tru, when you come and sit in that place antap long natin tru seat, whusait na wanem constituency yu representim?

Everyone gets their hands dirty, come through and the people will vote for you. They will give you the confidence in the ballot box that you will come in and to get it for nothing at all, when you come and sit in this place on a seat that you got for nothing, who and what constituency are you representing? (EMTV Online 2012).

Her argument assumes that all candidates contest in a free, fair and equal electoral environment. Yet, in the reality of PNG politics — a highly competitive and volatile electoral environment that inherently discriminates against women candidates — how often would a competitive woman candidate have to contest before she finally was elected to parliament?

Loujaya herself made three attempts before getting elected. In 2007, she contested the Lae Open electorate alongside 25 men and finished in fifth place. The next year, 2008, she contested in the Ahi rural local-level government (LLG) elections for a ward seat but finished third (amidst 38 man candidates). With each campaign, she explored new ways of connecting with the people. On one occasion, Loujaya, together with the support of her husband and local youths (mostly men), walked to all 16 wards of Lae with the flag of Israel rallying support and claiming territory as believers in the God of Israel (EMTV Online 2013). It may be that her 2012 approach to reaching people in other localities enabled her to pick up second and third

preference votes. At the polls in 2012, Loujaya received 1859 first preference votes — or eight per cent of the total allowable ballots (24,769) — against 31 other candidates, which gave her a strong start. She picked up enough second and third preference votes during the elimination rounds to eventually win. She attributed her win to connections made with other candidates in the race.

Former Eastern Highlands governor Julie Soso got into parliament after four attempts. At her first attempt in 1997, she contested with 36 other candidates and finished fourth. In the next two elections, her performance waned. In 2002, she finished fifth out of 26 candidates; in 2007, she finished eighth. She finally won in 2012 with 34,267 votes (out of 408,415 total allowable ballots) in a field of 49 candidates. Julie was one of the few winners to attribute her success to the LPV system, stating that it was the second and third preference votes that carried her through (Swan and Walton 21/6/2013); in previous elections, she usually received less than six per cent of the total allowable ballots. With over 15 years of campaign experience under her belt, Julie had also already established a substantial voter base. In addition to her identity as a successful entrepreneur and landowner in Goroka, she was financially able to contest over multiple elections and, more importantly, maintain her support base over a long period of time (Meki 4/12/2019).

Still, Julie Soso and Loujaya Kouza, with their impressive wins in 2012 after several unsuccessful attempts, are outliers. In their systematic analysis of PNG electoral data, Wood and Wangi (24/10/2019) found that women candidates tend to perform poorly after their first attempts. Most of the time, women candidates performed worse the more often they stood. For example, candidate Margaret Loko has been contesting for the South Moresby seat and National Capital District (NCD) seat since 1982 and still has not won. Her best result was in the 1992 elections when she finished in fifth place for the NCD seat. In the 2017 elections, Margaret contested again for the NCD seat and finished 18th in a field of 38 candidates (ibid.). There are many other regularly contesting women candidates who have not succeeded in either being elected or building competitiveness over time. While persistence builds a candidate's popularity, it might not be a practical strategy for women contesting in an expensive electoral environment.

In addition to financial resources, powerful local connections, the right profile and experience, Barbara and Baker (2016) also acknowledged campaigning as a metric of success for Pacific politicians. Traditionally, campaigning conjures images of canvassing, loud public announcements, rallies, vehicular convoys and candidate paraphernalia. However, money

politics and political gifting are now also considered normal elements of campaigning. Since the 2007 national elections, candidates who utilised money and gifting outperformed those who did not (Haley and Zubrinich 2015, 2018). This thesis illustrates that campaigning today is also about building credibility and maintaining a level of visibility and repute over a long period of time.

1.3 Campaigning

Almost every PNG election since 1964 has been observed and documented by academics and election observers alike (Bettison et al. 1965; Epstein et al. 1971; Haley and Zubrinich 2013, 2018; Hegarty 1983; King 1989; May et al. 2011; Oliver 1989; Saffu 1996). Most of these monographs and reports provide commentary on election administration, polling, voting culture and results from various electorates. There is relatively little in-depth analysis, however, of the complete campaign period and election-related activities prior to polling. This reflects the limited time observers generally spend on site during the election period. This thesis, in its use of political ethnography as a methodology, addresses this lacuna in PNG electoral studies by analysing the long-term campaign cycle, the campaign machinery and the candidates. Other political ethnographies of PNG politics include Bill Standish's 1991 dissertation, 'Simbu Paths to Power: Political change and Cultural Continuity in the Papua New Guinea Highlands'. His thesis examined the evolving political competition and dynamic changes from the precolonial era through to the postcolonial and was based on the Simbu people's social structures, ideologies and political techniques. His ethnography covered three elections: 1972, 1977 and 1982. About a decade later, Joe Ketan's thesis, 'The Name Must Not Go Down', provided a detailed study of political competition in the Highlands society, specifically in Mount Hagen, where some of PNG's wealthiest politicians vie for influence. Ketan's work provided local and contextual insight into the 1992 Dei Open election results with detailed accounts of political competition and alliances dating back to 1984. Both Standish and Ketan acknowledged the continuation of various traditional concepts into the modern era. Standish (1991:249) wrote, 'The key ideological appeals ... — whether in state politics or warfare — remain, and the process of translating resources from one arena into another is creatively used in each new period'. Meanwhile, central to Ketan's argument are the symbolic and functional parallels between the modern state and the traditional Hagen political economy, which survives on highly competitive *moka* exchange ceremonies. The *moka* is a traditional exchange ritual that

links groups together in alliance and is where big-men⁵ maximise their social status. Ketan concluded that the state itself has been incorporated into Hagen political competition; hence, elections there and in other Highlands electorates tend to be very competitive as a result of other entrenched tribal political arrangements. In their respective ethnographies, Standish's and Ketan's expositions of traditional local politics, resource accumulation and alliances facilitate understanding of the Highlands political culture and its propensity towards violence and money politics. Adding onto this discourse, this ethnography presents the gendered perspective, an examination of how women candidates contest in such a male-centric environment. My research is from Oro Province, which varies culturally from the Highlands provinces of Simbu and Mount Hagen. Oro society operates on reciprocity (Schwimmer 1973, 1979), which is the common denominator in all Papua New Guinean societies. The pervasive Melanesian concept of reciprocity or exchange is the underlying factor that drives money politics and fuels the intense electoral competition that now appears to be widespread throughout PNG.

After the 2007 national elections, domestic election observers Patrick Matbob (2011:357–74) and Dixon Susub (2011:211–26) suggested that the migration of Highlanders to lowland electorates appeared to be bringing the 'Highlands style' of politicking and campaigning to previously calm and peaceful electorates. 'Highlands style' and 'Highlandization' are terms used by Bill Standish (2003:11) to denote money politics, mass inflation of the electoral roll, multiple voting and other forms of electoral malfeasance, and violence and intimidation. But as the traditional Highlands society and political economy operated through extravagant *moka* and *te* exchange ceremonies, so did the Massim of Milne Bay with their *kula* trade and the Papua with *hiri*.⁶ Unspoken social contracts through the principle of repaying debt are the way of life or *pasin* of Papua New Guineans and Melanesians. This principle generally frames how voters and candidates operate as political actors. It was observed by Haley and Zubrinich (2018:45) in the 2012 and 2017 national elections that debt creation can be negotiated both ways, such as when voters fund and support credible candidates as a way of making an investment should their candidate get elected to parliament and be able to pay them back with services. Nevertheless, in campaigning, it is usually the candidate's obligation to initiate the exchange process by creating debt with voters or vote clusters months, if not years, before the

⁵ 'Big-man' refers to a style of leadership as opposed to the chieftaincy or leadership by inheritance. Rather, it is attained by a series of acts (such as generating and managing resources, organising people, having good speaking abilities) that elevate a man above the common people and attract a following (Sahlins 1963:289). The definition of a big-man is not static and has been described differently by various scholars of Melanesia (Bablis 2020:294–95).

⁶ *Moka*, *te*, *kula* and *hiri* all mean exchange in different PNG languages. Each is the name of this type of ceremonial exchange in its region.

election period in order to receive repayment by way of support at the polls. Through these actions, the candidate or intending candidate (depending how early they start negotiating exchange) takes on traits of the traditional big-man.

For the candidate, the debt creation process is a huge undertaking in contemporary campaigning that can be organised through the establishment of campaign committees, or *komiti*. A *komiti* consists of a candidate's relatives and strong supporters, particularly politically savvy and influential men who can carry out multiple administrative and technical roles (campaign manager, events coordinator, driver, security and so on) within the campaign machinery. One of their primary tasks, however, is to ensure that voters who have pledged support or have debt follow through on their commitment. Establishing a *komiti* is now an essential feature of campaigning; it confirms a candidate's credibility as a leader when they demonstrate their ability to recruit and manage a large group of influential supporters. Yet, it is an expensive exercise for candidates, usually only successfully accomplished by well-known men with sufficient capital to recruit workers and fund their campaign awareness activities.

Poor men and women candidates who cannot afford to set up extensive *komiti* networks resort to less expensive derivatives of exchange or debt creation such as *hanmak*. In Tok Pisin, *hanmak* literally means 'the mark of the hand' and is used to refer to the evidence of one's work: their contribution to, assistance with or proven involvement in family and community life (Meki 2020). It can also be understood as symbolic capital (Spark et al. 2019). It refers to long-term, meaningful contributions made by candidates either through addressing cultural obligations or assisting with modern day needs that will warrant later reciprocation. Unfortunately for aspiring women candidates, their *hanmak* does not readily translate into political capital, as it gendered in its reception and interpretation. While men's political aspirations and efforts to build credibility are perceived as legitimate, women face a higher hurdle in being seen as credible candidates because their *hanmak* activities tend to be regarded as apolitical community work rather than groundwork for a future campaign. Against such a backdrop, this thesis asks: how do women navigate an electoral environment that is stacked against them on various fundamental levels? What type of women candidates succeed or perform well?

1.3.1 Where I am coming from

My interest in women's participation in national elections began in 2012 for a few reasons. The 2012 elections were the first time I had resided in an electorate — my hometown of Goroka in the Eastern Highlands Province — long enough (over six months) to be eligible to vote. In

anticipation of the vote, I intentionally paid attention to all the campaigning transpiring around Goroka Town that year.

Among the contestants for the 2012 Eastern Highlands governor seat, Julie Soso was very popular. Perhaps it was because she had been contesting since 1997, or that she was one of the few women candidates. Her popularity and how women candidates generally are perceived by young people of voting age was the topic of my honours thesis between 2012–13 at the University of Goroka. During the 2012 election period in Goroka, I only witnessed one of Julie's rallies at Goroka's Peace Park, albeit from a distance due to the massive crowds. Coincidentally, two of her workers, or *komiti*, were related to my mother (cousins) and took care of Julie's support base in the Henganofi District. As such, although I attended just one of her rallies, I knew more about her campaign approach and messaging through listening to my uncle's discussions. Political discussions were a staple in my family home both on and off election season; my mother's partner for over a decade, Iggy (Bari Palma), had been contesting for the Kerowagi electorate, Simbu Province, since 2002. Hence, I am familiar with stories of tribal violence, deaths, compensations and disgruntled supporters making demands, destroying property out of frustration and so on. I also understand from the contestant's perspective the need to be hospitable (see Chapter 5.3.2) and the drive to make money and raise funds for elections. With this background, I was intrigued by how women candidates would navigate such a difficult setting. In my search for data for my PhD project, I went to Oro as an outsider — not only as a research student coming from an Australian university but also as a Highlander. While I have never really internalised my own Highlands-ness, my outsider, or *kam man*, status was blatantly reinforced during my stay in Popondetta. It not only served as a springboard for me from a comparative standpoint, but I believe it also influenced how interlocutors perceived me and conveyed information — specifically in relation to elections, as their activities in the Highlands vary to that of lowland electorates.

In my research endeavours, I traced how women negotiated entrenched patriarchal systems, built powerful local coalitions and used their backgrounds and contacts — and identities as women — to their electoral advantage, using Jean Eparo Parkop as the primary case study. Yet, as I recount in this thesis, neither Jean nor any other woman candidate in the 2017 national elections managed to win a seat in parliament. This research is significant as an ethnography of the contemporary campaign process in PNG from a gendered perspective. It contributes to the body of literature on PNG elections by elucidating the local political dynamics of campaigning and how they are both explicitly and implicitly gendered.

1.4 Guide to chapters

I arranged this thesis chronologically from the time I entered the field (July 2016) until I departed (July 2017). It documents the preparation to execution cycle of campaigning in contemporary PNG elections from the perspective of women candidates.

As the objective of my research was to analyse how women candidates conducted their campaigns, political ethnography (Schatz 2009) was the ideal methodological approach. This interdisciplinary research approach requires the researcher to immerse themselves in the field of the subject matter or research enquiry. PNG incumbent politicians and intending candidates are known to commence early campaign preparations. Therefore, I allocated 10 months, from July 2016 to July 2017, in the field to observe politically motivated activities preceding the 2017 PNG national elections. My field site of Popondetta Town, Oro Province, was determined by several factors. Compared to other provinces of PNG, Oro women had a good track record of contesting at recent national elections; in 2012, the Sohe electorate gave mandate to Delilah Gore. Tracking the then Sohe incumbent's fight to retain her seat was certainly one incentive to select Oro Province as a field site. Perhaps the most influential factor in deciding to conduct political ethnography in Oro, however, was meeting Oro provincial candidate Jean Eparo Parkop in March 2015. Knowing with certainty that she would contest in the 2017 national elections cemented my decision. Furthermore, my involvement with two other programs between 2016 and 2017 supplemented my data collection. First, I worked as a facilitator with the Women in Leadership Support Program, which introduced me to women candidates from all over PNG. Then, my role as leader of the Ijivitari District team in the 2017 Australian National University (ANU) domestic election observation granted me access to polling and counting sites around Oro Province. Chapter 1 is an overview of the field site and the data collection methods that informed this thesis.

The second chapter outlines the gendered history of PNG's politics: a space that, in its inception, was generally conducive for women candidates, as depicted in the political journeys of pioneer women candidates such as Nahau Rooney and Josephine Abaijah, but that has become more hostile as PNG's political culture has evolved. Even with legislative reforms undertaken to structurally improve the political space for all participants, it appears that the prevailing political culture refracts any of the expected outcomes.

Chapter 3 provides the conceptual framework that guides the discourse in subsequent chapters. The primary feature of PNG's evolving political culture that significantly hinders women's effective participation in the electoral and, more specifically, campaign processes is

money politics. While money politics may be considered a recent phenomenon influenced by Highlands-style politicking, it has flourished because of the underlying Melanesian concept of exchange or reciprocity. Traditional scenarios of exchange were usually conducted by big-men with affluence and followings. It is this ideology of reciprocity that structures how modern campaigning is practiced by candidates and perceived by voters. For candidates who cannot afford to actively engage in money politics, utilising modern derivatives of exchange such as showing *luksave* and creating *hanmak* may work in their favour. In Tok Pisin, *luksave* means to recognise and/or acknowledge. In the context of campaigning, *luksave* is used by voters to determine if an intending candidate has a good reputation and, more specifically, whether they are known to be responsive to communal needs or cultural obligations. Colloquially, *luksave* and *hanmak* are used interchangeably, but I establish a nuanced distinction between them, as *luksave* is more abstract and *hanmak* is its corresponding action. Unfortunately, when women candidates exhibit *luksave* and *hanmak* in a gendered society such as PNG, it is often perceived and received through a gendered lens. Therefore, it may not carry the same weight as when exhibited by men candidates, adding to the gendered challenges of contesting elections.

In order to answer my primary research question of how women campaign, I had to establish how campaigning is performed in PNG's contemporary political environment. Chapter 4 is an ethnography of that process, particularly early campaigning activities such as the establishment of an extensive campaign *komiti*. This campaign network is a testament to a candidate's leadership credibility.

Chapter 5 is a narrative of campaign experiences from Oro women who contested in previous national elections, including the 2017 national elections. Reflecting on their political journeys, these women concurred that elections in Oro are now all about money and that without it voters will not take candidates seriously. Nevertheless, in analysing the case of Sohe's first woman MP, Delilah Gore (2012–17), a first-time candidate who was elected with relatively little money, I argue that there are facets of her approach that can be utilised to build a credible reputation. However, the path to power is not linear, as various circumstantial factors do affect campaign efforts.

Of the women candidates in Oro who agreed to participate in this research, Oro provincial candidate Jean Eparo Parkop granted me liberal access to interview her family and campaign team and follow her on the campaign trail. Chapter 6 follows her campaign story and candidacy as a case study of how a competitive woman candidate plans and executes her campaign.

Drawing on observations of campaign meetings and interviews with key members of her campaign team, this chapter provides detailed insight into the expansive amount of work and planning candidates undertake when contesting. In addition, Jean's case study provides insight into the gendered nature of how she was portrayed as a credible candidate by her *komiti*. In particular, maternal imagery of her identity as mother as well as her role as the wife of Powes Parkop, the governor of the NCD, influenced her position as a woman candidate. The case study of Jean's campaign preparation continued until its execution during the official eight-week campaign period.

This final eight-week period, from 20 April 2017 until 23 June 2017, was a crucial time for candidates to consolidate and fortify their support. The public displays of support exhibited during the nomination week and at campaign rallies demonstrated the amount of wealth and size of following a candidate had. In the last two decades, campaigning has become more expansive and expensive. However, local, low-key campaigning remains important in consolidating support and ensuring voter turnout. Chapter 7 categorises the various types of campaign activities into two groups — public campaigning and local-level campaigning — while illustrating the importance of maintaining a broad and loyal network of *komiti*.

Chapter 8 analyses the results of the 2017 Oro national elections. Using the three Oro electorates as case studies, I illustrate a few emerging trends. First, I identify a shift away from the local ideology of 'Oro for Oro', where *kam man* (outsider or not ethnically local) candidates are shunned. This sentiment seems to have dwindled with the election of *kam man* candidate Richard Masere as the member for Ijivitari Open. Second, I demonstrate how the use of money politics to attain and maintain power is increasing, yet strong traditions of kin-based voting endure in some parts of the province. Third, like in other provinces around the country, the Oro elections were littered with allegations of sorcery and undue influence. While these allegations are hard to verify, I argue that their prevalence indicates a general mistrust towards election administration.

Finally, the concluding chapter reflects on how women candidates must navigate a political environment they experience far differently than their fellow men contestants. In every stage of the campaign process, from fundraising to establishing a *komiti* to the formal campaign period, women candidates must constantly negotiate the implications of their gender. Even the people they recruit to work for them, their *komiti*, negotiate their gender on their behalf. Moreover, the 2017 provincial race results, particularly the enormous 30,000 margin between incumbent winner Gary Juffa and runner-up candidate Jean Eparo Parkop, imply that even if

women candidates like Jean were to campaign exactly like men — in terms of having the right campaign team, building alliances, exhibiting *luksave*, creating *hanmak* and spending large amounts of money — their chances of getting into parliament are still very slim. These results from Oro were discouraging, but present a glimpse of how women candidates all over PNG experienced the national elections in 2017, as none of the 179 women were successful in their campaigns. PNG women candidates will continue to endure many challenges as electoral competitors, and there is still a need for legislative measures to aid their plight. This thesis contributes to the discourse on women's national underrepresentation by shedding light on the unspoken and uninterrogated assumptions that underpin PNG political behaviour. It is not enough to encourage women to 'keep trying until you get in', as they are not the 'problem', as such. The problem is with the structures and institutions in which women candidates must operate. In order to effectively increase women's political representation in a sustainable way, the gendered nature of contemporary political dynamics must be fully understood.

Chapter 2 Political Ethnography in Oro Province

Understanding that PNG's political culture means that women struggle to participate effectively in politics, and noting the apparent resistance to legislate any form of temporary special measure or gender quota, my fieldwork investigated the primary questions: how do women candidates campaign? How does a woman candidate organise and plan for such a taxing endeavour? I observed how women campaigned given the constraints of PNG's political culture and the weaknesses of its electoral administration. The nature of campaigning is complex and therefore requires a detailed focus rather than a broader survey. These research questions also required a subject — a woman candidate — and a method of participant observation.

This chapter presents the context and rationale for choosing Oro Province as the location for researching women's participation in national politics and the appropriate research method of a political ethnography. I begin by introducing Jean Eparo Parkop, as meeting her was the catalyst for choosing Oro Province as my fieldwork site. What follows is an explanation of my data collection approach and a description of the province.

2.1 Why Oro?

In March 2015, while attending the PNG Women's Forum at the Crown Plaza, I met Jean Eparo Parkop at a breakfast meeting at the Grand Papua Hotel, where she confirmed that she would be contesting the governor's seat in Oro Province in the 2017 national elections. Jean had also contested in the 2012 Oro elections and finished seventh. As an experienced candidate, she met the requirements in terms of preparedness and maintaining a connection with her constituency (Haley 2016; Haley and Anere 2009). Other characteristics contributing to her status as a woman likely to win or perform well included her level of education (Spark et al. 2019:12); her long-term employment; her involvement in the political sphere due to her husband, NCD Governor Powes Parkop (Baker 2014; Baker et al. 2013; Corbett and Liki 2015:328), who is also her strong male backer (Haley and Zubrinich 2016:2); and the support of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) (Barbara and Baker 2016:9). These factors advantaged her for two main reasons: access to resources and access to strong networks for political mobilisation (Barbara and Baker 2016:8; McLeod 2015:11). She became the one candidate I knew for certain would contest and provide a case study in terms of examining the complexities of how women candidates conduct their campaigns.

Photograph 2-1. Meeting Jean Eparo Parkop at Grand Papua Hotel, Port Moresby, 2015



Oro women have been contesting elections since 1997, and with each successive election, the number has increased. In 2007, Oro had the second highest number of women contestants in the country, a total of 11.⁷ That year, Oro women accumulated votes ranging from 0.2 per cent to 12.7 per cent, performing better than some men. Notably, in the 2007 national election race, Maureen Ambo finished fourth in the Ijivitari seat in a field with 38 other contestants, amassing 6.2 per cent of first preference votes (Susub 2011:219). In the 2012 national elections, a total of 13 women contested across the province. This election saw the success of Delilah Gore in the Sohe Open, the first woman in Oro's political history to be elected to parliament. The opportunity to observe whether she would retain her seat further cemented the choice of Oro as my field site.

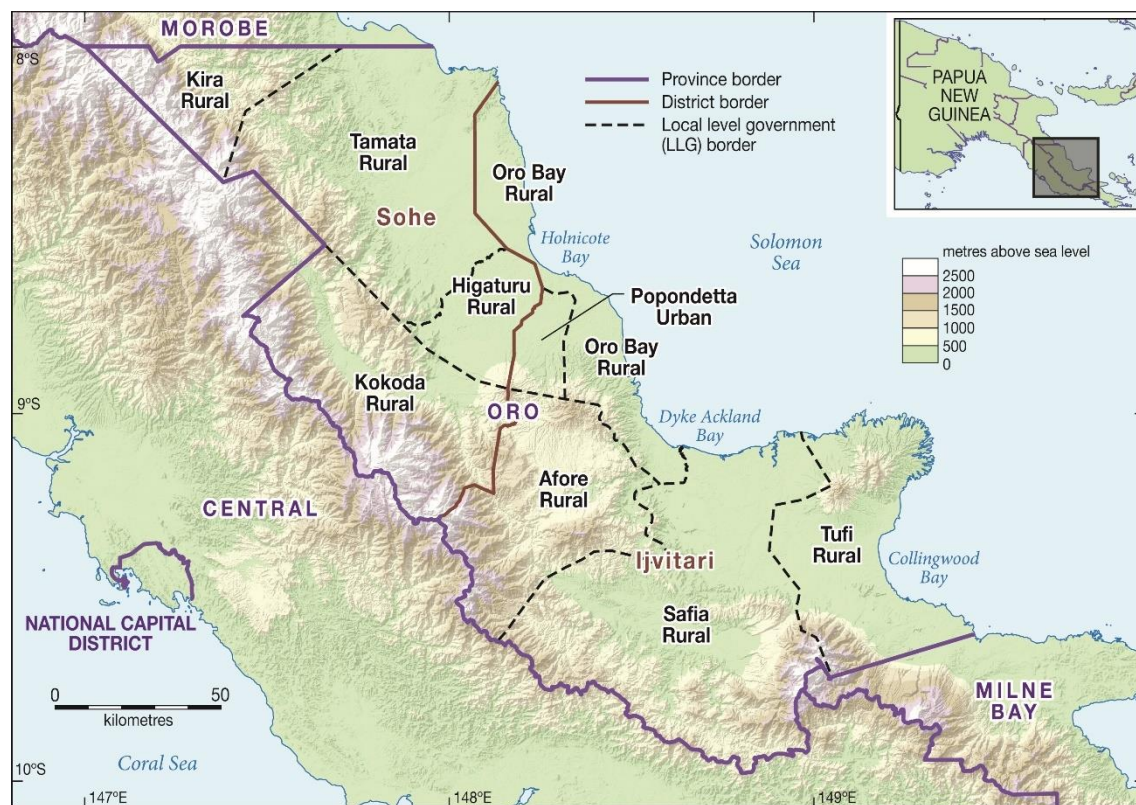
2.1.1 Field site

Oro Province, formally known as Northern Province, is located on the north coast of mainland PNG and occupies 43,700 square kilometres (Hanson et al. 2001). The province shares borders with Milne Bay Province to the south, Central Province to the southwest and Morobe Province to the north. The province is divided into two districts, Sohe and Ijivitari (see Figure

⁷ Eastern Highlands had the highest with 12.

2-1). Including the provincial seat, Oro has only three electorates, making it one of the smallest provinces in PNG. For government administration, there are nine LLG boundaries governed by LLG presidents who are voted in every five years and 162 wards administered by ward councillors elected by the community. At the time of my fieldwork, Gary Juffa from the Kokoda LLG was the governor; Delilah Gore, also from Kokoda, was the member for Sohe; and David Arore from the Afore LLG was the member for Ijivitari. The last national census conducted in 2011 indicated a total of 34,117 households and 186,309 persons in Oro Province (National Statistical Office 2014). Registered on the electoral roll were 65,900 eligible voters for the Sohe District and 65,443 for the Ijivitari District (Papua New Guinea Registry of Political Parties 2018). Altogether, Oro had a voting population of 131,343.

Figure 2-1. Map of Oro Province



Source: CartoGIS, ANU.

2.1.2 Timeframe of activities

The 2017 national elections provided the ideal opportunity to investigate women's participation in national electoral politics. Accordingly, my fieldwork timeframe from late July 2016 to July 2017 was scheduled to culminate with the 2017 PNG national elections. During this time period, I resided in Oro. However, from December 2016 to February 2017, I was briefly

employed as support staff for the PNG Women in Leadership Support Program.⁸ In that capacity, I assisted with facilitating workshops in Kiunga, Bougainville, Lea, Wewak and Kokopo. The program was aimed at equipping intending women candidates with knowledge that would enable them to launch strong campaigns. Due to my involvement with the Women in Leadership Support Program, I encouraged a few women candidates in Oro to apply and attend the workshops. The 2017 training for this program lasted six weeks and aided my research by providing the opportunity to network with intending women candidates across PNG and establish commonalities and archetypical attributes of women candidates. Moreover, the workshops provided much insight into the complexities of politics throughout the country.

The busiest period of my fieldwork was during the official campaign period of 2017, when I attended as many nominations and rallies as I could before committing to election observation. From the last week of the official campaign period (beginning 20 June 2017), I became fully engaged as the team leader for the Ijivitari electorate until the elections results were declared on 25 July 2017. Months prior, around April 2017, as I commenced organising logistics for Oro's domestic election observation, I consciously began to distance myself from Jean's campaign team and other women candidates in order to restore a level of neutrality that would be important in observing and analysing the performances of all the candidates who would contest in the 2017 national elections. One of the benefits of this distancing was that by the time election commenced, I was regarded as an election observer and not connected to one woman candidate.

Other members of the Oro observation team included Cecil Koa, Esther Sangai, Alfred Sahembo, Leslie Robert, Henry Osi, Eric Lausi and Rachel Keputong.⁹ My tasks were mainly administrative and included scheduling team members at various polling sites and counting centres and ensuring that all the data collection journals were completed. The Oro team was part of the larger Department of Pacific Affairs domestic election observation exercise, which gave me liberal access to polling sites and counting centres. After months of learning about Oro's political culture and voter behaviour, observing the Oro elections marked the culmination of my fieldwork in Popondetta. Altogether, my involvement in the Women in Leadership

⁸ In January 2017, the Department of Pacific Affairs at ANU commenced a five-year PNG Women in Leadership Support Program supported by Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development. The goal of the Women in Leadership Support Program is to improve women's political participation by enhancing their competitiveness in elections. The program is drawn from research regarding successful electoral campaigning in PNG.

⁹ Long-term Oro election observer Dixon Susub and policy research officer William Garena from the Office of Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates were also part of the Oro team, but had to withdraw due to other commitments.

Support Program and the ANU domestic election observation program complimented the ethnographic data collected throughout the 12 months of my fieldwork (July 2016 to July 2017).

2.2 Overview of the province

Of the two districts in Oro, Sohe is mainly inland, covered with swamps and forests. It contains tributaries such as the Mamba, Kumusi, Gira, Ope, Girua, Musa, Yodda and Eiya rivers. Ijivitari is along the coast and flat, with kunai plains until the Double Cross area and the Owen Stanley Range. The soil composition across the province is rich with volcanic ash, and the vegetation varies from light, secondary forest and grassland in the lowlands to thick, tropical rainforest in the higher altitudes. Most of the province is covered with oil palm plantations and other tropical fruits and vegetables, such as coconut and bananas. Cultivation of the root crop taro is pervasive because of its social, ritual and spiritual significance. Together with pigs, taro is used extensively in feasts and ceremonies (for more information on the ceremonial and cultural value of taro, see Bashkow 2006:49–50,189,196). Other than a trekking path from Koiairi, Central Province, to Kokoda in Sohe, the only other ways of getting to and from Oro Province are by boat from Morobe and Milne Bay and by air. People residing in the Tufi, Sapia and Afore regions are isolated from the rest of the province and reliable government services. Such limited transport links within the province make it logistically difficult and expensive for candidates to travel around during the campaign period, as they would need to hire dinghies and four-wheel drive vehicles to reach some of these remote locations — and when the dirt roads end, trekking by foot is the only option.

In Oro, the main languages spoken include English, Tok Pisin, Kaiva and Binandere. Most people are multilingual. Altogether, there are 13 languages spoken in Ijivitari¹⁰ and 12 language groups in Sohe.¹¹ The different language groups also correspond to various ethnic groupings and tribal alliances in Oro (Bonshek 2008:88). The terms ‘clan’ and ‘tribe’ are used loosely in everyday rhetoric when people try to explain their roots; sometimes, people even use the terms interchangeably. Williams (1930:406), in his categorisations of Oro people, defined tribe as ‘a reference to a common territory, certain idiosyncrasies of custom, distinct dialect and common enemies’. In the 1900s, Chinnery and Beaver, who travelled the Northern Division widely,¹² identified nine principal tribes: Binandere and Jevu Buje, Tanyanwari, Aiga, Yega, Sauaha, Sangara, Dirou, Wasida and Hunjara (Williams 1930:6). Clans, on the other

¹⁰ Notu, Korafe, Arifumae, Menyafia, Maisin and Wiri in Tufi LLG; Erage, Binandere, Notu, Sauga and Gaina in Oro Bay LLG; and Managalasi and Yaeba in Afore LLG.

¹¹ There are three languages in Higaturu LLG, five languages in Kokoda LLG and two languages in Kira LLG. The Aeko and Binandere languages are also spoken in the Ioma subdistrict.

¹² The Northern Province was known as the Northern Division at that time.

hand, are more problematic structurally, as they develop from the basic family group, are numerous and have the tendency to evolve as people migrate and resettle (Williams 1930:101–3). A clan is basically a patriarchal group named after the man founder, and its members can be scattered across several villages. Land is owned communally while gardens are owned individually. Clan members generally should not be allowed to marry each other, as it complicates the dowry process.

The dominant religion in the province is Anglican Christianity. More than 80 per cent of Oro people are either second or third generation Anglicans (Emori et al. 2005). Like in other missionised locations, the Anglican experience is well meshed with Oro's contemporary culture. In 1889, Albert Maclaren was appointed the first Anglican missionary to the region. By 1901, there were 11 mission stations on the coasts of Milne Bay Province and Oro Province, and the Anglican influence began to extend along 480 kilometres of coast and into the mainland (Gash and Whittaker 1975). The Maisin people along the Collingwood Bay area have been interacting with Anglican missionaries since 1890s, and the bulk of the population accepted the faith around the 1920s, with most of the school-aged children and adults attending mission schools and church services (Barker 2002, 2014:173). The church itself is fully localised, as most people have incorporated Anglican doctrines into their belief system and ethos (Hermkens 2015). Nowadays, church festivals are the major occasions for traditional dancing and singing (Hermkens 2007:350).

The localisation of Anglicanism was facilitated by exchanges or reciprocal actions between the missionaries and the villagers (compare views expressed in Schwimmer 1973). As one elderly man explained to Barker (2014:175) on his first trip in 1981:

They [missionaries] are not from here. They came from another place to help us. So we must help them. They are teaching our children, so anything they need or want for their work or the mission station we must give as vina ('pay-back').

Moreover, there was a certain degree of tolerance from the missionaries to not impose all their doctrinal requirements on the villagers. The missionaries needed support with food and labour to maintain the station and schools. In describing the approach of three Christian missions (Methodist, Anglican and London Missionary Society) that settled along eastern Papua, Wetherell (2012:166) said:

Among the Anglicans, 'conversion' was regarded as the absorption of the Massim into the fabric of the visible church while disturbing traditional habits

and customs only to the minimum required for the teaching of Christianity (for example, infanticide and cannibalism would come to an end).

Other denominations (for examples, see Eves 1996) had success banning traditional clothing, dancing and singing, but within the Anglican mission, there was no policy to convert Papuans in such ways. Rather, it was left to the local missionary to allow or forbid these practices (Wetherell 1977:202–5). The church was also localised. For example, the first record of church decoration using Indigenous elements like *tapa* was in 1934 (Barker 2014:177). Even before that, as early as 1917, much of the Common Book of Prayer and other elements of the Anglican communion service were translated into the Binandere language. Even today, many church festivals and open days are celebrated with cultural adornments, dancing and singing.

The church's influence was at its height in the 1960s, when it administered a network of churches, schools, theological colleges and medical clinics (aid posts) covering most of Oro Province (Barker 2002). Many of the local women candidates I interviewed, including Jean, were educated through the Anglican mission school system, starting with mission primary schools in their villages and later transferring to the all-girl Holy Name High School in Doruga, Milne Bay. A social mapping report conducted by the National HIV/AIDS Support Project in 2004 revealed that more than 20 per cent of the province's educational facilities are managed by the Anglican Church, as well as numerous health facilities. It was only in the 1980s that other denominations began to significantly infiltrate the province; however, their influence is not as pervasive, with their adherents occupying only certain areas of Oro.

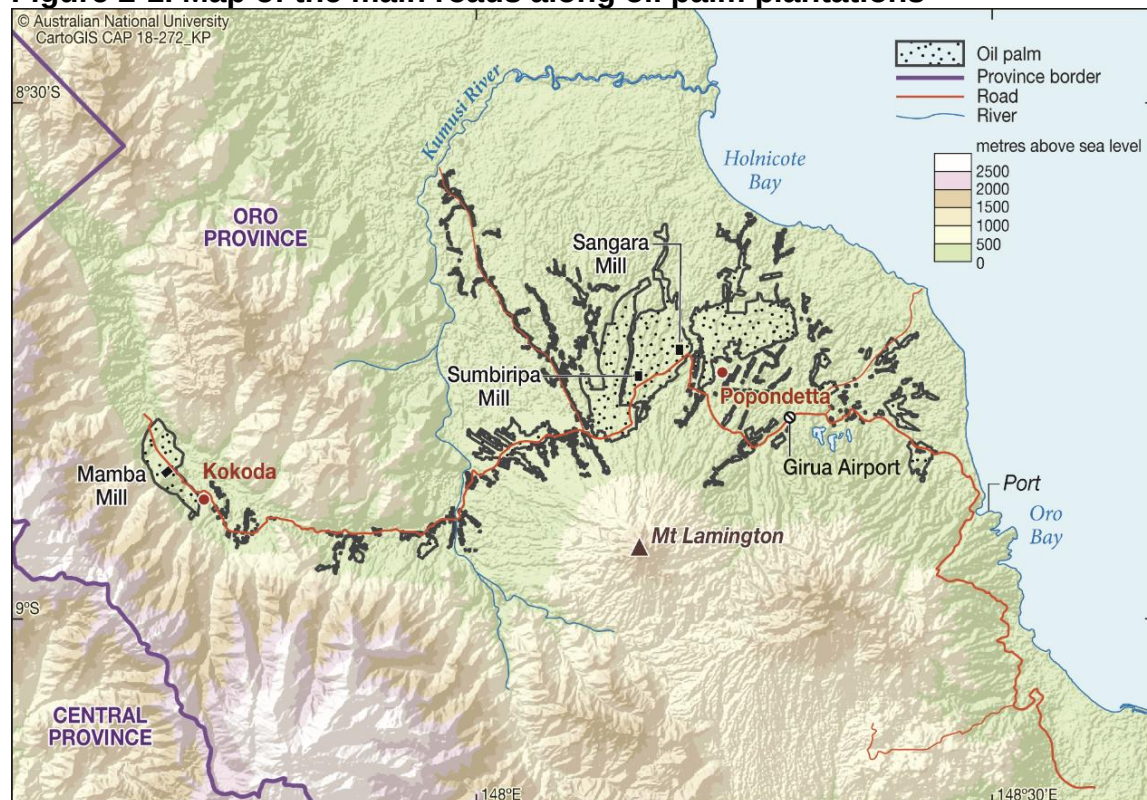
2.2.1 First impressions of Popondetta

My first trip to Popondetta was in March 2016, when I spent five days there with my advisor to facilitate a local women's workshop at the Oro Guest House. It takes only 30 minutes to travel by plane from Port Moresby to Popondetta. The weather in both places is quite similar, except that the air in Popondetta is more humid than in Port Moresby, with temperatures averaging between 30 and 35 degrees. In the 30-minute bus ride from Girua Airport to the small township of Popondetta, I saw that the vegetation was like that of Morobe Province, lush, green and with evidence of regular rainfall. Between Girua Airport and Popondetta Town, there are only a handful of permanent houses with corrugated iron roofing. Most residential dwellings are still made of bush materials, with pandanus leaves for roofs. Only a couple of miniature canteens were dispersed along the main road.

The road we travelled on was the Oro Bay Highway, which would later connect with the Kokoda Highway — major sealed roads in the province. Between Popondetta and the Kokoda LLG,

there are passable roads and people are within four hours of Popondetta. Oil palm development around Popondetta has resulted in a network of sealed roads, but outside of this, roads are limited, and access is poor (Hanson et al. 2001:87). Figure 2-2 is a map of the major sealed road from the northern coast to Kokoda. From this road are smaller gravel or dirt roads created specifically to enable the transportation of oil palm from the plantations to the processing mills. The district centres of Sohe and Ijivitari have road networks to the main highway, but smaller subdistricts like Ioma, Safia and Kira have no proper sealed roads.

Figure 2-1. Map of the main roads along oil palm plantations



Source: CartoGIS, ANU.

Even though the province has had mission contact since the 1900s and had colonial penetration earlier than other parts of PNG, Popondetta's infrastructure is in a poor state of repair due to natural disasters and continuous government neglect. The small township of Popondetta was established as a relief site after the eruption of Mount Lamington (known locally as Sumbiripa) on 21 January 1951 killed around 4000 local people and 50 Europeans (Johnson 2020; Kessing 1952:16). Prior to the volcanic eruption, Higaturu Station was the main mission centre, complete with offices, a hospital, accommodation for the Australian colonial administration, churches and the all-boy Martyrs School (Belshaw 1951; Stead 2018). Sangara, also the site of the Northern District headquarters, was well established before the eruption destroyed everything. This disaster put a halt to the postwar recovery and displaced

thousands of survivors. After the eruption, foreign aid workers assisted the survivors with medicine, food and tools, and after a year, many returned to settle on their traditional lands (Bashkow 2006).

The second disaster to devastate the province occurred 13 years ago. Between 12 and 16 November 2007, Oro was greatly affected by the category 1 tropical cyclone Guba. The PNG Government reported that 145,000 people were affected in the province. Oro police reported 71 casualties and at least 13,000 displaced people. Numerous roads, bridges and livestock were washed away by floodwater (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2007). Since the cyclone, recovery and repair of the infrastructural damage has been very slow.

Most of the government buildings I visited, including the police station, hospital, town secondary school and several public servant residences, are dilapidated and need to be rebuilt. Apart from Popondetta Hospital, which was closed for refurbishment in 2014 and reopened for operations in March 2018, most if not all of the state administrative buildings are decrepit. During my time in the province, a new terminal was under construction at Girua Airport as one of the 15 new airports being built around the country under the Asian Development Bank's Civil Development Initiative Project. Popondetta Town itself has one bank, a branch of the Bank South Pacific. There are four ATMs in town, one situated in the hospital grounds and three in front of the bank. A Filipino-run pharmacy provides the much-needed service of a single-room clinic with a registered nurse and a pharmacist. The pharmacy has a regular stock of drugs and is of great value to the residents of Popondetta Town and people travelling in from outside of town. Of the 127 aid posts in the province, 55 have closed. Patients from Popondetta Hospital are usually referred to the pharmacy with prescriptions whenever the hospital dispensary runs out of certain drugs. Popondetta does not have any private medical practitioners. There are three primary schools and one secondary school located in town. There is also a vocational school called Popondetta Skills Training Institute for school leavers who want to acquire trade skills as mechanics or cooks.¹³ Previously, Vudal University had an open campus centre, but it has been closed for several years now, and the facilities are dilapidated. Most students completing year 12 in Oro travel to Port Moresby or other centres if they qualify for further education.

¹³ The schools I saw operational were located in Popondetta Town; province wide, it is reported that there are over 100 elementary and primary schools and eight high schools/vocational schools (see National HIV/AIDS Support Project 2005:13).

There are two stationary shops, two bookstores and a major hardware and furniture store. Like other town centres around PNG, Popondetta also has a Papindo supermarket that stocks a reasonable variety of food items compared to the usual assortment of noodles, tinned fish and rice found in the four Asian shops in town. While my description of Popondetta Town in 2016–17 sounds a bit depressing, it was not always that way. Researchers in the 1970s described Popondetta as one of the most comfortable and attractive small towns in the country. Back then, it was home to a large expatriate population of government workers, planters, missionaries, tradesmen and storekeepers. To accommodate the large expatriate population, the town had amenities such as a cinema, golf course, bakery, several churches and a variety of retail shops (see Bashkow 2006:48). After 1983 and the gradual ‘white flight’ that began after PNG gained independence, more jobs became localised and the overall management and maintenance of buildings in Popondetta began to deteriorate.

2.3 Data collection: methods and approach

To carry out this research project, I employed the method of political ethnography, immersing myself and living in the Oro town of Popondetta to observe and understand the dynamics of power relations and the everyday way of life. According to Baiocchi and Connor (2008), political ethnography is a research method based on close-up and real-time observation of actors involved in political processes. In his evaluation of ethnographic works, Tilly (2006:410) wrote that ‘political ethnography brings field workers into direct contact with political processes instead of filtering that knowledge through other people’s testimony, written records and artefacts of political interaction’. The ethnographic approach includes various procedures for collecting evidence, such as in-depth interviews, conversation, participant observation, passive observation of interactions and covert observation of interactions. The main advantage of using this approach is getting to spend more time in the field, witnessing and experiencing events firsthand.

Overall, I spent about 12 months in the field. The first month was a time of settling in, adapting to the weather, food and new accommodation and making new friends. My transition was relatively easy due to my friendship with Esther Sangai, a good friend whose parents, Martin and Elisa, have resided in Popondetta for at least 20 years. My intention to conduct fieldwork and reside in Oro was made known to them six months prior to my arrival. In anticipation of my arrival, they built a self-contained single room flat for me to rent adjacent to their own house at Goruta Street in Popondetta Town. Moving in with this host family proved to be convenient. As their daughter’s friend, I was regarded as their daughter and looked after very well in terms of security. In addition, Martin, a pastor at one of the local churches, has taken in many young

men over the years, providing them shelter and food.¹⁴ At the time I was residing on their property, around six to 10 young men resided in the same yard. These young men kept an eye out for me, often providing escort when I needed by traveling with me into town and to more remote places. I owe them a debt of gratitude for their watchful eye over my walkabouts, as 'Oro Province is reputed to be one of the worst parts of the country for crime' (Bashkow 2006:49). From the 1990s to the early 2000s, Oro gained a reputation as a 'cowboy country' because of its law enforcement problems. There was a lot of robbery, armed conflicts with street gangs, hold-ups, rapes and murders. Due to this reputation, the United States Peace Corps stopped placing volunteers there, as did other international volunteer service organisations, including Australia Volunteers Abroad, Voluntary Service Overseas (United Kingdom) and Canadian University Services Overseas (Bashkow 2006). Perhaps that explains the small number of white people in Oro compared to other provinces in PNG. White people are generally perceived to be wealthy and are thus targets for criminals. Only in the last 10 years did the level of crime in Oro start to decrease when more police personnel were flown in from Port Moresby. The provincial police had resorted to shooting criminals' legs to minimise the crime rate. *Raskols*¹⁵ persist, although more discreetly than in the 1990s, with petty muggers who pick on new, unfamiliar faces.

Settling in and familiarising myself with the area were essential to initiating the snowball process and establishing connections. As Madden (2010:16) stated:

Rapport building is crucial to the ethnographic process and it can take some time to establish; one can't afford to rush things, to be pushy and risk being alienated by one's participant group.

I was not in a rush to arrange interviews and waited until I was more settled and comfortable approaching people without the referral of my landlords.

To collect data, I relied heavily on unobtrusive methods of ethnography such as passive observations of interactions and participant observation: 'Participation observation combines participation in the lives of the people under study with maintenance of professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data' (Fetterman 1989:45). One of the first things I did upon arrival in Popondetta was to get reacquainted with intending Oro provincial candidate Jean Eparo Parkop. Prior to arriving in Popondetta, I had been in contact with Jean

¹⁴ These young men were usually teenagers, some orphaned, others unemployed. Martin and Elise provided them shelter and food. As I resided in the same yard as them, these young men regarded me as their sister and ensured that I could walk freely around Popondetta Town.

¹⁵ *Raskol* or *rasko pasin* in Tok Pisin refers to individuals who are engaged in a range of criminal behaviours, from stealing to hold-ups and armed robberies.

via email and text messaging. She was delighted to see me again and welcomed me into her camp, introducing me to various members of her team and family. Her consent was important, giving me permission to enter her camp and talk to her *komiti* (campaign managers, coordinators) and family members. From that point on, her team were aware of who I was and my purpose in entering their space. In addition to one-on-one conversations, I also had access to their campaign planning meetings. At the very first coordinators' meeting I attended in Deboin, I made it clear that I would only be listening and taking notes. As an observer, I did not contribute to their deliberations. As a courtesy, towards the end of the first meeting I was invited to speak; I politely declined, as I felt any commentary on my part would be intrusive to their process. After this meeting, no one really expected me to say anything during meetings; however, my presence was always acknowledged. After being introduced and welcomed into Jean's campaign team, I visited their 'office' in town regularly and followed them on several campaign trips outside of Popondetta Town.¹⁶ During those excursions, I was introduced as part of Team Jean and given access to observe *komiti* meetings, have unstructured conversations with *komiti* and take photographs.

Conversations and in-depth interviews were only utilised in circumstances where I needed clarification and/or explanation and were conducted in English and Tok Pisin. Formal interviews, ones that required audio recording and the obligatory consent process, were conducted with the eight women candidates and key members of their *komiti*. The purpose of interviewing was twofold: (a) to know the biography, political ambitions and campaign strategies of women candidates and (b) to better understand local politics. For the most part, I relied heavily on my sticky Post-it notes to jot down discussion points of during the day and then elaborate and journal on them at night. While some people were happy to be interviewed, others were quick to discredit their opinions and, claiming they did not know enough about politics, refuse to be interviewed. Nevertheless, I found everyday, informal conversations and immersion to be the best ways of gaining unfiltered insight.

As someone who is time conscious, long-term ethnography required a lot of patience. Some days things just did not happen, people postponed meetings or do not turn up, initial plans were changed and new ones made. Eventually, I relaxed and went with the flow — mundanely living from day to day, going to the market, town, getting the daily newspaper and so on — which was an important process for me. Fetterman (1989:45) wrote that:

¹⁶ The *haus win* behind Jean's house in town became a meeting place where members of her committee and supporters would sit and discuss politics.

The simple, ritualistic behaviours of going to the market or to the well for water teach how people use their time and space, how they determine what is precious, sacred, and profane.

While carrying out my errands such as banking and shopping in town, I always carried my A3-size clear pencil case that contained my Post-it notes, pens, audio recorder and consent forms in case I met anyone who was willing to have a conversation or formal interview with me. I established four categories of people whom I mingled with for a purpose.

(1) Ordinary Oro residents/voters: these were people who lived in Oro, such as teachers, youths, health workers, public servants, neighbours and regular voters. The questions targeted towards everyday people/voters were general, open-ended and conducted in an informal manner, as the purpose was simply to better know them, their livelihoods and their understanding of whether certain aspects of day-to-day ritual influenced them to vote for particular candidates. Interactions with them were not formal, as most insight was gleaned from casual, everyday conversations.

(2) Women candidates: through snowballing, I met most of the intending women candidates. I wanted to find out why they decided to contest, how they were carrying out their campaigns and the types of people involved in their campaigns. Of the eight women candidates intending to contest in the 2017 national elections, I had formal interviews with five.

(3) Campaign managers: I needed to talk to campaign managers to get more insight on local politics and the details of their role. I found this group of people to be quite complex. Their standing in the community, their knowledge of local politics and their ability to herd and keep people together are remarkable. Initially, formal interviews were conducted, but after establishing familiarity, I communicated regularly with interlocutors over the phone to keep abreast of local political developments.

(4) Jean Eparo Parkop and members of her *komiti*, the subject of my case study: I kept in touch with Jean and members of her team throughout the duration of my fieldwork to track their activities. Although I had communicated with other women candidates and was aware of their campaign plans, Jean's continuous responses and accessibility confirmed her as my main case study.

Most of my formal interviews were conducted at the participant's place of residence. It was more convenient for me to move around and meet them where they resided. Only once did I interview an LLG woman candidate at my place of residence, Goruta Street. The first few

months of my fieldwork were uneventful politically but important for ethnography and understanding context. The unfamiliar quickly became familiar. People like the bank security officers, the newspaper retailers and the ladies at the local pharmacy regularly acknowledged me with a slight nod and smile. More importantly, I made progress in understanding their way of life, developed my own routine and became confident in my new environment.

2.3.1 Oro — a people and a place

Whenever visitors arrive at a new premises or at ceremonial or jubilant festivities, the chants ‘Oro, Oro, Orokaiva’ ring out. It is a form of greeting translated as ‘welcome’.

In 1894, when the colonial administrator Sir William MacGregor explored the Mambare River, people living along it cried out in greeting, ‘Orokaiva!’ and apparently MacGregor appropriately returned the greeting, shouting back the same word to them. ‘On the Mambare’, he wrote, ‘the password is “Orokaiva”, which seems to mean “man of peace”. It, at all events, puts one on a friendly footing’ (MacGregor 1894:32–33 in Bashkow 2006:29–30).

In the Binandere language, ‘Oro’ means ‘men’s house’ or ‘house man’. When repeated twice, it takes on the form of a greeting (see Smallhorn 2011:266 for its meaning in various Binandere dialects). Bashkow (2006:31) noted that the ‘usage of “Oro” came into prominence between 1908–1911’. It arose as part of the colonial administration’s process to organise people and place. ‘Oro’ transcended local political and administrative boundaries (Williams 1928). Not confined to one place, it grew over time to become a collective identity.

As a form of greeting, ‘Oro’ encapsulates the hospitable nature of Oro people. With the influx of missionisation at the turn of the century, there was an increase in travel, trade and social movements (Williams 1928). Receiving and entertaining guests has since become an established ethos of Oro society. For the host village or family, it is their privilege to receive, entertain and accommodate their guests. Bashkow (2006:193) recalled being both amazed and embarrassed at being offered expensive store food like bread and rice from poor villagers during his visits; a woman told him:

Guests will see from the way we live that these are not foods we eat all the time, but we have bought them just for them so that they will know the kind of people we are. They will know that we are people that take care of guests well, and that we are happy they came.

I visited two villages in Kokoda, one in Kilaton, one in Ambasi and another in Deboin. On all five occasions, I was well received by kind hosts. Moreover, this hospitable culture greatly aids travelling campaign teams as they canvass around various locations. They do not have to think

of everything, as friendly villagers on the receiving end are ready to host them. However, during the 2002 and 2007 national elections, one regular candidate bemoaned that those days of free hospitality are gone, and locals now expect more from politicians during election time (Susub 215:2011).

2.4 Local economy in Popondetta

During the first week of April 2017, while getting a few supplies at one of Popondetta's Asian-owned shops, I overheard a shop worker comment that they were out of white flour because one of the candidates had come early in the morning and purchased all of it for his campaign house. As leader of the domestic election observation team in Oro, I had quickly secured a vehicle for my observers because there were only three hire companies in town and a limited number of guest houses. Affluent candidates had cars shipped over from Port Moresby to aid their campaigns. For the public, there were two out-of-town bus service routes provided by local bus owners that transported passengers to the Kokoda and Afore hinterland regions and northward to the coast. There are only two service stations in town for vehicles to get fuel. One market sells produce such as taro, yam, bananas and a local variation of spinach known as *aibika*. People from Kokoda and higher altitudes usually bring various fresh produce to the market. However, their attendance at the market depends on their surplus and the availability of public transport. Other garden produce such as potatoes, cabbage and carrots can be found in the market occasionally whenever mainland Papua New Guineans or Highlanders bring it in via dinghy from Morobe Province.

The Popondetta market is a central place where health awareness sessions, street preaching and, during the official election campaign period, campaign speeches are given. It is also a very gendered space dominated by women as buyers and sellers of produce, an extension of their domestic duties as the primary organisers of family life. Men, although present at the market, are generally confined to the betel nut and smoking goods section. Occasionally, I found men with huge white coolers standing near the market gate to sell fresh fish they had caught on their fishing expeditions. Smoked marsupials such as wallabies and little tree kangaroos have their own section in the market minded by women. Vendors who are not ethnically from Oro, known locally as *kam man*,¹⁷ are stationed in one section towards the periphery of the market. They are usually retailers of store-bought items such as little mirrors, hair accessories, kitchen utensils and various other cheap Chinese-made items. Unless they

¹⁷ *Kam mans* is the Tok Pisin term used locally to refer to outsiders or people from different parts of PNG residing in Oro Province. Essentially, it refers to persons who are not ethnically local.

are long-time *kam mans* of Oro who have acquired land to grow food through purchasing it or by way of marriage, they are limited to this type of economic activity. As with other markets in PNG, the town market has a designated section for stimulants like cigarettes, betel nut, lime and mustard. Most, if not all, Oro people chew betel nut, or areca, from children to elderly people. This was observed in the 1920s by government anthropologist F.E. Williams, who noted that it was a mild, harmless stimulant that made the 'native's' life more pleasant (Williams 1930:65). Contrary to Williams' dismissiveness of betel nut, it is of significant cultural value and symbolic in gifting and welcoming ceremonies. Today, it is a major commodity in the informal sector and Popondetta is a major supplier. With the underutilisation and stagnation of formal cash crops in the province, locals have resorted to an informal cash crop: betel nut. Most Oro people have betel nut and mustard trees growing in their gardens and backyards. Selling betel nut is seen as relatively easy money as it grows all year round and not much work is required in its cultivation.

Local men have partnered with Highlanders who, despite the danger of getting lost at sea, regularly travel between Popondetta and Lae by dinghy to buy betel nut. A single one-way dinghy hire can cost up to K2000. Although some Oro men complain that the Highlanders are getting their betel nut for cheap in the province, Highlanders retort that the locals should not complain or demand higher prices because they are bringing the market directly to their doorstep to purchase their produce. Plus, the Highlanders must account for transport costs and the risks associated with long-distance travel, such as robbery, rotting of betel nut, drowning at sea and other contingencies. More detail about the betel trade route and the informal market sector can be gleaned from Tim Sharp's (2012) PhD thesis, 'Following Buai', which traces the market journey of the betel nut from growers in the lowlands to buyers in the Highlands of PNG.

2.4.1 Oil palm

Oro Province is one of the four provinces in PNG where oil palm is the primary cash crop and income source for most of the population. The Germans planted palms near Popondetta in the 1920s. The first substantial plantings of commercial oil palm were carried out in Hoskins, West New Britain, under a World Bank scheme in the 1960s (Cramb and Curry 2012; Hulme 1984). The Bialla scheme followed in 1972, then the Popondetta scheme after independence in 1976 (Koczberski et al. 2012:186). West New Britain set the pattern for arrangements between locals and palm oil companies. In this pattern, the central arrangement is known as the private (nucleus) or estate (joint venture) purchased from the state. This is surrounded by small farmers on a 99-year land lease (land settlement scheme) and customary owners growing oil

palm on their own land (village oil palm). The land settlement scheme blocks were generally six hectares of land that were prepared for returned soldiers during the colonial period (Anderson 2006).

From 2004 to 2006, palm oil exports averaged K420 million per year, which was 30 per cent of the agricultural exports for that period (Bourke and Harwood 2009). Such amounts are significant for a company's revenue, but production procedures limit substantial returns for factory workers. To begin with, the technology involved in the process takes control of production out of the workers' hands (Emori et al. 2005), making the grower part of a detailed division of labour. In fact, the small farmers are at the bottom of a very long value chain with only one buying facility (Higaturu Oil Palm). While they complain about low prices, they are not well positioned to negotiate their selling price. A 2006 report indicated that many growers earned only K100 a fortnight, essentially keeping them at a subsistence level (Anderson 2006:21). Furthermore, the level of intense labour required does not equate to the wages given. For example, the rate for harvesting palm bunches is only 10 toea per bunch; pruning oil palm fronds pays four toea per palm tree. Moreover, total man hours worked in a fortnight are not counted towards the payment of wages, as wage calculation only considers the completion of tasks, which can take more than two weeks (Emori et al. 2005:180). The labour of harvesting ripe oil palm is clearly divided by sex and age. The task of harvesting heavy fresh fruit bunches is the work of men, as the bunches can weight up to 30 kilograms and require the use of a long hook knife to cut and pull down. Elderly men block owners rely on their young sons and younger men relatives to do this work (Koczberski 2007:176). While harvesting, loose fruits drop and scatter from the bunches. The collection of these loose fruits is seen as the role of women, as traditionally, weeding and other drudgery work are mainly women's work and physically easier for them to accomplish (Williams 1928:138). Women's limited role in the harvesting of oil palm leaves them more disadvantaged in negotiating income distribution for domestic expenditures, so a lot of family disputes arise on 'cheque days'.

Environmentally, there are many problems associated with oil palm production, such as deforestation, soil degradation, water contamination, loss of habitats and species, and disputes between landowners and leaseholders (Emori et al. 2005). Furthermore, the monoculture nature of oil palm hinders the cultivation of other plants, thus draining soil's fertility and making it very hard to grow other types of cash crops. But perhaps the most distressing and immediate issue is the increasing shortage of land to accommodate the growing population. In 1976, when the scheme was organised, blocks of six to six and a half hectares of land were allocated to a single family — four hectares for oil palm and two and a half

hectares to plant other crops. Today, there are at least two to three generations of families co-residing on one block, which puts a strain on the distribution of income and contributes to domestic disputes.

Furthermore, there has been an uprising of ethno-regional sentiments between local Oro landowners and migrants (and their descendants) from other provinces who were recruited under the land settlement scheme arrangements. These sentiments were influenced by both local and national events. One such event was the 1992 national elections, in which the successful candidate for the governor's seat, Sylvanus Siembo, conducted an 'Oro for Oro' campaign that focused on the invasion of 'outsiders', or *kam mans*, and the local population being 'ripped off' by people from other provinces benefiting off their land (Susub 2011). During those elections, hundreds of settler families from several land settlement scheme subdivisions were violently evicted from their blocks of land by landowners. Others abandoned their properties, driven by fear and intimidation (Koczberski and Curry 2004:363).

This 'Oro for Oro' rhetoric still lingers and 'outsiders' residing in the province are very much aware of their position as such. They are stereotyped as gaining preferential employment, stealing the 'birthrights' of customary landowners, being thieves and being disrespectful of local culture (Koczberski and Curry 2004:364). These stereotypes, based largely on anxiety and unfounded fears, set outsiders apart from the local population and inadvertently create a common identity among them that functions as a voter base during elections (see Chapter 8).

2.4.2 A tourist destination, and other sources of revenue

Oil palm is grown exclusively in lowland locations; hence, Oro people located at higher altitudes outside the Buna-Popondetta-Kokoda corridor do not have that cash crop opportunity (Hanson et al. 2001). People from the Afore region have good coffee growing potential, yet many of them do not venture into coffee growing because transport is a challenge. Road conditions beyond the Kokoda station and Oro Bay in the north are terrible. Moreover, the coffee industry is not well established in Popondetta. There are no coffee exporters or processing mills in town. If coffee farmers wanted to export or ship their beans to locations with processing facilities, they would have to form an association and collectively hire a shipping container to transport their coffee. As with the growing and harvesting of cocoa and rubber, there is not a market to facilitate growth, despite the presence of small farmers planting these commodities in the province. Spices such as chilli and cardamom were cultivated in the 1960s, but production has stagnated so much since then that they are now extinct in the province (Bourke and Harwood 2009:379). Along the northern coast, fishing is an expedition undertaken

by men for domestic consumption more than retail. With no regularity in fishing schedules, expeditions are more one-off and fishing remains an underutilised industry in Oro.

Another source of income for the province is tourism. Every year, local and international tourists visit the 96-kilometre Kokoda Track. According to the Kokoda Track Authority, an average of 3827 Australian trekkers have walked the track every year since 2005. Other attractive war sites include the Kokoda War Museum and the beachhead battle sites of Buna, Gona and the Sanananda. What should be included in these sites of 'dark tourism' is the original Australian colonial headquarters in Higaturu Station, where in 1943, 21 Orokaiva men were executed for treason by the Australian administration. Unfortunately, these types of stories are hidden in the shadow of the 'fuzzy wuzzy angel' image of wartime mateship and, according to Close-Barry and Stead (2015), would complicate Australia's national narrative. In the last decade, there has been contention between the landowners in Kokoda, the PNG Government and the Australian Government over who gets to determine how the track should be used. In 2008, mining opportunities along 600 metres of the track's 96 kilometres were halted by the PNG Government due to pressure from the Australian Government, which led to protests from local landowners who want access to mining royalties (Brawley and Dixon 2009). Other locals, however, consider the region's history a key livelihood resource akin to extractive industries such as oil palm (Stead 2017).

Other tourist destinations include the Mount Lamington volcano crater and the fjords en route to the Tufi diving resort. Oro is also home to the world's largest butterfly, the Queen Alexandra's birdwing, and the world's smallest species of frog, both of which present opportunities for eco-tourism (Rittmeyer et al. 2012). In December 2017, after 32 years of collaborative work between conservation organisations and local communities, 3600 square kilometres of the Managalas rainforest plateau became PNG's largest protected conservation area. This was a great achievement that will ensure the longevity of the Queen Alexandra's birdwing butterfly and other rainforest species, as well as deter logging and industrial agriculture such as oil palm cultivation.

Another revenue source distinct to Oro is the production and sale of their iconic tapa cloth. Along the only main street of Popondetta, Maisin women and men, also known as 'tapa people' due to their special knowledge of distinct designs, sell their tapa products (Barker and Hermkens 2016:186). Made from tree bark and illustrated with local designs and mulberry dyes, these cloths can be sold for as much as K200 per piece depending on the size and print design. Traditionally, tapa was used as clothing: wrap-around skirts for women and loin cloths

for men. When worn with shell and bead ornaments, it becomes the *bilas* (costume) in ceremonial dancing at the end of a mourning period (Hermkens 2007). It is also a major object of exchange and continues to be a distinct gift item from Oro Province. Tapa from the Maisin people gained prominence in the 1950s as the market for PNG artefacts grew, then again later as an international symbol of defiance against commercial loggers trying to exploit the Collingwood Bay area. In the 1970s, the Anglican Church was the main local buyer of tapa (Barker and Hermkens 2016:188). Traditionally, tapa designs were kept and reproduced by women, but tapa is now made by both sexes due to market demand. Oro designers like Natasha Tamanabae have commercialised tapa, utilising the tree bark design on high heels, handbags and dresses (Tao 2016).

2.4.3 Women in the local economy

Most of the income sources discussed thus far favour men, and in many cases where women can earn income, their men partners control or try to control it (Eves and Titus 2020; Koczberski 2007). In 1997, the New Britain Oil Company sought to address this gender inequality, as well as the more pertinent company goal of using all the loose fruits that fall from the oil palm bunches during harvesting. Overripe oil palm fruitlets that become dislodged from the main branch and scatter over the ground can account for up to 14 per cent of the total harvest (Lewis 2000). Under the Mama Lus Fruit scheme, women were given their own account by the milling company. The money they earned from collecting was sent straight to their own separate account where they could access it with their own Mama card (Koczberski 2007; Seeley and Butcher 2006). Although this yielded more profit for the company, similar working conditions still applied to the women: minimum wage for tedious work, as loose fruits were scattered all over under the harvested palm. Women with wheelbarrows would walk the plantation for hours, literally breaking their backs in search of loose fruits. Furthermore, oil palm plantations are rife with snakes and rats, making it extremely hazardous to rummage through the bushes for loose fruits. For this back-breaking work, women's standard pay from the oil palm company is 65 toea per 50-kilogram bag. Therefore, women resort to the small-scale growing and selling of other types of fresh produce such as taro, peanuts and local vegetables.

2.5 Gender relations

Compared to other parts of PNG, Oro society appears to be more egalitarian. Barker (2002:9), during his visit to Oro in 1981, wrote:

Maisin women enjoy a relatively high status by Melanesian standards. They lack the right to speak publicly and inherit land, but their opinions are made known to their brothers and husbands and suffer very little violence.

This apparent egalitarianism can be attributed to both indigenous and introduced factors. Prior to missionisation, there were four means of obtaining a wife: purchase, exchange, elopement and capture (Lanoue 1990:203). By 1920, capturing had ceased. As with other patriarchal societies, women marry into and remain with their husband's clan, and their children belong to their father's clan. However, it is not uncommon for a family to reside in their mother's village for a period if she is homesick. Most marriages are monogamous with only isolated cases of polygamy (Williams 1930:131). Although women do not inherit land, they do have access to land through their men kin (Schwimmer 1973:95–106).

When a woman marries into a clan, she brings with her access to more land. Hence, it is profitable for her husband not to mistreat her because if she returns to her home, she takes her access to extra land with her. This entitlement has somewhat continued into modern day land access negotiations. Rooney, whilst conducting fieldwork in ATS — a community composed almost entirely of Oro people residing in Port Moresby — recorded three vignettes of Oro women who had married outside of Oro Province but used their network of Oro kinsmen to secure land in the ATS settlement for their family to move to and build a house on (see Rooney 2017:140–46).¹⁸ Another tradition of Oro society that perhaps has influenced the egalitarian nature of gender relations is the old practice of *bi-dorobu* (bridegroom price) given by the bride's family to reciprocate the *a-dorobu* (bride price). This payment is usually of equal value and essentially cancels out the bride price. Williams (1930:138) explained that if no return payments were made, the husband would be apt to mistreat his wife and her family were in no position to object.¹⁹ The *bi-dorobu*, or return present, functioned as a check on the husband's treatment of the wife and thus acted as a liberator for her. Moreover, 'it appears to have only been related to marriages involving exchanges and therefore served to help maintain balance between the two groups of people' (Banks 1993:127). In addition to maintaining balance in exchange relations (more on exchange in Chapter 3), such customs gave a form of respite or even agency to women, specifically in relation to marriage.

Another contributing factor to women's standing in society could be the influence of the Anglican Church, whose extensive Mother's Union program has saturated their lifestyle since

¹⁸ ATS stands for Air Transport Squadron. This settlement community is located near the old airport military base at Port Moresby's Jacksons International Airport where army planes once parked. For more details about the ATS settlement, see Chapter 4 of Rooney 2017.

¹⁹ The discussion of exchange in Chapter 3 demonstrates how important this practice would have been.

the 1900s. Formulated in England in 1876, the Mother's Union started as a support group for new mothers in the church, became very popular in the Anglican Church and quickly spread internationally (Barker and Hermkens 2016). There are two accounts of how the Mother's Union started in Oro. The first account is that an Australian nurse stationed at the district mission in the 1950s worked with a group of women to initiate local chapters of the Mother's Union (Barker 2014:178). The second account is that in 1948, five women approached a Papuan teacher–evangelist in the Church of St. Thomas requesting to establish a chapter of the Mother's Union. After a year of training and three more years under the guidance of Sister Helen Roberts, they were granted permission to conduct their own weekly services (Barker and Hermkens 2016:191). Whichever way the union commenced in Oro, its purpose was to strengthen nuclear family life and encourage domestic arts like sewing. The weekly services provided an opportunity for women to assemble, taking a break from their own domestic lives. Furthermore, it provided opportunities for women to advance their reputations and influence in the community. Different to orthodox religions like the Catholic Church that limited the full participation of women, the Anglican Church appeared to liberate women by giving them a space and opportunity to minister in a way that complemented the church's outreach work in the community and, in the process, taught women leadership skills (Dickson-Waiko 2003). However, the Anglican Church is still hierarchical and patriarchal in practice, and the actual empowerment of women remains limited.

Despite such elements of egalitarianism, there is a clear demarcation of gender roles and physical spaces that women and men occupy in everyday situations. For example, women still execute the bulk of the domestic responsibilities essential to sustaining the family, from gardening and marketing to the upkeep of the home and children. Men, on the other hand, generally have more time to socialise. The demarcation is starker in the traditional village setting, as men take on tasks that require either short bursts of physical energy or only occur occasionally, such as the clearing of bush, hunting and constructing houses, while women are responsible for repetitive jobs that require regular effort such as garden maintenance and child rearing. Barker (2008:82) wrote that women are perfectly aware that they do the bulk of the work, and 'constrained as they are by the conventional sexual division of labour and by male domination of public political talk, Maisin women are not without power'.

Relationally, in an everyday setting today, men and women may appear to be on an equal footing. However, gendered distinctions may resurface during traditional rituals and ceremonies. For example, one such custom still practiced in Oro society is known as *bondo* (Binandere language area/lowland), or *pondo* (Kaiva language area/inland). Other language

groups in Oro have their own terminologies. *Pondo* basically entails making a feast to mark or commemorate a significant event such as dismantling a *haus krai*,²⁰ coming out of the mourning period (Waiko 1986:25), showing appreciation or acknowledgement of a gift or act of kindness (Stead et al. 2019:14), peace ceremonies when resolving conflict and completing bride price arrangements. Terminologies for different stages and processes during the *pondo* (feast) vary according to locality and language. However, descriptions from Schwimmer's 1970 dissertation are used here to highlight the actors in the traditional process of *pondo*. Feasts are generally decided on and held for political and religious reasons: they build the prestige of the host, afford them more alliances and dispel hostilities. The custom is for a man to initially announce that he desires to host the feast. This announcer is therefore responsible for a substantial amount of provision, so he must have wealth, ceremonial knowledge and diplomatic expertise. As a feast leader, he is called a *pondo kiari embo* (feast expert). Upon his announcement, the men present at the meeting will decide which villages to invite. Preparations will go ahead a year in advance as they involve invited villages planting extra gardens of taro and raising pigs. After the feast leader tours each invited village and is satisfied with the growth of their taro, he calls another meeting with all the men of the village where they further affirm their plans to host the feast (see Schwimmer 1970:149–50). In this planning stage, no women are involved, but the growing of taro and raising of pigs is most certainly undertaken by women. This is an example of how women's work contributes to men's prestige, which is common in other parts of PNG as well (See McLeod 2002:44–45). Typically, Oro men and women regard these gendered roles as complementary to their livelihoods with no major qualms, as they are part of their custom and way of life. It is during electoral competition that men's privileged position becomes an obstacle for women candidates, as opportunities to demonstrate leadership are disproportionately given to men. Before delving into a discussion of Oro women as political candidates, I digress to present PNG's electoral history and women's participation since the 1970s.

²⁰ Literally translates as 'a mourning house'. It is a time when friends/relatives gather to pay respect and express sorrow with the family of the deceased.

Chapter 3 Women's Participation in Papua New Guinea's Electoral History from 1977–2017

In July 2017, PNG conducted its ninth national general elections. A total of 3340 candidates nominated to contest the 111 seats of parliament. More than half — 1936 candidates — contested as independents and 1404 were endorsed by political parties (Papua New Guinea Registry of Political Parties 2018:26). The PNG Electoral Commission (PNGEC) officially recorded 167 women candidates, however, upon closer examination of the nomination list, the Department of Pacific Affairs clarified that there were actually 179 women candidates (Haley and Zubrinich 2018). This was the highest figure of women contesting yet and suggests a growing political consciousness among PNG's women. While the average after-preference standing of women candidates improved discernibly between 2012 and 2017 (Wood 9/8/2019), none of them were elected to parliament, making the 10th parliament of PNG an all-man legislature.

This chapter outlines the three types of electoral systems that have been utilised in PNG over the past 55 years, the political culture that has evolved over time and the participation of pioneer women politicians who have been elected to parliament since 1972. Since the first national elections for the House of Assembly in 1964, various legislative amendments and reforms have been made to engineer a political culture that reflects the principles of liberal democracy: one that is free, fair, representative and conducive to women's political participation. However, a review of PNG's political history demonstrates that despite various reforms, the electoral environment has deteriorated, making it more difficult for women candidates.

3.1 1964–72: Dame Josephine Abaijah and the optional preferential voting system

After a 1962 tour of PNG by the United Nations Visiting Mission led by Sir Hugh Foot, a recommendation was made for a new legislative body. The Legislative Council of Papua and New Guinea was abolished in 1963 and replaced by the House of Assembly (Stephen 1972:56).²¹ In 1964, the territory had its first elections for the House of Assembly. By then, almost one-half of the population had experienced local government council elections following

²¹ From 1951 to 1961, the Legislative Council of Papua and New Guinea was a legislative body established by the Papua and New Guinea Act 1949 of Australia. It provided administration, but it was scarcely representative of the whole territory. In 1961, the Legislative Council was reformed and enlarged. It was intended to have a life of five years, but other events took over with the United Nations Visiting Mission of 1962 (Hastings 1973:131–32).

the postwar administration reconstruction. Nevertheless, the 1964 elections were a mammoth task that required extensive preparation.

The electoral education program was facilitated by the Department of Native Affairs in partnership with the director of Information and Extension Services, the government printer, representatives from the administrator's department and the Chief Electoral Officer, C.I. White, who was appointed by the Commonwealth Electoral Office. This program was responsible for all aspects of election preparation. It was decided that a version of Australia's preferential voting system, optional voting (or alternate voting), would be used in the elections. Political education, also known as awareness campaigns, preceded the elections, with patrols sent into remote villages with the task of imparting information about current events and the new political institutions in order to improve citizens' understanding of the principles of democracy. They used all avenues, such as radio, film, print publications and talks from administration officers who regularly visited rural villages, to inform the citizens about the impending elections (for details, see Bettison 1965:53–69).

Australia has used preferential voting since 1918, and it is compulsory for all Australians of voting age to vote. However, for the territory, due to the newness of large-scale election processes and low literacy levels, it was decided that compulsory voting was not yet appropriate, nor was the requirement to exhaust all preferences on the ballot. Nevertheless, the 1964 elections had 72.3 per cent voter turnout, which is exceptional considering the level of political development at the time and the logistics of getting to the polling site (Hughes and van de Veur 1965:400). The high turnout may be attributable to the fact that many voters perceived polling as another prescribed exercise and assumed voting was compulsory.

The territory had 44 open electorates and 10 special electorates that were reserved for the expatriate population. A total of 267 candidates nominated, with 227 Indigenous, 32 expatriate and eight mixed-race candidates. Only three, all expatriates, were women. Ana Frank contested the Moresby Open electorate and finished in 11th place with only 240 votes. A Mrs Ashcroft-Smith contested the Central special electorate and finished last with 405 votes. Shirley Ann McKellar, the wife of Madang's assistant district officer, won 3226 votes but trailed behind two Indigenous men candidates in the Madang Open electorate. Campaigning was almost unheard of, and candidates, apart from in their home or ethnic areas, were content to solicit second preferences (Bettison 1965:510), a common campaign behaviour with preferential voting. In some cases, voting was due to the drilling and memorisation of candidate names. Moreover, previous elections for local government councils had shown that

preselection of a candidate was a common phenomenon and that the formal act of voting merely served to express community consensus. Chapter 3 illustrates how this remains a factor in elections today.

Polling was conducted by voters 'whispering the ballots' to polling officials (Hughes and van der Veur 1965:395). While this method ignored the secrecy of the ballot, it was the only way to conduct polling efficiently. The 1968 elections saw significant changes from the previous one. There were 69 open electorates and 15 regional seats, replacements from the special electorates. In 1968, the racial restrictions were dropped, but regional electorates still favoured the election of Europeans (Somare 1975:56). During the campaign period, there were reports of alliances between candidates who campaigned together by sharing platforms and transport. The results also indicated an improved understanding of the preferential system, as 12 of the winning candidates were not leading on the first count (Reilly 2002:242). Although this varied across the territory, a trend that emerged during the 1968 elections was that voters gave their first preference to a clan member, while their second preference went to a candidate in a neighbouring village if they had good relations with them; if not, voters would give their second preference to an expatriate candidate. Many candidates aimed to get as many first preferences as possible in order to establish a strong lead, with little strategising on the use of preferences.

Importantly, the 1968 elections and subsequent House of Assembly were more progressive in moving the territory towards independence. In the lead-up to the elections, six political parties were organised. While some lasted longer than others, the momentum created by these movements testifies to voters' political consciousness and national awareness. In 1965, Oala Oala-Rarua formed the PNG National Party.²² The party drew in a lot of people during its inaugural meeting but did not attract much Indigenous support; without funds and proper organisation, it came to a halt in 1967. The next year, a Catholic brother in Wewak helped start the United Christian Democratic Party, whose primary platform was for the territory to become the seventh state of Australia. This ambition, however, quickly disappeared when the Australian Minister for Territories, C.E. Barnes, publicly ruled out that possibility in April 1967 (Somare 1975:47–48).

The most successful party of this era was the Papua and Niugini Union (Pangu) Pati, founded on 13 June 1967. Its founding members included Paul Lapun, Pita Lus, Nicholas Brokham,

²² Oala Oala-Rarua was a native of Pari Village. Born in 1934, Oala had a varied career: he was a public servant, he was a member of the Bully Beef Club that started at the Administration College in the early sixties, he founded a political party and he became the president of the PNG Worker's Association and Assistant Ministerial Member for Treasury in the 1968-74 House of Assembly (see Stephen 1972:56-60).

Wegra Kenu, Paliau Maloat, Barry Holloway, Tony Voutas, Siwi Kurondo and James Meangarum. Pangu's chief platform was for home rule, an ambition that was viewed as radical by both conservative members of the administration and Highlanders who still felt ill-prepared for independence, fearing that their coastal counterparts would economically progress ahead of them. In addition to the nine founding members, the party included other politicians such as Albert Maori Kiki, Joseph Nombri, Elliot Elijah, Sinaka Goava, Illimo Batton, Cecil Abel, Reuben Taureka, Kamono Walo, Cromwell Burua, Oala Oala-Rarua, Gerai Asiba, Ebia Olewale, Pen Anakapu, Epel Tito, Basil Koe, Gavera Rea, Vin ToBaining, Thomas ToBunbun and Michael Somare. Under the leadership of Somare, the Pangu Pati became PNG's first active political party and formed the opposition in the House of Assembly, adding that essential aspect of parliamentary democracy. One of its first victories came in 1970 when the party moved a motion on the Local Government Bill for the creation of one or more wards where only women could nominate and stand (Stephen 1972:98).

3.1.1 Moving towards self-government

The 1972 elections and succeeding years were the most significant period in PNG's history for various reasons. It was the lead-up to PNG attaining independence, during which the blueprint for the PNG state was created. The 1972 elections, therefore, were very important in determining the key figures in this transition. These were the last elections that utilised Australia's optional preferential voting system. The nomination fee was raised from \$50 to \$100, and the voting age was reduced from 21 to 18. The number of open electorates increased from 69 to 82, and the number of regional seats went from 16 to 18. Finally, Dame Josephine Abaijah from Milne Bay became the first women elected to the House of Assembly as the regional member for Central District.

Under the leadership of Michael Somare and the Pangu Pati, PNG attained self-government in 1972, its own currency in April 1975 and eventual independence in September 1975. Intending to transform colonial institutions to suit the new nation, PNG adopted a unicameral parliamentary democracy and abandoned the optional preferential voting system for an FPP system. The reasoning was that FPP would be less confusing to the population and less tedious for election administrators — and that, based on voting patterns during the pre-independence era, the results would be similar to those under the optional preferential system because most voters did not utilise all their preferences. As early as 1962, it was reported that the preferential voting system could mitigate the effects of the fragmented clan-based structure of Papua New Guinean society on politics:

First preferences would almost invariably go to the candidate representing the voter's ethnic group, but that, 'After casting his first preference, and being virtually committed to doing so ... from within his ethnic group, the voter then feels free to make his judgement of the remaining candidates in order of preference (from the Electoral Commission of Inquiry into Electoral Procedures, cited in Reilly 2002:240).

Candidates who understood the value of the second and third preferences campaigned specifically for them and were successful. For example, in the 1964 elections, second runner-up candidate Ugi Biritu of Henganofi District overtook candidate Bono Azanifa (leading with 8028 votes) by more than a 1000 votes because he collected all the remaining preferences. However, in other electorates, such as for Alotau and Esa'ala in Milne Bay (Gostin et al. 1971:97,105), very little preference-swapping occurred because the voters and candidates did not fully understand the mechanics of the preferential count (Reilly 2002:241). The lack of nationwide comprehension of preferential voting was a contributing factor to the new PNG government's decision to replace the system.

3.2 The first-past-the-post system: 1977–2002

The 1977 national elections, the first after independence, introduced the FPP system — the simplest form of the plurality system, with single-member districts. Promoters of the change argued that under the optional preferential voting system, voters were already voting as if under FPP by only choosing one candidate. Hence, it was not viewed as a major change for voter behaviour. Moreover, absentee voters were now required to vote in their place of residence. The voting age remained at 18, and candidates had to be at least 25 years old. Approximately one and a half million people were eligible to vote, although voting was not compulsory. Electoral boundaries had been revised to increase the number of electorates from 80 to 89; at that time, electorate size was based on an average population of 30,000.

In what would become a regular feature of elections in PNG, polling was delayed from May to June of 1977. This was said to be due to the difficulties experienced by the PNGEC in compiling the roll, but in reality parliament had caused the delay by rejecting the proposed boundary distribution earlier in the year. Nevertheless, polling was conducted smoothly, even with the absence of some candidates' photographs in various electorates.

A total of 881 candidates contested the 109 seats, surpassing the 611 candidates who contested for the 100 seats in the 1972 elections. In 1977, candidates included about 80 public servants (some of whom had held senior positions) and nine women candidates. This election saw the demise of the older style of 'big-man' politics and the rise of 'new man' politics, moving

political power from the rural to urban elites (Hegarty 1983:5–9). In the previous elections, many of the candidates were either former colonial *kiaps* (government officials) or natives who were employed in the colonial administration as interpreters, *bosbois* (native bosses or overseers), *luluais*,²³ *tutuls*²⁴ or councillors (Brown 1974:224; Gostin et al. 1971:110–11; Hughes and van der Veur 1965:407–8). These native candidates were local leaders or big-men transformed by the colonial process. The traditional role of the big-men faded into the past as they lost their influence in the modern political and economic environment, as illustrated in the film *Ongka's Big Moka*.²⁵ The 'new man' or new range of politicians from the 1977 elections onwards were businessmen, public servants or both (Ballard 1983:180–81; Standish 1983:96). With the level of general education increasing among the 'new man' candidates, the amount of money spent on campaigns increased dramatically.

Homegrown political parties became more active, with Pangu, the United Party and the People's Progress Party endorsing up to 295 candidates. Although the concept of parties had not yet penetrated many of the rural villages, party labels became popular, and candidates were aware of the benefits of party affiliation both with financial assistance during the campaign and with government formation after the election.

With the FPP system, candidates became acutely aware of the arithmetic of the electorate. Particularly in the Highlands:

candidates and party organisers calculated clan voting strengths and, in many instances, vote-splitting tactics were employed whereby a candidate would persuade (often with financial incentives) other clan candidates to run, thus reducing the chance of their opponents ... Campaign styles varied in different localities, but there was a general awareness among candidates that power, privilege, and access to government resources were at stake now that the colonial 'referee' had departed. (Hegarty 1983:5–6).

According to the results of the 1977 elections, seven of the 109 seats were won by candidates who obtained less than 20 per cent of the valid vote. Overall, 42 seats were won by candidates with less than 30 per cent of the vote. Hegarty (1983:15) reported that the responses of voters and candidates to the new system appeared to be more pragmatic, with material expectations. There seemed to be little concern about the minimal vote share won by many successful

²³ A village or tribal chief appointed by the government.

²⁴ The assistant village chief appointed by the government; the second in command in a village or area. Originally, the *tutul* was the messenger for the *luluai*. They sometimes also served as an interpreter.

²⁵ Filmed in the Western Highlands Province in 1974, this documentary is about Ongka, a charismatic big-man of the Kawelka tribe who spends nearly five years preparing for a big ceremonial exchange (*moka*). Unfortunately, things do not go as planned and the big *moka* does not take place. Filmed just at the cusp PNG's independence, this documentary illustrates a society in transition.

candidates. The style of political campaigning and the distribution of vote shares first seen under the FPP system in 1977 would have significant implications for future elections.

3.2.1 The pioneer women politicians

In the 1977 national elections, three of the women who contested were successful: Dame Josephine Abaijah, Waliyato Clowes and Nahau Rooney.²⁶ Dame Josephine was the first woman to win a seat in the House of Assembly in 1972 as a candidate for the Central Province. In 1977, she was re-elected for the NCD. Her win was one of the most dramatic electoral conflicts of the 1977 elections. While winners in most electorates were being declared with less than 40 per cent of the vote, Dame Josephine secured 57.8 per cent of the vote. Defeating her primary opponent was a significant accomplishment, as it was then Deputy Prime Minister Sir Albert Maori Kiki, a key figure in the Pangu Pati.

A contributing factor to Dame Josephine's win was the Papua Besena movement,²⁷ established on 3 June 1973. Papua Besena was a Papuan anti-colonial movement led by Dame Josephine (Abaijah and Wright 1991:284). The movement had three major objectives: (1) for Papua not to be forced to unite with New Guinea; (2) for Papuans to retain their Australian citizenship until they could govern themselves; and (3) for Australia to compensate Papuans for past neglect by way of financing their development plans. This movement had traction and formed the basis of Dame Josephine's popularity. But this secession agenda was downplayed, as Dame Josephine primarily campaigned on issues affecting the urban population, such as rural-to-urban migration, unemployment and limited housing. Most of her support came from Motu-Koitabuans and traditional villages around the Central Province (Premdas and Steeves 1983:44–60). Her success was also attributed to Kiki's unpopularity. During the 1972–77 parliamentary term, Kiki lost favour with voters from inland Moresby as his ministerial role kept him from fulfilling campaign promises (Premdas and Steeves 1978).

The second woman to be elected was Waliyato Clowes for Middle Fly Open. She contested as an independent against four men candidates, winning with 3360 votes out of 10,638; her nearest rival finished with 2392 votes. Compared to Dame Josephine Abaijah and Nahau Rooney, not a lot is written about Waliyato, perhaps reflecting her shorter political career. At the time of her election, she was a 26-year-old teacher married to an expatriate. Inspired by

²⁶ There were nine women candidates in total: Laura Martin for Wewak Open, Grace Pokana for Bulolo Open, Fide Bale for Moresby North-East, Frieda Lolo for New Ireland Province, Laura Haro for Kikori Open, Waliyato Clowes for Middle Fly Open, Nahau Rooney for Manus Open, Josephine Abaijah for NCD and Matilda May Pilacapio for Alotau Open.

²⁷ Literally translated, Papua Besena means 'hands off Papua'.

Dame Josephine's 1972 victory, the Gogodala people of Middle Fly asked her to contest the 1977 elections. Her decision to contest depended on the agreement of her husband, and he encouraged her. She had a platform based on assisting local businesses with transporting crops from her area to urban centres for sale. Unlike Dame Josephine, who saw herself as a politician for the Papuans and not necessarily for women, Waliyato regarded herself as a women's representative. She stated:

I am a great believer in women's rights. I cannot promise anything, but I will do all I can to help the women of the country. A lot of men think we are rubbish and take no notice of us (cited in Wormald 1989:82–83).

In parliament, she was known to ask a lot of questions and would later start a political party called Papuan Alliance (Panal) to coordinate independent Papuan members. Unfortunately, the party did not gather much support; Waliyato was defeated in 1982 and disappeared from the political scene (Wormald 1989).

The third woman winner was Nahau Rooney. Born in 1945 in the Lahan village of Manus, Nahau was educated in PNG, Fiji and Australia and married Australian Wes Rooney. Her interest in politics began early. As an undergraduate at the University of PNG (UPNG), she was involved in student politics as the president of the student representative council. In the 1977 national elections, she contested the Manus Open electorate alongside nine men candidates and won with 2137 of the 8590 votes cast.

Before contesting, Nahau worked at a district office for the provincial government in planning and was a research officer for the Prime Minister's Department. By the mid-1970s, decentralisation was a major issue, with secession movements already active in Papua and Bougainville, and Manus had plans drawn up to establish a provincial government. Nahau was asked to assist in the planning of the new body. In that capacity, she travelled extensively throughout the province and eventually decided to contest the Manus Open seat. She informed the Pangu Pati of her intention to contest before the election but was not officially recognised as a Pangu member until after her win. She was the first woman to serve in the Cabinet of PNG, first appointed as Minister for Correctional Services and Liquor Licensing in 1977. In 1978, Nahau became Minister for Justice. From the justice portfolio, she moved to the Ministry of Decentralisation, but soon found herself in opposition when the Somare government was defeated, and Julius Chan took over as Prime Minister. She retained her seat in the 1982 elections but lost it five years later (Wormald 1989:83).

Nahau is perhaps best known for the Rooney Affair, a contempt of court case that led to the resignation of five judges and saw the election of PNG's first national judge, Murray Kapi (see Pokawin 1998:335–36 for details). The affair began when the government gave a deportation order to UPNG academic Ralph Premdas. Premdas sought an appeal and was granted a staying order from the National Court of Justice. In response to this decision by the National Court of Justice, Nahau, then Minister of Justice, wrote a letter to Chief Justice Sir William Prentice stating her views on how the court handled the case. Her correspondence was treated as interference with the operation of the judiciary. Nahau was tried by the Supreme Court and sentenced to eight months in prison. Prime Minister Somare assumed her portfolio in order to release Nahau from her sentence. This led to massive unrest by other prisoners and university students (*ibid.*).

While this controversy has tended to overshadow her political achievements, Nahau is one of the very few women who has served multiple terms in PNG's parliament or held ministerial portfolios. Throughout her political career, she acknowledged the support given to her by her extended family. She believes that PNG's extended family system makes it easier for women to enter politics, particularly in relieving domestic maternal duties during the campaign period when women must go on campaign trips (Commonwealth Secretariat 1999:104).

It was remarkable for these three women to bypass the prejudice that existed during that period to succeed in politics. Wormald (1989:83) observed that it was the mentorship and support of their expatriate partners, from a culture outside of their own, that propelled them to success. Perhaps it was the novelty of elections during those early days that gave the appearance of women having an equal platform. Moreover, this was also a time when campaigning generally entailed visiting villages and making campaign speeches; money politics (including vote-buying) was almost non-existent.

In the 1982 elections, Nahau campaigned extensively throughout the province to retain her seat, knowing that she was the target for all other candidates. Opponents in Manus were critical of various facets of her leadership, namely her actions in the Rooney Affair, which many argued contributed to the toppling of the Somare government in 1979, and her outspoken personality. These attacks carried extra weight because of her gender. Of the 10 candidates who sought to oust her (one of whom was a woman, Elizabeth Buarra), James Pokasui was Nahau's primary rival. In the first count, both Nahau and Pokasui recorded 1537 votes each; after the second count, the tally was 1540 for Nahau and 1541 for Pokasui, who was declared the winner. Nahau filed for a disputed return, and in October 1982, the court ordered a recount.

Nahau was declared the winner with 1559 votes compared to Pokasui's 1548 votes (see Pokawin 1998:235–78 for details).

Nahau's win made her the only woman member during the 1982–87 parliamentary term; both Waliyato and Dame Josephine were unsuccessful in retaining their seats. Waliyato opted out of political life altogether. Nahau and Dame Josephine were regular candidates and active in the political space well into the 1990s. After a 15-year absence from parliament, Dame Josephine contested the 1997 elections and was elected as Milne Bay's first woman provincial governor with 15,145 votes (22.5 per cent of the total vote). Her win was attributed to two main factors: her leadership experience and her ethnicity. Dame Josephine is from Rabaraba District, and of the nine other candidates, only one other, Kevin Yabara,²⁸ was from Rabaraba. As a former MP and active leader in provincial affairs, Dame Josephine outclassed Yabara and Rabaraba became her stronghold for votes. She had strong support bases in 65 per cent of the province (Anere 2002:85–97).

3.3 PNG's evolving political culture

As mentioned in the previous section, various homegrown political parties and associations emerged around the mid-1960s, and a few have endured since. Party organisation and the coordination of activities became most effective during the 1982 elections (Saffu 1996:3). The eight most significant and popular parties were Pangu, People's Progress, National, United, Melanesian Alliance, Papua Besena, Papua Action and the PNG Independent Group. In the weeks leading up to the 1982 national elections, these parties held national conventions, formulated party platforms and preselected candidates.

Altogether, these parties endorsed about 60 per cent of the 1125 candidates who contested. Under the leadership of Somare, the Pangu Pati obtained 50 of the 109 seats and went on to form government. This was the height of party-based politics in PNG: 'by 1985 the Pangu Pati had succumbed to internal divisions and Somare lost the premiership. Ever since, party politics has become increasingly haphazard and volatile' (Okole 2005:368). Okole posited that parties in the pre-independence era seemed more focused due to their opposing views on the territories' pace to independence: Pangu was pushing for self-government, while the others were more conservative. Pangu's radical push for independence was strengthened by Australia's determination to quickly exit the territory due to the 'growing international disdain

²⁸ Kevin Yabara finished ninth in the race with 2230 votes.

for colonialism' (Hawksley 2006:165) and pressure from United Nations trusteeship agreements (see also Kari 2002; Waiko 1993:153–93).

Towards the early eighties, political parties in PNG became more fluid, lacking distinct ideology and policy platforms (May 2006; Okole 2005). As such, candidates did not necessarily seek like-minded parties to join; rather, parties looked for candidates who were most likely to win, a situation that remains to this day as party leaders' main agenda is to form coalitions and eventually win government. Moreover, 'traditional forms of social organization play an important role in PNG society, and continue to be significant influences upon the conduct of modern representative politics' (Reilly 1999:226). Accordingly, in a fragmented society with no major social divisions other than religion or ethnicity, voters tend to vote along clan or village lines for their kin or relatives (Kurer 2007; May 2003:7; Saffu 1989). With this practice, the percentage of overall winner vote share began to decrease as the number of candidates correspondingly increased. The winners were the candidates with the largest clan or tribal backing, which formed their voter base.

In the 1977 elections, 10 members won with less than 20 per cent of the electoral vote. In 1987, 22 members were elected with less than 20 per cent of the vote, three of whom won with less than seven per cent of the vote. At the 1997 elections, 44 members won with less than 20 per cent of the vote share and 16 with less than 10 per cent (Okole 2005:372; Reilly 2002:705). This trend resulted in the election of MPs who primarily represented a relatively small group in the electorate (Fraenkel 2004:123). These MPs would be obliged to cater to the requests of these small groups as a form of reciprocity for their votes and to maintain their support for future elections. This patron–client relationship is now considered the norm (Kurer 2007:41) and helps explain the high incumbent turnover rates at the end of each parliamentary term (Wood 2017:23). Since the elected member represents (and services) only a segment of the electorate, other groups — clans or coalitions of clans — are quick to seek to replace them with their own political representative. This patron–client voting culture practiced in PNG's largely patriarchal society is inherently unfavourable for women candidates, who generally are not perceived as the primary providers of their subgroup and therefore would not be chosen as a representative. Finally, Sepoe (1996:113) concluded that the weaknesses of PNG's political party system are a further barrier to women's electoral success, because if parties 'were a formidable force in electoral politics and showed some commitment to advancing women in politics, women MPs would not be as rare as they have been'.

3.3.1 Tribal fights, bribery and corruption

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the electoral landscape in PNG continued to deteriorate, becoming more expensive and violent in various Highland provinces and thus creating a more hostile environment for women candidates and voters. Saffu (1989) characterised the political style of PNG at the time as a bargaining process that was essentially pragmatic and opportunistic for both actors. The election process was regarded as a quick way of gaining access to government coffers. Moreover, politicians were investing more and more money and resources into their campaigns with the hope of getting a return on their investment once elected to parliament. With such financial investments at stake, bribery, voter intimidation and coercion were employed to ensure expected returns. Elections became more violent, with acts of violence not confined to the official election period: 'worse violence often followed after the declaration of results' (Saffu 1998:436). During the 1987 elections, violence erupted in the Kandep area of Enga Province, where officials were assaulted, and rival candidate supporters were axed. While the Highlands became notorious for violence during and after the election period (Haley 2002; May 2003; Reilly 2002), election issues such as the inflation of the common roll, multiple voting and the use of firearms and money were not limited to that region (Matbob 2011:363; Standish 2003:131). The FFP system was partly blamed by some for the deterioration of the electoral environment, as it was seen as encouraging hyper-localisation and facilitating violence between groups in winner-takes-all electoral contests (Reilly 2002).

By the time PNG conducted the 1992 national elections, there was a clear need for reform. To discourage the increasing number of candidates, the nomination fee was increased from K100 to K1000, and Section 141 of the Organic Law was abolished.²⁹ These reforms were aimed at making the administration of elections easier. However, a particular political culture had already taken root, and it was a system where women 'would continue to become casualties' (Sepoe 1996; see also Sepoe 2000, 2002).

3.3.2 Institutional reforms

After a vote of no confidence replacing Prime Minister Bill Skate, the Morauta government (1999–2002), acutely aware of the problems in the operation of PNG's political institutions and elections, were strongly motivated to initiate bold constitutional reforms (Standish 2006:195).

²⁹ Section 141 of the Organic Law was a statute that entitled any Papua New Guinean to vote at a polling station, even if they were not on the roll, after making a statutory declaration that they were over 18 and residentially qualified. As polling usually went on for three weeks, this provision was abused during the polling period to the extent that allegations of underage voting, bribery of voters and multiple voting became rife (Saffu 1998:35).

The government identified several priorities for change, the pertinent ones being the fragile party system and the voting system. Two laws were developed through the Constitutional Development Commission: the 2001 Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPAC) and the 2002 Organic Law on National and Local-Level Government Elections.

The OLIPPAC was a direct response to the political instability, continual votes of no confidence and weak party system that enabled frequent party hopping by MPs. To accommodate women's increased involvement in political parties, the law incentivised parties to endorse more women by giving a 75 per cent refund of electoral expenses to any party whose endorsed woman candidate(s) received at least 10 per cent of the votes in her electorate (Huffer 2006). This law may have had an impact: in 1997, 12 of the 55 women candidates were endorsed by parties, while after this law was passed in 2002, 40 of 60 women candidates were party endorsed (Sepoe 2002:29). While it can be argued that political parties in 2002 only endorsed women to secure funding, doing so was still a considerable risk, as the priority of political parties is to seek strong candidates who are likely to win. While the OLIPPAC may not have resulted in a significant increase in women being elected, it is significant as a structural change to create an enabling environment for women to participate at the national level. Alphonse Gelu, the Registrar of Political Parties, has been lobbying the government for proposed changes to the OLIPPAC since 2017, one of which would ensure that 20 per cent of candidates nominated by political parties must be women (Mori 2019).

The second law, the Organic Law on National and Local-Level Government Elections, addresses women's involvement at the subnational level. This law dictates that there should be 566 women nominated in all 296 LLGs nationwide, two in each rural LLG and one in each urban LLG. It further mandates that there should be one appointed woman in all provincial assemblies. While this is a commendable law to ensure women's representation at the local level, its implementation at the LLG level is not uniform and most LLGs have failed to implement the provision on nominating women (Sepoe 2002:40).

3.3.3 2007–17 limited preferential voting system

The LPV system had been debated since 1993, but it was in 1999 under the Morauta government that substantial steps were taken to implement it. This voting system reform was included in the Morauta government's economic and political reform package (May 2003). To aid greater winner vote share, successful candidates under LPV must accumulate 50 per cent plus one of the total allowable ballots cast in their electorate. The process is 'limited' because

the ballot paper allows for only three preferences and is valid when all three preferences are indicated by the voter (Standish 2006). LPV was utilised in various electorates in the by-elections that followed the 2002 national elections and was fully implemented nationwide in the 2007 elections.

Advocates of LPV advised that the system would curb election-related violence by facilitating cordial relations, as candidates would have to travel outside their support base to create partnerships (May et al. 2011). While some candidates took time to strategise and swap preferences, others prioritised the weight of the first preference, opting to campaign as if under the FPP system. Assessment of the campaign strategies used in the 2007 elections shows that most candidates campaigned in their stronghold areas, with few venturing out for fear of violence. Only a small number of candidates managed to successfully campaign in ethnically divided areas (Haley and Zubrinich 2013). Moreover, the shift to LPV increased the prevalence of vote-buying (Baker 2018). Although vote-buying did occur within the FPP system, LPV offered more opportunities for vote-buying due to voters having three preferences to potentially sell (Gibbs 2013; Haley and Dierikx 2013). This has had the unintended effect of making campaigning even more expensive for candidates, both men and women. In his observation of the first round of LPV implementation during a by-election, Standish (2006) noted that preferences were used negatively to block rivals by only a handful of candidates. Cheating, particularly double voting, was still rampant in the Highlands; fraud was found in three Highland counting centres, as well as voter coercion and intimidation (Haley and Zubrinich 2013, 2015, 2018).

Advocates also suggested that the LPV system could potentially aid women voters and, by extension, women candidates. By giving voters more choices, women voters could fulfil the forced obligation of voting for their male kin's choice with their first preference and then use the remaining preferences for their own choices, possibly including a woman candidate. Yet, after the 2007 national elections, Sepoe (2011:137) observed that 'reforms, such as the OLIPPAC and the change to LPV appear to have done little'. Overall, women's national representation did not change significantly under LPV; only four women have been given a mandate since its introduction.

3.3.4 Dame Carol Kidu: PNG's longest-serving woman parliamentarian

Dame Carol Kidu, PNG's longest-serving woman politician, entered parliament in 1997 for the Moresby South electorate. Born in 1948 at Shorncliffe in Queensland, Australia, she met Buri Kidu, a Papua New Guinean student on a colonial scholarship, during a school camp in the

1960s. They married in 1969 and soon after Buri's graduation from the University of Queensland Law School and the birth of their first child, the young family returned to Port Moresby where Carol learned to live in the traditional Motu society of Pari village (Kidu 2002). Trained as an educator, Carol taught in various schools in Port Moresby and wrote textbooks for 20 years whilst supporting her husband's legal career and raising their six children (Fairio 2019b). Buri, who became PNG's first national chief justice in 1980, was a prominent figure in PNG's judicial development. During his term as chief justice (1980–93), he worked to ensure the independence of the judiciary by securing its financing through a separate appropriations bill so that its budget would not be controlled by the justice minister (ABC Radio 4/2/2005). After Buri's untimely death from a heart attack in 1994, Carol began considering politics, as it was something that she and Buri had talked about (Kidu 2002:143). However, before going public with her intention to contest, she had to seek permission from Buri's relatives and elders of the Vahoi clan, as it would be foolish to campaign without a family support base (ibid.:151–52). When Carol won the Moresby South seat in 1997, she credited her success to her late husband's good reputation, stating:

The sympathy vote in being Buri's widow was a huge thing in my win as well. There is nothing special about me. I had so many things on my side that made it possible for me to win at that time in the history of Papua New Guinea (cited in Spark et al. 2019:1237).

Five years later, Carol was the only woman to win election among the 75 women who contested. She secured 24 per cent of the vote share and, as an incumbent, ascribed her re-election to visibly showing her *hanmak* to the Moresby South electorate, having a large voter base and the strategic use of electoral funds to advance her chances of re-election (Kidu and Setae 2002). When LPV was introduced nationwide in the 2007 national elections, the results were very disappointing for women. Of the 103 women contesting (3.7 per cent of the total 2759 candidates), again Carol was the only successful candidate (Sepoe 2011). In that race, she had a clear lead on first preferences with fewer second and third preferences than her nearest male rival (May et al. 2011). Hence, LPV did not necessarily help her re-election, and she most likely still would have won if the election were administered under the FPP system.

From 2002 to 2012, Carol was the only woman MP and served for most of that time under the Somare government as the Minister for Community Development. She was a vocal MP and minister and instrumental in numerous legislative reforms, such as the repeal of the Child Welfare Act and changes to the Criminal Code regarding rape, sexual assault and the sexual exploitation of children. Carol is also known for her reforms on community-based policy for

people with disabilities, the revised National Youth Policy, an informal economy policy and a revised policy on gender. These are only a few of her many contributions as a legislator.

When Peter O'Neill displaced the Somare government in January 2012, Dame Carol became leader of the opposition, making her the first woman to occupy this role in PNG's political history (Spark et al. 2018). During her last term (2007–12), fearing that there would be zero women in parliament after she retired, Dame Carol campaigned to increase women's national representation through legislative measures, with the nominated seats campaign in 2007 and the 22 reserved seats campaign 2011–12. In 2007, Dame Carol endeavoured to institute nominated seats for women using the provision for nominated seats found in Section 102 of the PNG constitution. This provision permits the appointment of at least three nominated persons to parliament through a two-thirds majority vote. Her proposal was endorsed by cabinet, and a process facilitated by the human resource firm Vanguard International commenced in 2008 with advertisements for expressions of interest all over the country. The process received a lot of criticism from the public and prominent women leaders (Baker 2019; United Nations Development Programme 2009). Seventy-nine women applied for the three positions, and after numerous rounds of short-listing by the screening committee, six names were presented to parliament for Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare and the opposition leader Sir Mekere Morauta to decide on. Sir Mekere, however, publicly opposed, stating that the process was not established in the law, which meant it could be challenged in court; that an MP should be elected rather than nominated; and those three women were too few to make a substantial difference in parliament (Baker 2019:66–67). Somare selected three women and presented their names to parliament, however, it was difficult to achieve the mandatory two-thirds majority vote without the support of Sir Mekere and the opposition. Sixty members voted for the proposal, 16 voted against and 33 abstained (Kabuni and Agon 25/5/2021) — 13 votes short of the 73 required to pass the motion that would include three nominated women in parliament.

In 2011, Dame Carol made a second attempt to get reserved seats for women. This time, she proposed the creation of 22 reserved seats, one for each of PNG's 22 provinces, before the 2012 national elections. These 22 seats would be in addition to the existing 109 seats (which would become 111 seats following the 2012 elections) and would be voted upon by both men and women. This was seen as more favourable than the previous attempt because the women would be voted for by the citizens, 'not appointed by political leaders' (ibid.:2). The Equality and Participation Bill generated nationwide debate and received more support from women's groups than the previous nominated seats campaign. Prime Minister Somare, his deputy Puka

Temu and NCD Governor Powes Parkop were among the men politicians who supported the bill. If instituted, the seats would have ensured at least 16.5 per cent female representation, a much higher figure than in any previous parliamentary term. To create the 22 reserved seats, an amendment to Section 101 of the constitution was required. This amendment required a simple majority vote;³⁰ hence, when the Equality and Participation Bill was tabled in parliament on 9 September 2011, it subsequently was passed on 23 November with 72 votes to two (Baker 2014:71). However, an enabling legislation associated with an organic law (Organic Law on National and Local-Level Government Elections) requires a two-thirds majority vote in parliament. That amendment, debated on 22 February 2012, received 58 votes, less than the 73 required to be passed. It was reported that while only one MP voted against the amendment, 21 others left the chamber shortly before voting commenced (Baker 2019:77–78). The failure of the reserved seats proposal has been attributed in part to the political instability created by the constitutional crisis that was taking place during that period.

The constitutional crisis started during June 2011 when Prime Minister Somare's family announced his retirement on his behalf while he spent three months in an intensive care unit at a medical facility in Singapore (Poling 16/12/2011). In his absence, Sam Abal was the acting prime minister, but he was removed on 2 August by then Works Minister O'Neill and a coalition of supporters when 70 members of parliament voted to oust the Somare government (May 2011). Upon his return to PNG in August, Somare took the matter to the Supreme Court, insisting that the resignation was without his consent and that he was still the prime minister. This political stalemate lasted about three months until the courts declared that the appointment of Abal was unconstitutional and Somare be reappointed. However, Peter O'Neill was re-elected as prime minister by the house with full acknowledgement from the speaker.

Throughout that political standoff, both Somare and O'Neill established separate cabinets (May and Haley 2014), members were divided and parliamentary sessions were boycotted; it was a very unstable period in PNG's parliamentary history. Although Dame Carol had developed the Equality and Participation Bill as the Minister for Community Development during Somare's government, it was taken up by the new government when O'Neill came into power. Both O'Neill and Somare had expressed support for the bill. When it came time to vote for the enabling legislation, however, members of the O'Neill government were granted a conscience vote instead of the binding vote that would have ensured the creation of the

³⁰ The PNG constitution outlines the different voting minimums required to amend various sections of the constitution and the Organic Law. Ordinary laws require only a majority of those members present, that is, a simple majority. Some laws require an absolute majority, that is, one plus more than half of the members present, while others require either a two-thirds or three-fourths majority.

reserved seats. Baker (2019:78) stated that O'Neill's initial public support for women's representation and subsequent decision to allow a conscience vote, which effectively scuttled the legislation, 'could have been an administrative strategy to curry favour on both sides of the debate'. Ultimately, the instability of parliament negatively influenced the outcome of Dame Carol's final effort to legislate guaranteed women's representation in parliament.

Despite the unfavourable outcome of Dame Carol's campaign for 22 reserved seats for women, the 2012 national elections were significant for PNG women because three women candidates were elected. Delilah Gore (Sohe Open), Loujaya Kouza (Lae Open) and Julie Soso (Eastern Highlands Provincial) were among the 135 women who contested with 3312 men candidates in 2012. Their success made the 2012 elections the best for women's representation since 1977. Supporters of the 22 reserved seats attributed the success of the three women to the nationwide awareness generated by the bill in the two years leading to the 2012 elections, whereas 'others argued that these women had benefited from the sympathy of voters after the reserved seats legislation had failed to be implemented' (Baker 2019:80).

3.4 Conclusion

Shortly after the first few elections were conducted, it became clear that the preferential voting system derived from Australia's system worked well with PNG's fragmented society. Nevertheless, because it was easier to administer voting and counting during elections, PNG changed to FPP after gaining independence from Australia in 1975. With the colonial powers gone, entry to parliament was interpreted as a path to accessing power, privilege and government coffers. Particularly in the Highlands region, candidates were acutely aware of the arithmetic of their electorate under FPP; winning candidates were generally from the largest clan or had extensive tribal connections, and this remains true under the preferential system.

This ethnic, clan-based voting and the patron–client relationship between candidates and voters continue to be distinctive features of PNG elections. They carry much weight in voter calculus and help explain the high incumbent turnover rates (Wood 2017:23). They are also responsible for small winner vote shares and were two of the reasons the Morauta government began the process to change to an LPV system in 1999. It was suggested that LPV would encourage candidates to form alliances by seeking support from other clans within a constituency. While well-placed men candidates could navigate these changes, women candidates still had the challenge of fully securing a substantial voter base.

Without the machinery of a well-developed political party system, women have limited institutional support. If political parties were a formidable force and showed more commitment to advancing women, perhaps the issue of women's representation would have incrementally progressed throughout the years (Sepoe 1996). Political parties commenced well during PNG's pre-independence era. There was even a level of distinction between Michael Somare's Pangu Pati, which pursued a fast track to self-government, and other conservative parties, which preferred to remain under colonial administration for a bit longer. Despite an increase in the number of political parties, after independence, their platforms lacked distinction. Without clear political differentiations, the political party system remains fragmented.

From the late 1980s onwards, the standard of PNG election administration began to deteriorate. Serious irregularities such as voter intimidation, impersonation, multiple voting and underage voting have become regular aspects of elections. Changes to the voting system have facilitated little positive change, with FFP decreasing winner vote shares and LVP facilitating money politics. In this context, women candidates continue to be disadvantaged (Sepoe 1996). Unlike the pioneer women politicians of 1977 who contested at a time in PNG's history when vote-buying and other malfeasances were almost non-existent and voters did not expect any inducements in return for their vote, current women politicians face significantly greater structural challenges.

As the sole woman parliamentarian for over a decade, Dame Carol feared the parliament would have no women's representation after her retirement. Twice she campaigned as a lawmaker for guaranteed seats for women, and both instances were unsuccessful. Referring to the 22 reserved seats, Dame Carol believed the bill was 'dead in the water' after her retirement (Chandler 2013). As illustrated by the outcome of the 22 reserved seats campaign in 2012, women's representation suffered at the expense of national politicking. On the other hand, the campaign has also been used as a political tool to gain popularity. After the disappointing results of the 2017 national elections with 'brazen electoral fraud' (Chandler 30/10/2018) and zero women elected, Prime Minister O'Neill proposed the idea of having four of the best performing women representatives from each region selected to parliament (Tarawa 26/3/2019). In May 2019, James Marape became the new prime minister. Marape, while initially not in favour of reserved seats (Papua New Guinea Today 14/11/2019), later publicly supported the agenda. As of May 2021, it is understood that the Marape government, in consultation with the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission and the Coalition of Parliamentarians to End Gender-Based Violence, has developed a legislative proposal to create five national seats for women to be tabled in parliament.

With the proposal introduced just a year before the 2022 elections, it seems unlikely it will get the three readings in parliament required to be passed. To that end, the whole exercise could be another stunt to gain political favour. Another proposal before parliament at the time of writing is to once more revise the OLIPPAC to require that at least 20 per cent of all party candidates are women. The status of that proposal is also unclear. Notwithstanding these new developments, the current state of PNG's political culture has taken over 30 years to evolve and deteriorate. Even with legislative reforms aimed at creating structural change to improve the status quo, it is apparent that the prevailing political culture refracts many intended outcomes of electoral reform. It is in this expensive, volatile and unequal electoral environment that PNG women candidates have been contesting, mostly in vain, for a space to participate in national decision-making. Chapter 4 delves into this political culture, discussing exchange and reciprocity as fundamental to understanding PNG politics.

Chapter 4 ***Pasin Bilon Bekim Bek: Elections and Money Politics in Papua New Guinea***

A major impediment and stumbling block for women candidates all over PNG is money politics. Money politics is a term in common use in PNG to describe what is generally referred to as 'vote-buying' and 'political gifting', which includes attempts to secure votes by granting favours in various forms, material and otherwise. PNG national elections are notorious for money politics. Every post-election publication since the 1982 national elections has discussed the utilisation of money during the elections (Haley and Zubrinich 2013, 2015, 2018; King 1989; May and Anere 2002; May et al. 2011; Saffu 1996). Both the potential causes of money politics (Kurer 2007; Wood 2016) and its implications for Western liberal democracy (Allen and Hasnain 2010; Standish 2002) are well documented. Some argue that money politics is now institutionalised in the PNG political system (see Clark and Walton 2017).

Money politics is also common in other democracies outside Melanesia, such as Indonesia (Aspinall and Berenschot 2019; Simandjuntak 2012) and India (Banerjee 2020; Björkman 2013). In South India, it is known as *dabbu rajakiyalu* (Still and Dusi 2020:111). In Indonesian campaigns, not only is money politics used to obtain votes, it is also a symbol of power, and the 'gesture symbolises the commitment of an elite person to take care of his people' (Simandjuntak 2012:108).

Money politics specifically impedes women's political participation in various ways. In Bali, Indonesia, party membership requires considerable personal wealth. Since women in that society are usually barred from inheritance, they cannot sell land nor use it as collateral. Moreover, women are disadvantaged during vote-buying, as they cannot afford to exchange money for votes. Other money politics activities include 'practicing nepotism within party politics, buying expensive candidate profiles or "articles" in Balinese newspapers, buying party endorsements or candidacies, vote-buying and even vote-rigging' (Rhoads 2012).

In a reinforcing cycle, money politics proceeds from and leads to clientelism. Aspinall and Berenschot (2019:25) define political clientelism as the practice of exchanging material resources or benefits for political support. Three interpretations that aid our understanding of clientelism are culturalist, institutionalist and marketist (Aspinall and Berenschot 2019). The culturalist explanation considers the customs or social norms in a society that allow money politics to flourish. Institutionalism refers to the institutions that encourage citizens to seek political candidates who will benefit the citizens personally, such as political parties and weak state institutions. This is the driving force for money politics in many low-income countries

(Stokes 2009). Finally, the marketist interpretation explains the rational choice citizens make when they instrumentalise their vote to access resources and when political candidates direct their recourses to maximise electoral returns. All three explanations reinforce each other, making it challenging to dissuade either voters or candidates from engaging in money politics. Chapter 3 outlined the key institutional factors that enable clientelist politics in PNG, and some scholars have highlighted the rational choice arguments in the PNG context (see, for example, Wood 2016). This chapter expands on the cultural factors that facilitate money politics in PNG.

The premise for this chapter is that money politics stands on the culturalist ethos of reciprocity and is sustained by informal institutions during the campaign period. The Melanesian concept of reciprocity or exchange is the ethos that structures how campaigning is practiced by candidates and perceived by voters. This ethos is enabled by the patronage relationship that exists between candidates and electors. This reciprocal relationship frequently compels voters to vote for their relative, *wantok*,³¹ friend or any candidate with whom they have a relationship. Understanding this dynamic helps frame our examination of how money politics, the most pervasive and notorious component of PNG's contemporary political culture, has thrived since the inception of democratic elections in PNG. This chapter examines the notion of reciprocity and its modern derivatives of *luksave* and *hanmak* through the lens of gender.

4.1 Reciprocity: the root of the matter

Reciprocity or exchange in its various forms and applications is ubiquitous in PNG and throughout Melanesia. Its ethos is engrained in the individual and the society that have enabled money politics to flourish in PNG's contemporary political space. Reciprocal gifting of significant and practical items between parties occurs during both mundane and elaborate occasions to link communities, maintain relationships and explain cosmologies. It also functions as a social contract to sustain the traditional economy. The *kula* of the Massim in Milne Bay (Malinowski 1922), the *hiri* of Papua (Oram 1982) and the *te* (Meggit 1974) and *moka* (Strathern 1971) of the New Guinea Highlands are among the well-documented, complex exchange networks that link numerous communities throughout PNG.

Re-examining the work of Papuan ethnographer F.E. Williams, Erik Schwimmer (1973) wrote a detailed ethnography analysing the origins and practises within the Orokaiva exchange system. In Oro, the obligation to give is an important value; if you do not give, you would be deemed a bad person. Once something is given (for example, hospitality, taro or other food),

³¹ *Wantok* is the Melanesian pidgin term for 'one language group', i.e. 'one talk'. It also refers to those of similar ethnicities and traditional kinship systems. More broadly, it can simply be used to refer to friends and associates.

the receiver becomes indebted and is obliged to reciprocate. This obligation is called *tihanga* and the Orokaiva term for exchange is *mine* or *minemine* (Schwimmer 1979:267). According to Schwimmer (1973:49), 'they cannot envisage any significant social relations in the absence of exchange relations, and they ascribe all breakdowns in social relations to an antecedent breakdown in exchange relations'. While precolonial expressions of reciprocal activities such as ceremonies and feasts worked to maintain sociocultural ties, establish autonomy and prestige and sustain the traditional economy, contemporary Oro society still hosts occasional feasts, or *pondos*, to fulfil obligations, thereby maintaining significant relationships.

On examination, the exchange ceremonies that mark significant events like marriage and death reveal and support the underlying cosmologies of PNG's social systems. For example, in the mortuary ritual of the Trobriand Islands, the deceased are freed from obligations accrued during their lifetime through the exchange of women's wealth (Lindenbaum 1977). Insightful monographs by Strathern (1971), Young (1971) and Sillitoe (1979) have illustrated that ceremonial exchanges serve as 'social contracts' that promote social order between groups and individuals and were a positive, integrating force in traditional societies that lacked formal judicial procedures (see also Feil 1982). At this juncture, it is important to highlight that, as Melanesian and PNG societies are predominantly patriarchal, these exchange or reciprocal activities are generally facilitated and executed by men chiefs and clan or tribal leaders. The way these activities occur and are recognised is also gendered.

PNG's reciprocal culture has shifted with the introduction of the market economy and Western societal organisation brought by colonialism and missionisation. In the context of elections, it is becoming increasingly obvious that reciprocal obligations manifesting themselves as money politics are not only surviving but thriving (Haley 2014; Haley and Zubrinich 2013, 2015, 2018). In Enga:

there is some continuity today with would-be leaders who give away cars instead of pigs, but the monetary system has brought radical changes. People see voting as a way of getting access to money or the things that money can buy (Gibbs et al. 2004:13).

In addition, it is important to consider the pre-existing social structures that encouraged clan-based voting and created a conducive environment for money politics to flourish. Some scholars posit that Western democracy never really took hold in PNG; rather, it has blended with elements of Indigenous structures, even to the extent of becoming indigenised (Gordon and Meggitt 1985; Morgan 2005; Standish 1991). In his study of local politics in Mount Hagen, Ketan (2004) explained that cash for votes, or vote-buying (money politics), is a common

practice in Hagen society and regarded as a normal part of electioneering. It often takes the form of a mini *moka*,³² an integral part of Hagen society that functions to link groups together in alliance and an avenue where men can maximise their social status (see also Strathern 1971). *Moka* is the term for the ceremonial exchange festivals of the Melpa and Gawil peoples of the upper Highlands. Similarly, the Engans have the *te* ceremony (Meggit 1972), the Wahgi people have the *konggar* and the Simbu the *bugla gende*. Although variations may exist in the ceremonial procedure, the principle is that of a delayed exchange where goods received in one ceremony must be reciprocated in the future.

4.2 Competitive exchange

In traditional *moka*, big-men compete to repay each other by increasing the amount and size of pigs, shells and other valuable items received in previous *moka*. Similarly, during election campaigns, Hagen candidates attempt to outdo their fellow candidates with political gifting and money (Ketan 2004). Other customary events like bride price payments and compensation are scheduled to coincide with the election period due to the amount of money being spent and the opportunity to utilise candidates' need to create debt with voters.

The massive mobilisation of economic resources brought about by political integration and cohesion between different Highlands groups during election periods makes the Highlands region more politically competitive than other parts of the country (Ketan 2004). A great deal of money is invested during election periods, and the desire to win in order to reciprocate the support received drives politicians (and their supporters) to employ all means necessary to win, including intimidation, violence and the punitive actions that often ensue post-election towards people who voted for the 'wrong' candidate (Dinnen 1996; Gibbs et al. 2004). As such, the Highlands region is notorious for high levels of both money politics and election violence (Gibbs et al. 2004; Standish 2002). Moreover, it is not a conducive environment for women candidates and voters. Election violence and intimidation are not limited to the Highlands, however, with such activities also noted in other regions of PNG, although not to the same extent (Haley and Zubrinich 2013, 2018:62,83; Transparency International Papua New Guinea 2017:62).

³² The word *moka* is derived from the Melpa usage *moka* or *moga*. The central Enga call their exchange festivals *te* and the eastern Enga call them both *te* and *maku* (Bulmer 1960:2).

4.3 The spread of money politics

Election observer teams reported more widespread vote-buying in the 2012 national elections than in the 2007 national elections (Haley and Zubrinich 2013). This continued in 2017: 'candidates across the country (in all four regions) were observed to have spent significant amounts of money securing support and offering material incentives to voters' (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:43). In the 2007 national elections, local observers Dixon Susub (2011:214–16) and Patrick Matbob (2011:357–70) reported that voters in their electorates of Ijivitari Open and Madang Open expected money from candidates. Both observers attributed this to Highlanders migrating to contest in coastal lowland electorates and introducing the practice of money politics. Matbob (2011) claimed the 'Highlandization'³³ of elections was now taking over what was previously known as peaceful election behaviour in lowland constituencies. However, voter inducement or vote-buying is more than just money politics confined to or spreading from the Highlands; rather, it is a demonstration of relationships and networks sustained by cultural obligation. Other coastal observers during the 2007 national elections affirmed this position. For example, a voter in Yangoru, East Sepik, said that:

gifts were and are exchanged and/or reciprocated in order to maintain, enhance, mend or initiate relationships. The kinds of gifts offered/exchanged would include food and cultural valuables. Kinship ties, tribal and clan alliances, and trade partnerships were and are still the network through which gifts were exchanged (Paol and Gesch 2011:398).

Another Sepik voter said more explicitly:

Olsem kalsa bilon mipela stret: man I givim yu kakaruk, bai yu mas bihainim dispela kakaruk stret na givim vot lo dispela man, no ken givim lon narapela man.

If someone gives you a chicken you must do what the chicken leads you to, you must give your vote to this man and no other (Paol and Gesch 2011:398).

It was noted during the 2007 Manus Open election observation that:

obtaining votes is about creating relations. In traditional exchange ceremonies, people position themselves in relation to those who distribute by explaining how and through which common ancestors they are related. This is referred to as finding a 'road' through the kinship network. The same applies to electoral politics (Dalsgaard 2013:488).

³³ 'Highlandization' was initially explained by Standish (2003:11) as the 'mass inflation of the electoral roll, multiple voting and the large sums of money and, in some cases, firearms'.

For many voters, money politics is seen to fulfill sociocultural obligations. Therefore, allegations of bribery sometimes do not hold up in the court because it can be difficult to prove the element of intent, as in the disputed returns for the Yangoru-Saussia electorate in the 2007 national elections. In that case, petitioner Gabriel Dusava alleged five instances of bribery by Peter Wararu Waranaka (first respondent and member elect of Yangoru-Saussia). Four of the five instances were dismissed: one due to reasonable doubt, another because the complainant joined the defence team and two because the element of intent could not be proved. In one of these instances, it was alleged that Peter Waranaka drove into Huaindua village of Yangoru-Saussia on 28 May 28 2007 between 10am and noon and gave K3800 in cash to two ward members. Of that amount, K3000 was Waranaka's contribution to a customary compensation payment for two deaths that occurred during the 2003–4 new year celebrations and K800 was to pay for a pig that was slaughtered for the occasion (*Dusava v Waranaka* (2008) PGNC69: N3369). The petitioner, Gabriel Dusava, argued that Waranaka's hefty contribution on this occasion during the election period was intended to unduly influence the electors. Unable to prove Waranaka's intent, the allegation was dismissed. Candidates contributing to customary payments and compensation demands is now commonplace, so much so that candidates need not be explicit about their intentions. The implication or contract is understood because of the culture of reciprocity and the relationship between the candidate and voter. Ultimately, Gabriel Dusava's petition proved successful, and Peter Waranaka's election was declared void. The final allegation, which involved Waranaka giving K50 to elector Marcus Paringu, was upheld on the basis that three witnesses overheard Waranaka ask Paringu to remember him. However, for many other matters of disputed returns, it is a significant challenge to provide evidence and proof intention. During the 2007 elections, Gibbs (2011:266) asked:

How would one distinguish between genuine assistance and unacceptable treating? Bribery and treating appear to be well embedded in Enga political culture; such practice is called maiyu neo (give and eat) according to the principle of reciprocity.

A further testament to the reciprocal relationship between voters and candidates is the multi-directional nature of money politics observed in the 2007 and 2012 national elections (Haley and Zubrinich 2013, 2018). This includes the funding and/or backing of candidates by affluent voters with campaign money, fundraising activities and donations of campaign equipment such as cars, fuel drums, dinghies, pigs — essentially anything that would enhance their candidate's campaign endeavours. This practice has driven candidates to seek out campaign financiers rather than rely solely on traditional ties and personal wealth (Haley and Zubrinich 2015). Thus, money politics in contemporary PNG elections presents an opportunity for voters to invest

(Gibbs et al. 2004) and ‘is not simply about pork-barrelling or big-men distributing largesse to constituents in return for political support’ (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:46).

Moreover, money politics is ‘profoundly gendered’ (Barbara and Baker 2016:8; Haley and Zubrinich 2016). Typically, men receive more money and gifts than women (Haley and Zubrinich 2015). On the other hand, women candidates are less likely to engage in money politics, as they typically have limited funds (Baker 11/8/2017; Huffer 2006; Kidu and Setae 2002; McLeod 2002; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2013; Wood 2014a). However, as the nature of money politics and exchange requires, these women (along with less affluent men candidates) still must create a level of debt with would-be voters in order to solicit their votes. Hence, they resort to creating long-term debt by showing *luksave* and creating *hanmak*. The concepts of *luksave* and *hanmak* are derivatives of a generalised (or delayed) type of exchange in which no direct return gift is required at the exact moment of giving. However, a debt has been created that, in common practice, is expected to be reciprocated sometime in the future by the receiver or relatives of the receiver. Compared to a balanced or direct reciprocity, which resembles immediate barter and trade, the requital for delayed reciprocity can be either sooner or later (Befu 1977; Sahlins 1965).

4.4 *Pasin bilon soim luksave*³⁴

Luksave is a Tok Pisin term that combines the words *luk* (see) and *save* (to know); Mihalic’s (1971) pidgin dictionary states that it also means ‘to recognise’. Like many Tok Pisin terms, its usage varies according to context. It can be stated plainly to indicate recognition, or it can be used to allude to a particular action or activity. I add that *luksave* also means ‘to acknowledge and respond appropriately’. With this definition, *luksave* is a verb as it is an action word, and it is an adjective as it describes the character. As an adjective, *luksave* refers to a favourable character trait that one may or may not possess, for example, ‘*dispela man i gat pasin bilong luksave*’ means ‘this man has the character trait of acknowledging/recognising and responding appropriately’. When used in this sense, *luksave* can be grouped in the same category as descriptors that mean being thoughtful or considerate.

In the context of campaigning, *luksave* is used as an indicator by voters to determine if an intending candidate has a good reputation and, more specifically, whether he or she is known to be responsive to communal needs or cultural obligations. Comments like ‘*em ino save luksave long ol lain long taim bilong hevi*’ (he does not acknowledge or respond to people when

³⁴ Tok Pisin: the custom of showing acknowledgement.

they are having problems)’ or ‘*em nogat pasin bilong luksave* (he does not have the character trait of acknowledging)’ are directed at intending candidates who are not known to be community-minded and appear aloof to the issues and people in their community.

Depending on the context, *luksave* is demonstrated when people action or carry out obligations and meet sociocultural expectations appropriately. For example, if a family in the community has experienced a loss and have set up a *haus krai* in their backyard, neighbours within the vicinity are expected to visit, pass on their condolences and share their grief by visiting the bereaved family. It is also appropriate and expected for these visiting neighbours to bring loaves of bread, biscuits or sugar and tea with them to share and/or contribute to the *haus krai* so that the host can cater to other visitors. This is a PNG-wide social and cultural institution. Rooney (30/3/2021) stated that:

haus krai is more than just paying respects to the deceased, attending a funeral or burying the deceased. Haus krai is the expression of the collective love and obligation to bury someone.

People who exhibit such actions are respected as good and active citizens of the community.

While *luksave* is practiced in one form or another by most, if not all, people within their community or among kin connections, the *luksave* of intending candidates is set apart by the amount they give, the regularity of their *luksave* and its reach. It is common practice for intending candidates to show *luksave* in other communities throughout their constituency, such as church associations, mothers’ groups and sports clubs.³⁵ A candidate’s extensive demonstration of *luksave* in the context of an election is twofold, as it aims to establish them as having leadership credibility as well as create a level of debt.

Furthermore, *luksave* is not limited to aspiring politicians; it also applies to incumbents, as failure to exhibit this Melanesian attribute may result in disapproval and damage one’s chances of re-election. In some cases, leaders or potential leaders may not be consciously aware of exhibiting *luksave*, but it can be perceived as *luksave* by the public (or voters). For example, I recall two instances of elected leaders showing *luksave* during my fieldwork.

The 10th of January 2017 was a sad day for Oro Province. There was a horrific vehicle accident along the main highway that killed 13 people and saw 16 others admitted to Popondetta

³⁵ Often, sports clubs, church associations and community organisations will have fundraising events to raise money for things like uniforms, equipment or trips. These events are opportunities for intending candidates to show *luksave* and *hanmak*.

General Hospital. One of the deceased was the Sohe district treasurer, who lived across the street from the house I was renting. In preparation for the arrival of his body, people in the neighbourhood decorated the street with flowers and hung a 'welcome home' banner between two light posts. A convoy of cars and friends, including public servants, escorted his casket and relatives. Oro Governor Gary Juffa stopped by to deliver a condolence message to the grieving family. As the deceased was a member of the provincial administration, it was appropriate that the governor visit his *haus krai*. Nevertheless, Governor Juffa's visit was interpreted by members of the community as a good political move, with sentiments such as 'this is someone who cares about the people, he made time to come here and share our grief, he is a true leader, our good governor'. Perhaps that was not the governor's intention, but it was how some members of the community construed his visit.

This point was further impressed a few weeks later when I interviewed an Oro Provincial Administration public servant who told me about the same incident but concerning another incumbent. He said:

Remember the vehicle accident that happened in January that killed all those people? That very afternoon, when the Member for Ijivitari David Arore heard about it from Moresby, he took the next flight back to Popondetta. He was already on the ground at the hospital organising vehicles for families of the deceased to take their bodies home.

This interviewee continued to say that with that kind of behaviour (*pasin*) of *luksave*, people will continue to vote for him, as 'he knows how to relate to people and help them in their time of need'.

Such crises are opportunities for leaders to show *luksave*. Any serious candidate, man or woman, will be attentive to such incidents in order to demonstrate intentional, politically motivated acts of *luksave*. For women, such acts are particularly complex. When a woman steps out of her designated gendered role to show *luksave*, her actions may not be viewed in the same way as if they had been done by a man. *Luksave* demonstrated by women is easily disregarded, not taken seriously and seen to carry little weight. Worse still, it is sometimes construed as improper and invoked as evidence that the woman in question does not know her place.

In most traditional male-centred societies in PNG, men usually have the ability and means to demonstrate *luksave*. In instances where they cannot, they can send their wife to represent them. Using the same example of visiting a *haus krai*, if a man is unable to visit, he will send his wife to attend on his behalf. Even if he does not specifically instruct her to go, a wife who

turns up for such occasions is still regarded as a representative or extension of her husband. This is akin to Strathern's (1972) discussion of Hagen, wherein a wife helped create her husband's wealth by rearing his pigs; that is, her hard work contributed to his reputation as a big-man or leader. Sillitoe (2001:171) emphasised the exploitative nature of this arrangement:

The daily work of herding pigs and controlling them is widely seen as the duty of women, whereas men take over and in dominate their public transaction. It is here in the community-wide domain that some men legitimate their big-manship claims, success at exchange being central to social standing and respected status.

In the Kup subdistrict, the Simbu women of Bari actively assist men in obtaining electoral support (McLeod 2002). In a marriage relationship, the normative aspect of this assistance is referenced colloquially and casually when introducing wives: in Tok Pisin, '*displa em Joy, em meri bilong David*' ('this is Joy, she is David's wife' or, literally, 'she is the woman who belongs to David'). Whatever a wife does or achieves also goes towards building her husband's reputation or reflects her husband. It presents a significant challenge when the scenario is inversed because the woman must claim her acts of *luksave* in order to build her own reputation.

The challenge of a woman claiming her *luksave* can be negotiated if the men in her life and other significant men gatekeepers in her community advocate for her capacity as a leader and potential political representative. This type of male endorsement aligns with gendered cultural expectations. Previous successful women politicians such as Nahau Rooney, Waliyato Clowes, Julie Soso and Loujaya Kouza all had supportive husbands throughout their campaigns. Josephine Abaijah had a man mentor in Dr Eric Wright, and Carol Kidu first got into parliament in 1997 with sympathy votes influenced by her late husband's untimely passing and his reputation as PNG's first chief justice. In his society, the late Sir Buri Kidu was a big-man and the *luksave* (recognition) of his status was transferred to his widow through sympathy votes that enabled her first win in 1997 (Spark et al. 2018).

Indeed, the support of strong men backers is needed for women candidates to be successful (Barbara and Baker 2016; Haley and Zubrinich 2013). All the women candidates I met in Popondetta had men campaign managers. Women illustrate *luksave* all the time. However, when stepping into the political space, their *luksave* must be recognised as separate from their husbands. Moreover, women's *luksave* must be recognised and supported by the influential men leaders of their society in order for them to attain leadership recognition and/or political capital.

4.5 *Yu gat hanmak?*³⁶

The next step in illustrating the abstract concept of *luksave* is defining *hanmak*. Colloquially, people tend to use *hanmak* and *luksave* interchangeably, but I want to establish here that there is a level of distinction between the two terms. *Hanmak* is the record or proof of *luksave* and often refers to something concrete that leaves an impression on the hearts and minds of people. In Tok Pisin, the term literally means ‘to leave the mark of your hand’; it can also be used to refer to a signature or autograph. Allegorically, *hanmak* refers to things you have made with your hands, such as planting a garden or building a house, but it can also be more abstract, such as giving money to a project.

Leaving (*lusim*) *hanmak* results in tangible public benefits — something typically associated with men. It is tied to being a provider and considered a distinct marker of masculinity. The practice of men leaving *hanmak* has its roots in the activities of establishing big-manship (Sahlins 1963). In those, men were the primary actors. In campaigning, *hanmak* is the evidence used by voters to determine if a candidate is serious, has credibility and/or is worth backing. It is now common practice for incumbents to start campaigning early by doing impact projects, or rather *hanmak* projects, with District Services Improvement Program (DSIP) funds, such as sealing roads or building bridges.³⁷ These projects are often targeted to locations in their electorate where they received significant voter support. This type of politics is well-documented in PNG (see Allen and Hasnain 2010; Ketan 2004; Wiltshire 3/4/2013; Wiltshire et al. 2016). During the 2017 national elections, there were reports of incumbents using DSIP funds to supplement their campaigns (Commonwealth Observer Group 2017:32). These pork-barrelling practices have programmed voters to demand that political candidates, including first-time candidates, show *hanmak* and prove their credibility through tangible evidence of service delivery. A study conducted by the PNG National Research Institute in Huon Gulf District and Lae District in Morobe Province after the 2017 national elections highlighted that *hanmak* is considered the most important factor in voting for a candidate (Fairio 2019a). *Hanmak* favours incumbents who have access to DSIP funds and intending candidates who are wealthy.

³⁶ Tok Pisin: Do you have anything to show?

³⁷ The DSIP provides development grants that flow directly to the district level from the national Department of Implementation and Rural Development. As stipulated by the revised Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-Level Governments in 1996, the grants are under the discretion of the Joint District Planning and Budget Priority Committees, which are responsible for overseeing all aspects of planning, prioritising and budgetary considerations at the district level (Allen and Hasnain 2010). In 2006, Member for Ialibu-Pangia Peter O'Neill proposed an amendment to establish district authorities across PNG. His proposal was passed in parliament in 2013. For details of the proposal, see O'Neill and Tuck 2006.

The informal institution of leaving *hanmak* in electoral politics creates a double impediment for women candidates. The first impediment relates to the gendered aspect of executing *hanmak*: a women's *hanmak* may not be afforded the same value as that of a man. Outside of the political and campaigning context, women create and contribute their *hanmak* regularly in various spaces and capacities, such as through making gardens, raising pigs, cooking meals for community gatherings, organising community events and church activities and in many other aspects of life. Korare (2002) asserted that, in many PNG homes, women have a strong influence and make important decisions about bride prices and ceremonial proceedings (*hanmak* activities), such as how many pigs to kill or yams to contribute. Moreover, women are aware of their input and the value of their *hanmak* as contributions to the leadership status of the men in their life (McLeod 2002). Yet, translating women's *hanmak* into personal political capital is immensely difficult. In campaigning, women must demonstrate their *hanmak* publicly and take ownership of it independently of their husbands in order to establish credibility as a potential political representative. The fact that a disproportionate number of successful women candidates in PNG have been either widows or married to expatriate men suggests that the translation of *hanmak* into personal political capital is easier in these contexts.

The second impediment to women candidates leaving *hanmak* is the length of time it will take to compensate for women's limited resources and finances, as it takes time to fundraise for *hanmak* projects. According to Fairio (2019a:3), 'female candidates must prepare five to 10 years before an election to implement *hanmak*, fundraise and build their support base'. Delilah Gore's decade-long campaign strategy (Chandler 2013) illustrates that she dedicated 10 years to residing in her local constituency and intentionally acted to foster a reputation of *luksave*, taking full ownership of it as a widow. Whenever she could, Delilah did acts of *hanmak*. Thus, she accomplished the required level of *luksave* and left significant *hanmak* as a record of her credibility.

Another woman politician who became successful after a long period of being consistent with her activities of *luksave* and *hanmak* is the former governor of the Eastern Highlands Julie Soso, who contested from 1997 until her win in 2012. Her results at every election indicate that she maintained a consistent voter base (Meki 4/12/2019). That type of supporter maintenance in between election cycles requires a substantial amount of regular income and consistent effort. This observation concurs with Milli's (2013:33) supposition that, for women candidates, 'politics is more of a vocation, it is not a part-time job, it takes planning and preparation and commitment'. While men candidates or politicians can employ financial capital to quickly create *hanmak* and establish *luksave* through their supposed charity, women candidates need to

establish long-term, meaningful connections of *luksave* and *hanmak* in order to transcend the superficial *hanmak* of male politicking during election time and 'offset the relative resource disparity between themselves and other candidates' (Spark et al. 2019:11).

4.6 Conclusion

Campaigning in contemporary elections is an opportunity for candidates, voters and other politically motivated actors to invest and create debt. This practice is harnessed by the underlying culture of exchange or reciprocity pervasive throughout PNG and Melanesia. *Luksave*, *hanmak* and money politics are all debt-creating activities because campaigning is about reciprocity. The main difference between the three concepts is that money politics is a faster transaction. In contrast, *luksave* and *hanmak*, as they naturally occur, should take more time, as they are reflective of long-term relations built by day-to-day interactions. Hence, the normative nature of early campaigning is because candidates need to intentionally conduct such activities in order to counter the money politics that will be employed by incumbents and wealthy contenders during the official election period.

Women candidates trying to establish credibility in this context will endure challenges, as debt-creating activities — both in the past and in the present, in action and as well as in reception — are associated with male leadership. Even if women candidates attempt to achieve credibility through *luksave* and *hanmak*, their efforts are filtered through gendered expectations. Moreover, women candidates' limited campaign funds constrain them from effectively demonstrating *luksave* and *hanmak* over a long period of time. Hence, women candidates will continue to perform poorly because money politics favours the elite man candidate with plentiful resources.

Chapter 5 The Nature of Campaigning

Over the last 30 years, electoral campaigning in PNG has become a longer, more involved and exponentially more expensive process. The proliferation of money politics and the so-called ‘Highlandization’³⁸ of election activities, coupled with the nepotistic, patron–client type relationship that exists between incumbents and their supporters, have increased the cost of running for election. They have also facilitated the normalisation of early campaigning because intending candidates are competing against incumbents who have institutionalised financial backing in the form of constituency development funding.

This chapter outlines the various activities undertaken by intending political candidates and their *komiti* before the formal nomination process. Commonly known as ‘doing groundwork’, these early campaign activities focus on what is often termed ‘awareness’, building momentum for a campaign and priming potential voters. These campaign activities can commence as early as two or more years before the election period and continue until the issue of writs when candidates officially nominate and begin their eight-week public campaign. During the official campaign period, some of the activities described here can be interpreted as undue influence and incur legal ramifications. Prior to that, however, they take on the veneer of Melanesian hospitality and reciprocity, which, thus far, has made them acceptable common practices. Campaigning is a period of negotiation originally initiated by the candidates and entered into by the voters. As described in Chapter 3, it remains firmly anchored in the principle of creating debt.

5.1 Contemporary campaigning in Oro

Ol hailans, ol I save lo pilai politiks, ol fit lain, yumi ol kaiva lonlon pinis, mipela save gim vote lo rice na tinpis.

*The Highlanders, they know how to play politics. They are astute. We Kaiva are already crazy, we give our votes for rice and tinned fish.*³⁹

This quote was from an elderly man from Central Kaiva. He further explained the differences in the customs of generosity between Highlands and Oro election campaigns: ‘In Oro, people do not give easily, hence it is hard for them to give more during the elections. The candidates give, but they give very little’. He concluded that Oro people are ‘crazy’ because they exchange their votes for relatively little material benefit — just tinned fish and rice. Highlanders, on the

³⁸ Also referred to as Highlands-style politics, this encompasses issues of electoral malfeasance viewed to be common features of elections in the Highlands, including multiple voting, inflation of the electoral roll, the use of large amounts of money and, in some cases, the use of firearms (Matbob 2011; Standish 2003).

³⁹ Anonymous 31/05/2017. Rally observer, personal communication.

other hand, 'know how to play politics', meaning that Highlands voters receive a lot more materially during elections because they expect their candidates to give more.

As the aforementioned quotes highlight, campaigning or electioneering in Oro is generally low-key in comparison to electioneering in the Highlands. Ketan (2004:228) explained that:

the level of political integration and cohesion between Highlands groups is far more advanced than coastal and lowland groups ... This is evident in the mobilisation and management of massive economic resources required in elections ... candidates in coastal areas, by contrast, generally spend less money on election campaigns and ... participation levels are much lower.

The elderly Kaiva man previously quoted, who had lived a portion of his adult life in the Highlands, jokingly said, 'If I live there [in the Highlands] now, I would kill one of my children during the election time so I can get money from the candidates'. He meant this as a joke, but it refers to practices in the Highlands, particularly the Western Highlands, where events such as bride price payments, compensation for tribal conflicts and even peaceful communal events and negotiations are deliberately scheduled to culminate during an election year, thereby reaping a much larger sum (ibid.:233). Campaign activities in the Highlands are generally larger, with more fanfare, and a corresponding higher cost for communities, parties and candidates.

Furthermore, electoral manoeuvring in the Highlands region has become notorious for the use of firearms, gangs and violence to facilitate bloc voting and maintain tribal allegiances. Failure to reap expected results often leads to tribal fights or violence and death (ibid.:246) because of the amount of money invested. For example, after polling in the 1992 national elections, fighting erupted between supporters of different candidates at the Koban plantation on the border of the Dei and North Waghi electorates in the Western Highlands (ibid.). Additionally, a village near Kundiawa, Simbu Province, was set on fire by an arsonist who wanted to 'teach a lesson' to the villagers who supported another candidate (ibid.). Previously, these activities were largely confined to the Highlands region. Recent election data, however, reported a degree of such activities in other regions. In 2017, election-related violence occurred in the provinces of West Sepik, Milne Bay, Northern, Western, Manus and Bougainville. Almost a quarter of election-related deaths occurred after the results were declared (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:91).

One interlocutor explained that traditional Oro politics revolves around allegiances created from indebtedness and reciprocity. For example, if someone from village A dies, people from

village B and C will contribute food towards their *haus krai*.⁴⁰ Later on, if someone from village B or C contests in an election, people in village A are obliged to vote for them. Not doing so is akin to ‘throwing mud’ at the intending candidate and their village. Such traditional obligations do exist, but they are not uniformly strong or binding; rather, their degree of practice varies from place to place. Another interlocutor remarked that:

*such obligations do not have much weight anymore, as it is hard to keep track of people and their movements. Young people today are not bound by the clan obligations such as obeying the chief's instruction on who to vote. These days, campaign managers and followers of candidates have so many ways of luring people away and convincing them to vote otherwise.*⁴¹

Moreover, with the increasing use of mobile phones in election campaigns (Haley and Zubrinich 2015:28, 2018:52) and the proliferation of money politics (Haley and Anere 2009:30; Haley and Zubrinich 2013), voters are making connections with various campaign managers and actively seeking out ways to bargain for their vote.

In his observation of the 2007 general elections, Oro local Dixon Susub noted that elections in Oro are usually low-key and campaigning was not very expensive until the 2002 elections, when outsider, or *kam man*, candidates began contesting. Susub (2011:215) claimed that outsiders brought in the “high cost” ... patron–client relationships and the expectations that went along with that’. In Madang Province, Patrick Matbob (2011:362) reported similar sentiments of *kam mans* (outsiders) versus *asples* (locals) during the 2007 elections. He noted that, even before the 2007 elections, there was growing evidence of the ‘Highlands style’ or ‘Highlandization’ of politicking introduced by Highlands migrants, which included incidents of ‘bloc voting, roll stacking, multiple voting, large sums of money and the use of firearms’ (Matbob 2011:393). Both Oro and Madang are important centres of the informal betel nut trade route, which brings in a lot of outsiders from the Highlands and Momase regions. When outsiders contest in elections, it is often other outsiders who support and vote for them. For both the provincial and open seats in the 2007 Madang elections, Matbob (2011) noted that the *votim asples* (vote local) campaign worked against women candidates, especially the two *kam man* women candidates whose voter bases were in urban Madang and shared by many *asples* candidates. The other two women candidates were *asples*; one of them, Catherine Mal, stepped down at the last minute due to a consensus reached by fellow *asples* candidates from

⁴⁰ It is not good cultural practice to visit a *haus krai* empty handed and visitors generally bring food to the bereaved. Moreover, visitors often arrive at a *haus krai* with displays of sorrow (crying, singing mourning songs, mud painted on their face and/or hair). The *haus krai* is dismantled after the funeral and burial of the deceased. In most PNG societies, there is usually a feast prior to or during the removal of the *haus krai*. The *haus krai* event can also become politicised.

⁴¹ Anonymous 12/10/2016. Oro political commentator, personnel communication.

South Ambenob to reduce their numbers in order to increase their chances of winning against *kam man* candidates. The other *asples* woman candidate, Mary Kamang, was a strong candidate who hoped to capture preference votes but finished fourth for the Madang provincial seat. It was reported that several candidates, particularly *kam man* candidates in three separate electorates, used inducements of cash and in-kind promises to win votes (Matbob 2011:366). Similarly, in Oro, the high cost of campaigning exacerbated by inducements supposedly introduced by *kam mans* and consequently taken up by *asples* candidates impedes the campaign efforts of women candidates.

Before the issue of writs for the 2017 national elections in Oro, there was no media coverage about early campaigning. Local observers reported that the campaign period was very quiet due to financial constraints.⁴² Yet ‘covertly’,⁴³ prior to the official campaign period, campaigning activities were already underway. Among Papua New Guineans, it is general knowledge and a common practice that intending candidates carry out early campaign activities, also known as ‘doing groundwork’ or creating *hanmak*, as explained in Chapter 3. Early campaigning occurs because intending candidates are contesting against incumbents who have access to institutionalised forms of money politics (Clark and Walton 2017) and have had five years — their parliamentary term — to engage in service delivery and claim it as their *hanmak*.

5.2 Early campaigners

There are three categories of early campaigners: incumbent or sitting members of parliament; candidates who have contested previous elections; and first-time candidates. Each employs slightly different strategies and has access to varying levels of resources.

5.2.1 Incumbent campaigns

The first category of early campaigners is incumbents or sitting members of parliament. During the PNG Women in Leadership Support Program training in Port Moresby in October 2016, former parliamentarian Dame Carol Kidu explained to the women participants that ‘campaigning doesn’t end when you get into parliament.’ Once in parliament, elected members still need to maintain their support bases to ensure that they retain their seats in the next election. Moreover, the patron–client relationship between elected members and their support

⁴² Anonymous 20/04/2017. Oro election observer, personal communication.

⁴³ I use ‘covertly’ or ‘covert’ from here on to indicate that this is supposed to be a hidden or low-key activity, but is common knowledge and most people in a community have a general idea about who is an early campaign worker, for which candidate and what their activities are, particularly during the election year.

bases compels members to use state resources for their gain (Standish 2007). Parliamentarians are notorious for politicising electoral development funds for their gain:

Various slush funds have been created — and controlled by government ministers — to facilitate the systematic looting of development grants to enrich themselves and to use in pork-barrel politics (Ketan 2007:21).

One such fund is the DSIP. Projects or incentives initiated by incumbents within the last year of their term are usually regarded by their constituents as playing politics or early campaigning. Voters are generally aware of this practice, particularly in locations where the incumbent has not delivered in the first few years of their parliamentary term. This type of incumbency campaigning continues into the official campaign period. In their 2012 election observation report, Haley and Zubrinich (2013:64) noted:

For decades governments have allocated MPs ‘electoral development funds’ for the entire election year in the first quarter of the financial year, well before the writs are issued. Some MPs have also been reported to have sequestered a portion of each year’s allocated for use in the election year. Consequently, sitting MPs may have access to millions of Kina in project funds to distribute during the campaign period.

Observers from the 2012 national elections reported various instances of such project funds being used during campaigning. An MP from Momase distributed project funds and ambulances to several LLG areas in his constituency. Another incumbent MP from the Highlands distributed bank cards with K1000 credit to about 1000 people as seed money for an almost complete DSIP-funded project. In the New Guinea Islands, observers noted the distribution of project funds and cheques to elderly voters and people with disabilities during the campaign and polling periods. A sitting member distributed project money throughout his Highlands electorate in the lead-up to polling. One observer witnessed the distribution of K50,000 at one location and K30,000 at another. Both payments were made for road maintenance work (Haley and Zubrinich 2013). Incumbents do this because they think it will increase their chances of re-election. Yet, the chances of retaining one’s seat are relatively low; only around 45 per cent of MPs are re-elected on average each election (Filer et al. 2021; Standish 2007; Wood and Laveil 2019:19). Nevertheless, incumbent campaigns are the main driving force behind early campaigning, as they ‘campaign’ throughout their parliamentary term.

5.2.2 Repeat candidates

The second category of early campaigners is repeat candidates. When a candidate first contests in an election, they create a following of supporters. Repeat candidates must maintain meaningful connections with their supporters throughout the five years until the next election. Contesting in consecutive elections in order to increase name recognition and gain a following for a future successful election bid is a strategy many men candidates employ (Barbara and Baker 2016; Haley 2011). For example, Bryan Kramer first contested in 2007, then again in 2012, before finally winning the Madang Open seat in 2017. In some isolated cases, this strategy has also worked for women. Former governor of the Eastern Highlands Julie Soso first stood in the 1997 elections, contesting four times before eventually winning in the 2012 national elections. While there are some first-time winners like Delilah Gore, who got in on her first attempt in 2012, many other successful candidates have contested multiple times. Repeat candidates have the same challenges as incumbents in maintaining their support bases over successive electoral cycles, but unlike incumbents, they do not have access to state funds to bolster their campaigns. Nevertheless, the committees of these repeat candidates become active during the early campaign period and start to canvass and unite their followers.

5.2.3 Newcomers

Early campaigning is also important for the third category of early campaigners: the newcomers. As a woman candidate stated, 'no one [just] wakes up and decides, today I'm going to contest for parliament'.⁴⁴ Even first-time candidates have to notify their families and village communities months — or even years — before the formal election period. Recalling her first attempt in the 1997 national elections for the Moresby South seat, Dame Carol noted that her first campaign activity was to visit family members and gain their support. She expressed that without the full endorsement of her family, it would have been impossible for her to move forward in politics (Kidu 2002:152). This is true for candidates not only in terms of moral support and authority but also in terms of resourcing, including human resources for campaign logistics. Families of political candidates are the focal points of their campaign, with all members involved in various ways, from hospitality to driving, organising rallies, spray painting t-shirts and canvassing for votes. The campaign machinery begins with the immediate family and expands out to other kin (Corbett 2015a). Thereafter, important members of the community are consulted, announcements made and alliances formed. Candidates who are politically astute and experienced will strategise, organise and commence campaigning early

⁴⁴ Anonymous woman candidate 26/10/2016. Women in Leadership Support Program, workshop group discussion.

in one form or another. This has been the case for many successful bids for election, including Delilah Gore's 10-year approach for her 2012 campaign, which is described in Chapter 6.

Failure to organise early will disadvantage an intending candidate on many levels. An interviewee from the village of Emo in the Oro Bay LLG complained to me that it is unfair to the village community when an intending candidate, even if it is a relative, gives late notice. Late notices are those given just two or three months before nomination, which is usually in March or April of the election year. He explained that voters need to be notified as early as two years before the election. This is because, in the months leading up to the election period, many intending candidates will approach village communities to ask for their support and will even invest or show *hanmak* in these communities. Waiting until the nomination period to announce a candidacy is considered too late because, by then, most people will already be obliged to vote for another candidate. With this explanation, it appears that early campaigning is more than an accepted practice — it is necessary for a serious candidate to engage in early campaign activities.

5.3 Two layers of campaigning

There appears to be two layers of campaigning in PNG elections: overt and covert. While this thesis focuses on Oro Province, election reports and conversations with women candidates all over the country seemed to indicate that these two layers of campaigning are practiced throughout PNG with varying degrees of intensity. The overt layer of campaigning is the superficial, colourful campaigning that occurs during the official eight-week campaign period with candidate paraphernalia, public rallies, speeches and community visits. However, beneath this overt layer of campaigning is the more covert layer known as 'doing groundwork' or 'awareness.' I call this layer of campaigning 'covert' because it occurs outside the boundaries of the formal campaign period, but it is more of a known secret. People in PNG electorates generally know when such 'awareness' or groundwork is occurring and who is conducting it. Some members of the general public may even refer to it 'early campaigning', but it is generally accepted and not reported to officials as a campaign violation. Whether this is due to fear of repercussion, a lack of awareness on who to report to or just plain indifference is an area for more investigation. Nevertheless, this groundwork is essentially the more substantial part of campaigning, as it is when intending candidates gain visibility and prove their credibility. In Melanesia, credibility refers to the likelihood that a candidate will deliver benefits to his or her constituency if elected (Wood 2014b). It operates on the premise of proving first to the voters that you can deliver. A consequence of patron–client or clientelist politics (Kurer 2007; Wood 2014), this facet of the Melanesian political culture is well

documented. Members of parliament generally provide services or cater specifically to those in their electorate who voted for them (Ketan 2013:4). This institution has thrived on the pervasive underlying culture of reciprocity that is synonymous with being Melanesian. Men candidates and politicians set the precedent for clientelist politics, and it is now part of voters' expectations and a measure of a candidate's credibility. Thus, intending candidates, both men and women, are contesting against incumbents who have access to state resources, are already involved in institutionalised money politics (Clark and Walton 2017) and have been investing in their constituency (and their own re-election hopes) through service delivery during their term in parliament. Therefore, intending candidates must start their groundwork early.

5.4 Doing groundwork: establishing a *komiti*

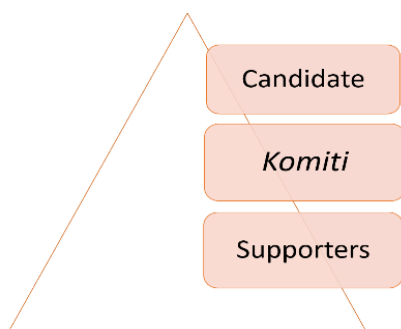
One key groundwork activity, and perhaps the primary task of early campaigners, is to establish their campaign committee. The election period in PNG has created an informal sector of short-term employment where people in the community become campaign managers, coordinators, event organisers, cooks, drivers and security personnel. The term *komiti* was first mentioned in the 1977 national elections report. Hegarty (1983:12) stated that 'some candidates developed a rudimentary form of organisation by using *komiti*, or electoral agents, to foster support'. May (2006:118) used *komiti* in place of campaign team leaders. From here on, I use *komiti*, both as singular and plural, to refer to campaign managers, area (district/ward) coordinators and anyone who is a part of the campaign team; this is common terminology and how some of my interlocutors introduced themselves to me.⁴⁵ It is apparent that since 1977, the term *komiti* has advanced both in organisation and scope.

Most *komiti* are relatives and die-hard supporters of the candidate, and it is common practice for politicians and intending candidates to recruit such individuals to be part of their campaign team or committee. It is also beneficial to recruit people who have a following or are regarded as gatekeepers of certain communities, for example, pastors, clan heads and community leaders who already have a level of influence. Often, other members of the community will approach the candidate on their own accord and volunteer to work for them. In this respect, it is important for intending candidates to either be long-term residents of their constituency or maintain relations with locals in their constituency in order to know who is genuinely influential and could be good *komiti* members, as opposed to opportunists.

⁴⁵ For example, when I met 'Kenneth', he introduced himself by saying '*mi komiti bilon John Warisan* (I am a member of John Warisan's committee)'. Another way to say this would be, '*mi wokman bilon John Warisan* (I'm John Warisan's workman (or worker))'.

A *komiti* is administered by a campaign manager(s) who is also the closest person to the candidate and should be the most trustworthy. The campaign manager then communicates with area coordinators who look after clusters of people in wards, villages and organised communities like church groups and youth sports clubs. The following diagram shows the basic communication pathway between supporters and their candidate, with *komiti* acting as intermediaries.

Figure 5-1. Communication pathway



A *komiti*'s primary role is to recruit supporters and then maintain them until the polling period, when they somewhat herd them to the polls. The *komiti* maintains supporters by serving as a communication channel between them and the candidate. They also deliver request letters from the supporters to the candidate. Enclosed in these letters are various types of requests, from speaking invitations to requests for school fee assistance or financial assistance with group travel. Sometimes, enclosed in these letters is a list of voters who pledge to vote for that candidate.⁴⁶ This common practice of sending request letters to an intending candidate(s) is an avenue for the voter or cluster of voters to market their vote in exchange for whatever their request(s) might be. Moreover, when voters send request letters, they are essentially providing an opportunity for intending candidates to express *luksave* and exhibit *hanmak*. These letters are usually sent to numerous intending candidates to determine which of them would be a credible candidate. Even though it is aggravating for intending candidates and their *komiti* to receive these request letters, the advantage is that they may lessen the need for intensive campaigning and awareness. Request letters are potential *hanmak* opportunities delivered to

⁴⁶ These are known as name-lists. Once supporters pledge to support a particular candidate, their names are recorded by the *komiti* and taken to the campaign administer, who records them in the database and checks with the PNGEC officer to verify the names are on the electoral roll. At polling, scrutineers are aware of the numbers (supporters) from various polling sites and keep track of voters as they go through the polling station to cast their vote. In the event the candidate must reciprocate or show appreciation to people who have supported them, this list is used to verify expressions of support. In describing the Hagen megacycle, Ketan (2004:245–46) wrote that name-lists usually had an average of 15 voters, some of whom were potentially fictitious. Yet, the leader of the group wrote these names on pieces of paper and delivered them to more than one candidate to receive cash in exchange for the promise of these votes on polling day. The candidates are aware that their support will be hard to verify on polling day, but it is a gamble they are often willing to make.

the *komiti*, rather than the *komiti* actively going out and seeking opportunities for *luksave* and *hanmak* with potential voters. Moreover, receiving such letters indicates the intending candidate's popularity. These request letters are deliberated on by the campaign managers and *komiti* to determine the best political outcome before their candidate responds.

Furthermore, the *komiti* herds their cluster of voters to the polls by ensuring that their names are on the common roll and, for those in rural locations, that their transport to and from the polling site is arranged. Another benefit of having *komiti* in various locations around the constituency is that once the writs are issued, these *komiti* will consolidate their candidate's supporters, as well as organise them to escort the candidate to nominate and show support at public rallies. On the other end of the spectrum, in electorates with electoral violence and intimidation, it is mostly likely a candidate's *komiti* who become the henchmen and do the dirty work of their candidate by distributing money, bribing, intimidating, being violent, hijacking ballot boxes and the like.

Often, a candidate's *komiti* become scrutineers at the polling site. In that instance, they become the most important people in a candidate's campaign team, as they are the 'eyes and ears' of the candidate in the polling area and counting room. In this capacity, they are tasked with recording the number of supporters that pass through the polling station, keeping track of the ballot booklet serial number and escorting the ballot box as it travels around the electorate to various polling sites. Their most important task as a scrutineer during the polling period is to be on high alert and attentive to detect any type of foul play that may compromise their candidate's chances of performing well.⁴⁷

Establishing a *komiti* is an important task and should be one of the first things an intending candidate does in the lead-up to the election period. Having a *komiti* is accompanied with risks, however, as it operates on a tacit degree of reciprocity between the candidate and the *komiti*. If candidates do not cater to the requests or demands of their *komiti*, it may evoke resentment, which can lead to betrayal by *komiti* switching camps or acting as a mole. Other risks include political infighting among the *komiti*, which might affect the effectiveness of a campaign. There is also the possibility that a *komiti* might misrepresent their candidate by not adhering to their campaign platforms or even making promises or claims without the candidate's knowledge. There is also a level of *luksave* and *hanmak* between a candidate and their *komiti*.

⁴⁷ These are directions from their candidate, but Sections 127, 128 and 130 of the Organic Law on National and Local-Level Government Elections stipulate the presence of scrutineers at polling, their functions and limitations.

Finally, it is expensive to maintain a *komiti*. During the 2015 Bougainville elections, a woman candidate from the Autonomous Region of Bougainville expressed the following sentiments:

It's very expensive to have so many komitis. So for myself, I'd rather have just a few. I stood alone. The sole reason there [was] because if I had to go around with them I had to pay them. I had to no money at all (cited in Baker 2015:6).

Considering all these factors, groundwork activities are still best achieved with a *komiti*, as groundwork is an extensive endeavour.

5.4.1 Awareness

In the last few elections (2007, 2012 and 2017), electoral and civic awareness was carried out by either the PNGEC or civil service organisations with funding from donors. Such awareness is generally conducted to ensure that people comprehend voting procedures and the rules for polling. Quantitative data from the 2012 election report indicated a positive correlation between the number of people who were exposed to some type of awareness (print, media, radio or face-to-face public awareness) 'and those reporting knowledge concerning how to vote properly' (Haley and Zubrinich 2013:43). As expected, urban voters had greater exposure to awareness than their rural counterparts. For remote locations such as the Highlands region, Menyamy, Nuku, Kandep and Koroba-Lake Kapiago, however, election studies from 2007, 2012 and 2017 reported face-to-face awareness as being the most effective method (Haley and Anere 2009:3; Haley and Zubrinich 2013:41). Capitalising on inconsistent funding and late commencement of awareness by the PNGEC and civil service organisations, candidates are known to conduct their own awareness. This was reported in the 2012 (Haley and Zubrinich 2013:44) and 2017 national elections, particularly in the Southern region (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:24). Awareness conducted by candidates and their *komiti* is also known as groundwork. Although groundwork may convey information about voting procedures and rules for polling, more often it will be partisan and essentially an activity of early campaigning.

When a candidate and his or her *komiti* conduct awareness, it occurs in two stages and is about informing the constituency of their intention to contest. The primary stage of creating awareness for the intending candidate is more than just letting people know of their intention to contest. It is also the time to show the intending candidate's *pasin* (conduct or behaviour) to the larger community — that is, to illustrate whether and how he or she displays or is known to display *luksave* and *hanmak*. This is important because Papua New Guineans do not vote according to political party policies or ideology; rather, their voter calculus considers kin,

candidate personality and personal benefits (Ketan 2004; Kurer 2007; Okole 2005; Wood 2016).

The primary stage of awareness is prompted by the intending candidate's actions. They will 'do awareness' by engaging more publicly in their community to develop *luksave* as someone with leadership potential. For example, in the months leading up to her first contestation in the 1997 national elections for the Port Moresby South electorate, Dame Carol Kidu visited various groups of people in her constituency. Her approach was not to blatantly tell her hosts that she would be contesting the upcoming election. Rather, she conducted visitations to different groups of people to see how they were doing and identify some of their needs.⁴⁸ By reaching out to the community in this way, Dame Carol achieved her goal of learning more about the constituency she hoped to represent, increased her popularity and laid the groundwork for her official campaign. Moreover, she received recognition, or *luksave*, from those segments of the constituency as a potential political representative.

Realistically, it would be difficult for a candidate to commit to such engagements all over their constituency or even be aware of engagement opportunities. Therefore, it is the *komiti's* responsibility to inform their candidate of engagement opportunities, whether it be a request to sponsor a women's group travel or support a local soccer team with uniforms. *Komiti* stationed in various locations are on alert for such opportunities. Thereafter, the *komiti* will use these events as material to supplement their one-on-one campaigning.

The secondary stage of doing awareness is known as infiltration. This is when the *komiti* travels to different parts of the electorate either by invitation or on the pretence of visiting relatives (their point of contact) and spends a couple of nights canvassing support for their candidate. An infiltration is successful if the *komiti* recruits new supporters to work for the team as local agents or a local *komiti*, particularly in areas that are considered the strongholds of other competing candidates or incumbents. If the intending candidate is available, he or she will join the *komiti* on these trips, but otherwise, it is the responsibility of the *komiti* to carry out this awareness work. Of the seven women candidates I met in Oro, four had already commenced their awareness work before the issue of writs. Two of these candidates were doing out-of-town field trips with their *komiti*, traveling as far as the remote Afore mountains and going by dinghy to coastal villages in Tufi (see further explanation in Chapter 6). The other

⁴⁸ Personal notes from Women in Leadership Support Program Port Moresby training 2016.

two women were more focused on what they called 'door-to-door' awareness in their local communities near the Popondetta urban area and the Higaturu LLG area.

5.4.2 Open house policy

The residential areas or properties of intending candidates should be places that are hospitable and accessible to their potential voters. For village residents traveling to town, a candidate's property can be their point of transit; for sick people coming to the hospital, it can serve as their rest house. The idea behind having an open house policy is that if a leader is considering public office, they must be approachable and open with their hospitality, an intrinsic aspect of Oro culture and *pasin*. Most of the candidates with residential properties in Popondetta have a rest house or traditional *haus win* (literally 'house wind') in their backyard. These *haus win* are made from wood and pandanus leaves. They consist of a raised platform with bush material roofing. In the hot climate of Oro, they provide shade and 'pull' wind, hence the name *haus win*. At night, mosquito nets are pinned up by hooks to keep mosquitoes out and create a degree of privacy for rest. *Haus win* are common in Oro, but take on particular importance during the election period due to their function as campaign houses. A candidate's *haus win* becomes a political space used to discuss politics and negotiate actions that will have political implications.

Campaign houses are generally built by strong supporters or *komiti* of the candidate in their villages. It is not usually the responsibility of the candidate to build his or her campaign house; rather, this endeavour is undertaken by strong supporters or *komiti* when they realise their candidate has a large following. Once they complete the campaign house and do a headcount of the regular attendees, they inform the candidate, who then decides when to visit and what to bring to ensure the continuation of that campaign house for the duration of the campaign period. Moreover, campaign house activities vary across localities. In other parts of PNG, like among the Bari people in Kerowagi, Simbu Province, McLeod (2002:44) noted that the terms 'campaign houses' and 'men houses' were used interchangeably, yet 'both men and women spent their nights in these houses discussing political strategies and hosting visitors'. In Enga, 'campaign houses, or as they are commonly known 'animal houses', are purposely built to house and gather supporters of a particular candidate during the campaign period' (Gibbs and Mondu 2009:167). The term 'animal house' is used to describe the reputation that campaign houses accommodate gambling, drinking and transactional sex as entertainment for regulars and visitors during the election period. Ketan (2004) explained that in the highly competitive Hagen society, the distribution of cash hand-outs occurs inside a *haus-man* (men's house).

These descriptions of campaign houses are notorious in the Highlands, but other locations in PNG have their own versions of that phenomena. In urban Popondetta, supporters of a candidate will gather on a *haus win* in their candidate's backyard, whereas in semi urban or rural areas, they may gather in a temporary shelter or tent erected and maintained by a strong supporter or *komiti*. During the first weekend of June 2017, I flew to Port Moresby from Popondetta to visit our family doctor, as I had been ill for a while. Our doctor also happened to be a candidate for the Rigo Open, and my uncle (his best friend) followed him around Rigo District for his campaign trail. When I asked my uncle if they had campaign houses in Rigo, he replied:

No, they have banners to indicate a base support area, and different villages will erect grandstands for candidates to come and talk, but I have yet to see a campaign house like those in the Highlands.

Later, while walking around the Koki (2-Mile) area of Port Moresby, I saw marquees set up in front of which residents had pinned posters of their candidate for Moresby South, Justin Tkatchenko, in order to indicate his campaign 'house' or support base. I asked my uncle, 'Does Justin Tkatchenko know about this?' He replied:

I don't think so, maybe it is just a bunch of supporters coming together to hang out. This was probably set up by Highlanders, and it does not matter if Justin endorsed it or not. By the end of the election period, the person who set up this makeshift campaign house will inform Justin about it and will probably get some money from him to make a feast with the supporters before they remove the marquee.

The 'feast before removal' he mentioned is like a *pondo*, similar to what happens before a *haus krai* gets dismantled. This is another example of the continuity of traditional practices within modern institutions.

Campaign houses are usually erected and visible to the public during the official campaign period. They are open to the public (undecided voters) to visit. However, the host and regular attendees of the campaign house who maintain it are usually fully committed supporters who have pledged allegiance months prior.

5.4.3 Creating debt

The election year is seen as a period of opportunity and plunder without many repercussions for voters because aspiring candidates are willing to gamble their resources with hopes for a return of votes at the polls. Some voters capitalise further by selling or bargaining their votes. In the 2007 and 2012 elections, 'votes were bought, sold and marketed with typical

configurations of K100, K50, K20, K10 for first, second and third preferences, respectively' (Haley and Zubrinich 2015, 2018:44). Yet, even for those not actively engaged in vote-buying and selling, there are many opportunities to create debt in the lead-up to an election.

Popular intending candidates are usually given invitation letters to attend community events such as church openings, school openings and sporting awards ceremonies. At these events, the organisers and the community give their pledge to the intending candidate. In return, the candidate will most likely leave a token of appreciation. This is an example of *luksave* in which the receiving party acknowledges the contribution of the intending candidate as well as their potential to be a political representative.

As mentioned prior, intending candidates are also given request letters asking for school fee assistance, funeral help, fundraising and many other kinds of financial help. Through these letters, voters are allowing the intending candidates to create debt and *hanmak*. As explained in Chapter 3, contemporary campaigning operates around the principle of reciprocity. Creating debt can work both ways, with voters supporting, or investing in, their candidates with cash or other types of resources — such as garden foods, pigs and vehicles — to aid their campaign. The *2017 PNG General Elections: Election Observation Report* stated that four per cent of voters in the Southern region gave cash to support their candidate; 11 per cent gave goods; 10 per cent raised funds and 27 per cent actively campaigned. Moreover, 'in 2017, it was not just wealthy businessmen backing candidates but ... grassroots communities across the country' (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:46). This multi-directional indebtedness was also observed in the 2007 and 2012 PNG elections (Haley and Dierickx 2013; Haley and Zubrinich 2013, 2015).

The practice of creating debt has considerable risk for both parties. Candidates can win, get into parliament and forget about the people who supported them. On the other hand, voters whom intending candidates have invested in may not feel obliged to vote for them on polling day. A frustrated Oro woman candidate who contested in the 2012 national elections expressed that all intending candidates spend a lot of money because voters capitalise on the fact that candidates are looking for votes. Some voters seek to get as much money as they can from numerous candidates without fully committing to one candidate. Nevertheless, this is a risk candidates must take in their attempts to create debt.

5.4.4 Never let a crisis go to waste

Some debt-creating circumstances are orchestrated and therefore overtly politically motivated. Other circumstances, however, occur organically, such as deaths, fights or other crises within the community. Such circumstances are effectively utilised for political advantage when intending candidates, or at least their senior and influential *komiti*, reside locally in the constituency in which they wish to contest. Recall, for example, the car accident and subsequent *haus krai* detailed in Chapter 3. In the event of a death, intending candidates are expected to attend the deceased's *haus krai* and funeral and contribute to the mourning family — opportunities for them to demonstrate *luksave* and *hanmak*. Particularly during an election year, intending candidates and their *komiti* need to be aware of such incidents and harness them for their political benefit.

5.4.5 Is early campaigning gendered?

Engaging in early campaigning groundwork activities builds a candidate's credibility, ensures they have a following when they nominate and gives them a strong start in the election race. Both men and women candidates must adhere to the informal institution of early campaigning because they are competing in the same space and the precedent for doing so has already been set. However, starting early presents significant challenges for women candidates, as they generally have less access to resources than men due to being less engaged in the formal economy (Barbara and Baker 2016; Huffer 2006; McLeod 2002; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2013). As such, most women candidate are not able to recruit and manage a reasonably sized *komiti*, the fundamental machinery for groundwork, leaving them grossly disadvantaged.

Moreover, in the period leading up to the elections, women candidates are likely to be busy, involved in fundraising or looking for donors to support their campaign. An Ijivitari woman candidate I interviewed 18 days before the issue of writs was engaged in awareness trips as well as looking for sponsors to assist her with the K1000 nomination fee. When I called her after the nomination day, she revealed that she was not able to nominate as a candidate because one of her benefactors did not come through with the money they had promised her. Women who are aware of the importance of doing groundwork have to strategise, as it is an extensive undertaking. When an intending candidate's desire to contest becomes common knowledge, potential voters tend to approach them with requests. The case study of Jean Eparo Parkop in Chapter 7 highlighted this as a costly and sensitive component of groundwork. Her campaign managers spent most of their time receiving request letters and explaining to

potential supporters that because Jean was not the sitting member, she should not be at the receiving end of their requests. However, responding to these voter request letters is an opportunity to establish credibility, as the candidate is effectively responding to the voter's invitation to create debt.

Another aspect of early campaigning or conducting groundwork that is challenging for women pertains to how they are perceived in the community, specifically in relation to how they express their leadership qualities. In PNG's predominantly patriarchal society, gender-specific and culturally appropriate roles and obligations are clearly distinguished. Actions associated with political power such as decision-making, public speaking and the exchange of prestigious items are culturally male-specific (Sepoe 1996, 2011). Whilst traditional views are changing and men may no longer have the sole right to leadership (Korare 2002), various aspects of leadership are given more weight when undertaken by men because they have traditionally filled those roles. For example, McLeod (2002:44) wrote that 'Simbu women were less highly respected as public speakers than men'. Women may also be overlooked when it comes to opportunities to attain and establish *luksave* because men candidates are perceived to be more likely to respond favourably and more likely to be successful in winning the election. For women, missing out on opportunities to show *luksave* limits their community engagement and subsequent *hanmak*. Furthermore, many acts of *luksave* and *hanmak* that women do outside the campaign period are commonly taken for granted and not counted as leadership qualities, such as was the case with Susan Setae. Susan was described as an 'honest mum' who did a lot of work with the youth in her constituency (Kidu and Setae 2002). However, when she contested for the Moresby North-East seat in the 2002 national elections, her community work was taken for granted and not perceived as a manifestation of leadership (ibid.).

Campaigning can be more complex for women candidates who are not married or divorced because of society's attitude towards educated women being unmarried (see Macintyre 2011; Spark 2011). In the context of groundwork, unmarried women candidates' exhibitions of *luksave* and *hanmak* such as attending a *haus krai* or donating a pig may have to be executed with a man escort such as an uncle, brother or *komiti* member for validation. For married women candidates, their *hanmak* might not receive the same recognition or be assigned the same value as that of men candidates, as it can also be perceived as part of her husband's *hanmak* or considered part of his reputation, even though the husband might not intentionally take credit for it. This notion is even evident in the Tok Pisin vernacular, for example, in the phrases '*meri bilong Peter kam na lusim kaikai lo haus krai*' or '*meri bilong John igat gutpela pasin*' ('Peter's wife came and left some food at the house cry' or 'John's wife has a good

character’). Addressing people through their relationship to another is common with Tok Pisin and can inadvertently transfer credit to the relation mentioned. Married women candidates, therefore, have the added task of separating and owning their *hanmak* to their community. It helps when their husband supports their candidacy, like in the case of Julie Soso, who had her husband’s support and blessing throughout her political career.

5.5 Conclusion: money and opportunity

To establish one’s position as a credible candidate, ‘covert’ groundwork activities must occur in the lead-up to an election. These activities require a substantial amount of capital and planning. It takes money to entertain people when they visit a candidate’s residential area, as well to organise awareness trips, not only in terms of logistics but also in meeting the expectation for visitors to come bearing gifts. This gift-giving is a normal and expected part of campaigning or doing awareness. Furthermore, money is needed to create debt and finance the *komiti* in their networking endeavours.

Moreover, most credible candidates intentionally look for further opportunities to create debt. Any events that occur during an election year — and even before — can become occasions for political gain, to earn *luksave* and leave behind *hanmak*. Hence, it appears that most of the substantial campaigning is carried out as groundwork, while the official eight-week campaign period is a time to consolidate and reaffirm support pledges.

An enduring challenge, however, is how to maintain supporters and herd them to the polling booth, especially given the rise of money politics in PNG elections. Affluent intending candidates and incumbents who engage in vote-buying and gifting during the official eight-week campaign period can disrupt prior investments by luring away voters who already have debt to another candidate. Many hiccups can occur during the eight-week official campaign period, such as pledged supporters switching alliances up to the last minute. Therefore, intending candidates must use their finite resources wisely. However, exerting minimal effort on early campaigning and saving their resources for the official campaign period would be at the expense of establishing credibility over a longer term. Such is the nature of campaigning: there are considerable risks with each type of campaign approach. The purpose of this chapter was to outline the technical steps of doing groundwork prior to the official election period. It must be noted, however, that there is no guarantee such preparations lead to success at the polls. The next chapter examines how three women candidates conducted their groundwork in preparation for the 2017 national elections in Oro.

Chapter 6 Women Candidates in Oro Elections

Life's lottery delivered [Delilah] Gore, the new member for Sohe, a couple of defining advantages.

—Chandler 2013

Women in Oro Province have been contesting national general elections as candidates since 1997. In the 2007 general elections, there were a total of 11 women candidates in Oro, the second-highest number of women participants in any province after the Eastern Highlands, which had 12 women. No women were successful in Oro that year, but in 2012, the province elected its first woman MP, Delilah Gore from the Sohe electorate. Delilah's win can be classed as unique, an isolated incident wherein all the stars aligned for a candidate, as Chandler (2013) expressed in the quote above. While Delilah's campaign approach can be replicated, it cannot guarantee a win in a rapidly evolving campaign environment — as Delilah herself discovered in 2017.

Women in Melanesia (Garap 2004; Monson 2013; Paina 2000; Saovana-Spriggs 2003) and other parts of the world (O'Neil and Domingo 2016) perform leadership roles in civil society and peacebuilding efforts. These can be regarded as the spaces where they develop and hone their leadership skills (Haley and Zubrinich 2016). Yet transferring these acquired leadership experiences and skillsets into political capital for campaigning in a contested space remains a substantial challenge for women leaders entering politics (McLeod 2015).

This chapter examines the campaign strategies of Oro women candidates using narratives of women who have contested in previous general elections as well as research on archetypal winning candidates across Melanesia. It looks at the strategies of these women in the wider context of PNG elections and evolving electoral dynamics. The chapter illustrates how certain elements of PNG's campaign culture, such as showing *luksave*, doing awareness and leaving *hanmak*, can add more pressure for women on top of being the right candidate in terms of personal characteristics and qualifications.

6.1 Traits of successful politicians in the region

What does a typical Melanesian politician look like? Corbett and Wood (2013) profiled Solomon Islands members of parliament and found that successful politicians seem to be getting older, are more educated than the average person in their electorate and have often studied abroad in either Australia, New Zealand, the United States or the United Kingdom. The same can be said of Papua New Guinean members of parliament. The archetypal Melanesian politician is of course male, but women who do get elected tend to have similar backgrounds (Corbett and

Liki 2015). Women elected to national office in the past have tended to be urban based, educated and employed in the public service (Corbett et al. 2018). They have also been ‘high-profile and well-regarded members of civil society’ (Corbett and Wood 2013:330), especially with keeping connected to communities in their electorate (Haley and Anere 2009; Susub 2011), whether through involvement with their local church (Baker 2014a) and/or delivering on communal needs (Morgan 2005; Sepoe 2011).

Women in the region who have been successful in politics usually come from political families with either their father, husband or another male relative already successful in the political space (Baker 2014a; Baker et al. 2013; Corbett and Liki 2015) — or they are daughters or wives of prominent public figures such as chiefs or expatriates (Fraenkel 2006). For example, Samoa’s first woman prime minister and longest-serving woman MP, both in Samoa and across the Pacific, Fiame Naomi Mata’afa is the daughter of the country’s first prime minister. PNG’s longest-serving woman politician, Dame Carol Kidu, was married to the country’s first Indigenous chief justice.

Demonstrating credibility in one’s constituency is just as important as having the right family background. Wood (2014) described credibility in Melanesian politics as the likelihood a candidate will be able to deliver benefits to their voters if elected. Among the questions voters ask to determine a candidate’s credibility are: is this candidate a successful entrepreneur? What projects have they accomplished in their community? Have they left any type of *hanmak* for the community? Have they resided in their constituency long enough to exhibit *luksave* to communal and sociocultural obligations? Candidates are also deemed credible if they have a track record mobilising resources for local supporters and have established themselves as local leaders (Baker and Barbara 2016; Fraenkel 2006; Haley and Zubrinich 2016).

Perhaps the most important component of performing well in and winning elections is to establish powerful local coalitions and alliances. This is the case for competitive men candidates (Wood 2014b); for women candidates, strong men backers are especially important (Haley and Zubrinich 2013). Strong men backers are not only a great aid in campaigning, but their public support and endorsement of women candidates also help to counter stereotypes relating to women’s capability as leaders in the public space. Moreover, backing from men kin is necessary because they can represent women in events that are only culturally appropriate for men, such as kava drinking and other events that may be deemed inappropriate for a woman to engage in (Corbett 2015a).

Furthermore, building alliances with other candidates during the campaign period is a smart political tactic and occurs in two ways. The first type of alliance occurs when candidates partner to operationalise the limited preferential system. Supporters of these candidates swap preferences to ensure that their second and third preferences are utilised to increase each other's total vote. With this type of alliance, only one of the candidates can win, but the losing candidate may receive other benefits from their arrangement. The second type of alliance is between open candidates and provincial candidates, wherein their voters agree to support both candidates. This type of alliance was illustrated during the 2020 Bougainville elections when Amanda Masono Getsi won the North Bougainville District women's regional seat while her father retained his seat as the member for Atolls Open, and when Therese Kaetavara won the South Bougainville District women's regional seat while her son Emmanuel-Carlos was elected for the Baba constituency.

When Maureen Ambo first contested for the Ijivitari seat in Oro in the 2007 general elections, she allied with her father-in-law, Suckling Tamanabae, an experienced provincial candidate and a former bishop of the Anglican church in Oro. Their strategy was to share voters. Suckling's voters for the provincial seat were encouraged to also vote for Maureen in the Ijivitari electorate, and her supporters were encouraged to return the favour by also voting for Suckling (Susub 2011). This plan was lucrative for Suckling, who became governor of Oro Province, but not so much for Maureen, who failed in her election bid. However, she finished fourth in a field of 38 candidates, an exceptional result for a first-time contestant. In the next election year (2012), Maureen contested again but failed to improve on her 2007 performance. This time, she lacked alliances with strong candidates. Going back to her former alliance with Suckling would have been a risk because, after being the governor for five years with little delivery or *hanmak* to show, his chances of re-election were uncertain. However, building no alliances was electorally fatal, as Maureen received only one per cent of the first preference votes (173 votes out of 33,733) and finished in 39th place out of 51 candidates.

While these traits can contribute to a good performance, there is also the influence of good timing, favourable electoral environments and luck. Various circumstantial factors, as well as the difficult nature of contemporary campaigning, also affect the performance of women candidates. The next section uses the campaign experiences of previous Oro women candidates Maureen Ambo, Margaret Embahe and Theresa Kuman to highlight some of these challenging factors.

6.2 Campaign experiences: money politics, outside influences and loyal supporters

In March 2016, in my pursuit of finding a case study for my PhD research, I met up with Maureen Ambo and a few other previous women candidates. I aimed to find out if they were still interested in contesting elections and whether they would consider contesting the 2017 general elections. None of them were interested. They unanimously agreed that the ideal time for women candidates to contest was during the 1990s and that contemporary campaigning was far too expensive for them.

Funding is the single most common challenge for women (and men) candidates (Kurer 2007; Wood 2014a). Financial resources are needed not only for formal campaign costs such as purchasing public announcement systems and printing posters and t-shirts but also for informal or 'covert' early campaign costs such as maintaining campaign houses and doing awareness or groundwork. Sometimes, there is an outright expectation that candidates will directly distribute money to potential voters. Former Oro National Broadcasting Cooperation radio announcer and 2012 provincial candidate Margaret Embahe stated:

Even if you use the radio, you still have to go out and talk to the people, all of which require money, because we are talking to the people, we have to give them money. The people say we are trying to buy their finger, people are expecting money, 'If she gives money, then we vote for her'.

As Margaret explained, a candidate must pay or give something to have an audience with voters, as talking to candidates for free would be a waste of voters' time. A three-time man candidate lamented in 2007: 'gone are the days when candidates would travel with empty hands and campaign on empty stomachs and expect the villagers to feed them' (Susub 2011:215). According to an Oro election observer:

When elections in Oro were contested by the people of Oro themselves ... rallies [were] organized by candidates and their supporters in each village or at public venues where one or more candidates presented their campaign speeches. Things changed during the 2002 and 2007 elections, however, when people from other provinces residing in Oro decided to run for political office (ibid).

In his account of the 2007 elections in Oro, Susub (2011) blamed outsiders (*ol kam man*) for bringing a high-cost campaign style and patron–client relationships into the province. Other sources attribute the exponential rise of money politics across PNG at least in part to the introduction of LPV (Haley and Zubrinich 2015). Whatever the reason, women candidates are disadvantaged due to financial disparity.

Another challenge for candidates is maintaining loyal supporters. Voters can capitalise on the fact that they have three preferences to allocate and hop from one camp (candidate) to another in hopes of getting more in return for their vote. During her 2012 run for the provincial seat, Theresa Kuman was extremely disappointed by what she perceived as the disloyalty of voters. She said:

They [voters] say one thing to your face, they pretend to be in your camp, but at the last minute, they will switch over to another camp and support their own wantok. Disregarding everything that you have done for them ... people don't seem to understand the amount of sacrifice that candidates make when trying to contest. Rather, they feed on that and want more from candidates. It is disheartening because a lot of candidates are not rich, they are good, hardworking people trying to make a difference in their communities.⁴⁹

Recalling all the *hanmak* and *luksave* she showed to the people in her community, from transporting sick people to the hospital to providing food and hosting large communities, Theresa concluded that loyalty is a big problem in the province. But perhaps her experience was slightly different from other candidates due to her identity as a *kam man* woman. Theresa is ethnically from Simbu Province, but she and her husband have resided in Oro since Mr Kuman was posted there after completing his police training in the early nineties. They have built their life in Oro: their children, all raised in Oro, married locally, and they established several local businesses, including selling newspapers and operating public motor vehicles, thus providing services — and employment — for local Oro people. As *kam mans*, Theresa and her husband had done extensive *hanmak* to prove their loyalty to the province and show their investment in seeing Oro prosper. Theresa had two theories about her lack of electoral success: first, that local supporters were still fixated on her *kam man* status and feared that she might 'take money out of the province' if she were elected; and second, that they were deterred by her failure to engage in money politics. Another important factor was that, as *kam mans*, neither Theresa nor her husband had clan or extended family to serve as a strong support base. Despite them being long-time residents who had done years of *hanmak* and service through their business — and one of their sons marrying locally — Oro voters during the 2012 elections demonstrated a strong affinity towards their own local candidates.

Maureen Ambo reflected that it is practical to tap into already established church and women's networks, but building such alliances can be tricky. She told me that women can work together effectively and get things done, but on the flip side, they can also be enemies. She spoke of

⁴⁹ Theresa Kuman 31/01/2012. Oro regional candidate, personal communication.

her experience with women supporters who would go to one campaign house during the day and to someone else's campaign house at night. She said:

Women follow their husbands. Even women want to go where the money is, regardless of how well you treat them. At the end of the day, it is about who has more influence over them.

There is a perception by women candidates that women voters should support them, and it is often a source of frustration for unsuccessful women candidates to not have won the 'women's vote'. Women, however, are not a homogenous group with identical interests. Furthermore, in PNG, a woman's vote is often not her own; she may be obliged to vote according to the preference of her husband, her male kin, or, as Maureen said, whoever influences her. Sepoe (1996) noted that many women in rural areas, where the bulk of the country's voting population resides, do not support the political ambitions of urban educated women because they do not understand how such women would alleviate their daily burdens. Negative sentiments towards women candidates can also be attributed to the dominant patriarchal culture, which favours men over women for positions of public influence, and the common perception that men politicians are better able to deliver services if elected (Wood 2014a). Due to these factors, the need for women political aspirants to establish their *hanmak* is more pressing than for men, as it is about proving their leadership credibility. Moreover, as women candidates generally do not have a surplus of funds to contend with money politics, establishing *hanmak* early on can work to 'offset the relative resource disparity between themselves and other candidates' (Spark et al. 2019:11). This was precisely what Delilah Gore set out to accomplish.

6.3 Delilah Gore's approach: *luksave na lusim hanmak*

For Delilah Gore, the idea to contest first came in 2002. However, like many women candidates, she did not have the money or largesse to campaign on the same level as her men counterparts. Delilah was a long-time public servant who, up until 2012, worked as the treasurer for the Ijivitari District Office. Using her regular income to finance groundwork, Delilah decided on a long-term strategy. For the next 10 years, Delilah set about becoming more engaged in both church and secular activities in her local community through strategic spending and contributions whenever the need arose. If there was a gathering, she was present to listen and show *luksave*, thus increasing her profile within the community. When required, she left meaningful *hanmak*. In her words, 'I did a lot of public relations. And when my election posters went up, people said, "I know this woman ... when we needed a dinghy, she got us a dinghy"' (Chandler 2013). Donating a dinghy to a coastal community

demonstrates *hanmak*; it is about addressing communal needs rather than simply responding to the demands of relatives and friends, as is common in PNG.

Finally, at the 2012 general elections, Delilah Gore contested against 54 other candidates. With an initial total allowable ballot of 35,021, she received eight per cent of the first preference votes (2826), more than any other candidate, and continued to accumulate more votes as counting progressed. By the 13th count, Delilah had surged ahead with a 900-vote gap between her and her nearest rival; she eventually won with 6105 votes.

While Delilah had an effective strategy and demonstrated commitment to its long-term execution, her approach was assisted by various circumstantial factors. To begin with, she was preceded by her father's reputation as paramount chief and local leader. To those voters inclined to prioritise traditional leadership, coming from such a family is an important attribute. Also, in relation to her long-term groundwork of showing *luksave* and leaving *hanmak*, Delilah had been a widow since her husband died in a car accident in 1998. Hence, unlike other married women candidates who may have to negotiate separating their *hanmak* from their husband's, as a widow, Delilah owned and took the entire credit for all her *hanmak*. Moreover, she was the only contestant from her village; thus, there was no competing candidate to split her voter base. While all preferences are important under the LPV system, a strong first preference vote is essential to winning. Of the three women winners in 2012, Delilah was the only one leading on the first preference votes, but overall, most winning candidates topped the first preference count (Baker 2018:213).

Finally, Sohe's voting culture also contributed to Delilah's win. Trawling through screenshots of the election count, there was a relatively even distribution of votes between all 54 candidates in Sohe — not the stark margins that typically emerge due to block tribal voting. Blogger Deni ToKunai argued that a woman could do well in Sohe because local tradition is egalitarian and gender is not the hurdle it is elsewhere. People cast their votes freely (Chandler 2013).

Contrast ToKunai's observations about Sohe with the experiences of women candidates in the Highlands region, such as Sarah Garap's campaign for the Sinasina-Yonggomugl seat in the 2002 general elections. While working as a Women's Programme development officer for the Simbu provincial government from 1992 to 2001, Sarah helped a group of women from Kup subdistrict establish the Kup Women for Peace organisation (Garap 2004). Through advocacy and training, Kup Women for Peace worked effectively to reduce the tribal violence that had plagued the area since the early 1970s (Tumun 2001). With all the awareness and community mobilisation associated with her work with Kup Women for Peace, Sarah built a public profile,

ticking all the boxes for *luksave* and *hanmak*. In 2002, she was asked by people in the community to stand in the elections. However, she finished the race in 29th place with only 78 votes, hardly a reflection of the amount of work she had invested in her community. For the big-man politics of the Highlands, these types of community *hanmak* activities carry little weight.

Another important factor in Delilah's win was that the then incumbent for Ijivitari Open David Arore is her nephew. During the 2012 campaign period, Arore sent some of his supporters to campaign for her.⁵⁰ The importance of powerful male backing was highlighted earlier; if the male backer is also an incumbent who can assist with resources, finance and advice, their support is even more advantageous. All of these factors, coupled with Delilah's strategic, long-term campaign strategy, worked in her favour in 2012. Her win was a watershed moment in Oro's political history. The 2017 general elections, however, played out differently and were less favourable to women candidates, including Delilah. The following section highlights some of the women who ran in 2017.

6.4 2017 Oro women candidates

A total of seven women candidates contested in Oro in the 2017 general elections. Three ran for the provincial seat: Jean Eparo Parkop, Anista Matbob and Prisca Mauve. The Sohe electorate had the incumbent woman MP Delilah Gore defending her seat, along with Maureen Duwang, Alicia Toroi and Helen Porari also contesting. Ijivitari had only one woman candidate, Dr Joy Travertz-Arore. Bella Amen and Samantha Sipo were two women aspirants for the Ijivitari seat who started initial groundwork but failed to secure enough money in time to pay their nomination fees. This was a diverse group of candidates (and aspiring candidates), some well connected and some less so. Their intentions to contest were based on a conviction about their potential contribution to national politics and their local area, and they generally set out with a considered plan, but the demanding nature of campaigning in many cases took a substantial toll. I begin by introducing Dr Joy Travertz-Arore.

6.4.1 Dr Joy Travertz-Arore

Joy was the only woman candidate among the 33 candidates who contested in the Ijivitari Open. This seat was previously held by her husband David Arore, who decided to contest the

⁵⁰ David Arore 20/04/2017. Member for Ijivitari Open, personal communication.

provincial seat in 2017. As a first-time independent candidate, she performed well, finishing in ninth place with 1926 votes.

6.4.1.1 Joy's background

Joy was a 41-year-old gynaecologist at the Popondetta Base Hospital. Joy is ethnically from a mixed parentage from Hula in the Central Province and Kerema in the Gulf Province. She came from a family in which both her parents worked: her mother as a nurse and her father as a long-time public servant who at one point was the Provincial Affairs secretary. Joy is the eldest of her siblings, with two brothers and two sisters. She completed most of her primary schooling in Australia at a co-educational private school outside of Brisbane. After year 10 in 1992, she returned to Port Moresby and convinced her father to let her attend Kerevat National High School, where she completed grades 11 and 12. She enjoyed science and wanted to pursue a career in medicine. Growing up, Joy's father was a big influence in her life and encouraged her ambitions. In 1995, she was accepted into the science foundation program at UPNG. She graduated with a degree in chemistry and later pursued medicine at UPNG's Taurama campus between 2000 and 2005. After serving two years of in-house residency at the Port Moresby General Hospital, she was sent to Manus for a few months and then transferred to Popondetta Base Hospital in 2007.

In Popondetta, Joy met and married David Arore. In 2010, after the birth of her second son, she left work and attempted to be a housewife. She soon got bored and commenced a master's program at UPNG. In 2014, Joy resumed work in the Popondetta Hospital with a diploma in obstetrics and gynaecology. With her new qualification, she worked mainly in the maternity and labour wards.

At home, she spent most of her time entertaining because people were always at the Arore house. Her husband's political career impacted her life as well. As the sitting member's wife, it was her responsibility to receive guests at her home and attend to them. She became annoyed with voters always turning up at the family house asking for money. She realised that these locals needed a sustainable way of getting income, so she began to buy and resell their coffee to larger exporters. She established and registered her company, Managalas Organic Coffee. The company had over 800 registered coffee growers, most of whom were men from the Afore LLG, many of them her in-laws. Through this venture, Joy enabled many coffee farmers in Afore to get good value for their coffee. It was during an afternoon conversation with her coffee farmers that one of them brought up the topic of women politicians, stating that in the 2017 elections, he would give his vote to a woman because people were getting tired of male

politicians. In acknowledging her *hanmak* with her coffee work, he suggested that perhaps she would consider contesting.

6.4.1.2 Joy decides to run

In October 2016, Joy resigned from her position at the Popondetta Hospital. Initially, her intention to contest was kept quiet, with conversations only between herself and members of her coffee association. Eventually, her husband David found out and was not impressed; however, he later consented. With his blessing, Joy began to get organised. To her advantage, David already had a working *komiti* and network in place that she could utilise. She was confident that Afore's population of about 9000 would be her voter base, just as they had supported her husband for the previous 10 years. With David now switching to contest the provincial seat, his voter base would give him their vote for the governor's seat and could possibly give her their votes for the Ijivitari electorate.

Unable to secure endorsement from a political party, Joy contested as an independent candidate. Her purple campaign poster highlighted her professional background with the slogan 'your health is your wealth'. Initially, Joy targeted women supporters, and she specifically had three women *komiti* in each of Ijivitari's 84 wards. But upon realising the difficulty women *komiti* were having in garnering support while fully engaged in their domestic duties, she later changed her approach to target all voters and focused more on her male *komiti*. While women are certainly capable of working as *komiti*, their sphere of influence is often restricted to areas such as church gatherings and the marketplace. Their domestic and family responsibilities also limit their time for political activity. For example, it is often more difficult for women than for men to leave their families to go on awareness trips or travel to *komiti* conventions. In their interpretations of the experiences of women politicians in the Pacific, Corbett and Liki (2015:14) noted that 'some women feel that campaign conventions limit their choice of campaign style'. This also extends to the work women *komiti* undertake as they campaign on behalf of their candidates. Moreover, vote soliciting and political talk predominantly occur at male social locations and during male social activities, such as drinking at bars or gambling and staying out late at night at campaign houses. Unless women *komiti* were married and accompanied their husbands, it is highly unlikely they would go on these endeavours alone.

I asked Joy, 'Why should people vote for you?' She threw the question back:

Why would people not vote for me? I tick the criteria, I save lives [as a doctor] and I provide services [as a coffee buyer] ... If I become a leader, I'm going to give them the tools necessary for them to make money, I'm going to give them the machinery. I have a poor society; I want to make them rich.

Her response was based on her experience of helping Afore coffee farmers get their licences for organic farming and export their coffee. However, Joy would soon learn that voter criteria are varied and context dependent. The most common criticism of Joy as a candidate was the fact that she was the incumbent member's wife. Many believed that she did not need to go into politics because there was already someone in a powerful position in the family. Joy also had to manage voters' complaints about the incumbent's lack of service delivery, which appeared to dim her candidacy. When I asked how she was navigating that, she replied:

There are a lot of disgruntled voters ... I had to go out and educate the voters again and tell them, 'I am a woman coming [to you]. He is a man; he deals with it differently. He is a politician by profession and I'm a scientist ... I'm different to a teacher'.⁵¹ And I'm trying to explain to them we are two different people with two different ideologies and different visions and different backgrounds.

Lynette Waide, Joy's administrative assistant, said:

Look, individually, David is David and Joy is Joy. Two different people even though they have the connection of being husband and wife. But two different people. Their characters are not the same. Tupela ino saim lain [they are not the same people], how they move around is different. David em [is a] Managala man, she is a Hula woman — they both come from different cultures. Dr Travertz has worked in Oro for eight years, she has served here, ol save gut lo em [they know her well].

In their comments, Joy and Lynette focused on the distinctions between David and Joy as political candidates. They emphasised the differences in their personalities, education and cultural backgrounds. But these distinctions do not change the fact that in the minds of many voters, David and Joy were seen as a pair; as husband and wife, they were a family unit. Some voters expressed that they did not want political power to be concentrated in the same familial group.

Furthermore, many Ijivitari voters were tired of David Arore and anything associated with him; they complained that they had not witnessed any substantial development in the last 10 years under his administration. One of the biggest challenges for Joy was to establish her identity as separate from that of her husband, particularly in areas outside of Afore where she was less

⁵¹ Prior to entering politics David Arore was a secondary school teacher.

well known. As Lynette mentioned, Joy had worked for eight years as the resident gynaecologist at Popondetta Base Hospital. Through this role, women in the province had come to know her very well, but this did not necessarily mean that women voters would interpret her professional service as *hanmak*.

Another disadvantage was the fact that Joy was a *kam man*. As a woman married from another province, even with the support of her in-laws it was hard to secure the strong base vote that would usually be provided by kin. Moreover, her in-laws' area, Afore, is the most remote and isolated LLG area within the Ijivitari District. Cultural traditions and patriarchal worldviews are relatively intact there compared to other lowland areas of Oro, which disadvantages a woman in-law. This was especially the case in 2017, when there were three men from Afore also contesting the Ijivitari seat. Thus, the 9000-strong voter base Joy spoke of would most likely be divided amongst these male candidates.

Finally, it appeared that Joy did not have the full support of her husband, the outgoing member for Ijivitari. Despite allowing her to use his *komiti* networks to campaign, in May 2017 David Arore publicly endorsed long-time Ijivitari contestant John Warisan at a rally in Popondetta, joining Warisan's convoy and declaring his support for Warisan to be the next member for Ijivitari. An interview with a friend of the family revealed that while David permitted his wife to contest, he was not fully committed to her political ambitions; furthermore, some of his influential relatives — who would have been the core of Joy's voter base — agreed with him.

6.4.2 Prisca Mauve

Prisca Mauve was one of three women who contested for the Oro provincial seat, in which she did not perform strongly. She was the eighth person to be eliminated, receiving only 294 votes. I share her story to illustrate the importance of residing in or maintaining close connections to the constituency in which one is planning to contest. This is the key not only to building a reputation but also to being well informed about local politics and local people in order to recruit credible and influential *komiti* to one's campaign team.

I met Prisca at the PNG Women in Leadership Support Program training held in Port Moresby in October 2016. An Oro woman whose mother is from Kokoda and father from Kilaton, Prisca spent most of her adult life working in the education sector. She started as a schoolteacher, then joined the Department of Education. This was followed by a long tenure with the Office of Higher Education, during which she was instrumental in establishing an off-campus centre for the PNG University of Natural Resources and Environment at Popondetta.

A soft-spoken woman in her mid-fifties, it was not originally Prisca's intention to enter politics. However, members of her family and people in her local community approached her and requested that she contest the election. As Corbett (2015b) found with politicians all over the Pacific, this is a common pathway to politics: relatives and kin in the community approach certain citizens who are accomplished, considered elite and/or have exhibited significant *hanmak* in the constituency and convince them to contest.

Initially, Prisca resisted, but after much persuading from her relatives, she gave in. According to her, these relatives made her realise that she could do more for her province. Although 2017 was her first time contesting as a candidate, Prisca was not new to elections and campaign administration. Her husband, who died in July 2016, worked as one of the campaign managers for NCD Governor Powes Parkop, beginning in 2007. She noted that, given his role, she could not avoid being involved in politics: 'As his partner, I'm also a campaign manager. I looked after the house, I took care of the people'. Prisca noted that Parkop had contested before without success and that it was after she and her husband joined his team that he won the NCD Governor's seat in 2007. With that experience, Prisca was confident in dealing with the technicalities of running a campaign. Her main concern was recruiting good people for her team. At the time of our interview in October 2016, she revealed that she had just recruited a suitable campaign manager. One of the disadvantages that came with residing outside the province for so long was not knowing who is who in the community in terms of influence and reputation, as well as who to trust. This local knowledge is hugely important in building a campaign team that can maintain loyal support. In October 2016, Prisca told me that she planned to relocate to Popondetta in February 2017, but apparently, she did not make that move. I tried to follow up with her campaign in the weeks leading up to the issue of writs to no avail. As we entered the campaign period, I was not able to locate any of her rallies around town. I did, however, find her posters in various locations. Her quick elimination with less than 300 votes reflects her limited presence during the campaign and the overall weakness of her campaign team. Prisca had recruited a campaign manager around October 2016, which left only five months to recruit and organise a *komiti* and do awareness. Not residing in Oro before the election year meant limited opportunities for Prisca to show *luksave* and establish meaningful *hanmak* with people in the constituency. Even if she had moved to Oro within that timeframe, anything she or her team did would have been regarded purely as politicking, and they would have been dealing with voters likely already aligned with other candidates.

6.4.3 Bella Amen

Bella Amen was an aspiring candidate who was ultimately unable to secure funding to nominate for the 2017 elections. Bella had been politically active since the early 2000s. Her story has many commonalities with other women candidates, including their upbringings, ambitions, commitment to their communities and desire to do more for their local areas and the national interest. This presents an insight into the kind of women who seek to contest elections in PNG. Contesting national elections is not something most PNG women actively plan for; more often, it creeps up on them. Many women enter politics because people ask them to run. In other cases, the frustrated desire for better services drives them to run.

Bella was a 63-year-old widow, a teacher by profession and a mother of three. Originally from Oro, she had spent most of her professional life outside the province. In 1999, when she and her family resettled in Oro, she was disappointed to see how backward her province was compared to other parts of PNG. Having lived and worked as a high school teacher in the Highlands, the New Guinea Islands and the Southern region from the 1970s to the 1990s, it was very disheartening for Bella to see the contrast between other urban centres and Popondetta. This experience sparked her desire to enter politics and bring change to her province.

Bella also wanted to set an example and normalise the presence of women in public leadership roles. She reflected that as a young woman in the seventies, there were not many woman role models to emulate. She admired Dame Josephine Abaijah, PNG's first woman MP, and the late Dame Rose Kekedo, who was the first woman chancellor of UPNG, among other notable achievements. Bella eventually met both Dame Josephine and Dame Rose, whom she regarded as mentors, affectionately referring to them as *apa pajire* (meaning 'big sister' in her dialect). Bella was particularly inspired by Dame Josephine and believed it was important to set the same kind of precedent so that later generations of women could follow suit.

Bella first contested in the 2007 elections for the Sohe seat. Among 48 other candidates, she was the 14th to be eliminated, only winning 150 votes. It was both disappointing and embarrassing, but she reflected that it was a learning curve for her. Back then, she did not establish a strong voter base. She recounted that her relatives questioned her, saying:

Where were you all this time and you are just coming in now? We already picked who we want ... we are not going to break because we already made promises and we are going to stick to them.

The lesson for Bella was that even her family members needed early notice of her intention to run. Preparation for candidates needs to start as early as two years before an election because the *komiti* of other candidates are always on the lookout for 'loose' people — those without a local confirmed candidate to support — so that they can attract them into their camp.

Bella planned to contest again in the 2012 elections, but the sudden death of her husband in 2009 left her devastated. She shunned all public engagements and kept to herself for three years. In February 2012, Bella attended the Women Candidate Strategy Training workshop organised by the Centre of Democratic Institutions and PNG's Office for the Development of Women in Alotau. There, she met many other women candidates and her desire to contest was reignited. This time, for the 2017 national elections, she decided to contest the Ijivitari Open seat. Even though both her parents were from the Sohe District, Bella was born and grew up in Ijivitari. Moreover, upon her family's return to Oro, they purchased land at Huvivi in Ward 9 of Ijivitari and had lived there since; hence, she imagined that Huvivi would be her base vote area.

In 2013, Bella was elected as the president of the Ward 9 Council of Women. In this position, she used her background as a teacher to advise the women in her ward about various ways to sustain themselves, such as through poultry and piggery projects. However, with limited funding and because service enablers such as proper roads, law enforcement and banking services were not in place, it became a challenge to carry these programs forward. Nevertheless, dealing with the daily struggles of the women in her community kept Bella's desire to contest alive.

In 2016, a young man in Bella's locality approached her and asked if he could start doing her groundwork. She agreed. Together, they started to conduct door-to-door visitations, informing people of her intention to contest. At the time I met Bella in early March 2017, she had a campaign manager and a group of young men conducting her awareness work in the Sepia LLG area. Her son, a coordinator for the youth movement in the Anglican church, contributed to her awareness by spreading the word through his church network. Through the initial work of her *komiti*, Bella received speaking invitations from areas including Tufi, Kewansasap and Sepia.

When I enquired about her policies or the ideas she communicated during her groundwork excursions, Bella explained that she would not speak on that before the official campaign period because she did not want to appear to be making false promises. Rather, her main slogan was 'time for a change'. A loaded phrase commonly used in PNG elections, this slogan

connotes: (a) a change in the way election campaigns are conducted; (b) a change in leadership and away from voting for people who do not bring any development to the district; and (c) a change to the living standards of the community. Her goal was basic development — in her words: ‘I just want to put solar lights there to light up the villages, water pumps and to do the roads, just the basics’.

Bella was strongly against what she termed the ‘handout mentality’. Her approach to groundwork or awareness building was word of mouth and going door-to-door rather than hosting huge community meetings where there was an expectation of gifting. On one occasion, when she visited John Warisan’s stronghold area in Kewansasap, the locals told Bella that she must show *hanmak* to get a portion of their votes; if not, all the votes would go to Warisan. Although they used the term *hanmak*, they were implying that she had to leave them a sum of money, as they had been receiving various forms of *hanmak* from Warisan for a while and were therefore indebted to him. However, Bella was adamant in her message of ‘clean campaigning’:

I am trying to break through that system [of political gifting], and I am getting some opposition, but I’m not going to bend down. I say, ‘If I can, maybe I can come and sponsor’. But I do [not] want to be seen to be buying votes.

While Bella was willing to sponsor or help fundraising events for her community, she did not want to be seen as practising money politics. She claimed that she wanted people to choose her based on her background and previous track record of working with her community — that is to say, her *hanmak*.

I want you to see me and say, mama em background bilon em gutpla na em olsem so na atin em bai kisim service bilong yumi kam [This mother, her background is good, and she is like that so maybe she will bring our service to us]. I want them to speak that kind of language and give it to me.

This opposition to money politics was both ideological and practical. Bella, like many other women candidates around PNG, did not have the resources to engage in lavish political gifting. During our interview on 9 March 2017, Bella held in her hand a directory of political parties, as she was still looking for party endorsement. Back in 2007, when she ran for the Sohe seat, it was under the banner of Julius Chan’s People’s Progress Party, which had provided her with money for logistics and posters. Back then, voters in Oro (and elsewhere in PNG) did not generally identify with parties or vote along party lines, but party endorsement was still advantageous to candidates in terms of assistance with campaign logistics. Furthermore, association with a prominent politician’s party adds weight to a candidacy. Especially for

women candidates, having party backing is a testament to their competitiveness and leadership potential. Throughout the Pacific, women candidates seem to prioritise party endorsement. During the 2019 Solomon Islands elections, observers noted that 65 per cent of the women who ran were party endorsed (Wiltshire et al. 2020).

Leading up to the 2017 elections, the political landscape had seemingly shifted in terms of the importance of parties. In particular, Pangu Pati leader Sam Basil's attacks on Peter O'Neill's People's National Congress (PNC)-led government had influenced many voters and candidates to pick a side. These sides were not entirely based on party policy but also on the personalities of the party leaders. Bella was impressed with Pangu Pati candidate Bryan Kramer's candid views on the PNC-led government, and she planned to approach the Pangu Pati for endorsement. However, women candidates generally have a harder time getting endorsed as party candidates, as political parties scout and endorse candidates they view as most likely to win, usually men (Okole 2005).

At the end of the nomination week, I contacted Bella to check how her nomination went. Unfortunately, she reported that she was unable to secure the K1000 she needed for her nomination fee and had missed the deadline to nominate. Despite being a second-time candidate, Bella had appeared lax about her campaign organisation and did not seem to have a fixed team in place. She was quite vague about her campaign message and plans, choosing to hold back until the official eight-week campaign period. Perhaps her hesitation to reveal more was her reaction to me as a PhD student researching election campaigns. Nevertheless, I found her leisurely approach quite unusual, as most politically informed Papua New Guineans know that unofficial campaigning and preparations begin at least two years before an election.

6.5 *Givim lo Aza*: campaigning as a Mother

Of the women candidates I spoke to about their candidacy in Oro, only a few mentioned or used their experiences as mothers as a means of validating their leadership capability; the rest were fixated on professional experience and ideas for development. Yet, my conversations with *komiti* and observations at campaign rallies revealed that a woman candidate's identity as a mother was utilised frequently in campaign rhetoric. This is a noticeable point of difference from male candidates, whose identity as a father is almost never used in campaigning. For women, certain dimensions of motherhood are glorified, including the perception that mothers are inherently caring, compassionate and have good intentions for those under their care. Also highlighted are the transferable skills associated with being a mother and managing a

household such as planning, budgeting, and managing crises. These qualities and skills all contribute to a woman's purported political skillset, which can aid in political decision-making.

The word *Aza* in the Orokaiva dialect means 'Mother'. The phrases '*em Aza ya* (she is a Mother)' and '*givim lo Aza* (give it to the Mother)' were used a lot during the 2017 elections, particularly in Delilah Gore's re-election campaign for the Sohe Open seat. These are loaded phrases. With a certain intonation, they can mean, 'She is a mother, she knows what she is doing, she will take care of you'. This implies everything that is associated with being a good mother.

Figure 6-1. Delilah Gore's 2017 candidate poster



Source: Sohe District in the Spotlight blog.

On Delilah's 2017 campaign poster (see Figure 6-1) is the phrase '*Aza kebera*'. In the Kaiva dialect, this phrase means 'Mother, you are telling the truth' or 'Mother, it's true'. This slogan emphasises her identity as a mother, as well as affirms her campaign messages. Just above her box number is the phrase '*Hanmak stap pinis ya!*', that is, 'The work that she has already done in the constituency is evident'. Unlike the posters of other intending candidates, which

commonly listed policies or priorities, Delilah's poster had a simple reminder that, as an incumbent, she had delivered and demonstrated *hanmak*.⁵²

Other women candidates have also used their gender to appeal for the women's vote. In Thom Cooke's 2007 election film, *PNG: The Rules of the Game*, Julie Soso is recorded saying, '*Namba wan ya, olgeta meri yu kam lo meri pastaim* (Number one, all the women, you come to the woman first)' as she advised her women supporters on how to take advantage of the LPV system. Speaking at a public rally at Goroka's Peace Park in 2012, Julie used an analogy of how a mother evenly serves food to all the members of her family to emphasise the fairness and good management a woman leader might exhibit as an innate motherly trait. This type of rhetoric can aid women candidates, particularly when it capitalises on the assumption that male candidates are corrupt (Corbett 2015b).

When differentiating herself from her politician husband, 2017 Ijivitari candidate Dr Joy Travertz-Arore said, '*Mi mama ya, mi gat susu, mi gat womb, mi karim pikinini na mi pilim pen bilon yu* (I am a mother, I have breasts, I have a womb, I have given birth and I have felt your pain)'. As a gynaecologist, she used the experience of painfully birthing children and later nurturing them (*mi gat susu*) as a rhetorical device to unify women. In the early phase of her groundwork in 2017, she first approached women leaders in her community and deliberately sought to appeal to women voters.

The use of maternal imagery thrived in Oro due to Delilah Gore's success in Sohe in the 2012 elections. Some of Team Jean's women *komiti* members from the Kokoda LLG shared their experience of supporting Delilah Gore in 2012 and throughout her term. Speaking about Delilah's approachability, a woman *komiti* member said, '*Em meri so mipela painim isi lo go lukim em* (She is a woman, so we find it easy to go see her)'. As expected, most of Delilah's women *komiti* spoke favourably of her performance as the member for Sohe District.⁵³

While Delilah's successful campaign exemplified the effectiveness of using attributes of motherhood or maternal imagery as campaign rhetoric in Oro, doing so can also be a drawback for women seeking to enter the male-dominated political sphere. Motherhood and its associated exhibitions of *luksave* and *hanmak* are often confined to the domestic sphere, regarded as merely women's duty and not as indicators of leadership potential. As noted in the case of Susan Setae's 2002 campaign, work women do in the community is not necessarily

⁵² Throughout the 2012–17 term, progressive reports of developments in Sohe District initiated by Hon. Delilah Gore were posted on sohedistrict.blogspot.com

⁵³ Group discussion with Team Jean coordinators from Sohe District 2017.

considered an indicator of leadership; rather, it can be regarded as something good mothers would or should do. Mothers are often taken for granted in PNG, particularly as their *hanmak* in everyday life is regarded as their motherly responsibility and not something that necessarily obtains *luksave* in a political sense. Motherhood is not commonly perceived as a trait or indicator of credible leadership. As aptly stated by Kidu and Setae (2002:51), 'being a mum is often a disadvantage because mums are always taken for granted. They are the backbone of PNG society — indispensable but too often invisible'. Yet a lot of women candidates use maternal imagery, as they believe it demonstrates skills that are transferable to leadership and management positions.

There have been situations in the region where women have harnessed their status as mothers to gain entry into and effect change in male-dominated arenas, particularly in peacebuilding. These efforts, however, do not necessarily create space for political influence. As analysis of women peacebuilders in the Highlands showed:

although women and women's groups are at the forefront of peacemaking efforts at the community level, this does not always translate to the inclusion of women as decision-makers in political arenas (Hinton et al. 2008:523).

During the crisis in Bougainville, women's roles as mothers and their matrilineal positions as custodians of the land gave them 'a certain amount of status and "a platform ... to approach and appeal to powerful men"' (El Bushra 2007 as cited in Hermkens 2011:13). They were instrumental in initiating the peaceful discourse between the warring factions (Regan 2019:16). Even still, they faced exclusion from national-level peace talks, and in the post-conflict programs, men were the primary decision-makers (Tankunani Sirivi and Taleo 2004). While women successfully campaigned for three reserved seats in the post-conflict legislature, this figure was far less than their original aim, with the reserved seats constituting less than 10 per cent of the elected positions (Hermkens 2011:11). A similar situation occurred in Solomon Islands during the Tensions: women played a crucial role in peacemaking but were largely shut out of post-conflict political settlements and are yet to be proportionately represented in national-level politics (Webber and Johnson 2008).

6.6 Conclusion

Research shows that various factors such as having the right profile, building credibility, being persistent and aligning with powerful brokers are the key components of being a successful politician. In addition, other circumstantial factors must align for a win to eventuate. These include the voting culture of the constituency and the candidate's campaign strategy. Delilah

Gore's decade-long groundwork and *hanmak*, coupled with her relation to long-term Ijivitari incumbent David Arore and Sohe's voting culture all contributed to her 2012 election success. But Delilah's case is an exception that would be impossible for other aspiring women candidates to replicate.

It is clear from the narratives of Oro women candidates that while women might employ different strategies or explore different avenues to garner support and build credibility, unlike for men candidates, the gendered aspect of their identity will always be a scrutinising factor for voters. Also, unlike men, women candidates cannot ignore their gender and all its implications and associations. The most common of these associations is motherhood. Much of women candidate's rhetoric is entwined with maternal imagery, which has both positive and negative connotations, with the former translating motherly attributes into leadership qualities and the latter relegating women to the domestic sphere and taking their *hanmak* for granted.

What is obvious from the stories of Oro women candidates is that there is no established pathway to leadership for women. While women candidates negotiate similar challenges such as finance and security, facets of their individual identities like their ethnic heritage and marital and professional status have implications in how they are perceived and received by voters. Of the 2017 Oro women candidates, three of the seven performed very well. Joy Travertz-Arore finished in the top 10, coming in at ninth place. Sohe's incumbent member Delilah Gore lost by only 198 votes. An analysis of her 2017 run is highlighted in Chapter 7 along with the overall 2017 Oro election results. Jean Eparo Parkop, a candidate for the Oro provincial seat, also finished in second place. Her campaign strategy is the topic of Chapter 7.

Chapter 7 Jean Eparo Parkop

I stood for elections not because my husband was a politician and I wanted to be like him. In fact, this was one of the criticisms against me. I stood for elections because it was my dream to represent my people one day as an elected leader ... Also, [after] traveling back and forth to the village for holidays and other family events and to the province for official duties and seeing no major improvements in the province, deterioration of roads and dilapidated buildings, closing of schools and health centres resulting in too many preventable deaths and increasing number of children doing nothing in the villages, I wanted to bring improvement to service delivery.

—Jean Eparo Parkop

Of all the Oro women candidates I met leading up to the 2017 elections, provincial candidate Jean Eparo Parkop was the most well prepared. I was able to follow her campaign more closely than others because she gave me liberal access to interview members of her family and her *komiti*, sit in on campaign meetings and join them for awareness trips and campaign events.

7.1 Introducing Jean

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I first met Jean at a breakfast meeting at the Grand Papua Hotel in March 2015 during the inaugural PNG Women's Forum sponsored by the United States Embassy. At that time, she revealed that she would be contesting the Oro governor's seat in the 2017 national elections. Her family in Oro were aware of her intention to contest, and by way of preparation, a few of her siblings had already begun planting large gardens of taro to cater for election-period festivities.⁵⁴

Jean Eparo Parkop is a Binandere woman. She was born in Deboin village on 5 November 1962. Both her parents, Prisca Tawoki Maino and Raphael Eparo, are from villages (Deboin and Iwaia) along the northern coast of Oro Province. She comes from a large family of 12 siblings, three of whom had already died by the time I met her.

In 1967, at five years old, Jean was enrolled in prep (kindergarten) at Dewade Primary School in Deboin. At that time, the Anglican church had a strong presence in the northern coast and many people were educated through the Anglican school system at Anglican mission stations. Like many children, Jean found school boring and would occasionally run away or skip school; hence, her primary education was disrupted by such absences.

⁵⁴ Taro is the staple food in Oro and has a special position in the Orokaiva exchange system, as it symbolises commensality. See Schwimmer 1973:111–37 for details.

By 1976, Jean had completed primary school and moved to Dogura Mission Station at Milne Bay to attend Holy Name High School, an all-girl Anglican boarding school that catered for grades seven to 10. Jean's desire to be a political leader started in 1977 as a grade eight student, when all the Holy Name students attended a political rally in Alotau. There, then prime minister Michael Somare gave a rousing speech endorsing Pangu candidate Matilda Pilacapio. Somare's call to help build the country, which had only recently celebrated its independence, inspired Jean to pursue a career in public service and development. Unbeknownst to Jean, her uncle Taylor had already decided that Jean should enter politics, and he began doing awareness among the Binandere tribe. After Jean completed grades 11 and 12 (1980–81) at the Aiyura National High School in the Eastern Highlands, her uncle Taylor tried to prevent her from going to university, as he wanted her to return home and contest, but she convinced him that she needed tertiary education in order to be a better leader. At UPNG in 1982, Jean applied for a bachelor of education, but due to a paperwork mix-up was enrolled in the arts program and settled for a psychology course. It was at UPNG that she met Powes Parkop, a law student from Manus Province. The pair married in 1987 after she completed her arts program.

7.1.1 Partners in development

Throughout the 1980s, as undergraduates, Jean and Powes were vocal activists and participated in various student associations. They founded a social movement called the Melanesian Solidarity Group (MeISol) that advocated for local and regional human rights issues such as the struggles for independence in West Papua and Kanaky (New Caledonia). In PNG, MeISol dealt with logging and mining issues, the unfair treatment of landowners, police brutality and violence against women and children. As the need for awareness increased, the pair, in discussion with Dr Brian Brunton, initiated another organisation called the Individual Community Rights Advocacy Forum that focused on providing legal aid to environmental and women's issues. The Individual Community Rights Advocacy Forum began operations in 1993. All of this advocacy work was conducted outside of Jean's and Powes' formal employment as part of the teaching staff of UPNG. In 1989, the Parkop family moved to the United Kingdom for Jean and Powes to both undertake master's programs at Keele University and the University of Warwick, respectively. It was a challenging time for the young family, as the couple had two young boys, Marshall born in 1987 and Sengol in 1989. Between doing her coursework and taking care of the boys, Jean unfortunately was not able to submit her final paper and therefore did not qualify to graduate.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Jean later went to Australia in 2001 and completed another master's degree at Flinders University.

Back home in 1993 with sisters to help with childcare and the boys starting school, Jean joined the public service while still active as a member of the Individual Community Rights Advocacy Forum. Jean and Powes had another son and two more daughters; they also adopted another daughter, bringing their brood up to six. During her career with the Department for Community Development, Jean worked as the national coordinator for the Disability and Elderly Program (1993–2003), first assistant secretary for Community Governance and Economics (2004–8) and first assistant secretary for Community and Learning (2008–10). In that department, Jean was instrumental in various projects and policies from inception to delivery, such as the National Disability Policy, the National Platform of Action for Women, the Integrated Community Development Policy, the National Early Childhood Care and Development Policy and the Lukautim Pikinini (Child) Act. After a decade with the Department for Community Development, Jean moved to the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council, where she contributed to the Spiritual, Cultural and Community Development pillar of the *Papua New Guinea Vision 2050* national strategic plan.

Although Jean led a very busy life and resided in Port Moresby, she regularly travelled to Oro for work and family obligations and was well abreast of the region's local politics. Moreover, she maintained ties with the local community by way of meeting family obligations (*luksave*) and contributing to various community projects (*hanmak*), including the establishment of water taps in her village of Deboin. Meanwhile, her uncle Taylor was still adamant that Jean would contest, but each election year, Jean always had an excuse to postpone: in 1982, she wanted to go to university; in 1987, she had just given birth to Marshall; in 1992, she was in the United Kingdom; in 1997, she was busy with work in the public service. Finally, in 2002, Jean decided to make a start on her long-awaited political career. Before she got the chance to inform Powes, however, he announced that he would be contesting the NCD's governor seat. Jean was surprised because, in their years together, he had never mentioned contesting to her. Political ambition appeared to be something that had crept up on him. Yet, as they had always been partners, she decided to postpone again to help him with his campaign. It was challenging campaigning in the ethnically diverse city of Port Moresby, and Powes finished fifth in the 2002 race out of 19 candidates. During this time, the Parkops also registered a new political party, the SDP. In 2006, when the incumbent NCD governor Bill Skate died, a by-election was held in which Powes contested and finished third. Across these two unsuccessful attempts, both Jean and Powes were learning a lot, picking up on mistakes and improving their strategy. Finally, on their third attempt in 2007, Powes was elected as the new NCD governor with 46.1 per cent of the total ballot (36,606 first preference votes).

During Powes' first term as NCD governor, Jean volunteered much of her time to his office, facilitating planning and providing advice on policy and budgetary matters. In 2013, Jean became attached as an advisor to the National Council of Women and served on the boards of over a dozen different committees and organisations that deal with human rights, women's advancement, the environment and people living with disability. Her work experience in service delivery with the government is arguably a solid political pedigree. But, as research has shown, voters do not necessarily consider this kind of work experience to be the most important factor when deciding their political representative (Kurer 2007; Saffu 1989; Wood 2018).

7.1.2 Lessons from the 2012 national elections

In 2012, I spent most of my time educating people about the importance of elections and voting quality leaders in the parliament who represent our interests and work for us. We had a manager, my cousin brother who was a former corporal in the army. He was a very good soldier, a troop commander. As a female going to [contest the] elections, I felt the need to have a manager with this background to take care of my security. We had a team of 12 people who accompanied me, mostly my relatives. I did all the campaign in public. The others did their one-on-one campaign, meeting people and talking to them about me and finding out about their concerns, who they were supporting and so on.

—Jean Eparo Parkop

Jean contested the Oro provincial seat for the first time in 2012. It was an impulse decision to contest, and she entered the race without much prior preparation. She contested alongside eight other women candidates and 63 men candidates, finishing in seventh place. The winner was first-time candidate Gary Juffa, a former public servant.

Jean's first attempt taught her some valuable lessons that would aid her planning for the next elections in 2017. Her impulsive decision to contest left little time, about a month, for her family to develop a campaign strategy and plan. She had a limited team to cover the province: her cousin brother went up the Kumusi riverway and inland, while Jean and her other brothers went along the coast to Tufi, the south coast of Popondetta and along the Kokoda Highway to Sasembata to campaign. Other than educating people about the importance of electing quality leaders, there was no specific campaign message or slogan. Apart from a lack of planning, another reason that might have contributed to Jean finishing in seventh place was that her base vote was divided. In the 2012 elections, her cousin brother, the late John Kawowo, also contested the provincial seat; hence, many of her relatives and clan members in Deboin had divided loyalties. Ultimately, neither Jean nor John secured the whole base vote required to be competitive.

Furthermore, even though Jean is well known among her people and the Binandere tribe in her local area, she was not as well known throughout the rest of Oro Province, which limited her impact as a candidate for the governor's seat. Her first campaign experience yielded a few important lessons: to start early with campaign preparations; to develop an extensive campaign strategy that covers the whole province; and to relocate to Oro Province to increase her visibility.

7.1.3 Planning for the 2017 national elections

On 28 July 2016, a day after I arrived in Popondetta to commence my fieldwork, my landlord Uncle Martin drove me to Jean's house in town. Fortunately, she was home. As we got reacquainted, I explained the objectives of my research project and asked if I could observe her campaign preparations. My request was well received, and Jean seemed happy to have me document her campaign journey. She quickly introduced me to her *komiti* and relatives in the yard and invited me to accompany her team to Deboin village the next day. On the morning of Friday, 29 July 2016, I travelled with her team to Deboin. It took about two hours to get there, one hour on the road to Kikiri Beach and another hour by dinghy on the sea.

Photograph 7-1. Team Jean getting ready to travel to Deboin, July 2016



Photograph 7-2. Dancers at Deboin welcome Team Jean, July 2016



Photograph 7-3. Team Jean ushered into conference area, Deboin village, July 2016



The gathering at Deboin village turned out to be a significant event for the team going forward. Two programs occurred over that weekend (29–31 July 2016). The first program on Friday afternoon was the coordinator and community meeting, which entailed an introduction of previous *komiti* from the 2012 campaign and new interested *komiti*. This was an opportunity

for all the *komiti* to meet and reacquaint with each other, as well as encourage and critique their strategies for the next few months. It was sort of a caucus for the team. The second event on Saturday was a reconciliation program followed by a *bondo* (feast) in the afternoon. This event was important to unite the Binandere tribe, as they were divided in the 2012 elections, with some families voting for late John Kawowo and others voting for Jean. With reconciliation underway and witnesses and support from clan members along the Mamba, Gira and Eiya river areas, it was decided that the Binandere tribe would be the support base for Jean's 2017 campaign.

Photograph 7-4. Organising food for *bondo* (feast), July 2016



Photograph 7-5. Jean making a speech during the *bondo* (feast), July 2016

At this time, Jean was also in the process of relocating from Port Moresby to Popondetta. A new house was being built on property she owned 40 minutes outside of Popondetta, and construction was almost complete. Meanwhile, her old house in Popondetta Town was being converted into an office and campaign headquarters where people interested in meeting her, supporting her or working for her could drop by for a visit. This town property had a big *haus win* built in the backyard for family, supporters and visitors to rest as they transited through town; it was affectionately known as Lucky Base. Jean was much better prepared this time. Most of her team recruitment and informal groundwork had already begun in 2015 and would continue until early 2017.

7.1.4 A family affair

The family, village or clan is generally also a campaign team, funding support and voting base.

—Corbett 2015a:58

Jean's planning committee, and core team, was her family. Her son Machel was responsible for campaign logistics. Her niece, also named Jean, looked after the finances. Many of her young nephews provided security, or 'escort', and her sisters-in-law maintained Lucky Base and hosted visitors there. Jean had two campaign managers; for these roles, she recruited experienced older male relatives, Mr Romney Begeda (Mr B) and Mr Lester Guwada (Mr G).

Jean also had eight coordinators for the LLG areas. As these coordinators were located throughout the province, I had few interactions with them.

Mr B, in his early sixties, was a relative from Jean's mother's side and a member of the Binandere tribe.⁵⁶ Mr B had lived most of his life in Oro Province. In the 1980s, he served in local government as a ward member for Ward 10 in Deboin. He was also a long-term employee of the Higaturu Oil Palm company and president of the workers' union. In that capacity, he had become well-known in Oro. As a Binandere man, Mr B was tasked with ensuring that the Binandere people were supportive of Jean's campaign. His other responsibilities included keeping the master list of potential supporters, entertaining visiting parties and speaking on behalf of Jean in her absence. His role was mainly administrative, however, and he was given responsibilities for overseeing activities in the Sohe District.

The other campaign manager, Mr G, was a few years younger than Mr B and responsible for the Ijivitari District. As Jean's nephew from her father's side, the Tain-Daware tribe, he had to ensure the rest of the tribe would support Jean. In the late eighties, Mr G had worked as a marketing and credit manager for the Colgate Palmolive company. He was based in Mount Hagen for a few years before joining Telikom PNG as their sales and marketing manager for the entire Highlands region. He resigned in 1999 and returned to Oro to look after his ailing father. While in the village, he did groundwork awareness for fellow tribesman Cecilking Doruba in preparation for the 2002 national elections. Doruba ousted two-term Ijivitari member Simon Kaumi in that election and hired Mr G to be his political advisor. With his experience working for Doruba and drawing on his previous career as a salesman, Mr G's approach to campaigning for Jean was very tactical, referring to working for Jean as 'selling their product'. His role included conducting awareness trips and establishing support in areas not yet infiltrated. Sometimes he went alone, and other times he travelled with a small entourage of the Team Jean *komiti*. While Mr B's role was more administrative, Mr G was more of a field worker who did a lot of travelling. Initially, it was Jean's intention that these two relatives would focus more on securing support from their respective tribes, but they ended up working all over the province. Herein is an important lesson. Although the candidate may have their own vision of executing a campaign strategy, the campaign managers may disagree and follow their own plans.

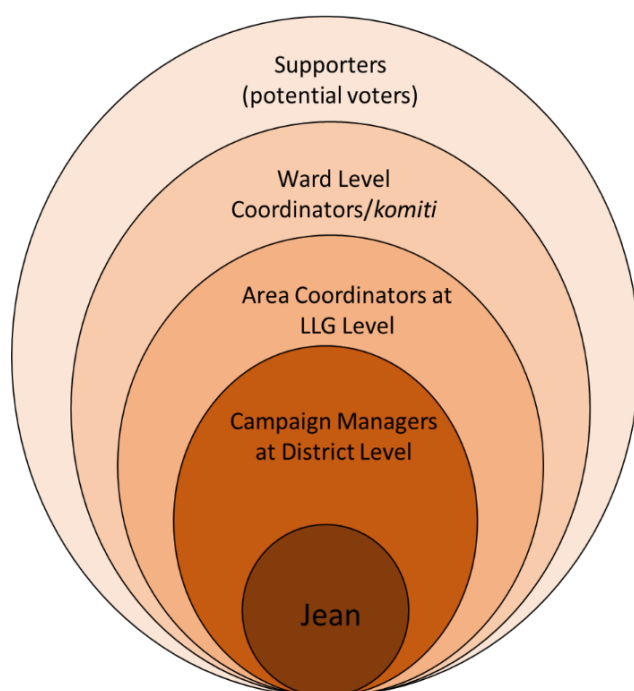
⁵⁶ The Binandere are a migratory people who, over the last 200 years, have settled along the lower plains of the Mamba, Gira and Eia rivers (Waiko 1986).

I have tried to differentiate Mr B's and Mr G's roles here according to their descriptions and my observations. However, in practice, their roles overlapped. As a result, for a time during the groundwork period, there appeared to be level of animosity between the two men. At least, that was communicated to me by other members of the team. There was also wider discord. On one occasion, one of Jean's nephews started a fight with one of his uncles to express his frustration at how *komiti* were conducting their groundwork. Managing people is a challenge, and Jean's *komiti* and her extended family were not immune to internal strife and contention caused by miscommunication, disagreements and petty jealousy. Nevertheless, such differences did not significantly deter them from their primary task of campaigning for Jean.

7.2 Team Jean

In the campaign, the people closest to Jean were her two campaign managers. Together, they formed the core team responsible for the initial strategising, and both were in regular communication with Jean. The campaign managers were responsible for growing the network of Jean supporters, mainly through a core team of eight coordinators who worked to maintain old connections and infiltrate new areas of the province. The original plan was to recruit 162 ward coordinators, one from each of Oro's wards. At one point, Team Jean had a total of 100 ward coordinators or *komiti*, five of whom were women. By the end of the campaign period, however, the total number of *komiti* had reduced to 60, as some had defected to other camps. In addition to this official structure, family members of Jean and the *komiti* were a distinct group of their own in each ward. Their task was to support the *komiti* in the wards through providing food and other resources during the campaign period.

Figure 7-1 illustrates the communication pathway from Jean to her campaign managers, Mr B and Mr G, who communicated with the area coordinators of the nine LLG areas, who in turn communicated with the ward-level coordinators. Team Jean was also collectively known as the *komiti*; technically, however, the workers at the LLG level responsible for overseeing activities in the nine LLG areas were known as coordinators, and the workers at the ward level were referred to as *komiti*.

Figure 7-1. Communication pathway from Jean to her supporters

This communication pathway was designed to control the traffic of interested people coming into Lucky Base. When there was an influx of random people coming to Lucky Base to see either Jean or the campaign managers, it indicated that either the supporters were not following the official line of communication and/or that there was no local ward *komiti* in their locality. The latter would prompt the core team to recruit someone to become the *komiti* for that area. Every few months, the entire team would ‘camp out’ and come together for a caucus. But for the most part, each team member resided in their village and worked on recruiting and maintaining new supporters.

Team Jean aimed to collect at least 100 votes — ideally first preferences, but also second and third preferences — from each of Oro’s 162 wards.⁵⁷ If the *komiti* from each ward collected 100 votes, Jean could potentially win with 16,200 votes. This figure was based on the incumbent’s win in the previous election: in 2012, Gary Juffa won with 13,111 votes after initially amassing 6394 (9.1 per cent) of the first preference votes. Team Jean aimed to get at

⁵⁷ According to the 2011 national census, there are 158 wards in Oro, but members of Team Jean insisted there were 162 and planned according to that figure.

least 7000 first preference votes and then hoped that second and third preferences could pull them up to a figure close to 16,200.

7.2.1 Team Jean's groundwork

Team Jean concurrently conducted three types of groundwork activities. The first was one-on-one campaigning, the responsibility of *komiti*, who sought to convince everyone within their sphere of influence to vote for Jean. The two other groundwork activities were entertaining interested visitors at the *haus win* and conducting awareness field trips. Each of the campaign managers had responsibility for different aspects of groundwork: Mr B managed hospitality at the *haus win*, while Mr G oversaw the awareness field trips.

7.2.2 The *haus win*

The *haus win*, located in the backyard of Jean's property in town, was where Mr B was based. It had a welcoming atmosphere for potential supporters and visitors wanting to meet Jean. The *haus win* also served as a meeting location and a transit point for people traveling to and from their home villages. It was here that the *komiti* from each ward would bring their lists of supporters for Mr B to compile onto the master list. Having sat and observed Mr B at Lucky Base in the *haus win* when a *komiti* would report to him with their name-lists, I noticed that these lists often were accompanied by requests or invitation letters. This can be interpreted as bait from the voters to initiate the exchange process. As established in Chapter 4, the election process is viewed as an opportunity to profit. This practice of sending request letters to an intending candidate is an avenue for the voter or group of voters to market their vote in exchange for something. On various occasions while observing how Mr G and Mr B responded to potential supporters who delivered these letters, I heard Mr G say:

Jean is not the governor of Oro; she is an intending candidate. If you have a request, bring it to Gary Juffa, or Delilah Gore, or David Arore. If she can help you, she will. But your first option is to go to the sitting members. Remember, she is not a member.

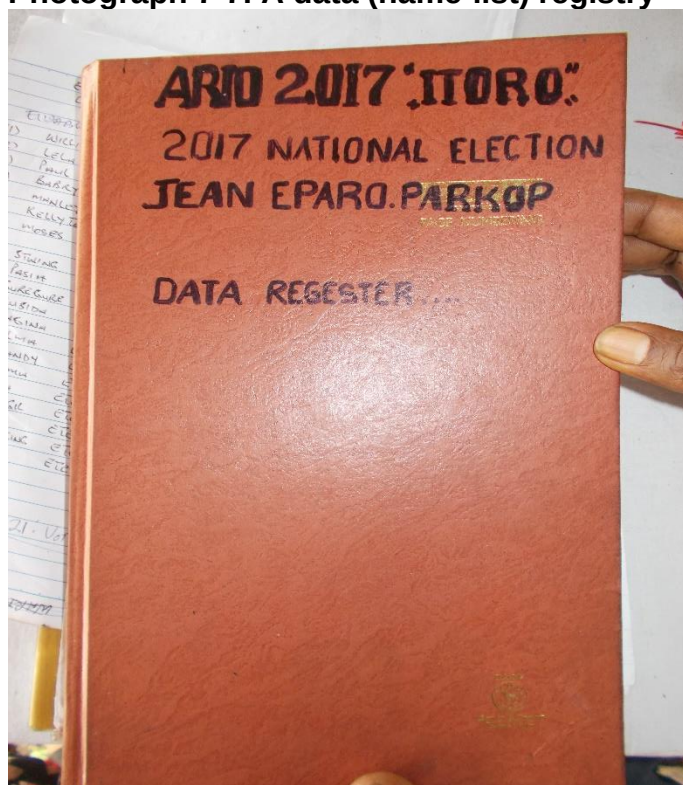
The campaign managers — who usually entertained these visitors, especially Mr B — would often reiterate to them the important fact that Jean was a candidate and not the incumbent member. At times I detected slight annoyance in Mr B's voice, but he always tried to remain tactful and engaging. Previous candidates' practice of handing out inducements and the rise of money politics had encouraged voters to make requests of candidates and expect returns (Haley and Anere 2009:30–31; Kurer 2007; Wood 2016). As these request letters were also

sent to the campaign managers of other intending candidates, Mr B and Mr G had to strategically assess the risks and potential returns before advising Jean.

Photograph 7-6. Example of request letter



Photograph 7-7. A data (name-list) registry



7.2.3 A day at Lucky Base

During my fieldwork, I often visited the *haus win* at Lucky Base. I made it a practice to drop by at least two or three times a week to catch up with Mr B and whoever else was present in the yard. Team Jean's *haus win* at Lucky Base was relatively large. As the first *haus win* began to deteriorate, a second one was built next to it (see Photograph 7-9 and Photograph 7-10). At just a metre off the ground and without walls, people standing outside could also chat with people sitting inside.⁵⁸ Some days, Lucky Base would be filled with visitors and a lot of noise. Other days, it would be relatively quiet, with only a few people hanging around the yard.

Photograph 7-8. An old *haus win* at Lucky Base



⁵⁸ The floor plan of this *haus win* is a large rectangle. It is a big space that caters for a lot of people doing different things. For example, Mr B might be sitting in one corner with his notebook entertaining visitors. In another corner, a group of women could be chatting, and at the far end corner, a group of kids could be playing cards.

Photograph 7-9. A new *haus win* under construction at Lucky Base for election period



One busy day was 19 September 2016. Around 10am, I went to visit Mr B at the *haus win*. He was showing me a map of Oro Province, plotting which locations had a resident Team Jean *komiti*. As we finished discussing the map, an elderly man from Ijivitari approached Mr B and began chatting about John Warisan, a candidate for Ijivitari who had run several times in the past. The man said that he had noticed the incumbent member for Ijivitari, David Arore, getting too close to Warisan. He expressed his dissatisfaction with Arore's performance as an MP and said he had advised Warisan not to engage too much with Arore. In this exchange, Mr B simply agreed, and they continued in small talk.

Not everyone who approached the *haus win* needed to talk only about Jean's campaign. It was a space to meet and have conversations about other things as well. In this instance, it seemed from their dialogue that the elderly man might be a *komiti* of John Warisan. In such a small town, people generally knew each other well, and *komiti* members of various political candidates communicated amongst themselves.

After that, two young men came into the *haus win* and sat next to Mr B. As they started talking, three ladies entered the *haus win* and sat on the opposite side of Mr B. They were all served

tea and donuts by Mr B's wife. She, along with another one of Jean's women relatives, was responsible for keeping the property neat and welcoming visitors into the yard. At any time of the day, whenever an unfamiliar person entered the yard, Mrs. B and other people in the yard would chant 'Oro, Oro, Oro' to welcome them and invite the visitors to sit in the *haus win*. The three ladies had come from the Niugini Compound, a residential area of Popondetta, to follow up on a request letter they had sent to Jean earlier. In response, Mr B explained the team's busy schedule and advised them that Jean would respond towards the end of the following week after she returned from a trip to the Binandere area. Following this explanation, Mr B reverted his attention to the two young men, who wanted an explanation of how things were organised in Team Jean. This was quite common — especially in the early stages of the groundwork. People would often come from distant locations to verify whether Jean was contesting the next election and check out her team and camp.

At 10:45 am, Jean arrived at Lucky Base. Jean resided 40 minutes outside of Popondetta at her property in Urio and would occasionally visit Lucky Base. If visitors were lucky, they would get to meet her personally. After greeting everyone in the yard, Jean came into the *haus win* and Mr B updated her on his trip along the north coast the previous week to check up on their stronghold locations. He presented her his black notebook with notes from the trip, which Jean read and appeared pleased with.

Photograph 7-10. Jean and Mr B at the *haus win*



While she was occupied with the little black book, Mr B turned his attention to a man named Windsor who had just arrived from Ward 8 in Iwaia. This was Windsor's first visit to Lucky Base and his first time speaking with a *komiti* of Team Jean. Mr B introduced himself and spoke about the team's overall strategy. Then, Windsor mentioned that it was his nephew, a student from UPNG, who had encouraged him to check out Jean's camp and volunteer to be a part of her campaign. Windsor's nephew had advised him that she would be a good candidate because earlier that year she and her husband had funded him and several other Oro UPNG students to carry out an anti-corruption awareness trip to the province.

After Windsor, another young man approached the *haus win*. He brought with him his father's medical report. As he handed it to Jean to read, he explained that his father needed to be transferred to Port Moresby General Hospital. However, the document he brought with him was only a report of his father's condition, not a letter from Popondetta Base Hospital recommending his father's transfer. Jean responded that she needed more clarification from the doctor regarding the transfer and what was expected of the patient's family financially. In this scenario, I had an inkling that perhaps this young man was trying to get some money and that his father did not necessarily require a medical transfer. Unfortunately for him, his plan did not work out. This situation highlights another issue with entertaining request letters: some are undoubtedly genuine, but others may not be. Furthermore, some requests letters are for the benefit of entire communities or groups of people, while others are for individual gain. Hence, careful consideration is required when processing these requests to ensure high returns, detect falsehoods and avoid wasteful spending.

Jean departed from the *haus win* around midday, leaving Mr B to continue his duties. A few more people arrived in the afternoon requesting *helpim* (money), but Mr B explained that there would be no assistance until Team Jean had conducted some more fundraising. Mr B reminded the visitors that the Parkop family also had to organise and fundraise for NCD Governor Parkop's re-election campaign, and, as Jean was also involved with the fundraising activities of the SDP, it was a busy time for the Parkop family.⁵⁹ In his role as the administrative campaign manager, Mr B spoke on behalf of Jean. He had to be approachable and accommodating to visiting potential supporters. Lucky Base in many ways encapsulated the essence of Oro hospitality and *luksave* by welcoming people and being hospitable and responsive while also seeking to preserve campaign resources as much as possible until the issue of writs.

⁵⁹ Powes Parkop is the parliamentary leader of the SDP, which he founded in June 2010.

Photograph 7-11. Mr B at his desk in the *haus win* at Lucky Base

7.2.4 Awareness field trips

Mr G was primarily responsible for marketing Jean to the province through awareness field trips. On these trips, he would go to villages where he had relatives or friends to stay with under the pretence of visiting them. These visits, a form of guerrilla campaigning, acted to strengthen existing ties made during the 2012 elections and as recruitment drives in locations without a resident *komiti*. On some occasions, Mr G travelled to already infiltrated areas to check up on *komiti* and personally inform them of plans for the campaign. Maintaining these ties is important because, during the official campaign period, candidates cannot venture freely into any community to give campaign speeches or host rallies. Most communities are looked after by *komiti* of various other candidates, and it is the resident *komiti* who organises rallies for their candidate to attend and speak at.⁶⁰

7.2.5 Trip to Kokoda

On 11 October 2016, I accompanied a small cohort of Team Jean under the leadership of Mr G on a trip to a village in Kokoda. The small cohort comprised of Mr G, Mr and Mrs. B, the

⁶⁰ The *komiti* will arrange for the erection of a temporary podium, organise dancers and singers to welcome the entourage and invite local people to attend. This is another opportunity for election entrepreneurship. During the campaign period, I learnt that in a few areas around Popondetta Town that did not have a resident committee member of any candidate, the unattached male youth erected temporary podiums and invited intending candidates to speak, charging them a small fee for using their makeshift platform.

driver (a young man named Jason), 'Little Jean' (Jean's niece who managed the finance), another young man who was responsible for security and Martin, the president of the SDP, and his wife. After stopping at Papindo for supplies — tea, sugar, rice and tinned fish — we left Popondetta Town around 4pm. The main roads in Oro are generally sealed, but as we approached the Kokoda LLG area, we hit the gravel and dust, as some sections of the roads are either incomplete or still under construction.

We arrived at our destination, Kebara Primary School in Ward 7 of the Kokoda LLG, around 7pm. The incumbent Governor Gary Juffa is from this area, and Team Jean knew it was likely to be the centre of his support base. Nevertheless, the purpose of the trip was to assess the potential level of support for Jean in the area, seek out disgruntled supporters of Governor Juffa and other candidates and figure out how Jean's networks could be expanded. The campaign team mentioned that a lot of women from Binandere and along the north coast had married into this section of Kokoda, and there was a possibility that some of them could be recruited to work for Team Jean. Mr G advised that they were looking for second and third preferences, which were better than nothing. He commented that although that section of Kokoda was considered a stronghold for the incumbent governor:

We must not assume that everyone is satisfied with the governor's leadership. There will be people who are not satisfied. These are the type of people we are looking for.

Our host, Cephas, was the overall coordinator for the area and took care of wards 1 to 24 in the Kokoda LLG. Kebara Primary School was built on his land. When we arrived, it was already dark. Cephas led us into a long *haus win* he had recently built to host such meetings and receive guests. After putting our things in our designated rooms, we convened in the centre of the house and sat around a warm fire, which was very welcome as Kokoda is higher in the mountains and colder than the lowlands where we had come from. Not long after, Cephas' wife brought out a tray of cups of hot tea that was passed around. Little Jean and Jason had given Mrs. Cephas and her helpers some of the store food we had brought with us from town, and they proceeded to cook the evening meal. By the time we had our meal, it was already 9pm, and Cephas, Mr G, Mr B and Martin were deep in conversation about campaign groundwork. Cephas was outlining the places where he had appointed *komiti* and other areas that still needed more infiltration.

In addition to summarising his own work, Cephas spoke highly of his wife's work for the campaign and the connections she had made for Team Jean in her capacity as a women's leader in the Anglican church. The main reason Cephas and many others in the area had

decided to get on board with Team Jean was dissatisfaction with the incumbent governor. Although geographically located in Governor Juffa's stronghold, they claimed that he had not once attended community events they organised, despite them sending out numerous invitation letters. His failure to acknowledge their invitations had left them disappointed in his leadership. Cephas continued talking late into the night, updating us on what had transpired in the last year, how he had garnered support in various villages and the number of villages who had pledged their support to Jean. Mr G reminded him that political developments happen all the time, advising that the campaign team needed to be on guard and maintain regular contact with the supporters they recruited.

The next morning, Mr G gave Cephas some money to arrange for all the *komiti* under his leadership to come together in the afternoon for a meeting. As he handed the cash he said:

How yu usim money lo mekim admin em ino wari bilon mi (how you use the money to do your administration work is not my concern), you are a leader, we will not question your integrity.

This comment perfectly illustrates Mr G's campaign approach, particularly with money. He preferred not to know exactly how campaign workers used the money they were given; to him, all that mattered is that they got the job done. He also believed strongly that a good candidate is one who listens to their *komiti* and lets them do their job without micromanaging.

After breakfast, two little girls and I went walking through the Kebara Primary School field and came across a clear, fast-flowing river where we relaxed, did a bit of laundry and collected smooth little stones. In the early afternoon, we returned to Cephas' yard to find logs of old trees arranged in a semi-circle as seats on the lawn in front of the *haus win*. Carloads of men — *komiti*, chiefs and village leaders from the area — began to arrive to fill the seats, and by 5 pm, the meeting was underway. Cephas, as the overall area coordinator and host of the meeting, welcomed everyone. He gave an overview of the program and introduced the travelling team. Mr G, who spoke next, explained the purpose of their trip, which was to do awareness and assess the progress of their groundwork. He stressed the need to tread carefully in doing awareness in the Kokoda area and reiterated the importance of following the channel of communication. Mr B spoke next. He began by thanking all the leaders (area *komiti*) for coming together. He then gave an update about the work being done along the north coast. He ended his speech by reminding them of the campaign goal, which was for each of them to collect at least 100 votes from each ward. After Mr B was Martin Angoro, the president of the SDP. Of the speakers, Martin spoke the longest. He gave a history of the SDP and explained the importance of political parties — particularly in forming government after elections — and the

value of being affiliated with a party as opposed to being a 'loose' candidate. He concluded by stating, 'Without party you become a backbencher. *Noken makim candidate natin, makim pati candidate* (Do not choose a candidate without endorsement, choose a party-endorsed candidate)'.

Photograph 7-12. Mr G and Mr B talking to *komiti* at Kebara, Kokoda LLG



After hearing from the guests, it was time for the local Kokoda *komiti* to give their remarks. They stood and spoke one at a time, introducing themselves by stating which village they came from. They declared their support for Jean and gave a summary of the type of work they had already done. Some even provided demographic information for their village or ward, such as the number of families and pledged voters they had recruited. By this time, it had begun to rain, and we retreated into the long *haus win*. Once the formalities were done, a dinner of rice, fish and greens was served with very sweet tea. Casual conversations continued late into the night. By midnight, I became tired and retreated to bed. When I returned to the lounge area (fireplace) the next morning around 8am, some of the *komiti* were still there talking politics. They were discussing Jean's *pasin* (personality), what she is like and how she relates to other people. I then realised that some of these *komiti*, while they worked for Team Jean or were interested in working for her, had never met her. Those who did not know her personally were very keen to learn more about her. Hence, Mr G and Mr B, as relatives of Jean, talked about her, describing her approachability, her *luksave* and her *hanmak*. They even compared her to Governor Juffa, saying that she was more in tune with cultural protocols such as reciprocity

and making *bondo* (feasts). This was important information to convey, as I often heard people comment that the incumbent governor, while a good, outspoken national leader, appeared to lack the cultural *luksave* the rural people value.

Photograph 7-13. Typical meal during awareness trips



While everyone was drinking tea, Mr G made a few closing remarks. He advised everyone not to work in isolation, to communicate with each other and continue to check up on their supporters. Referring to the incumbent's *komiti* he said, '*Sapos ol givim — it's politics, yupela kaikai* (If they give money — it's politics, you eat)'. By this, he meant that if the incumbent governor's *komiti* offered money, they should take it and use it, as that is politics. After breakfast, some rice and sugar were distributed to the remaining *komiti* to take back to their respective communities. Mr B made note of some of the requests the *komiti* had made. One popular request was for help to purchase lawnmowers and building materials for campaign houses in preparation for the official campaign period. By 10am, we were all packed and left Kebara for Kokoda Station to visit a relative stationed there who was a police officer. In the afternoon, we stopped for the night at another village in Papaki at a relative's residential area. During the night, similar activity occurred as the night before, with community leaders and interested neighbours coming over to have a meal and chat with Mr G and Mr B about the team's campaign plans. This was an example of how awareness trips are generally conducted. They are the core of doing groundwork and usually conducted by male *komiti*. Although a few

women were in attendance, they did not engage in much of the deliberation, only observed and listened.

Another type of trip Team Jean took was visitations to communities who supported and voted for Jean in the 2012 elections. Usually, the team would go bearing gifts such as bales of second-hand clothing as a way of thanking them for their support in 2012 and to further strengthen that relationship.

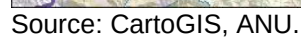
According to my tracking of Team Jean's activities, between August 2015 and October 2016, 45 locations or villages in the northern part of Oro established a resident Team Jean *komiti*. Figure 7-2 shows the reach of Team Jean's infiltration and established support. Deboin and Iwaia, indicated by bold red ink, were the focal points of her support base: Jean's mother is from Deboin (Binandere tribe), and her father is from Iwaia (Tain-Daware tribe). Campaigning in PNG generally begins with the immediate family and spreads out through affinal connections. The surrounding areas in red indicate Jean's stronghold, as these are places where she had kin connections as well as tribal affiliation. In these areas of the Oro Bay and Tamata LLGs, Team Jean expected complete support in terms of first preference votes. However, even though this was Jean's local area and despite the claims of clan-based support, there is no such thing as a ready-made support base that will automatically give full support to a candidate when requested (Ketan 2004). Campaigning is still a necessity, and a *komiti* must be stationed in such an area. Even though a strong first preference vote from a stronghold area is expected, it is not guaranteed.

For areas in green and purple — areas infiltrated by the campaign, either earlier in campaign preparations (green) or later (purple) — a first preference vote is neither guaranteed nor expected. These areas are strongholds for other candidates, and it is understood that most first preference votes will go to those candidate. For example, there was only one member of Team Jean stationed in Afore because the Afore LLG 'belonged' to David Arore, the incumbent member for Ijivitari who had decided to contest the provincial seat in 2017. Furthermore, Figure 7-2 also shows that Team Jean had little influence in the Higaturu LLG, which was where Gary Juffa's team did a lot of campaigning. The further away the support is from the stronghold, the less committed you can expect the supporters to be. In these areas, teams campaign for voters' second and third preferences, as it would be unrealistic to expect first preference votes.

As 2016 came to an end, Team Jean worked even harder, traveling to remote locations such as the coast of Tufi, where they were warmly received and promised votes. As of 12 December 2016, 50 localities along the north coast of Ijivitari and rural Kokoda had a Team Jean

representative. These were isolated and expensive locations to reach, requiring dinghy hire and four-wheel drive vehicles. Of course, with each visitation, Team Jean was obliged to bring bales of store food items, as per the common practice (Susub 2011:215). Upon establishing *komiti* in these locations, both campaign managers seemed pleased with the progress made and were quite optimistic they could win the governor's seat. By March 2017, the areas in purple had been infiltrated; as Jean informed me, 'by the end of March 2017, we covered the province coast to coast, all Binandere and Tain-Daware villages, and many Iwaia and Orokaiva villages'.⁶¹ Figure 7-2 shows the impressive amount Team Jean was able to accomplish between August 2015 and March 2017. Yet, when compared to Figure 7-3, which shows most of the other villages across the province, many more locations remained to be infiltrated. Team Jean particularly failed to infiltrate and establish support in the rural areas of Afore and Tufi because they were difficult to traverse due to limited road access. These and other remaining areas had to wait to be reached during the official campaign period from 20 April to 23 June 2017.

⁶¹ Jean Eparo Parkop 01/04/2017. 2017 Oro Provincial candidate, personal communication.



7.2.6 Jean goes to nominate

The most anticipated day for Team Jean was 24 April: Jean was going to submit her nomination form. The night before, Mr B texted to suggest that I should make my way to Lucky Base around 8:30am. Since I knew how long it can take for people to organise, I left my place at 9:30am and first went to the town Papindo store to get some batteries for my digital camera. When I arrived at Lucky Base around 10am, a huge orange SDP banner hung over the entrance. Trucks and buses were parked in a queue along the street. I bemoaned my tardiness; the place was already packed with people milling around, chatting and getting ready, and more supporters were arriving by truckloads. I could not find a spot to sit, so I walked around the yard and noticed some familiar faces: men, women and children I had met on previous trips to Oro Bay, Deboin, Ajeka and Kokoda. In one corner of the Lucky Base yard, four young men were spray painting 'Jean Eparo Parkop' on an orange banner nailed onto two timber poles.

Photograph 7-14. Young men preparing banners



Near the entrance, a group of young girls in grass skirts and tapa cloth were putting the finishing touches on their face paint. Each new arrival of supporters came with their own syncopated chants of 'PARKOP! PARKOP!' and their own colourful costumes to distinguish themselves from supporters coming from other areas of the province. Most of the *komiti* and Team Jean personnel wore the orange SDP t-shirts. Mr B had informed me that only officials and fully committed supporters on the name-list would be entitled to receive and don campaign paraphernalia such as t-shirts, hats and stickers.

Photograph 7-15. Family supporters getting ready for Jean's nomination



Around 11:30am, Jean arrived in her Land Rover. She looked very formal in a short-sleeved Oro print dress suit and a large traditional necklace. She asked Martin why the people were not yet organised. Apparently, they were waiting for two truckloads of supporters still en route from Kokoda LLG. In addition, the NCD governor's flight was delayed in Port Moresby. As the parliamentary leader for the SDP and Jean's partner, it was important for Governor Parkop to be present for Jean's nomination and the preceding reception event. An hour later, Governor Parkop was still stuck in Port Moresby; nevertheless, it was time to nominate. Two Highlands girls in their full *bilas* (traditional Highlands costumes) escorted Jean on her walk to nominate.

Photograph 7-16. Jean with her escort girls

Outside the Lucky Base yard, supporters were assembled in groups to walk behind a stage truck with a live band performing on it. Only a few cars would be involved in the show convoy to the PNGEC office, with everyone else instructed to leave their vehicles and walk. Popondetta is very small town, and it would usually take only 15 minutes to walk from Lucky Base to the PNGEC office. Due to this being a grand occasion, however, the convoy took a longer route, walking on the main road through town and then on to the NPGECE office. By 2pm, the procession patiently waited outside while Jean went into the PNGEC office to fill out her nomination form. Fifteen minutes later, she walked out to her jubilant crowd of supporters, and they all began to walk to through town. All of their chanting and dancing, coupled with the live band, created a lot of commotion that stopped the whole town. The convoy walked about 30 minutes out of town to the post-nomination reception at a place called Hageta that belonged to a *komiti*. There was an open lawn that could fit more than 500 people, and supporters sat in their local groups. Jean and a few men proceeded to the grandstand stage and commenced the acknowledgement and thank you speeches to all the supporters who had turned up for the nomination. After showing the crowd the nomination form, which was met with applause, a pastor said a prayer and *mumu* (earth oven)-cooked food of taro, banana and chicken was

served to the people by the host *komiti*'s team. By 4pm, everyone got back into their trucks and started on their return trips.

Photograph 7-17. Jean giving final instructions to *komiti* before the nomination walk



Photograph 7-18. Dancers getting ready to lead the way out



Photograph 7-19. Team Jean's convoy walk to nomination about to start



Photograph 7-20. Team Jean's convoy walking into town



Photograph 7-21. Post-nomination reception



After Jean's nomination on 24 April, the team unfortunately had to delay their official public campaign plans for two and half weeks due to a few untimely deaths in Jean's family. Her first cousin — and Mr G's son — died in April; then, later in May, Jean's father died. These deaths had a huge impact on Team Jean's campaign, affecting their schedule and budget as they now had to direct their attention to organising the funerals. Later, Jean reflected that they lost about 10 per cent of their support from the Mamba and Gira areas because they were unable to make the consolidation trips to those locations, and their supporters were swooped up by other provincial candidates.

7.2.7 Campaigning in a village: Banderi

On 11 May, I accompanied Team Jean on their first campaign outing since the nomination. It was a trip to visit the Banderi community in Emo village in the Oro Bay LLG. Team Jean was invited to the village by an Anglican church women's group. Jean was accompanied by her core team, a few relatives and several of her supporters. Together, we piled into a 35-seater Dyna truck to make the two-hour journey from Popondetta to Banderi. Upon our arrival, we were greeted by loud female chants of 'Oro, Oro, Orokaiva'. The path leading to the temporary podium was lined with colourful flowers, and a banner made with young lime green coconut leaves was hung overhead for us to pass under. We sat in a circle inside a large *haus win* where refreshments of *kulau* (unripe coconut juice), bananas and betel nut were served. Then, community members approached to shake our hands.

Photograph 7-22. Team Jean being greeted by the Banderi village community

Soon after, we moved out into the lawn, and the master of ceremonies approached the stage to start the program. The gathered crowd was not very large. Altogether, less than 100 people attended, mostly women from the Anglican church along with community leaders, including the LLG president, the village magistrate and *komiti* of other candidates. The event began with welcoming remarks from the village magistrate followed by a speech from Jean. She delivered her speech in a combination of English, Tok Pisin and their local dialect. After thanking the local organisers, Jean began her speech by explaining the electoral process, the value of having elections and the importance of choosing an appropriate representative. She said:

No more toilet project[s], that is, food that goes in one end and out the other. Development is at your fingertips, and it is a community effort. Do not vote for people who come and say, 'You vote for me, I will do this'. If they say that, ask them what they have done. Ask them about the DSIP funds, where has it gone? Be careful in choosing your leaders.

Here, *hanmak* was emphasised when she urged the voters to ask candidates about what they had done, whether they had a record of service delivery and how development funds had been used. She went on to speak a little about herself, particularly her experience with community development. She talked about work that had been done with development funding in the NCD, such as sealing the roads around Port Moresby, suggesting that the same could be done in Oro if the Provincial Services Improvement Program funding was budgeted well. Her appeal to voters was that, after 40 years of independence, there must be a turning point. She

challenged the Anglican women in the audience, whose union had a membership of 12,000, to agree to support one leader:

Sometimes we must get tired of begging, look around, and see what type of resources you have. I am not afraid of men; I know the government system. Time up. Now is the turning point for Oro. It was a small party, SDP, that built up the National Capital District. SDP's promise to the community is water and electricity.

Her administrative campaign manager Mr B spoke next. He commenced with this question: 'Will a woman invite a man into a hotel room if she is away from her family?' He described men politicians who engage in activities such as drinking and having affairs whenever they go to Port Moresby for parliamentary sessions, arguing that 'it will be hard for a woman to do that. It is time to try a female governor'. Knowing that it is difficult to dispel stereotypes, this type of rhetoric using generalisations about male and female virtues prompts the audience to consider women as 'clean' candidates because men are perceived to be corrupt (Corbett 2015b). Moreover, 'there is a pervasive idea that women behave differently from men as candidates and members, and that only men play money politics' (Baker 2015:12). This rhetoric is an appeal to voters who are tired of corruption, money politics and no service delivery. It aims to promote women candidates as disrupters to a corrupt political system. As outlined in Chapter 2, PNG's highly volatile and dishonest political environment has been shaped by men as the principal political actors.

Mr B felt it was necessary to start off his oration with this gendered rhetoric, but it was something that Jean did not mention. While some women candidates may fixate on amplifying noble womanly virtues and maternal imagery, I observed that Jean's speeches usually focused on development goals and policies. This was probably an attempt to distance herself from the label of 'woman's candidate' or downplay the 'gender card', thus portraying herself as everyone's leader. Yet, using such rhetoric can sometimes aid in establishing a common ground or sense of affinity between the candidate and the audience. For example, in the 2007 elections when Betty Higgins, a well-travelled businesswoman, was contesting for the Usino-Bundi electorate in Madang Province, her campaign rhetoric used phrases like '*mi meri bilong peles* (I'm a woman from the village)' and '*mi wok long famili* (I work for the family)' (quoted in Zimmer-Tamakoshi 2011:384) to identify with the rural voters and portray herself as a good woman who works for the family. This gendered language was also used by other Oro candidates (see Chapter 5).

Continuing with his oration, Mr B talked about Jean's qualifications, the type of leadership positions she had held over the years and her work with the Department for Community Development. He spent a significant amount of time talking about the changes taking place in Port Moresby because of Jean and Powes' partnership in development, highlighting this as part of her *hanmak* in the space of development and progress. Locally, he talked about the water tap Jean had put up in her home village of Deboin 20 years ago and her *luksave* to communal needs. After that speech, Mr B and Jean presented K1000 to the Anglican women's group as a contribution to their association.

Martin Angoro, the provincial party president for the SDP, spoke next. He gave a brief history of the SDP and explained that the party had nominated Jean as their candidate for the Oro provincial seat based on her merits. He told the crowd that there was no other person better suited for the job of governor than Jean. He also educated the audience at length about the value of voting along party lines, concluding that, ultimately, it is a coalition of parties that forms government.

After Martin, the Anglican women's representative, Florence, spoke. She thanked Team Jean and spoke about transport issues, especially how difficult it is for women to get to Popondetta from Banderi and other nearby villages to sell their garden produce. She also promised Jean that she would try her best to collect first preference votes for her. After she finished, a *komiti* of Jerry Weiba's, a local Ijivitari candidate, came up and thanked Jean and her team. He also took the opportunity to appeal to Jean's supporters to give their first, second or third preference to Jerry Weiba for the Ijivitari seat.

A village chief spoke next, thanking the team, followed by the Oro Bay LLG president. The final speaker was a youth representative from Team Jean. He gave an analogy about how a mother would keep cooked food for her children even if they are out late at night, compared to a father who would be cross at the children when they returned home. He did not expound on his analogy but left it as something for the audience to ponder and encouraged them to consider trying a woman representative such as Jean. Even if Jean herself did not use gendered rhetoric in her speech, the campaign event was bookended by her campaign team members promoting the benefits of choosing a woman candidate.

By 4:30pm, the formal program had ended, and another more substantial round of refreshments was brought out. Large trays of creamed taro, rice, *aibika* (local spinach) and fish were placed in the centre of the *haus win* where the guests could help themselves. At 6pm, Team Jean piled backed into their truck and journeyed back to Popondetta.

Photograph 7-23. Jean speaking to locals before departing for town



7.3 Gender and campaigning

Scholars have highlighted three explanations as to why gendered cultural beliefs and practices around politics present a significant challenge for women candidates (Sepoe 2002; Underhill-Sem 2010; Zetlin 2014). Waring and others (2000:25) analysed data collected by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2000 from a survey of about 200 women politicians across 65 countries and found that:

the strongest theme to emerge across regions from the data was the concern that traditional gender roles and cultural values affected women's access and contribution to the democratic process.

When campaigning as a woman in PNG's male-dominated electoral space, gendered beliefs about the place and role of women must be constantly contested. In a woman candidate's campaign, discussions of development and policies are usually accompanied by the acknowledgement of gendered norms.

According to locality or context, campaigners or the *komiti* will either emphasise gender stereotypes that would be favourable to a woman candidate and/or capitalise on negative male stereotypes to present women candidates in a better light. In Banderi, Mr B suggested that women politicians would be more morally upright than their men counterparts. This type of rhetoric puts the focus on women's behaviour, or rather, the behaviours expected of women,

such as reliability and fidelity. It relies on positive stereotypes about a woman's character or *pasin*, relating them to leadership attributes of accountability and integrity. It also prompts the audience to consider some of the negative behaviours associated with men and, therefore, men candidates. While most of the speeches endorsing Jean were focused on her capabilities and attributes, the first speaker, Mr B, and the last speaker, the youth representative, highlighted her gender, framing it as an advantage, with Jean as a woman candidate representing a kinder, more ethical style of leadership, one that could potentially bring change to their province.

7.4 Campaigning as a wife

As in the case of Dr Joy Travertz-Arore (discussed in Chapter 5), Jean received a great deal of criticism due to her status as the wife of NCD Governor Powes Parkop. Critics viewed Powes' success as 'enough' for the Parkop family and questioned Jean's motive for contesting. On several occasions, I heard critics make remarks along the lines of, 'your husband is already a governor' and 'does parliament belong to your family?' These types of sentiments illustrate the challenge of separating out the wife component of a woman candidate's identity. To some extent, Jean and Joy were not regarded as independent political actors, but rather as part of a pair with their husbands.

Jean's *komiti*, however, sought to use her marriage to Powes to their advantage, arguing to voters that it is better to have someone with political connections already in place than to vote for someone who does not. During my observations at the Lucky Base *haus win*, I heard someone use the adage of 'wherever the neck turns the head follows' to emphasise that, while Powes might be the governor and head of their family, Jean is his most trusted advisor. The campaign frequently suggested that developments in Port Moresby reflected Jean's input and not just Powes' work alone. Another *komiti* from the Safia LLG, while talking to a group of elderly people, said:

Yu tingim ah, taim bilong kilim pik, mipela isave salim meri pik igo lo bush lo kisim man pik ikam clostu, olsem lo skin bilon pikinini meri bilong mipela bai mipela kisim governor ikam lo hia.

You recall, when it is time to kill a pig, we usually send a female pig into the bush to lure in the male pig. Similarly, we will use our daughter to bring the governor here.

By this he was suggesting that voters could 'use' Jean to bring the Governor Powes Parkop, and therefore Port Moresby's level of development, to Oro. Knowing the respect people had

for Governor Powes and the transformation of Port Moresby during his two terms as the NCD governor, this *komiti* talked more about Powes than Jean to this audience. From this perspective, it was not Jean's individuality that was attractive but rather her marriage to a successful male political figure.

In another instance, a woman I met in Kokoda explained to me that she and her family would be voting for Jean because their daughter had benefited from one of Parkop's policies in NCD back in 2008. In this case, it was an incentive that assisted families with the tuition fees at the Marianville Girls High School in Port Moresby. The woman told me, '*Mipela igat dinau lo NCD governor*', meaning her family was indebted to the NCD governor and that they would repay that debt by voting for Jean. In that case, Jean benefited from her husband's *hanmak*.

While Jean's *komiti* had a standard campaign slogan and message of partnership in development that aligned with the ideals of the SDP, they were at liberty to frame Jean in whatever way they saw fit to garner support for her candidacy. I did not hear Jean refute any claims made by her *komiti* or dictate their campaign rhetoric in public, however, when speaking in public about Governor Powes, she usually stated that they were 'partners in development'.

Governor Powes himself proved to be a supportive partner and parliamentary leader of the SDP by visiting the province on multiple occasions and escorting Jean to several significant gatherings. Most of his speeches about Jean highlighted her leadership record and her contribution to helping Port Moresby develop in the last decade. The following is an excerpt from a speech Governor Powes made during the campaign period:

Na yupla lukim Mosby is different because everybody there ol i decide not to vote for their relatives or wantok or their province or district or haus lain bilong ol. They vote for me; you can see the result in Moresby. Moresby is changing because they decided to vote people on merit. Em brada blo me or nogat, or em Kandere blo mi or nogat or one tokples, they put that aside na mi ya! Lo las liklik provins, ol votim mi na yu can see the result, and she is part of the result, she is a major part of the result. Look at leaders with proven record, na candidate bilong yumi (referring to Jean), governor in waiting, em gat proven record lo leadership. Ems tap lo primary school, em skul captain, em igo lo hi-skul lo Dogura, em skul captain, em igo lo Ayiura, olgeta Papua New Guinea kam ya, em skul captain, em igo lo yunnivesiti em Lukautim ol meri, em wok lo NGO, mobalisim komuniti, then em igo wok llong dipatment bilong komuniti development so emi gat experience long mobalisim komuniti, kamapim program long komuniti,

*implementim program isave. Our governor in waiting, she has the plan, em ran wantaim pinis, em formulatim pinis, plan bilon em ya, em to 'Arise Oro'. Let's arise and take it!*⁶²

Photograph 7-24. NCD Governor Powes Parkop greeting Jean's *komiti* at Lucky Base



7.5 Conclusion

This chapter illustrates a well-planned campaign, a campaign that essentially ticked all the boxes. Team Jean started early, with groundwork already underway in 2015. This entailed recruiting *komiti*, reconnecting with supporters from her previous contestation during the 2012 national elections, showing *luksave* and exhibiting *hanmak*. Nevertheless, there are always risks, unanticipated events and challenges that require vigilance during the campaign period.

⁶² Translation: And you people see, Port Moresby is different, because everybody there, they decided not to vote for their relatives or their friends or their province or district or their village hamlet. They vote for me; you can see the result in Moresby. Moresby is changing because they decided to vote people on merit. He is my brother or not, he is my maternal uncle or not. My one bird [traditional totem] or not, or whether we came from the same province or not. Or one language, they put that aside and me, from the last smallest province, they voted for me, and you can see the result, and she [Jean] is part of that result. She is a major part of the result. Look at leaders who have a proven record and our candidate, our governor-in-waiting has a proven record in leadership. When she was in primary school, she was the school captain. When she went to high school in Dogura, she was the school captain, when she went to Ayiura National High School, where students from all over Papua New Guinea came, she was the school captain. When she went to university [UPNG], she was the women students' warden. She's worked at non-government organisations, she's mobilised community. Then, she worked at the Department of Community Development, so she has experience in mobilising the community, in creating community programs and implementing programs. She knows. Our governor-in-waiting, she has the plan, that she's already ran with, there is already a formula there. Her plan is, 'Arise Oro'. Let's arise and take it!

First, there is the ever-present risk of disloyal *komiti* defecting to other camps during the final weeks of the campaign period. Like with voters, there is no guarantee that *komiti* will remain loyal. As Jean said, 'the campaign team comprised of family members. They would be more loyal than other people'.⁶³ Ultimately, it was the core team, mainly relatives, that completed the task. This is common with all candidates, men or women. Then, there are unanticipated events that skew the campaign schedule. Two tragic events greatly impacted Team Jean's campaign. In April 2017, Mr G's (campaign manager) son died. Then, in May, Jean's father passed away. These unexpected events, and the accompanying logistics and burials, devastated the core team and their families and took about three weeks out of the official campaign period.

Jean's case further illustrates a significant challenge that pertains only to women candidates: the constant contestation of their gender. Unlike men candidates, women candidates (and, by extension, their *komiti* and supporters) have the added task of regularly navigating and framing aspects of their gendered identity (such as being wives and/or mothers) in a positive light. They must do so in order to exhibit attractive leadership qualities such as accountability and/or critique the leadership exhibitions of the incumbent (or previous) men members of parliament. Moreover, Jean's case highlights the importance of male endorsement and support all throughout the campaign period. Yet, even though Jean fit the profile of a successful political candidate, had the necessary resources, started early and did her groundwork, all her preparation and effort culminated in finishing second with a total of 8132 votes. Chapter 8 examines the wider electoral space during the official eight-week campaign period, when all candidates go public with their campaigns.

⁶³ Jean Eparo Parkop 26/07/2017. 2017 Oro Provincial candidate, personal communication.

Chapter 8 Campaigning for the 2017 National Elections

In PNG national general elections, the official eight-week campaign period commences after the issue of writs and the nomination week. For the ninth national elections, the writs were issued on 20 April 2017 and nominations were open for a week after. The eight weeks of public campaigning reflect and are a manifestation of all the *hanmak*, ‘covert’ groundwork and awareness activities performed by candidates and their *komiti* over the previous few months (and sometimes even years). This final eight-week period is a crucial time for candidates as they consolidate and fortify their support.

The public displays of support exhibited during the nomination week and at public campaign rallies are a demonstration of the amount of wealth and size of following a candidate has. In the last two decades, campaigning has become more costly. But local, low-key campaigning remains important in consolidating support and ensuring voter turnout. This chapter categorises the various types of campaign activities into two groups — public campaigning and local-level campaigning — while illustrating the importance of maintaining a broad and loyal network of *komiti*.

8.1 Campaigning through public displays of support

8.1.1 The nomination week

The most extravagant public campaigning occurs during the nomination week. Nominations have come to resemble a civic parade or festival. Impressive nomination rallies are now commonplace and often involve vehicle convoys and crowds of noisy supporters. In locations around PNG, candidates attended nominations in traditional regalia or *bilas*, and some were carried by their supporters on purpose-built platforms. The 2017 campaign saw candidates try to outdo each other with grandiose displays of support (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:36).

Nominations in Oro commenced on 24 April, a Monday. The small town of Popondetta came alive with festivities, music and colour as candidates for open and provincial seats were paraded by their convoys of supporters to the PNGEC office to officially nominate as political candidates for the 2017 national elections.⁶⁴ A total of 106 candidates registered that week for the three Oro electorates (see Appendix 2 for a list of candidates). Sohe had the highest number of nominations at 42; four were women, including the sitting member Delilah Gore.

⁶⁴ The nomination week is the one of the most exciting times during the election period because after the writs have closed, candidates tend to go to rural areas to campaign. Nomination week is one of the only occasions when all candidates are in one location with their supporters. The next time such an activity occurs is when the winners are declared after counting.

The Ijivitari electorate had 33 candidates, with a sole woman candidate, Dr Joy Travertz-Arore. The Oro provincial seat had 31 candidates, including three women.⁶⁵

Nomination convoys display a candidate's support and wealth. This is indicated by the number of vehicles that participate in the convoy and the size of the crowd escorting the candidate to nominate. Incumbents Delilah Gore (Sohe) and David Arore (Ijivitari) had the highest number of vehicles in their convoys. At least 20 vehicles for each blocked both lanes of the main road in Popondetta Town. Among the vehicles in Delilah's convoy was a bulldozer that she had purchased for a road rehabilitation project in the Sohe District. This was a symbol of her *hanmak* in the district.

Party endorsement displayed during the nomination conveys a candidate's competitiveness. As a candidate endorsed by the PNC, many of Arore's supporters donned red 'PNC4PNG' t-shirts. His entourage appeared to be the rowdiest and most dangerous for public safety, with intoxicated individuals dancing on top of trucks. It was reported later that a young boy fell from one of the trucks and was severely injured; others claimed the boy died instantly. Another disruptive incident was a fight that erupted between one of Arore's supporters and someone in the crowd. Apparently, the person in the crowd showed his middle finger at the passing convoy. This irritated one of Arore's supporters, who left his position in the convoy, ran to confront the man in the crowd and started punching him. Fortunately, other bystanders were quick to break up the confrontation.

In contrast to Arore's rowdy parade, other candidates had more orderly processions. For example, John Warisan, a United Resources Party-endorsed candidate for the Ijivitari Open seat, had a very organised convoy. Various groups of his supporters walked with banners indicating their localities, such as 'Mendi-Tari block for Warisan' or 'Kokoda for Warisan'. His supporters walked in an orderly fashion with their banners and coconut leaves, chanting their slogans in unison.

⁶⁵ There should have been 10 women candidates, but two intending women — one for Sohe and the other for Ijivitari — were late in depositing their K1000 nomination fees and subsequently missed the nomination deadline.

Photograph 8-1. Highlands Community for John Warisan nomination day rally



Photograph 8-2. John Warisan's supporters at a nomination day rally



Incumbent Oro Governor Gary Juffa had the largest number of people join him for his nomination, with between 15,000 and 20,000 people walking with him from the governor's state residence at Doroin Park to the PNGEC office (Mou 26/4/2017). The incumbent governor claimed that he had not paid for vehicles, dancing groups or rent-a-crowds. Although Governor

Juffa claimed that his huge crowd turnout was unexpected, it is unlikely he was completely surprised, as his *komiti* would have sent word through their networks informing his supporters to come into town on the day of his nomination.

A candidate's nomination is the prime occasion to publicly parade and display the amount of support they have. Well-organised, spectacular processions reflect the planning skills of dedicated *komiti* and the financial backing of their candidate, as logistics alone are very expensive. Convoy vehicles must be hired, supporters need to be transported into town from their various residential areas or villages all over the province and traditional dancers and singing groups must be paid. Then, after the nomination parade, supporters are usually treated to a reception at the expense of the candidate and their *komiti*. Hence, only popular, well-resourced candidates can afford such extravagant displays and all that they entail. Many other less affluent candidates quietly walked into the PNGEC office and nominated without drawing much attention. In this way, the nomination period draws a clear line between well-funded and popular candidates and the rest of the field.

8.1.2 Campaign posters and other types of communication media

As soon as the writs were issued, almost overnight the whole town was littered with candidate posters. The posters were most visible on notice boards and shopfronts. In addition, many private vehicles and public transportation vehicles had stickers and posters of their drivers' favoured candidates plastered on their doors or front bumpers. Along the highway and on the roadside, a banner hung between poles indicated a particular candidate's stronghold area or voter base; this was also a way to assert that a location was looked after by a *komiti* of a particular candidate and that other candidates (or their *komiti*) could only visit to campaign by invitation.

Photograph 8-3. Gary Juffa's banner at Huvivi, Kokoda Highway



In town suburbs, loyal supporters had their candidate's posters plastered on their property, either on the door of their house, the wall, a coconut or mango tree or any eye-catching display surface. The quality of the poster paper and the graphic design and stylistic features on the posters were indicative of the candidate's effort and campaign budget, as well as whether they were contesting as independent candidates or endorsed by a political party. On shopfronts in Popondetta, PNC-endorsed candidates Delilah's and Arore's campaign posters were the most eye-catching in terms of style, quality, design and layout.

Photograph 8-4. Candidate posters on a shopfront

Well-resourced candidates provided their supporters with campaign-branded clothing and accessories. Jean Eparo Parkop kitted her supporters out in orange SDP t-shirts and hats. Governor Juffa's supporters carried black polypropylene bags with his party's acronym (PMFC, People's Movement for Change), symbol (a closed fist) and slogan (#TakeBackPNG) printed in white. A few of his young, male supporters set up a screen-printing station at one end of Doroin Park where other fans could bring their own black shirts to be printed with the People's Movement for Change party logo; they charged K5 for the service.

Photograph 8-5. Gary Juffa's campaign bag



Photograph 8-6. Jean's sticker and Governor Juffa's wallet-sized postcard



In Oro, as elsewhere in PNG, red campaign paraphernalia seemed to dominate public spaces, as it was the National Alliance Party's and PNC's primary party colour. PNC especially ran a highly visible campaign across multiple forms of media. I recall watching PNC informercials on EMTV and receiving text messages from Digicel (the largest mobile network provider in PNG) to vote for PNC candidates. As the primary party of the previous O'Neill–Dion coalition government, PNC endorsed a total of 95 candidates nationwide. Their public rallies drew very

large crowds (see Appendix 3 for PNC rally photographs). Their primary rival, the Pangu Pati, also endorsed 95 candidates. Pangu had similar colour scheme for their party, except with a green background.

Photograph 8-7. David Arore in his traditional Oro *bilas*



Source: PNC4PNG Facebook page.

Not all candidates had the support of a political party. In Oro, less than 50 per cent of all the candidates for each electorate were endorsed by a party (Papua New Guinea Registry of Political Parties 2018:100). Of the eight women candidates in Oro, four were endorsed by political parties. Dr Joy Travertz-Arore, the only woman candidate for the Ijivitari Open, was not party endorsed. However, her purple poster was unique and stood out amongst other candidate posters that tended to utilise primary colours such as red, yellow and black.

Photograph 8-8. Dr Joy Travertz-Arore's 2017 candidate poster

Unlike other provinces — Morobe, for example, was a stronghold for the Pangu Pati due to the local profile of party leader Sam Basil — Oro Province did not appear to unanimously support one party. As in previous elections, support was focused on individual candidates rather than parties. One such candidate was incumbent Governor Juffa. Even though he personally had a huge following within the province, the local candidates he endorsed under the umbrella of his People's Movement for Change party were less popular. Furthermore, observers from the Registry of Political Parties office reported that Oro people supported the People's Movement for Change due to Governor Juffa's political leadership and outspoken character (Papua New Guinea Registry of Political Parties 2018:97). Hence, it was primarily Governor Juffa's personality that attracted his large following. While parties were a visible feature during the campaign period, campaigning was still personality driven.

The campaign period can be a very noisy time. Some candidates and supporters like to set up speakers and sound systems on their vehicles and drive slowly through town and the surrounding suburbs playing popular songs or a specific candidate's songs.⁶⁶ Between songs,

⁶⁶ Some candidates hire local artists to write and produce their campaign songs.

a *komiti* will announce their candidate's name and box number and shout out a slogan over the loudspeaker. I recall one of Arore's campaign cars driving slowly by Goruta Street, where I resided. There was nothing notably interesting about this campaign vehicle or the song amplified from its speaker system; it was the loud, disruptive noise that caught my attention. This form of drive-by campaigning draws attention only as it disturbs quiet neighbourhoods and prompts curious residents to come out of their yards and houses to check out the commotion. However, sometimes campaign songs can generate a lot of positive attention for a campaign. Delilah's song 'Oro Ta Aja' by Oro artists B-Rad, Daugoz and Webstar (2017) was very popular as it was constantly on the radio, and it attracted over one million views on YouTube. This catchy song is sung in three Oro languages with a rap portion in Tok Pisin. Using maternal imagery, the song acknowledges Delilah Gore as Oro's mother, highlighting her *hanmak* and *pasin* as appropriate for a mother of Oro. One of the lines says, '*hevi painim yu, yu save stretim sindaun yet*', meaning 'when you encounter issues or problems, you still find a way to fix it and make life good'. This expresses the notion of mothers as problem solvers. Another line states, '*pasin yu wokim, pasin yu karim, yu soim kala bilon Orokaiva*', or 'good behaviour you show, you carry with you, you show Oro's colours'. This is analogous language to denote that the good character and/or behaviour you have is reflective (*soim kala*) of Oro, or that you are an ambassador of Oro (see Appendix 1 for complete lyrics).

Other than a few instances of this drive-by campaigning, most of the Popondetta-based candidates were quiet during the official campaign period. Perhaps they resorted to more local door-to-door campaigning. Just the same, it was reported that other locations around the country were also relatively quiet and 'less flamboyant' (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:XI) compared to previous election campaign periods. In Popondetta, the loudest rally events occurred on the very last day of the official campaign period.

8.1.3 Gary Juffa's rally at Doroin Park

Incumbent Governor Gary Juffa's rally on the last day of the official campaign period (23 June 2017) attracted a large crowd at Doroin Park near his state residence. It was very hot that day, but the open park was packed with people. Some spectators were just passing by, while others stood and listened to Governor Juffa, who spoke while standing on the back of a white Dyna truck parked at one corner of the park. In this public speech and others he gave during the campaign, the governor's rhetoric was generally in the same vein as his social media commentary, particularly in defending Oro's logging resources against illegal operations and citing broader national issues in relation to his party's slogan of 'Take back PNG'. He was also quite vocal in his anti-PNC sentiments. On a provincial level, he denigrated Asian migrants,

accusing them of taking over a lot of businesses in Popondetta. In conclusion, he reminded the audience about his achievements in the last term, specifically his partnership with local landowners who were in a legal battle against the illegal logging occurring in the Collingwood Bay area. He also highlighted the completion of public works funded by the Australian Government and the PNG Department of Works, specifically the Girua, Eroro and Ambogo bridges that were completed during his term.

Photograph 8-9. Gary Juffa at his rally in Doroin Park



Governor Juffa's oration was well received by the crowd. As I walked through the audience, I heard people say '*bai yu stap ye*', meaning 'you will continue to remain in power'. Governor Juffa had to pause speaking to allow occasional chants of '*pawarim Juffa*' (power to Juffa) by children and adults alike. His crowd doubled in size when a convoy of Richard Masere's supporters drove onto the field chanting 'JUFFA! MASERE!' A nearby rally had finished and they had convoyed over to join Governor Juffa. Masere, a candidate for the Ijivitari Open seat who also contested in the 2012 elections, climbed on top of the truck and stood with Governor Juffa, urging the crowd to continue their chants. Even though Masere was endorsed by the National Alliance Party, these two candidates had a clear alliance. Both Governor Juffa and Masere gave campaign speeches endorsing each other. It is not uncommon for candidates to form alliances independent of their political party affiliations, as a candidate's persona has more appeal (Reilly 1999). Another example of this comes from Gary Juffa's own People's Movement for Change party. As party leader, Gary Juffa endorsed Fred Daingo as a candidate for the Sohe Open. Even though Daingo had been a long-time companion (and *komiti*) of

Governor Juffa and travelled extensively with him, he was not popular as a candidate. However, Governor Juffa's public endorsement of Richard Masere seemed to work because Masere himself was already a popular candidate with a large following.

Photograph 8-10. A Gary Juffa supporter at Doroin Park



8.1.4 Richard Masere's market rally

In the centre of the main market in Popondetta, there is an elevated slab of concrete that resembles a little stage. On several occasions, I witnessed street preachers and health awareness speakers use it as such. That afternoon, on the final day of the campaign period, after his brief public endorsement of Governor Juffa at Doroin Park, Masere and his convoy of screaming supporters brought their portable speakers and organised themselves on that concrete 'stage'. As it was a Friday, the market was already packed and busy with sellers and buyers. There seemed to be over a thousand people in the vicinity.

Some people paused to listen to Masere's speech, while others continued about their business. He began by speaking about bringing better services to Popondetta (located within the Ijivitari electorate), improving the delivery of basic services such as health and creating

better pathways for Oro's high school dropouts. He recognised the contribution of churches to development and promised that if he got elected, 10 per cent of the DSIP fund would be allocated to supporting churches. Furthermore, he acknowledged the role of women in society, but then went off on a tangent about how much he loved his wife. At the time, I questioned the relevance of this tangent. However, in hindsight, I realise that perhaps he was trying to highlight his connection to Oro and to the audience. Were it not for his wife, Masere would be a complete *kam man* because he is not originally from Oro. Ethnically, he is from Daru and Australia, while his wife, Cotilda, is from Tufi. Hence, to a certain degree, his status as an in-law to the province evokes affinity and kinship. Given the 'Oro for Oro' sentiments that were pervasive in previous national elections, perhaps he felt it was important to reiterate his connection to the province as an in-law.

Public rallies are a relatively cheap form of campaigning. Because the crowd is already present, the candidate does not need to pay for transport costs. In most situations, a stage will already be set up, or the candidate can stand anywhere public with a loudhailer and speak. Furthermore, due to a rally's public nature and the free movement of people, the candidate (and their *komiti*) does not need to provide any refreshments or a reception. The main disadvantage of public rallies, however, is that candidates cannot really ascertain the quantity of genuine supporters. Because those in the audience could be just spectators attending for entertainment, such rallies may not be an effective way of gaining or securing support. Moreover, by time the official campaign period begins, most people have already decided which camp they are in or which candidate they support. Therefore, most candidates opt for more intimate door-to-door or local-level campaigning where they can speak to smaller groups of people or pockets of voters in both rural and urban areas.

8.2 Campaigning at the local level

Gone are the days when candidates would travel with empty hands and campaign on empty stomachs and expect the villagers to feed them

–Susub 2011:215

Dispela ino bribery tasol em mi mekim kastom. Ino gutpela mi lusim yupela han natin.

This is not bribery but it's me doing custom. It is not good that I leave you guys empty handed.

–Sheldon Deilala, 2017

Prior to the 2002 national elections, campaign costs were minimal (Susub 2011). In Oro, candidates could either travel alone or with a small entourage and expect their host village to

provide refreshments. The primary campaign costs at the time were transport logistics to move around the electorate. But, as discussed in Chapter 4, the proliferation of money politics and the influence of the 'Highlands style' of politicking during the campaign period has created an informal sector in which almost every aspect of the campaign process has been monetised. In contemporary PNG elections, many voters will seek to make a profit from their vote.

Modern campaigning requires candidates to recruit and establishment an extensive network of *komiti*. Apart from attracting and maintaining potential supporters in the months preceding the elections, an additional benefit of a *komiti* is evident during the official campaign period when they facilitate local community meetings. As the following case illustrates, having an active resident or local *komiti* to liaise with the community and endorse the candidate is an essential part of effective local-level campaigning.

8.2.1 Sheldon Deilala's meeting at Ombora Street

On 31 May 2017, a Wednesday, the weather was dreary with grey clouds and drizzle. Early that morning, my neighbour had informed me that she had received notification from one of Ijivitari candidate Sheldon Deilala's *komiti* that he would be coming to the soccer field on Ombora Street to give a campaign speech around 10am. So, I got my umbrella and notebook and walked over to Ombora Street. I found a good spot under a mango tree and sat on an old Mac truck tyre, waiting as people trickled into the oval area. We expected Sheldon and his team to arrive by noon — later than they had indicated, but not too late by PNG campaign-period standards — but they arrived much later, around 4pm. Sheldon had a convoy of three vehicles, a 35-seater Dyna truck and two 10-seater Toyota Land Cruisers, filled with his supporters and travelling *komiti*. As a candidate endorsed by the PNC party, his vehicles were covered with PNC posters. Eight hours earlier, a temporary stage had been erected by local youth from the neighbourhood in preparation for his visit. Women dressed in their traditional tapa cloth and necklaces had been practicing a performance since 10am, but they retreated to their homes around midday due to rain. They later returned at 4pm to welcome Sheldon and his team.

After a brief introduction by his local resident *komiti*, Sheldon gave a short speech. He focused mainly on youth employment and expanding the township of Popondetta to make it more economically viable for young people to start businesses. He also spent time talking about himself, his relative youth and professional background, and how he was qualified to be the representative for Ijivitari. He discouraged the audience from voting for old people, arguing that when older candidates get into parliament, they end up doing nothing for the province. After

Sheldon's brief speech, another older *komiti*, part of his entourage, spoke next. He took his time and spoke much louder than Sheldon. Through the amplifier, he appeared to be shouting at the crowd, proclaiming Sheldon as the ideal candidate to be Ijivitari's MP. In a militant fashion, he announced his belief in Sheldon and urged everyone within earshot to get on the Sheldon bandwagon.

8.2.2 *Komiti*: keepers of the community

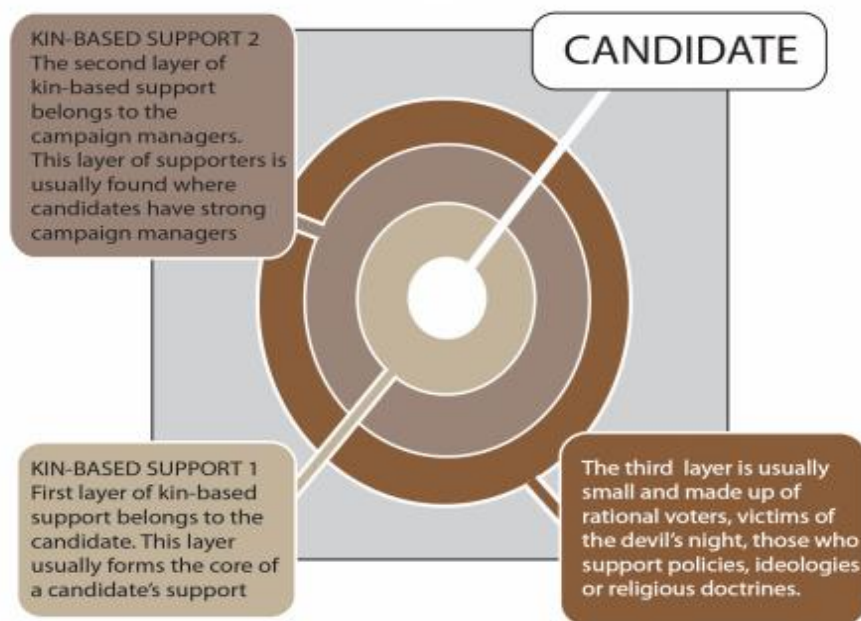
At smaller community gatherings, often the strongest endorser is the *komiti* who speaks after the candidate (as described from the Team Jean trip to Banderi in Chapter 6). The *komiti* usually speaks with more passion than the candidate, promoting, praising and essentially 'selling' the candidate to the audience. By their job description, these *komiti* are influential members of their community. In instances where it is the local resident *komiti* who endorses the candidate, he (it is usually a man) speaks with authority to an audience who generally regard him as their gatekeeper, as he has been working in that community in the months preceding the official campaign period. Although the candidate may have his or her a unique campaign message or oratory prowess, the endorsing *komiti* uses their own analogies and anecdotes to present the candidate as the best option for public office.

Jean Eparo Parkop's *komiti* John for Ward 27 in the Higaturu LLG often retold the story of how he became a member of Team Jean. It was sometime in early 2012, ahead of the national elections that year. John was organising a sports carnival in his community and needed equipment such as nets, balls, whistles, cones and trophies for the winning teams. John drafted a request letter and approached numerous intending candidates for the 2012 national elections to sponsor his sports carnival. Jean was the only intending candidate who responded positively to his request and donated K3000 to support his sports carnival. That encounter alone convinced him to join Team Jean. John emphasised that although they did not know each other at that time, Jean displayed *luksave* by responding to his request. That anecdote suggests something about Jean's character or *pasin*, that she is someone who is approachable and responsive. Another angle John used was to emphasise Jean's professional background and her *hanmak* in assisting her husband, the NCD governor, in developing Port Moresby. He said:

[In] the country's capital, Port Moresby ... the governor himself is Powes Parkop. He is the governor, but his qualification is law. Okay for his wife ... she has the qualification that changes the city. So, this really tells me that Parkop is not changing the province [NCD], but it is Jean who is advising him because she has a background in community development.

Furthermore, Tony Hirasia's kin-based voting model (see Figure 8-1) demonstrates how much the local *komiti* or campaign manager's lengthy endorsements matter. Hirasia's study, based on voting patterns and gifting in East AreAre, Malaita Province and Solomon Islands, is also applicable to the voting culture in Oro and PNG.

Figure 8-1. Tony Hirasia's kin-based voting model



Source: Hirasia 2016.

Hirasia (2016:4) explained that campaign managers (*komiti*) essentially duplicate kin-based support in their own areas. Voters pledge allegiance to them more so than the candidate. There is also a level of exchange by way of *luksave* and *hanmak* that occurs between the *komiti* and their kin relations. Therefore, it is rational for the local *komiti* to speak more strongly than the candidate at these community gatherings because they have a following, and a level of affinity, with those in the audience. As such, their words carry more weight than those of the candidate.

Going back to Sheldon Deilala's community meeting, after the older *komiti* finished talking, Sheldon took the stage again to deliver his thank you message to the audience. In closing, he said in Tok Pisin, '*Dispela ino bribery tasol em mi mekim kastom, ino gutpela mi lusim yupela han natin*' (This isn't bribery but it's custom, it is not good for me to leave you people empty handed). He proceeded to give money and gifts to members of the community: K400 to the women who gave his team a traditional Orokaiva welcome, K500 to the young men who built the temporary grandstand, a few cartons of drinks and biscuits for the young children in the audience and a carton of rice to be distributed to the mothers who had come to the gathering.

After handing these things out, he shook hands with the women and children who were standing near the front of the temporary grandstand. Due to the rain, not a lot of people came to his rally; they numbered around 50, half of which were his supporters that arrived with him. The whole event took less than an hour and soon Sheldon and his team had departed for their next speaking location.

Sheldon's concluding statement reminded me of what 2012 provincial candidate Margaret Embahe had mentioned to me months prior, that because you are talking to people and taking up their time, you must give them something to show *luksave*. As Sheldon said, it is often not considered bribery, but rather an acknowledgement (*luksave*) and a show of appreciation, as the attendees took time out of their schedules to come out that rainy afternoon. From the voter's perspective, Sheldon's distribution of goods was not perceived as bribery, nor did it warrant any type of reciprocation on their part. This was what he owed them for taking up their time.

It is unlikely that audience would commit to voting for Sheldon based on this gesture alone. Yet, demonstrating appreciation for people's attendance by giving food stuffs, beverages or a bit of cash as a way of showing *luksave* to the audience is now a regular feature of local-level campaigning and an additional expense in the candidate's campaign budget. While not considered bribery by many, this element of *luksave* has enabled a culture of political gifting. Contemporary campaigning has become even more expensive as travelling campaign teams must go around with food items, gifts or money to present to their host communities.

8.2.3 The benefits of a *komiti* network

Establishing a strong *komiti* enables a candidate to delegate campaign tasks and cover more ground during the eight short weeks of official campaigning. *Komiti* from various locations can organise meetings, dancers and stage building, arrange refreshments and call the community together. They plan community events and then inform the candidate when and where to attend. Members of the Oro 2017 domestic election observation team and I observed this level of efficiency at John Warisan's community meeting at the Works Compound near Popondetta Town.

On 6 July 2017, Cecil — our driver and fellow election observer — informed us that Ijivitari candidate Warisan would be meeting with the community around 4pm. Around 3pm, we drove to the location and waited until we saw more people arriving. We then walked with them down to the compound. When we got to a small clearing between houses, a mini stage had already

been set up and the place was decorated with flowers. Members of our team were given chairs to sit. There appeared to be less than 400 people in the audience. Just before 4pm, the program commenced, with local community leaders welcoming everyone, including Warisan and his team. After the preliminary welcome speeches, Warisan took the stage and began by reminding the audience how long he had lived in Oro. As a *kam man*, it was important that he remind the audience about his local status and long-term *hanmak* over the last four decades. After that, he shared his plans to improve the standard of living in Popondetta. He concluded by donating K1500 to the community leader and event organiser (most likely his resident *komiti*). He then left with his travelling team to their next location. The whole event took less than an hour.

Realising the value of a working *komiti*, most serious candidates prioritise establishing one. Maintaining and managing a *komiti* also demonstrates a candidate's leadership credibility and ability to garner local influence. First-time candidates who venture into campaigning without an entrenched and extensive *komiti* network are essentially campaigning at a superficial level, as they are not harnessing the kinship networks of an extended *komiti* or campaign team. Of the women candidates I spoke to, only two — Jean and Joy Travertz-Arore — had large, active *komiti* networks. Chapter 6 outlined in detail how Jean organised her *komiti*, starting with her relatives, branching out towards their kin and then utilising other relationship networks. Joy utilised her in-laws from Afore, many of whom already worked as *komiti* for her husband David Arore, the long-serving member for Ijivitari.

The other women candidates had meagre support staff, with only one campaign manager or two *wokman*. For example, Bella Amen started her groundwork in 2016 with one young man working with her; her son also assisted in his capacity as a youth coordinator in the local Anglican church, but his involvement was not full time. By March 2017, Bella had a campaign manager and a handful of youth working for her in the Sepia LLG, but that was it. Again, the primary obstacle for women candidates recruiting and maintaining a *komiti* is finance. Like voters, the *komiti* also have their own requests. Candidates must look after their *komiti*, both in meeting their personal needs, such as assistance with funeral or school fees (*luksave* and *hanmak*), and in funding their groundwork logistics. This aspect of contemporary campaigning — maintaining a *komiti* prior to the official campaign period and then later consolidating the support garnered during the official campaign period through local community meetings — is very expensive and cannot be afforded by most women candidates. When Dame Carol Kidu first contested for the Moresby South electorate in 1997, she also started her groundwork early and, like a lot of candidates, ran out of money during the official campaign period. She said:

I had already done a lot of groundwork in my after-work visits to settlements, so it was time to become more focused in my plans. For six months before the writs were to be issued, I planned a political education campaign to reach as many people as I could in the electorate without ever mentioning my own intention to stand for election. For after the issuing of the writs, I planned to focus my campaign on policy platform and background ... In the last month before voting day, I knew that I was running short of money at the very time that I needed it most to pay for fuel for the increasing number of vehicles and to buy food for the increasing number of people. I had funded all of my posters and campaign materials and had extras provided at reduced rates by friends. But there was a definite need for fund-raising for the expenses of election day (Kidu 2002:155–58).

The current election climate is more complex than when Dame Carol first contested. She conducted her own groundwork through educating people in the settlements in the evenings after she finished work. Her groundwork was not a full-time endeavour, nor she did she delegate that task to a *komiti*. Moreover, as an independent candidate, she funded her own posters, campaign materials, food and fuel and still needed to organise more last-minute fundraising to cover the expenses of election day. Back then, Dame Carol could manage without a *komiti*, but it is now far more difficult given the proliferation of money politics. Candidates who are seeking a return on their investments must employ *komiti* to maintain the supporters who have benefited from the intending candidate's *hanmak*.

Compared to previous elections, the 2017 national elections also saw more money moving between the candidates and strongmen or middlemen rather than directly to voters (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:44). It is these strongmen, chiefs, pastors, powerbrokers, middlemen or gatekeepers who guide the masses. These strong character types make the best *komiti*; therefore, candidates must recruit them early and maintain their loyalty through *luksave* and *hanmak* over a long period of time. This is an endeavour that is too costly for many women candidates to undertake. Moreover, there is a risk in expanding one's *komiti*, as Jean learned at the end of the campaign period when many defected. The remaining *komiti* of Team Jean comprised of family members, as they were more loyal. Nevertheless, the informal institution of setting up a *komiti* is the foundation of campaigning.

8.2.4 *Komiti* as scrutineers during polling and counting: 'even though its quiet, doesn't mean it is good'

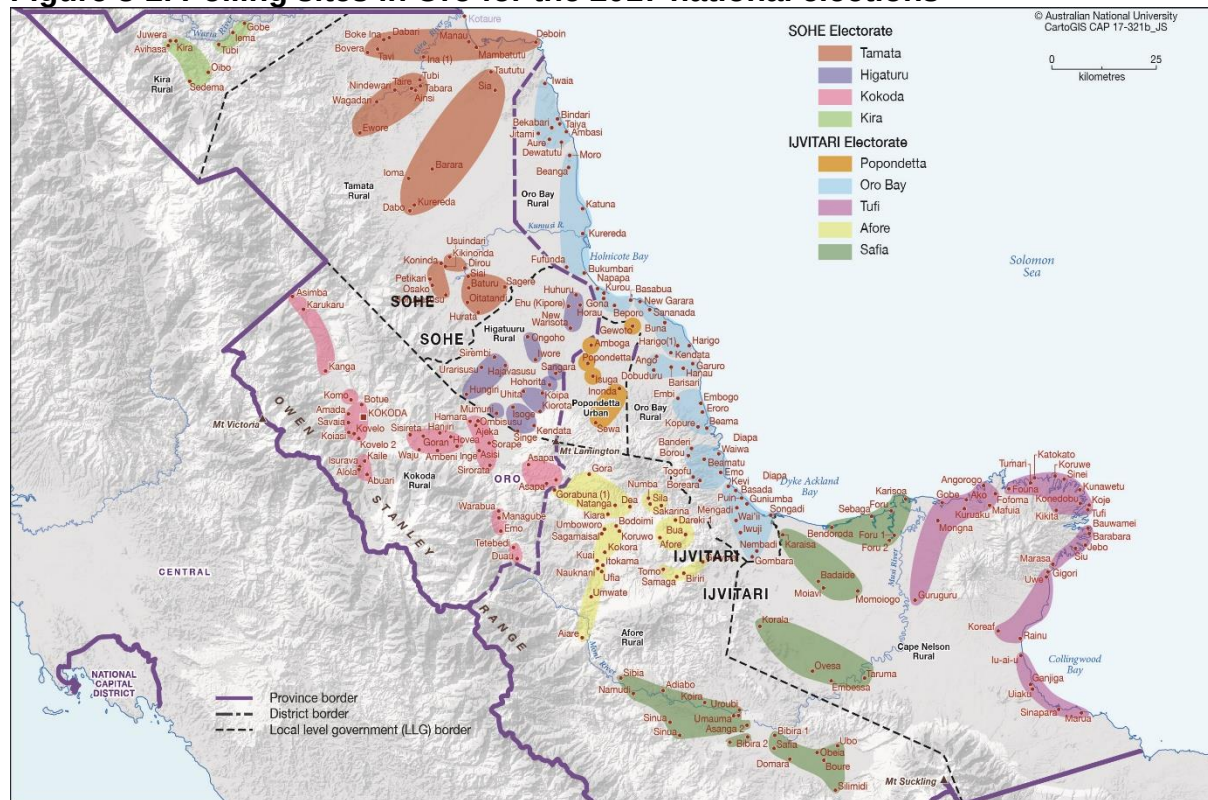
Compared to the Highlands, Oro is known to be relatively quiet during elections, particularly during polling and counting. However, quiet and peaceful does not mean free from electoral malfeasance and fraudulent behaviours. The 2017 polling and counting in Oro had reports of intimidation, multiple and underage voting, threats of violent clashes, tension, vote-buying and

sorcery allegations. During this time, candidates are not permitted near the polling or counting areas. As such, their *komiti* transition to scrutineers and become the candidates' eyes and ears. For women candidates who cannot afford to recruit experienced *komiti*, this is one point where they suffer. Section 129 of the Organic Law allows for scrutineers to sit in during the polling if they present the presiding officer their certificate of appointment. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that their scrutineers have the proper documents to be allowed into the polling stations and counting rooms. Due to my participation in ANU's domestic election observation, myself and seven other local domestic observers had access to polling sites and counting rooms.

Polling in Oro was scheduled for 24 June to 8 July 2017 but was pushed back a few days due to heavy rain and the fact that most of the polling officials and security personnel had not received their allowances. Such late starts are common and have occurred in previous Oro elections (Haley and Anere 2009). Even before polling began, there were already rumours that ballot boxes were found in the remote jungles of Afore. Some claimed these rumours were a distraction to get the police out of town so that the main roads would be clear for other suspect activities. Two weeks prior to the issue of writs, it was rumoured that Ijivitari's then incumbent David Arore's *wasmeri* (a witch that protects) had suddenly died, leaving him with no protection to go into the 2017 election race; hence, there was a strong chance he would lose. Moreover, local Oro election observers were quick to suggest that the continuous rain was the handiwork of rainmakers (sorcerers) trying to stall for time while they organised their sinister plans. Like in other locations in PNG, talk of sorcery is considered a normal explanation of events in Oro and is not uncommon.

On 27 June, the storage container holding the ballot papers was opened at the Popondetta Police Station in front of polling teams, police and the election observers. The PNGEC had 55 polling teams in Oro. Twenty-five were for the Sohe electorate and 30 for the Ijivitari electorate. Polling commenced around midday for the Popondetta Urban LLG and continued into other areas throughout the week. Polling is administratively challenging in Oro. Remote locations in the Tufi and Afore areas require dinghies and helicopters to transport the polling teams and ballot papers.

Figure 8-2. Polling sites in Oro for the 2017 national elections



Source: CartoGIS, ANU.

In Figure 8-2, the red dots indicate the sites of the polling stations. The shaded areas show the range of villages within the vicinity of the polling stations. For urban polling sites, the boxes were guarded at the nearest district office at the end of each polling day. Polling in the urban locations had a good turnout, with many residents turning up to cast their votes. However, turnout was more problematic in semi-urban areas. For example, at a polling station in Oro Bay, disgruntled voters were turned away because their names were not on the 2017 common roll, even though they reported having their names on the 2012 and 2007 common rolls. Apparently, roll clean-ups that were scheduled to take place from January to February of 2017 did not eventuate due to funding shortages. In other polling sites such as Epa estate (residential estate for Higaturu Oil Palm workers), many of the oil palm workers did not turn up to vote because the Higaturu Oil Palm Company did not give them a day off to do so.

At a polling station in Kinea (another Higaturu Oil Palm estate), the election observation team witnessed audacious acts of underage voting by teenage girls. At Kararata, a polling station was set up near the main highway less than 10 metres away from Ijivitari candidate Sheldon Deilala's residential area. Supporters coming out of his yard to vote all wore their candidate's t-shirts that displayed his name, face and box number. In more crowded polling areas such as

the main market and oval field in Popondetta, other local election observers reported that the *komiti* of affluent men candidates were walking through the crowds intimidating people and instructing electors who to vote for with promises of monetary gain.

Multiple voting was common. While observing at Mumuni, I overheard a woman say that she had voted in town the day before and then come to the village to vote because her name was registered on both rolls. In most polling places, voters stood in a queue to check their names with the clerk before proceeding into the polling booth. In other locations, the community insisted that the clerk call out names, and those present would then step up to vote. As there is no identification card with which to verify one's identity, the polling clerks generally rely on the honesty of the voters. When the names are called out in a roll call manner, the community and scrutineer can confirm the voter's identity. However, as this exercise prolongs the process, after a few hours, the polling team, in consensus with the scrutineers and the community, often resort to having voters queue up. At one point during my observation at Epa estate, the scrutineer sitting next to me whispered that a girl approaching the clerk's assistant to get her pinkie finger inked had just used her mother's name to get into the polling station. When I asked how he knew, he replied, 'This is my area. I know everybody around here'. I asked, 'So how come you are not saying anything to the officials?' He replied that if he spoke out, other scrutineers would speak out if one of his candidate's supporters came through with a 'borrowed' name, so it was best to not say anything. Ultimately, they all want to get their votes and not ruin it for one another.

Almost all scrutineers had little notebooks or pieces of paper to tally the number of voters passing through the polling stations. The secrecy of the ballot makes it hard for scrutineers to verify if their potential supporter voted for their candidate, but it is their duty to keep a tally of numbers. I saw an earnest scrutineer (a woman *komiti* of candidate Gary Juffa) sit up front at the Mumuni (Sohe) polling station with a big, brown logbook, ticking off names as potential voters of Governor Juffa walked in. When this polling team packed up and travelled to their next polling site at Harange, our team followed them until the dirt road ended. We then walked about 20 minutes towards the bank of the river Kumusie, where we realised the polling team would have to swim to get across. We watched as they carefully loaded the boxes of ballot papers onto inflated tyre tubes and then swam across the river. To my surprise, the same woman *komiti* had arrived at the riverbank, stripped down to her shorts and was wrapping her logbook inside a plastic bag to swim with the polling team to the other side. Soon, other committed scrutineers began crossing the Kumusie River.

Photograph 8-11. Polling team with equipment walking to the next polling site



Photograph 8-12. Polling officials crossing the Kumusie River with ballot papers



In addition to observing the voters, the scrutineers were also focused on ensuring that the polling officials conducted polling accurately. Unless there was an attempt to halt or disrupt the polling process, scrutineers and the security personnel appeared oblivious to the incidents of multiple voting and underage voting. Polling ended after a fortnight on 8 July 2017, and three days later, counting commenced.

The open (Ijivitari and Sohe) boxes were counted at the Popondetta Secondary School dining hall and the provincial seat ballots were counted at the Higaturu council chambers in town. Counting was also delayed because the counting officials had not received their allowances, despite being recruited a fortnight prior. The counting room was arranged to enable the scrutineers to sit behind the counter and monitor the ballots that went into their candidate's box number. There were 36 counters in total, 10 of whom were women. All presiding officers were required to be in the counting room because, prior to opening their ballot box, they must provide a report and reconcile the ballot serial numbers.

Photograph 8-13. Setting up the Ijivitari counting room at Popondetta Secondary School



Whenever a ballot paper was not filled out completely, the counting officials had to clearly announce it for all the scrutineers to acknowledge in order for that ballot to be made informal. Counting runs smoothly when scrutineers and counting officials agree. A major issue raised by the scrutineers was the fact that the presiding officers did not consolidate the ballot booklet serial numbers before counting began. Instead, they just read the serial numbers on the inner and outer seal tags and provided a brief report of where the ballot box and team had travelled. On 14 July, after count nine of the Ijivitari count, Sheldon Deilala's scrutineer stood up and demanded to know why the tally for that count was 2693 while his own record stated 2572. He claimed that he had travelled with the box (team nine) from the start to the finish of their route, which the presiding officer confirmed. None of the counting officials could provide a satisfactory response as to why there were 121 extra ballot papers. Instead, they rang Oro's election

manager, Peter Malaifeope. When Peter Malaifeope arrived at the counting hall, he stated that these types of issues are troublesome, as it is difficult to ascertain if Sheldon's scrutineer's figures were correct. The scrutineers collectively responded by requesting for the ballot booklet figures to be consolidated, as that would be the only way to verify and know the total number of ballot papers used for that box number. Peter Malaifeope replied, 'The Electoral Commission record belongs to us, which we have already sent to Port Moresby, and you have no right to ask for them'. He further questioned the scrutineers, saying, 'What was your job? To sit and decorate the polling station or to take your won tallies? You cannot ask for our own figures'. This exchange on 14 July reached a stalemate, with scrutineers walking out, supposedly to report to their candidates, and counting ceased until the next day. This also occurred in 2012, when 'the candidates and their scrutineers alleged there were a lot of discrepancies which Malaifeope overlooked and simple administrative matters such as balancing ballot papers were not seriously considered' (Omaro 26/7/2012). In such scenarios, vigilant scrutineers must speak up and ask for accountability. In order to deflate contentions that might arise, the PNGEC sent two lawyers to each province to observe the counting.

There were also suggestions of sorcery during the counting process. After counting several ballot boxes, when all the first preference votes kept going in favour of Richard Masere, a commentator remarked that:

there must be someone in the counting room closing the eyes of the counters, making them sleepy and then manipulating all the ballots to go in favour of Richard Masere.

In the same conversation, it was lamented that 'if only Warisan got someone to counteract and protect his ballots, he would have blocked whatever was happening in the counting room'. This type of sentiment from advisors or *komiti* is not uncommon. During a Women in Leadership Support Program workshop in Port Moresby in early 2017, Dame Carol shared that she was advised to hire a counter-sorcerer to ward off any spells that other sorcerers might cast on her during her second election campaign in 2002. Although she did not believe in it, she complied to appease her *komiti*. It was also rumoured that both Richard Masere and Gary Juffa hired the same sorcerer from Koiari, Central Province, to multiply their ballot numbers. Sorcery narratives provide an explanatory framework for seemingly inexplicable events but, in the context of elections, perhaps might suggest a distrust in election administration.

8.3 Conclusion

Campaigning is about establishing oneself as a credible candidate. One important factor in establishing credibility is the candidate's ability to recruit and manage a large network of *komiti*. These *komiti* consists of kin and loyal supporters who conduct extensive groundwork for the candidate months, or even years, prior to the election period and then work with the candidate during the official eight-week campaign period to consolidate their support. Hence, the festivities and rallies during the official campaign period are demonstrations of pre-existing support. Moreover, big crowds and long vehicle convoys display the wealth of a candidate, an important factor for voters.

In the eight weeks of official campaigning, a great deal of money is spent on various campaign activities, from poster production to travel logistics and gift presentations at community gatherings. During election time, everything costs money. However, it is the effective coordination of an extensive working *komiti* that enables a candidate to cover more ground during the campaign period. Also, as the *komiti* are already influential in their localities, their endorsement of the candidate adds value to the candidate's campaign efforts. Furthermore, due to the proliferation of money politics and political gifting in the last 20 years, voters are prone to hop from one candidate camp to another. Therefore, having a *komiti* in place serves as a surveillance measure to ensure that voters who have pledged their support and have benefited from a candidate's *hanmak* follow through with their pledges.

It is apparent that establishing an extensive *komiti* is pivotal to a candidate's overall performance, not only during the campaign period but throughout the polling and counting when some *komiti* become scrutineers. This is a crucial aspect of campaigning where many women candidates underperform. With their limited campaign budgets, it is difficult to recruit and maintain a loyal *komiti* over an extended period. Women candidates are more likely to save their campaign funds for the official campaign period. While doing so may cater for the façade of campaigning, it is the absence of substantial groundwork that hinders their overall performance.

Chapter 9 Tinned Fish and Rice: The 2017 National Elections in Oro Province

The preceding chapters have outlined the theory and practice of contemporary campaigning, all of which culminates in polling and the subsequent election of political representatives. In Oro, 106 candidates contested in the 2017 national elections. This chapter is an analysis of their results.⁶⁷ As discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, voter behaviour in PNG is characterised by kin-connections and patron–client politics. However, after the 2007 national elections, the ‘Highlandization’ theory — an extension of the patron–client relationship coupled with money politics — arose due to the perceived outsized influence of Highlands political culture on other regions of PNG. In Oro, the election results from the three electorates of Ijivitari Open, Sohe Open and Oro Province illustrate how these aspects of voter behaviour contend with one another.

The election of a *kam man* candidate, Richard Masere, in the Ijivitari electorate suggests a shift away from traditional kin-based voting or voting for the local, or *asples*, candidate. Gary Juffa’s overwhelming support throughout the province for the Oro provincial seat also affirms this trend. Yet, in the Sohe race, the usual pattern of candidates collecting bulk votes in their stronghold or base support areas indicates that kin-based voting is also still in effect. Before expounding on these new trends, a review of traditional voting norms is necessary to establish a point of reference.

9.1 Voting trends in Papua New Guinea and Oro

As mentioned in Chapter 2, there are established structures in PNG that inherently inhibit the performance of women candidates. Specifically, three voting trends present a perpetual challenge for women candidates’ attempts to collect votes and therefore influence their approach to campaigning.

The first voting trend that presents a challenge for women candidates is kin-based voting, or voting along clan lines. This trend was observed in the country’s first election (1964) and now appears to be the tradition of electoral politics in PNG (Hegarty 1983; Ketan 2004; Oliver 1989; Saffu 1996; Standish 1991) and Melanesia more broadly, particularly with ‘the absence of significant ideological cleavages and established party allegiances’ (May 2006:108). Interpretations of this practice are diverse and accommodate elements of cultural obligations, reciprocal relationships, remnants of big-man leadership and clientelism. In clientelist polities,

⁶⁷ See Appendix 2 for the list of 2017 Oro national election candidates.

the candidate acts as the patron and his or her followers as clients. In a feudal society, 'clientelism is a way of describing the pattern of unequal, hierarchical exchange ... in which patrons and clients were tied to durable relationships by a powerful sense of obligation' (Hopkin 2006:2). In Melanesia, however, clientelism operates on the ethos of reciprocity and is reminiscent of the traditional big-man system, in which wealth created by the big-man is distributed within and reciprocated by the clan to maintain his status and following (Sahlins 1963:291). In the modern era, close supporters are endowed with government contracts, jobs in the public service, business ventures and even individual material goods like vehicles and money (Gibbs et al. 2004; Kurer 2007:41). Having observed similar practices in Solomon Islands, Wood (2015:8) posited that it is rational for voters in developing countries with weak party systems, poor state institutions and struggling economies to support candidates who will cater for their immediate needs. With this reasoning, it is unlikely voters will vote for women candidates who cannot afford to readily respond to their requests. In the same vein, voting for a relative or kin is also a rational choice as an investment in social security and financial safety (see Rooney 2017).

After kin connections are exhausted, voter support continues down the path of reciprocal relations and exchange networks. To borrow HiriAsia's model of kin-based voting, the core of a candidate's total vote is their kin; where they reside are the candidate's stronghold areas. The secondary source of strong support is campaign managers (*komiti*) and their kin and networks, hence the importance of recruiting influential campaign managers, as discussed in Chapter 4. The third category of voters are those who do not have any kin contesting or participating as campaign managers; these voters are not committed to any candidate and so can be persuaded (HiriAsia 2016:4). Official campaigning after the issue of writs is viewed as targeting this third category of voters.

An emerging practice that challenges the trend of kin-based voting is that of money politics. Money politics, which entails vote-buying and political gifting, has gained prominence since the 2007 national elections (May et al. 2011). This patron–client practice of exchanging money for votes, either using constituency development funds or a candidate's personal wealth, is well-documented and considered a norm not only in PNG but in other parts of the Pacific (Corbett 2015a:65; Duncan and Hassall 2011; Ketan 2007; Kurer 2007). However, the practice may vary in specific societies. Tony HiriAsia (2016) argued in his study of East AreAre in Solomon Islands that kin-based voting is still the primary determinant of political choice and that political gifting becomes risky in non-stronghold areas. Studies of other areas in Solomon Islands contest this; for example, Cox (2015) described how in the North Vella Lavella

constituency, money politics overrides kin-based voting. A possible explanation for this contrast is that East AreAre is a chieftain society in which cultural obligations are stronger, whereas North Vella Lavella operates under a big-man system.⁶⁸ In PNG, money politics has long been associated with the Highlands region (Haley and Anere 2008:30; Ketan 2004; Standish 1983,1996).

In Oro, kin or clan voting is pervasive not only because of relational obligations but also because voters have observed that successful members usually provide for their own kin and base vote areas.⁶⁹ Prior to the 2007 national elections, politicking in Oro was low-key, with door-to-door campaign visitations an effective strategy, as opposed to the big-man politicking style of the Highlands with largesse and campaign houses. Yet, in the last four election cycles, the number of *kam mans*, or outsiders — candidates not ethnically from Oro Province — contesting national elections has increased. In 2002, the winner of the Sohe electorate was Highlander Peter Oresi. During the 2007 national elections, Oro locals became aware of the potential of outsiders to mobilise votes and determine election outcomes (Susub 2011:214).⁷⁰ This led to the inception of the ‘Oro for Oro’ campaign slogan, designed to encourage voters to vote locally. Susub (2011:215) further claimed that *kam man* candidates caused campaigning to become much more expensive for men and impossible for women:

With them [outsiders] came the ‘high cost’ campaign style which involved ‘patron–client’ relationships and the expectations that went along with that. Gifting was not only accepted, but became expected.

While candidates complain of the expense of campaigning, some voters complain about how cheap their Oro candidates are and how little voters received in exchange for their votes. As discussed in Chapter 4, the ‘*mipela save gim vote lo rice na tinpis* (we give our votes for tinned fish and rice)’ statement was referenced quite regularly in Oro, sometimes with scorn, indicating disappointment with the low expectations of Oro voters. Thus, money politics is considered normal in Oro but practiced on a comparatively smaller scale to the Highlands.

It might appear that Highlands candidates just dish out cash randomly during elections, but as explained by Ketan (2004:343), ‘cash ... must be used cleverly because handouts do not

⁶⁸ Derek Futaiasi 17/04/2019. ANU PhD candidate, personal communication.

⁶⁹ Anonymous 23/05/201. Oro political commentator, personal communication.

⁷⁰ Oro has a high population of migrants relative to other provinces of PNG. This is largely due to the commercial production of oil palm, which began in 1976 with the state acquisition and conversion of customary land to state agricultural leases and the establishment of government land settlement schemes. People from elsewhere in PNG were voluntarily resettled in Oro and allocated 99-year state agricultural leases (Koczberski et al. 2012:186).

automatically open eyes or win votes. Cash must be given in the context of historical relations and personal networks'. In the documentary *Pigs and Politics* (Frankham et al. 2002), which followed election campaigning in the Highlands during the 2002 elections, Professor John Nonggorr explained that:

it's not just election campaigning taking place for somebody to be voted into parliament. No, it's all these exchanges, local politics going on with alliances that have been established.

Hence, cash handouts during the election period operate within the parameters of existing exchange relationships (see Chapter 3).

While money politics continues to be rampant in the Highlands region, it is also increasingly influencing campaigning elsewhere in the country, majorly inhibiting women's campaign efforts. About 45 per cent of the voters interviewed by Transparency International PNG observers admitted to receiving bribes and/or asking for inducements in return for their vote in 2017 (Transparency International Papua New Guinea 2017:19). In addition, observers from ANU's 2017 domestic election observation team reported that candidates across all four regions spent large amounts of money to secure votes. In the Southern region (which includes Oro), vote-buying in the 2017 elections more than doubled since the last elections in 2012 (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:43). Money politics is now considered a common feature of elections in PNG. The following section is an analysis of the 2017 election results for the three electorates in Oro.

9.2 Oro for Oro? A *kam man* gets mandate in Ijivitari electorate

The count for Ijivitari Open proved equally contentious, with widespread allegations that each of the leading candidates had engaged witches and sorcerers to improve their prospects of success. As counting progressed, rumours emerged that the leading candidate had used witchcraft to collect votes from other candidates, with witnesses coming forward to report that the candidate in question had been seen in the company of two people from Milne Bay. Losing candidates also claimed that votes cast by their supporters were not 'found' during the count. Some candidates took to social media with their concerns, and four days into the count, candidate supporters fought outside the counting venue. A suspected sorcerer was apprehended, beaten and subsequently locked up for his own safety.

—Haley and Zubrinich 2018:52

In the Ijivitari electorate, 33 candidates nominated to contest in the 2017 national elections (Papua New Guinea Registry of Political Parties 2018:92). Nineteen contested as independent

candidates and 14 were endorsed by political parties. Dr Joy Travertz-Arore, the sole woman candidate, contested as an independent and finished in ninth place with 1926 votes.

For the first time in the electorate's history, the people of Ijivitari gave overwhelming support and mandate to a *kam man*, or outsider. Richard Masere, who was endorsed by the National Alliance Party, won with 15,245 votes. Masere, originally from Daru, Western Province, first entered Oro politics in 2012 when he contested the Oro provincial seat. He finished sixth in that race with 2976 votes. Later, in 2015, Masere contested with 20 other candidates in the Ijivitari by-election, where he finished fourth. Masere's win in 2017 surprised many voters and observers for several reasons. To begin with, in the months leading up to the elections, the candidate thought most likely to replace the incumbent David Arore was John Warisan.

9.2.1 The Arore/Warisan rivalry

In the decade leading up to the 2017 elections, David Arore and John Warisan competed often as political rivals. Both men entered the political space in the 2007 national elections as candidates for the Ijivitari seat. That first contestation was quite competitive, with Arore collecting 2477 first preference votes for third place and Warisan behind him in fourth place with 2322 first preference votes. As counting proceeded into the elimination rounds, Arore collected a significant number of second and third preferences and was declared winner on 25 July 2007 with 5479 total votes. Warisan finished second with 4941 votes, a difference of 538 votes. On 3 September 2007, John Warisan filed an election petition disputing David Arore's election, which turned into a lengthy court battle.

In the following elections in 2012, incumbent Arore retained his seat with 8933 votes, and Warisan finished in second place again, this time with 4906 votes. After the election, Warisan filed a petition with PNG's Court of Disputed Returns alleging 14 counts of bribery against Arore. The court dismissed 10 of the 14 counts, and Warisan withdrew one of the counts, meaning three counts ultimately went to trial. This was another lengthy process. Finally, on 2 June 2015, the National Court declared Arore's 2012 election void and ordered a by-election (Moi 2/6/2015). In that November 2015 by-election, a total of 21 candidates contested, including Warisan, Arore, Richard Masere and Sheldon Deilala. It was a close race between these four men; by the time they finished counting the 16th ballot box, John Warisan was leading with 3442 votes, David Arore was running behind with 2684 votes and Sheldon Deilala and Richard Masere were following with 2802 and 1805 votes, respectively (Kavera 28/11/2015). However, by exclusion 19 of the elimination round, Arore won again with a total of 9787 votes. For the third time, Warisan finished in the runner-up position, with 8389 votes.

It is important to highlight that the Arore/Warisan rivalry illustrates Oro's voting culture, particularly in the rural areas of Ijivitari District. Arore comes from the densely populated and isolated subdistrict of Afore. Prior to entering politics in 2007, he worked as a teacher at the Popondetta Secondary School. In the months leading up to the 2007 national elections, Arore travelled all over his mountainous region, educating his kin and others in Afore on how they could best utilise the new LPV system. Stressing the importance of keeping all three preferences within the Afore subdistrict, he said, 'Back then, LPV was just introduced and while other people were still learning the system, my people in Afore already knew how to utilise their three preferences'.⁷¹ Susub (2011:222) reported after the 2007 elections count that people from Afore still had the FPP mentality, but as Arore explained, they were instructed to keep their preferences within their own LLG area.

Of the nine LLGs in Oro, Afore, located in the southeastern Highlands, is the most remote. Depending on road conditions and the weather, it can take between four and eight hours to reach Popondetta from Afore (Hanson et al. 2001:80). Although the land has great potential to grow coffee and other cash crops, terrible road conditions limit access to markets. A 2001 study by Hanson et al. (2001:81) reported that most people in rural Afore earned less than K40 per year; in the two decades since, living standards in Afore have not risen. Afore's remoteness implies that many traditions are still intact, and with limited migration, people are more likely to vote strongly along kin and clan lines. For example, in the 2007 Ijivitari election, after the first preference votes were distributed, Arore was running in third place, while his relative Benson Garui (also from Afore) was leading the race. As the counting progressed, Arore and Warisan wavered between third and fourth place and Garui dropped down to fifth. The margin between the first and third place candidates was around 600 votes. When Garui was eliminated in the 34th count, almost all his second preference votes — around 1000 of them — went to Arore, which enabled his first victory.

In contrast, Warisan is a *kam man*. Originally from Kubalia in the Yangoru-Saussia District of East Sepik, he came to Oro as a young boy in 1977 with his older brother, a police officer. He was adopted by the Koa family of Bakubari in Ijivitari and grew up in Popondetta. His first employment was with the Department of Works in Popondetta, and he progressed through the Department of Works as provincial head plant manager and later became the head of the plant and transport division. Outside of this work, Warisan established himself as a local businessman and, over a period of four decades, displayed much *luksave* and *hanmak* to those in his community. When I first arrived in Popondetta for my fieldwork in July 2016, my

⁷¹ David Arore 20/04/2017. Member for Ijivitari Open, personal communication.

landlords were still constructing my flat and had arranged for me to spend a week at Warisan's home. Knowing that Warisan would contest again in the 2017 national elections, I took that opportunity to ask him about his political experience in Oro. Considering his *kam man* identity, I enquired about his support base; he said:

Being in Popondetta Town for the last 20, 30 years, Popondetta Town became like my own village. When I stood for election in 2007 and 2012, Popondetta Town became my base voters because ... all people from Papua New Guinea live in Popondetta Town. So, I use Popondetta Town as my base vote.

Evidently, Warisan is well-known in Popondetta, not only through the kin network of his adoptive family but also among other *kam man* peoples such as the Sepik, Morobe, Tari, Hagen and Simbu communities. This was exemplified during the counting for the November 2015 by-election when Warisan collected many votes in the urban areas of Ijivitari but lost momentum when the ballot boxes from the Afore District were counted; most of those votes went to David Arore. Furthermore, a seasoned campaign manager explained that in Oro, a candidate needs at least 20 villages to win an election. Contrary to the ubiquitous 'Oro for Oro' sentiments, this campaign manager said:

Being an outsider does not disadvantage you in the sense that Oro people do not like you, no! John Warisan is a likeable man and collects very well in the urban areas, but the fact of the matter is you need a bloc vote from at least 20 villages to give you a push in the count. Being an outsider, you have no village or clan here. That is how David Arore always wins, because his people of Afore LLG will always give him the vote base that John Warisan unfortunately does not have.⁷²

In acknowledging the 'Oro for Oro' sentiments, Warisan admitted that perhaps 20 per cent of Ijivitari voters would not vote for a *kam man*. However, he believed this attitude was changing:

When using those words, Oro for Oro, they do not see any development. Now, people will begin to look outside, they will support or give votes to people coming from other parts of Papua New Guinea living in Oro like myself. They say that their own people cannot do it.⁷³

In the 2017 national elections, people expected Warisan to win the Ijivitari seat, as this would be his third attempt — especially once it became known that Arore was vacating the seat to contest the Oro provincial seat. Arore said, 'The people have asked me to run for governor'.⁷⁴

⁷² Anonymous 29/08/2016. Oro political commentator, personal communication.

⁷³ John Warisan 09/08/2016. 2017 Ijivitari candidate and Oro Department of Works and Transport employee, personal communication.

⁷⁴ David Arore 20/04/2017. Member for Ijivitari Open, personal communication.

When Arore publicly endorsed Warisan and urged his supporters to vote for him during the nomination week, his gesture was interpreted as a reconciliatory blessing towards Warisan. Even though Arore's wife, Dr Joy Travertz-Arore, was also contesting the Ijivitari seat, Arore's public support for Warisan implied that either Arore did not believe his wife had a good chance of winning or that perhaps he was not completely supportive of her candidacy.

9.2.2 Masere bags the prize

Richard Masere winning the Ijivitari seat in the 2017 national elections was largely unanticipated. Masere won with 15,245 votes and Warisan finished the race in second place with 7183 votes. The 8062-vote margin was by far the widest winning margin in the history of Ijivitari elections. In 2012, the margin between Warisan and Arore was 4106 votes; in 2007, the margin between the winner and the runner-up was 211 votes; in 2002, it was 76 votes.⁷⁵

Masere's win surprised many people, especially Warisan supporters, for several reasons. To begin with, Masere is also a *kam man*, but of a different type. Unlike Warisan, who had arrived in Oro as a child in the late 1970s and built his life there, Masere, ethnically from Daru on his mother's side and Tasmania, Australia, on his father's side, was a resident of Lae, Morobe, prior to his first election attempt in 2012. His tangible connection to the province is through his wife, Cotilda Masere, whose mother is a Maisin woman from Tufi; her biological father is German. Cotilda was raised by her maternal aunt, who later married and settled at Jonita village in Popondetta. Utilising his wife's kin as a base vote, Masere's support presumably came from his in-laws in Jonita village and surrounding areas such as Jegarata village. In theory, however, it would be difficult to establish a strong vote base as he could not necessarily rely on complete clan support from his in-laws, and he had not lived in the province long enough to build the kind *luksave* and *hanmak* that John Warisan had established over four decades. With such a background, how does one accumulate such a large following across the district? After analysing a decade of election outcomes in the Angoram, East Sepik, May (2006) concluded that men outsider candidates have a chance of winning because strong winning candidates do so not only with a concentration of localised votes but also with widespread votes throughout the electorate.

Masere's campaign was strengthened by his alliance with Oro's 'favourite son', Governor Gary Juffa. On the last day of the official campaign period, incumbent Governor Juffa and Masere rallied together at Doroin Park in Popondetta Town. Both candidates endorsed each other,

⁷⁵ These figures and other election results are taken from the PNG Elections Database at devpolicy.org/pngelections/data-explorer, which has been an incredibly valuable resource in writing this thesis.

urging their supporters and everybody else in the audience to vote for them. Weeks later, their mutual support was verified in the counting room when Masere polled the highest in the locations where Governor Juffa also had huge support. Evidently, Masere's partnership with Governor Juffa worked in his favour.

Yet critics were quick to claim other reasons for Masere's win. Allegations against him included the extensive use of money and sorcery. During the polling and counting periods, various allegations of malfeasance were made against Masere. For example, a few of Masere's *komiti* and Masere himself were seen near polling stations in various polling locations (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:66). A source from within his camp reported on 11 June 2017 that Masere had fired shots from his weapon after a dispute with supporters of rival candidate Sheldon Deilala.⁷⁶ Later, as counting progressed, fellow Ijivitari candidate Erastus Kamburi filed a dispute against Masere claiming that a particular ballot box was full of completed or already filled out ballot papers because Masere collected more votes in Kamburi's base area than Kamburi himself. There were also reports of families crying to Warisan in disbelief when they learnt that the ballot box that contained their votes for him had 'disappeared' and instead contained only ballots for Masere.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, putting aside sorcery, intimidation and malfeasance allegations, Masere and his *komiti* managed to secure large amounts of votes from all over the district. This signifies a shift away from Oro's traditional obligatory kin-based voting and the 'Oro for Oro' ideology. However, allegations of money politics, gifting and political violence cannot be ignored, as they attest to the salience of the 'Highlandization' theory.

9.3 Running for governor: *pawarim*⁷⁸ Juffa

In the 2017 race for the Oro governor's seat, there were 31 candidates, a marked decline from the 72 candidates of the 2012 national elections. Of these candidates, 14 were endorsed by various political parties, while the remaining 17 contested as independents. Three women contested: Jean Eparo Parkop, Anista Matbob and Prisca Mauve. Both Anista and Prisca performed poorly. Anista was the first and Prisca the eighth contestant to be eliminated in the count. Neither woman visibly campaigned in the province, nor did they have an active or integrated *komiti*. Jean, on the other hand, was a serious candidate whose long-term groundwork and strategic campaigning resulted in her finishing in the second place (see Chapter 7).

⁷⁶ Anonymous 17/07/2017. Oro election observer, personal communication.

⁷⁷ Anonymous 18/07/2017. Oro election observer, personal communication.

⁷⁸ Tok Pisin phrase meaning 'to give more power to'.

Unlike other provinces with strong party affiliations, such as Morobe's support for the Pangu Pati and New Ireland's for the People's Progress Party, Oro Province as a collective does not tend to lean towards one party. Most of the people I spoke to either directly or indirectly expressed that political parties have no significance for them. One *komiti* (campaign area coordinator) said, 'If you talk about party in our province here, they won't say or go more deeper on party, but they will say more about the candidate'.

Nevertheless, various political parties made an impact and were visible in Oro through distributing party merchandise, conducting awareness and occasional visits by their parliamentary leaders during the eight-week campaign period to endorse their nominated candidates. One such visiting party leader was incumbent prime minister Peter O'Neill, who visited Oro in early May 2017 to publicly affirm his support for the PNC-endorsed candidates: Delilah Gore for Sohe electorate, David Arore for the governor's seat and Sheldon Deilala for Ijivitari electorate. SDP Leader and NCD Governor Powes Parkop visited Oro on several occasions to support his wife, provincial candidate Jean Eparo Parkop. Another high-level political visitor was then opposition leader Don Polye at the invitation of Governor Juffa to officially open the new operating theatre at Popondetta's General Hospital. Polye is a seasoned Engan politician and leader of the Triumph Heritage Empowerment Party. With the absence of then prime minister Peter O'Neill, who cancelled his attendance at the last minute, Polye politicised the event by criticising the O'Neill–Dion government's management of PNG's economy and canvassed for the opposition, which included himself and Governor Juffa (Radio New Zealand 4/5/2017).

In the months leading up to the 2017 elections, Allen Mesa, Mark G. Baia, David Arore and Jean Eparo Parkop were very popular candidates and perceived as the most likely to unseat incumbent Governor Juffa. Yet Governor Juffa had a huge following, both in Oro Province and nationally. As a member of the opposition in the previous term (2012–17), Governor Juffa regularly spoke against the government and its policies, not only on provincial issues — such as logging and Kokoda Track management — but also national and regional issues. His zealous patriotism and candid speeches were well-received among many Papua New Guineans, and he had a large following on social media compared to other PNG parliamentarians.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ As of 10 October 2021, Governor Juffa had 6122 followers on his Twitter account, @hungara; on Instagram he had 51.8K followers. On Facebook, he is followed by 59,623 people.

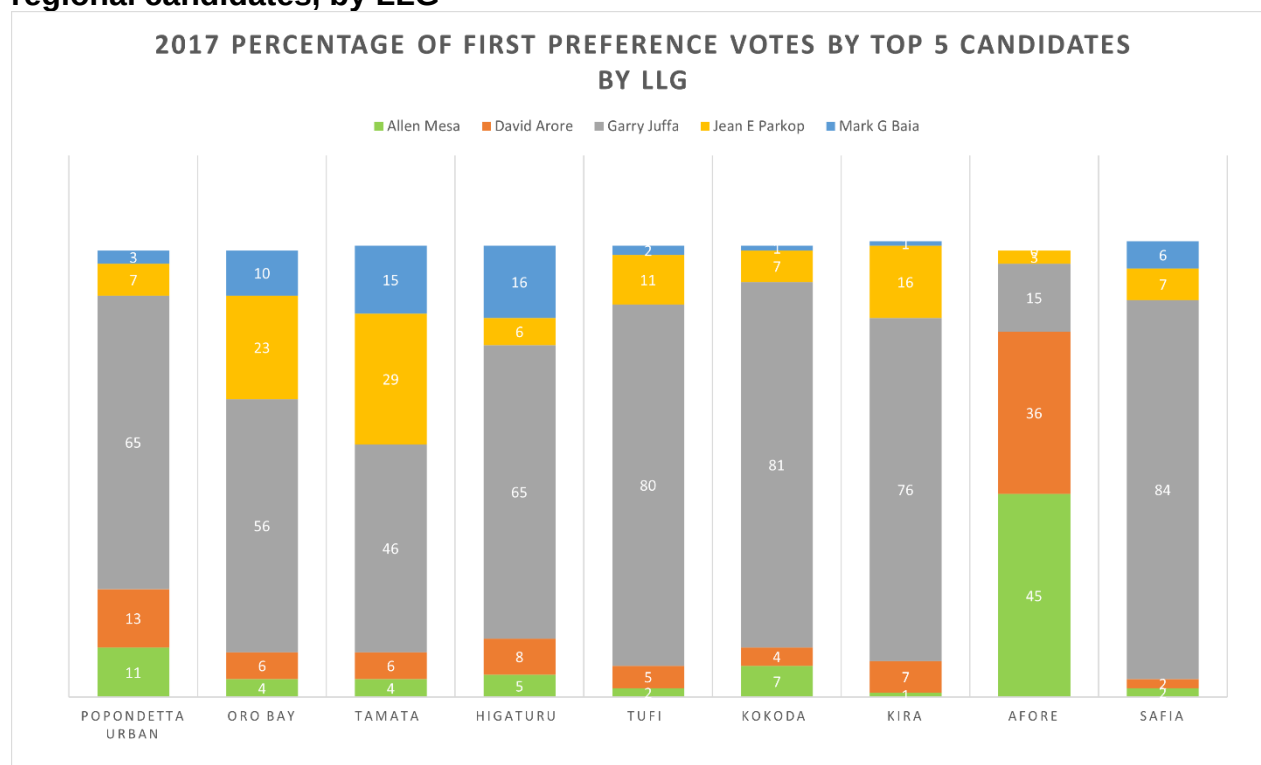
In Oro, however, not everyone was a fan of the outspoken governor. Some Oro locals expressed that he did not know how to do things the *kastom* way, particularly in relation to resolving local disputes, which they felt was an important leadership trait. To other critics, Governor Juffa was all talk but no action. They used the analogy of *tanda pirap tasol nogat laitnin*, meaning ‘the thunder that makes noise without any lightning’, to describe the lack of service delivery under his leadership. Local critics claimed that he had achieved nothing for the province; of his stated accomplishments as governor, the three bridges that opened in 2016 were already underway before his term, and the new airport was a project of the National Airports Corporation. Meanwhile, die-hard supporters would say:

Gary Juffa go insait lo parliament nau, ol man save lo wanem hap em Oro, bifo nogat ya (Before Gary Juffa went into parliament, nobody knew where Oro Province was).

Some even regarded him as a saviour of Oro Province, while one critic remarked that his following was almost cult-like, with his close supporters usually dressed in black, much like himself.

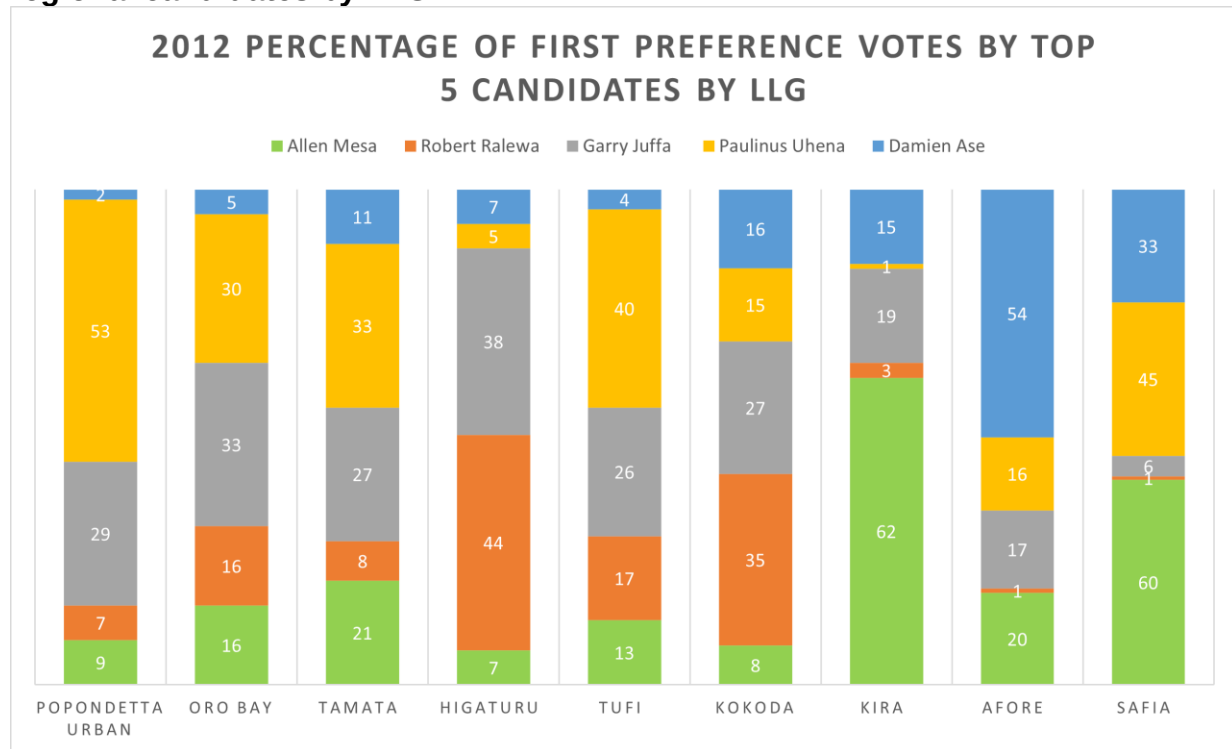
In the 2017 provincial race, Governor Juffa retained his seat as expected; the surprising factor, however, was his winning margin. He collected 37,729 votes in 2017, a huge increase from 2012 when he won with 13,110 votes. Moreover, the margin between Governor Juffa and the second runner-up Jean Eparo Parkop was over 30,000 votes, with Jean finishing with 8132 votes. Figure 9-1 displays the percentage of first preference votes received by the top five provincial candidates across Oro’s eight subdistricts or LLG areas. According to the kin or clan-based voting theory, the proportion of first preference votes collected by each of the five candidates should correspond to where these candidates are ethnically from.

Figure 9-1. 2017 percentage of first preference votes received by the top five regional candidates, by LLG



As discussed in Chapter 7, runner-up Jean has property and resides in the Oro Bay LLG and is ethnically from the Tamata LLG. Her *komiti* spent a lot of time strengthening and consolidating their kin and clan connections in Oro Bay and Tamata. Hence, they were confident that those two locations would be her solid voter bases or strongholds. However, Governor Juffa's team managed to infiltrate these areas, and Jean received only 23 per cent and 29 per cent of first preference votes from Oro Bay and Tamata, respectively. In fact, Governor Juffa collected more than 40 per cent of the first preference votes in eight of Oro's nine subdistricts, an unprecedented landslide margin. The only subdistrict where he did not collect well was the isolated Afore. Fellow provincial candidates Allen Mesa and David Arore are from the Afore subdistrict, and both men contesting for the governor's seat split their base vote. Overall, in comparison to the 2012 provincial race, the voting pattern changed dramatically in 2017. A similar chart for the top five candidates in the 2012 provincial race illustrates this change.

Figure 9-2. 2012 percentage of first preference votes received by the top five regional candidates by LLG



In the 2012 elections, Governor Juffa's win came as a surprise because he was a newcomer and won on his first attempt, an exception in PNG politics. Also, candidates Timothy Titipu and Paulinus Uhena, who finished in second and third in the 2007 provincial race, were tipped to win.

One local political commentator and *komiti* remarked that Governor Juffa campaigned strategically in 2012 by funding a lot of the open candidates from both the Sohe and Ijivitari electorates. In return for his support, these open candidates instructed their supporters to give Governor Juffa their first preference vote for the regional seat. Other interlocutors shared anecdotes alluding to money politics. Irrespective of how Governor Juffa campaigned for the 2012 national elections, Figure 9-2 illustrates that his first preference votes from each subdistrict never exceeded 40 per cent; in Safia, he received only six per cent of first preference votes. In 2017, however, he secured 84 per cent of Safia's first preference votes. Furthermore, in the other subdistricts — barring Afore — Governor Juffa managed to double, if not triple, his first preference vote shares, even in places where he likely did not have kin:

The decisiveness of Juffa's win certainly generated much speculation with observers and citizens alike highlighting that no one had ever been elected as governor of Oro twice or with such a margin (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:52).

It is common knowledge that Governor Juffa's mother is from the Kokoda LLG, and according to the traditional culture of clan-based voting, that should be his primary stronghold. However, the 2017 voting pattern suggests that perhaps contemporary Oro voters no longer feel obliged to vote according to kin, clan or traditional obligatory ties. In addition, with improving mobile network coverage, people are increasingly migrating or travelling around the province and building new alliances outside of kin. Governor Juffa's landslide win could also be a testament to the effective organisation of his *komiti*, as Governor Juffa himself was not physically present in the province during the 2017 campaign period until the very last week of the official campaign period.

Nevertheless, Governor Juffa's huge victory was not without accusations of political gifting, vote-buying and sorcery. Sorcery allegations were made towards Governor Juffa and Masere, as both candidates collected many votes in areas that were not their strongholds. For example, there were rumours that both Masere and Governor Juffa hired sorcerers from the Koiari (Central Province) and Samaria (Milne Bay Province) areas to manipulate votes during the polling period. Sorcery, or the supernatural, is generally not a novel concept in Oro, as magic was an aspect of the traditional Oro cosmology pertaining to healing, horticulture and weather patterns (Williams 1928). Today, however, these sorcery accusations are indicative of the general sense of mistrust towards the 2017 national elections administration, especially in relation to polling and counting. Sorcery allegations were not only reported in Oro but throughout all four regions of PNG during the 2017 elections (for more sorcery accounts, see Haley and Zubrinich 2018:49–52).

9.4 Sohe electorate: business as usual

While the Ijivitari and provincial counting and results caused a lot of commotion, the Sohe race was relatively calm, labelled as 'normal' because the votes collected in each locality reflected a candidate's stronghold and various partnerships between candidates. In 2017, 42 candidates nominated to contest the Sohe Open seat. Of these 42 candidates, 16 were party endorsed and 26 contested as independents. Incumbent and PNC-endorsed MP Delilah Gore was one of four women candidates. Maureen B. Duwang, who contested as an independent in 2012, contested again; this time, she was endorsed by the Pangu Pati. She finished in 22nd place, the same position as in her 2012 race. Another second-time candidate was Helen Porari, who finished third in 2012 but performed poorly in 2017, finishing 23rd. The final woman candidate was first-time independent candidate Alicia Toroi, who finished 35th in the race. In the months leading up to the 2017 national elections, I did not see or hear much about Porari or Duwang's campaigns. It became evident that Porari did not reside in Popondetta. Duwang, travelling

between Port Moresby and Popondetta, declined my request for an interview. Toroi, whom I interviewed along with her campaign manager just a week before the issue of writs, expressed that she had carried out very little groundwork but would start campaigning after the issue of writs. The differing results of these four Sohe women candidates are perhaps indicative of their campaign efforts.

9.4.1 The demise of Delilah Gore

As the first woman MP for Sohe, Delilah faced double standards and excessive scrutiny (see Baker 2018). According to Yangin (2021), three rather controversial incidents sum up Delilah's political career. First, in 2014, Delilah nominated her own candidate as Oro's provincial administrator and requested the National Executive Council's endorsement. This action received a lot of backlash from the Oro Provincial Executive Council, who had already appointed retired General Jeffrey Dademo, a selection endorsed by the Public Service Commission. Then Tufi LLG president Jaff Taua said, 'Gore has never turned up for any PEC [Provincial Executive Council] or assembly meetings and should not use her power as cabinet minister to influence the running of the provincial administration' (quoted in *The National* 27/8/2014). Second, also in 2014, allegations arose that Delilah, as Minister for Community Development, used public funds to accommodate Oro councillors at the Grand Papua Hotel in a bid to oust Governor Gary Juffa. The third and most well-known incident occurred in April 2015, when Delilah allegedly shouted at an Air Niugini flight attendant who had requested she switch off her mobile phone after safety demonstrations had been completed. A leadership tribunal hearing found Delilah guilty under Section 27 (1) of the constitution for misconduct in office and she was suspended without pay for three months, including any entitlements as member for the Northern Provincial Assembly and Minister for Community Development, Youth and Religion.

Delilah was heavily criticised for all three incidents. But, as PNG voters tend to be more fixated on local than national issues (Standish 2007:141–42), Delilah's re-election chances largely depended on local politics and local-level campaigning. In the months leading up to the 2017 election period, it was professed that she had a very good chance of maintaining her seat. From the issue of writs in April 2017, she actively campaigned throughout her electorate. Even before she returned to the province to commence campaigning, two of her *komiti* on the ground disclosed to me that they had already begun to work. For incumbents like Delilah, Governor Juffa and others around PNG, most if not all the work they do while in office is inferred as exhibiting *hanmak*; in this way, their track record of distributing constituency development funded projects enhances their chances of re-election.

Delilah's historic win in 2012 as a first-time candidate was a testament to her long-term engagement in her constituency (Chandler 2013). Her decade-long community service in her constituency exemplifies building credibility through creating *hanmak* and establishing *luksave*. In 2012, Blogger Deni ToKunai was the first person to break the news that she would be the fifth-ever woman MP. ToKunai (20/7/2012) observed that votes in the Sohe electorate race appeared to be evenly distributed between the candidates, with only a few hundred vote difference between leading candidates. He labelled this 'conscience voting', as opposed to the bloc voting patterns common to other parts of PNG (ToKunai 20/7/2012). Throughout the counting for the 2017 Sohe Open seat, this voting pattern became evident again. Incumbent Delilah took the lead as counting commenced. She held the lead on first preferences, amassing a total of 5258 votes in the first round. At that point, she had a 1801-vote margin to her nearest rival, Henry Jons Amuli. Despite this comfortable gap, her male rivals caught up with her during the elimination round. It became clear that the competitive men candidates had formed alliances with each other because, as they were eliminated, their second and third preference votes were collected by other men allies. Eventually, Amuli overtook Delilah by a 198-vote margin. Amuli won with 7713 votes and Delilah finished second with 7524 votes.

The 2017 vote distribution pattern suggests that Delilah did not establish any meaningful alliances with other candidates. Nor did she try to operationalise the LPV system, even with candidates deemed 'weak' and likely to be eliminated early. Moreover, the other three women candidates — Helen Porari, Alice Toroi and Maureen B. Duwang — did not appear to direct significant preferences towards Delilah; even if they had had, their early eliminations make it hard to deduce. In addition, the men candidates seemed to be working collectively to oust the woman member. I had asked one of the woman candidates if she had considered reaching out to Delilah to forge some type of alliance; the reply was, 'It's hard to get in touch with her'. Perhaps Delilah's strategy was to start strong and maintain that lead until the declaration, which had worked successfully for her in 2012. As an incumbent, she certainly had the resources to execute this strategy. Moreover, that was the primary campaign strategy employed under the FPP voting system and is the default approach to campaigning.

It may also be that the result reflects Sohe's evaluation of their first woman member. Prior to polling, I questioned Sohe voters to ascertain the general sentiment as to whether incumbent Delilah Gore would retain her seat; around three in five said yes. Others remarked that she had done a lot for the district, with the rehabilitation of the Sasembata/Kendata roads and the Kokoda High School infrastructure improvements (Kenneth 6/12/2016). However, most of her projects were concentrated near her home area and not dispersed throughout the district, a

common practice by PNG members of parliament (compare views expressed in Wiltshire et al. 2016). Hence, not everyone experienced service delivery and/or development projects during her term, and there was a reasonable possibility she could lose her seat.

Delilah Gore's 2017 campaign poster had the words 'AZA KEBERA' and '*Hanmak stap pinis ya*'. *Aza kebera* means '*Mama, yu tok tru*', or 'Mother, it's true'. This phrase affirms her statement of '*Hanmak stap pinis ya* (the evidence is already there)'. Unlike other candidate posters that were littered with policies or plans, Delilah's poster had a simple reminder that, as an incumbent, she had delivered.⁸⁰

Figure 9-3. Delilah Gore's 2017 election poster



Source: Sohe District in the Spotlight blog.

Nevertheless, a solid track record does not guarantee re-election for an incumbent, particularly in a country with high turnover rates (Standish 2007:140; Wood 2016:34). As such, incumbent MPs — both men and women — tend to struggle to get re-elected. The 2017 winner of the Sohe open seat, Amuli, had been contesting since 2002. In the 2012 elections, he finished in third place. As an experienced candidate, it is unlikely Amuli stopped unofficially campaigning or maintaining his support base between elections. He too is from Kokoda and is a Seventh Day Adventist like Delilah. Being from the same area and church as Delilah suggests a split in

⁸⁰ Throughout the 2012–17 term, progressive reports of developments in Sohe District initiated by Hon. Delilah Gore were posted on sohedistrict.blogspot.com.

Delilah's support base, which — along with the preference flows from other men candidates — ensured Amuli's narrow victory. Interestingly, had this election been under the FPP system, Delilah would have won with her lead; however, the elimination component of counting under the LPV system cost her the win.

9.4.2 Reflections on being a women candidate in PNG

A few days after the election results were declared, I met Jean Eparo Parkop at the bookstore in town and asked how she was doing. She seemed okay but was very downcast about the election results. She had reason to believe that a lot of her supporters has switched allegiance at the last minute; either that or they were not very honest in keeping the pledge they made to her team months prior. Her clear disappointment was mirrored by women candidates all over the country. No women candidates were given mandate and the three 2012–17 incumbents had lost their seats. This was particularly disappointing because a record 179 women candidates contested the 2017 national elections, the highest figure yet in PNG national elections. The highest polling woman candidate was Rufina Peter, who contested for the Central provincial seat. She finished in third place with 33,221 votes. Rufina, quoted in a United Nations Development Programme PNG media release (EMTV Online 6/8/2017), identified four challenges for women candidates in PNG:

Firstly, the perception of many Papua New Guineans that politics is a man's world and that women are ill-equipped to be effective political leaders. Secondly, the current political culture promotes corrupt practices — particularly significant expenditure to buy votes. The third is that there isn't adequate financial resources and logistical support for the entire election period and finally the challenge women face brokering support of traditional tribal leaders to secure sufficient base votes in order to be a serious contender among the male candidates.

Another strong candidate for the Rai Coast Open seat, Kessy Sawang, who finished third, shared similar sentiments on her blog, saying, 'Women are disadvantaged because of traditional cultural norms, male domination, unlawful practices of vote-buying and election rigging and lack of adequate finances to conduct election campaigns' (Sawang 2017). More recently, at the 2021 Pacific Women PNG Annual Learning Workshop held in Port Moresby, a panel of the well-performing women candidates from 2017, specifically Dulciana Somare, Jean Eparo Parkop, Lucy Siki Aiya and Julie Soso, reflected on their experiences from the 2017 elections and plans for the next in 2022. Dulciana, who finished fifth in her campaign for the East Sepik provincial seat, spoke about the demands of voters and recognised that in many jurisdictions, voters and influential brokers in the communities are asking for money in advance. This creates a campaigning environment where the highest bidder has the greatest

chance of winning. Both Jean and Julie expressed the belief that free and fair elections in PNG are still a dream. Jean said:

You can have what it takes to be a leader, you can give you best in your campaign, or you have the best campaign strategy, or you can give and say whatever but, in the end, I tell you, people still want money. So, if you want to run a clean campaign, you want to be clean and honest, this place is not a place for people who are honest and clean. You can be defeated at the eve of election because our people still want money. I don't know about other provinces but for Oro, people want money, and that's how people [candidates] at the eve of election, a lot of their voters will be taken away. That's what happened to mine.⁸¹

As outlined earlier in this chapter, the effect of money politics on voter behaviour and voting trends greatly disadvantages women candidates, and as Jean expressed, it nullifies all their campaign efforts. At the same event, Jean reflected that while her campaign efforts for the 2017 Oro provincial race were exemplary, in hindsight, she did not follow through with vigilance at the counting. She said:

At the voting stage, you need to make sure that you know how many people are going to vote for you in that particular ward, so you make sure that your voters turn up and vote and make sure that those votes are protected.

This suggests the need for both loyal and effective *komiti* to ensure voter turnout and a collation of ward population and constituency census data to verify records. These are expensive and time-consuming tasks that candidates and their *komiti* must now conduct as measures to secure their votes and/or detect malfeasance by other candidates (or even PNGEC staff). If such measures are to be incorporated as part of campaign preparation or groundwork, campaigning becomes even more expensive for the average women candidate. Commenting on the next national elections in 2022, Julie Soso, a relatively well-off candidate who spoke after Jean, said:

It's very expensive, so we have to have the money to really manage your team from the polling booth all the way to the LLG ward coordinator to the LLG coordinator, the district coordinator and then the provincial management team and the coordinators. It's going to be expensive.

It is a dire situation when PNG women candidates can only work to improve what they control, that is, their preparedness and campaign strategies, yet it is largely the structures outside of their control that hinder their performance.

⁸¹ Jean Eparo Parkop 3/08/2021. 2017 Oro provincial seat candidate, PNG Annual Learning Meeting.

9.5 Conclusion

In the domain of national elections, women candidates regularly negotiate and accommodate many hurdles in the campaign exercise just to give the appearance that they are on an even playing field with their men counterparts. Often, they do this only to find their efforts compromised because the established voting patterns are not in their favour. Women candidates become *kam mans*, or outsiders, in the political space because the existing structures innately disfavour their candidacy.

It is notable that the woman candidate who performed best in Oro, Delilah Gore, ran in Sohe. This was the only electorate that seemed to maintain Oro's traditionally egalitarian voting atmosphere; as each ballot box was counted, logical deductions could be made as to which candidate would collect most of the votes. Sohe also had minimal reports of public tension and malfeasance. Branded as the 'normal' race, this district was mostly free from allegations of sorcery and misconduct. The 2017 Sohe election race, although disappointing for Team Delilah Gore and her supporters, was satisfying to observe because the voting trend was consistent from previous elections. Also, with Delilah's narrow loss, Sohe remains an electorate relatively favourable for women candidates.

The two other Oro races, the Ijivitari Open and the provincial seat, were littered with surprises and discord. In these two electorates, rumours of money politics, vote-buying and tense confrontations were rife. The trend of voters supporting candidates they know well, either through kinship or long-time relations built from *luksave* and *hanmak*, is changing due to the influx of money politics and political gifting. This was illustrated in the Ijivitari race when *kam man* candidate Richard Masere won on his first attempt at contesting the seat. As expected, incumbent Governor Gary Juffa was able to maintain his provincial seat, but the scale of his victory was surprising to many. Governor Juffa's overwhelming support across eight subdistricts, even localities where he held no significant relational tie, is a sign that Oro politics is undergoing a change. This change does not bode well for the future prospects of women candidates. The next and final chapter summaries the argument of this thesis: that women candidates operate in a political environment inherently antagonistic to their political aspirations and campaign efforts.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

In this thesis, I set out to investigate how women candidates in PNG could successfully participate in an electoral environment that is dominated by men; that is often volatile and marred by violence; and in which patriarchal institutions, structures and culture present significant challenges for women. My research interest was piqued by the controversial debates in 2011–12 surrounding the 22 reserved seats parliamentary bill, or the ‘Women’s Bill’, which was ultimately not implemented. In those debates, there was a common assumption put forward by critics of the reserved seats that somehow, if women continued to contest, they would eventually get elected. What women were missing, according to this argument, was persistence: if women kept trying, they would inevitably make it to parliament. This position of ‘keep contesting until you get in’ was prevalent despite the existence of a wealth of research outlining the barriers that hinder women’s candidacies (Fraenkel 2006; Huffer 2006; see also Fairio et al. 2020), reflections from former women candidates (Kidu and Setae 2002; Sarah Garap in Frankham et al. 2002) and the knowledge that elections in PNG occur on an uneven playing field (Sepoe 1996, 2011; see also Fairio 2019a; Zimmer-Tamakoshi 2011). After the 2012 national elections, these sentiments were fuelled, or rather perceived as confirmed, by the unusual success of three women candidates. Dame Carol Kidu’s retirement from politics in 2012 also removed the reserved seats agenda from national parliament. None of the three women elected in 2012 appeared willing to carry on that baton, with some even speaking out against the use of reserved seats after their election. In 2016, Dame Carol said she believed that ‘PNG missed its chance for more women in parliament’ (Radio New Zealand 5/10/2016).

This thesis contributes to this discourse and the literature of PNG electoral politics in two major ways. First, it examines the campaign process from the perspective of women candidates, addressing a gendered gap in the literature. Most literature on PNG elections focuses on electoral and political systems — often wrongly assumed to not be gendered — or men candidates, perhaps understandably in contexts where very few women contest, but nevertheless contributing to a lack of knowledge on *how* women candidates practice politics in PNG. Second, this ethnography provides insights into the underlying activities considered necessary — and, for PNG voters, normal — parts of campaigning. These underlying activities have become normalised and unremarkable in the PNG electoral context, yet examining them sheds crucial light on how the electoral political economy works in PNG and how it is biased against women. From this viewpoint, this thesis provides further evidence to support the fact that PNG’s electoral space is fundamentally unequal. Without any special legislative measures and with women expected to just keep trying, how do women compete at the national level?

How do they go about garnering support for their campaign? Is there a certain way they must campaign that is different to how men campaign? These were my primary research questions.

Prior to conducting my own political ethnography, my assumption was that women and men must campaign the same way because they are operating in the same space. However, this electoral space, as outlined in Chapter 2, is neither fair nor equal, leading to different outcomes for women. Moreover, because men have been the dominant players since the adoption of Western democracy and elections in the country, they have created various informal institutions or practices of campaigning appropriate to their masculinity and male privilege. For example, hosting a campaign house, which is now ‘ubiquitous across all four regions’ of PNG (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:44), is seen as a far more appropriate activity for a man candidate than a woman. Here, the gendered double standards in PNG society are blatant. Another example is the fact that men can travel long distances at night — thereby covering more ground or saving daylight hours for campaign activities — on the campaign trail and not worry too much about their personal safety. Security is just one example of what women candidates must seriously consider, far more so than their men counterparts, when they organise their campaign schedules. Jean Eparo Parkop’s choice in 2012 to hire a relative with a security background as her campaign manager for this reason reveals calculations that men candidates do not have to make. As recounted in the preceding chapters, although men and women might generally campaign the same way procedurally, women candidates end up doing a lot more just try to level the playing field with their men counterparts due to the ramifications of their sex and gender. To conclude this thesis, I highlight the three primary barriers women candidates continually negotiate when campaigning in PNG’s unequal electoral environment: cultural perceptions, access to networks and money politics.

10.1 Cultural perceptions of women’s behaviour

Cultural perceptions of women’s behaviour and women’s contributions to their community can be significant barriers to success in politics, particularly when it comes to building credibility as a competitive candidate. Where women have overcome these barriers, they tend to be exceptions with circumstances that are not easily replicated. Such was the case with Delilah Gore, as discussed in Chapter 6. Delilah first thought of contesting for national parliament in 2002 but spent the next decade doing what she referred to as her ‘public relations’ to build credibility within her electorate. This meant, in Tok Pisin terms, exhibiting *luksave* and demonstrating *hanmak* to people in the Sohe District. *Luksave* means to acknowledge and respond in culturally appropriate ways, while *hanmak* is the corresponding tangible action. For example, attending a neighbour’s *haus krai* is an act of *luksave*; contributing to the grieving

family's funeral expenses is *hanmak* to that family. In the context of campaigning, *luksave* is used by voters as an indicator to determine if candidates have a good reputation. An aspiring candidate who has the trait or *pasin* (conduct or behaviour/way of life) of *luksave* will exhibit *hanmak* or give tangible assistance to their potential supporters in their time of need. Through this process, they establish their leadership credibility. Delilah Gore's *hanmak* — in other words, debts — were reciprocated at the polls in the 2012 national elections, making her the first woman elected for the Sohe electorate. While other factors contributed to Delilah's win, her groundwork was fundamentally important. However, her groundwork approach cannot be readily employed by other women candidates as their individual contexts will vary. At a 2012 post-elections reflection workshop hosted by United Nations Women PNG in Port Moresby, Barbara Toia, a 2012 candidate for the Simbu provincial seat, said:

Everywhere I went, people accepted me, they respected me. But most of the time, the people would cry and tell me, 'Barbara, why did you come very late to contest? You should have come three years earlier to prepare yourself to contest. We didn't know that you were going to contest. We've already pledged out support to other candidates'.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Miong Kila, a candidate in 2012 for the Huon Gulf electorate:

When I told my family, they already had their one vote [first preference] already made up for the male candidate. So when I went there, they said, 'You could have made yourself known earlier' (United Nations Women Papua New Guinea 2013).

Many women candidates, particularly first timers, have deliberately attempted to conduct clean campaigns and, as part of their resolution, will not engage in any activity that has an appearance of early campaigning, including groundwork. However, the election environment necessarily accommodates groundwork; it is what men have been doing and continue to do.

In Delilah's case, her identity as a widow worked in her favour because she took complete ownership of her *hanmak*. Aspiring women candidates who are married may find it challenging to take complete ownership of their *hanmak* — and identity more broadly — because, even though husband and wife are two different individuals, their actions are filtered by society through their marital union. Hence, *hanmak* exhibited by a married woman candidate may be perceived as an extension of her husband.

The reputation of a woman's husband and his support (or lack thereof) may also affect her candidacy or how she is perceived as a candidate. For example, during the 2017 election year

in Oro, candidate Joy Travertz-Arore's identity as the wife of long-time Ijivitari member David Arore appeared to be a disadvantage for her candidacy. Upon learning of her intention to contest, critics of David Arore expressed sentiments like, 'David Arore did nothing for Ijivitari in the last 10 years, what is his wife going to do?' In this way, voters bound his past actions to her efforts to build credibility.

In some cases, a woman's *hanmak* might be taken for granted and not given political currency because it is regarded as part of her responsibility as a woman or mother. Such was the case for 2002 candidate Susan Setae, who established a reputation for helping the youth in her community prior to her campaign for the Moresby North-East electorate (Kidu and Setae 2002). Unfortunately, Susan's *hanmak* through community work did not register as an indicator of leadership credibility, nor was it considered a debt that needed to be reciprocated at the polls.

10.2 Access to networking

PNG's patriarchal society privileges men who can garner political support through their network of kin, clan and tribal relations. Intending women candidates can also mobilise their kin and clan connections to form their voter base. If a man relative or kin is contesting for the same seat, however, these networks will likely privilege the man candidate. In 2012, when Jean Eparo Parkop first contested for the Oro provincial seat, her cousin brother John also contested, which fractured the support base of the Binandere tribe. One of the factors that contributed to Delilah Gore's win in 2012 was that she was the only candidate from her village contesting for the Sohe seat. As such, there was no one to split her support base.

Nevertheless, networks through kin and family relations are not sufficient to win an election. To perform well at the polls, more support is required. Building politically meaningful networks requires time, which many women do not have due to gendered expectations of their domestic 'duties'. For many women, their key networks will be through either church associations or employment.

Church networks can be a useful campaigning tool. During the 2017 groundwork period, Ijivitari intending candidate Bella Amen established strong connections with the Anglican church. Her son, who was the coordinator for the youth movement in the church, contributed to her awareness by spreading word through this church youth network. In the end, Bella did not end up contesting, but other women have also utilised church connections in previous elections. For example, when Maureen Ambo contested for the Ijivitari seat in the 2007 national elections, she partnered with her father-in-law, provincial candidate Suckling Tamanabae, a former

bishop of the Anglican church in Oro. Together, they allied with the Anglican church network in Oro and devised a plan to share votes. The plan proved successful for Suckling, who was elected as governor in 2007. Although Maureen did not win the Ijivitari seat, she finished in fourth place, a relatively good position for a first-time candidate (see Chapter 5).

However, it is getting more challenging for *kam man* candidates, both men and women, to build strong and effective networks. For example, 2017 Ijivitari candidate Joy Travertz-Arore, a *kam man* originally from Central Province and Gulf Province, had two primary networks: her long-time employment with the Popondetta Base Hospital and her in-laws and her husband's support base in segments of the Afore population. Although she did not win, she performed better than previous *kam man* candidate Theresa Kuman, who — despite residing in Oro for over 20 years — did not get more than 100 votes at the polls when she contested for the provincial seat in 2012.

Another indicator of credibility and an essential component of groundwork is the recruitment of *komiti* (sometimes known as *wokman*, gatekeepers, henchmen or brokers). Having a *komiti* demonstrates that a candidate has the endorsement of influential community members and that they have an extensive network. It is common to travel and campaign with a team or *komiti*, but the rise of money politics has increased the necessity of employing a large *komiti* as a security measure to ensure accountability from pledged indebted voters. Most *komiti* are politically savvy and influential relatives of the candidate. People outside of kin or obligatory relations may approach candidates offering their brokering services, but only if they deem that candidate to be credible. As recounted in Chapter 5, a non-relative approached candidate Bella Amen and offered to work for her. For most women candidates, however, their *komiti* is comprised of relatives and kin connections. Once those kin connections are exhausted, further recruitment is a risk due to election-time swindling and disloyalty. In addition, monitoring and managing the behaviour, work and campaign rhetoric of *komiti* can be a burden. Some women candidates prefer to keep their *komiti* numbers small to avoid dealing with excessive demands (Baker 2015:6). *Komiti* or brokers may be an effective means of garnering support, but only if they are honouring promises to the candidate (Wood 2014c). Towards the end of Jean's 2017 campaign (see Chapter 7), she reflected that Team Jean had over 100 active *komiti* at the commencement of groundwork. By polling time, however, her *komiti* had been scaled back to just her relatives. For women candidates with limited funding, their quandary is with the recruitment of *komiti*. Do they use their funds to recruit *komiti* and start doing groundwork early — and risk running out of money by the official election period — or do they save up their funds

and wait until the issue of writs to engage *komiti* and start campaigning? The risk with the latter is that, if they wait too late, good *komiti* might already be employed by other candidates.

10.3 All about the money

Finally, the biggest barrier that frustrates women's political participation at various levels is money. At the groundwork level, an intending candidate needs enough capital, or at least multiple sources of income, to continually demonstrate meaningful *hanmak* whenever the need arises. Recruiting *komiti* to delegate one's awareness also requires money for their logistics as well as their time. Having a *komiti* is now essential for waging an effective campaign, but candidates must be politically savvy to navigate the risk of disloyalty. Even if the *komiti* are relatives or kin, family obligations have limitations, and continuous free labour can potentially lead to resentment. Akin to a business model, the candidate is likened to a manager, their employees the *komiti* and the voters the customers. As long as the candidate keeps their *komiti* content, it is then the job of the *komiti* to look after the voters. This relationship operates on the intrinsic Melanesian concepts of reciprocity and *luksave*. An intending candidate that does not acknowledge or show *luksave* to the needs of their *komiti* is seen as either stingy or not having good *pasin* (personality), which may cause resentment and even lead to disloyalty. Most, if not all, women candidates operate on a tight campaign budget. Hence, they tend to be stricter with their finances than men candidates, inadvertently neglecting their *komiti*, which then affects their full commitment.

In the official eight-week campaign period that precedes the nomination week, it is general knowledge that prices for services like car and boat hire increase. During a post-elections debriefing in Port Moresby, women candidates from the 2012 national elections expressed that logistics and transport were their biggest challenges (United Nations Women Papua New Guinea 2013). Women candidates in Bougainville (Baker 2015) and Solomon Islands (Wood 2014a) have similar struggles with campaign finances.

The proliferation and normalisation of money politics increasingly disadvantages women candidates, exacerbating an already expensive undertaking. Most women candidates do not have the means to engage in money politics; even if they do have the money, many women choose not to engage. Most of the women I spoke to in the lead-up to the 2017 elections, not only in Oro but from other parts of the country as well, expressed their preference for 'clean' campaigning. This style of campaigning was seen as based on policy and doing door-to-door campaigning by talking to families or small groups, rather than dishing out money or making promises to potential supporters. Unfortunately, in the 2017 national elections, candidates

across PNG were observed to have spent large amounts of money to secure support and induce voters:

Nearly half (45 per cent) of all voters interviewed by the Transparency International Papua New Guinea observation team reported that voters were offered bribes or inducements or asked for bribes and inducements in return for their votes (Transparency International Papua New Guinea 2017:19).

All over the country, there was a significant flow of resources from voters to candidates. In this vein, it is important to remember that ‘money politics in PNG is not simply about pork-barrelling or big-men distributing largeness to constituents for political support. It is about the creation of multi-directional indebtedness’ (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:46). This was acknowledged and reported in the 2007 and 2012 PNG national elections (Haley and Zubrinich 2013). In this respect, women are further disadvantaged because affluent voters are more likely to invest in candidates who they perceive as being more likely to win (Haley and Zubrinich 2015), usually men. Finally, money alone is not enough for women candidates to campaign effectively or even win. Compared to other women and men candidates in Oro, Jean Eparo Parkop was an amply financed candidate. As an incumbent MP, Delilah Gore had access to resources through the DSIP. Yet, money cannot completely level the playing field for even well-funded women candidates because their reluctance to engage in money politics or ‘play dirty’ can affect all their other campaign efforts.

10.4 Implications for women candidates and their future

My research illustrates explicitly how women struggle in contesting elections and the many barriers they must navigate. This is just one part of the story of how women participate in PNG’s current electoral space. It does not hypothesise about how a temporary special measure or any other type of legislative reform might change the situation; rather, it focuses on how contemporary electoral dynamics are failing women. Without generalising and projecting all aspects of Oro politics onto the entire country, I can safely state that the experiences of Oro women candidates in the 2017 elections are reflective of the challenges women all around PNG contend with in their quest for national representation. While their specific obstacles vary with locality and context, negotiating entrenched gendered ideologies is an extra component of campaigning that women candidates and their *komiti* must navigate. This cultural barrier will continue to hinder women’s effective political participation. My political ethnography contributes to this discourse by providing a local and contextual understanding of how such entrenched gender ideologies influence campaign rhetoric and activity. But gendered campaign rhetoric seems to be a comparatively manageable issue. In their

campaign endeavours, women candidates must also illustrate their leadership credibility and, in the process, confront the biggest barrier of all: money politics.

Unlike previous elections where resources characteristically flowed from candidates to supporters, the 2017 elections saw resources flow from communities through local strongmen (*komiti*) to candidates (Haley and Zubrinich 2018:45). While a new development, this trend is not surprising in a Melanesian society that at one point operated on and was sustained by exchange and reciprocity: 'reciprocity is a strong value, and in a genuine relationship, a gift both incurs and obligation and opens a continuing exchange' (Standish 1991:191). Money politics has progressed because of reciprocity and exchange. As Haley and Zubrinich (2018:45) aptly state, 'a significant factor for understanding money politics in the PNG context is that the transfer of resources invariably engenders indebtedness'.

Furthermore, it is the exchange framework that prompts the early campaigning activities of debt creation months, or even years, prior to an election. Looking at the trends of money politics in PNG elections, it can be stated the campaign process has been Melanesianised. Both Standish and Ketan arrived at similar conclusions in their ethnographies of political competition in the Highlands. Standish (1991:250) reflected that the interaction between precolonial Indigenous political institutions and the introduced state in Simbu Province was one of interpenetration, stating that 'it could even be argued that the introduced state has been co-opted into Simbu politics or been colonised by Simbu political values'. Ketan argued that traditional Hagen society and PNG arenas of competition and cooperation have merged in the Western Highlands (2004:255). Such continuities from the precolonial era, I believe, have compromised the introduced Western democracy. For example, the fanfare of the nomination week and the rallies of the official campaign period are in fact demonstrations of the level of support already garnered based on existing relationships and obligations. In this way, the official campaign period is the culmination and expression of much longer-term and more dynamic political relations. The whole display could even be interpreted as a façade of electoral democracy. Such hybridisation of politics further disadvantages women candidates because, traditionally, exchange activities were facilitated and executed by big-men. The meshing of old and new political systems — male-dominated traditional politics coupled with the emergence of money politics — creates an impossibly hostile political environment for women candidates. As illustrated with the case of Jean Eparo Parkop detailed in Chapter 7, even if women candidates were to comply with all the conventional and unconventional standards of campaigning (and meeting voter expectations), they will continue to face an uphill battle to

secure political representation. Without structural changes driven by political will from the national government, it is likely that all their campaigning efforts will be in vain.

Glossary

<i>asples</i>	to be local, or ethnically, from a particular place or location
<i>Aza kebera</i>	Mother, it's true (Kaiva vernacular)
<i>bilas</i>	traditional ornaments and costume
<i>hanmak</i>	a signature; tangible works done by hand; politically refers to service delivery or development projects; also used as a euphemism for money politics
<i>haus krai</i>	a house or venue where people gather to mourn with and visit the family of the deceased
<i>haus win</i>	little summer house, usually elevated with no walls
<i>kam man</i>	outsider, migrant, not ethnically local
<i>kiap</i>	a government official; the district commissioner/officer during the colonial era
<i>komiti</i>	a committee; a member of a committee
<i>luksave</i>	to recognise, acknowledge and respond appropriately as it pertains to sociocultural obligations
<i>save-pes</i>	a familiar face and/or one who is well known and accepted
<i>pasin</i>	ethos, conduct, custom, manner of life, an individual's behaviour or characteristics
<i>pawarim</i>	to give more power to
<i>tinpis</i>	tinned tuna or any other type of fish in a can
<i>wokman</i>	a man or woman who works; during campaigning, often used interchangeably with <i>komiti</i>

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Appendix 1. ‘Oro Ta Aja’ by Oro artists B-Rad, Daugoz and Webbstar

Welcome, welcome, welcome
Oro people’s mother
Welcome, welcome, welcome
The mother of Sohe people
From your ways, from your actions
You are your father’s daughter therefore
You did what you did
Aza eh Aza oh, Sohe embo ta azara

[Verse 1]
Mother ah mother oh
Mother, mother
The mother of Sohe people

Mama ah, mama oh, you ya mama bilong Orokaiva

[Rap part]
Oro butterfly ye you sowim kala yet
Sun ikirap pudaun, em yu stap yet
Yu be the one when we call you up mama
Olgeta taim yu soim pasin Aza
Hevi painim yu, yu save stretim sidaun yet
One love, all the people undivided, *ol ikam, yumi go, ol itok Oro*

Mama eh, mama oh, yu ya mama bilong Orokaiva
Pasin yu wokim, pasin yu karim, yu soim kala bilon Orokaiva

[Note: The first two minutes are sung in the Kaiva language (Sohe District), then in Tok Pisin with the same meaning. The last verse is in the Ijivitari language, repeating the same lyrics in three different languages. The last verse is sung in the Ewage language.]

Aiya eh aiya oh (the eh, mother oh)
Iji vitari da aiya ra (the mother of sun up)
Iji wosera da aiya ra (the mother of sundown)
Iso wasiri mi (from your ways)
Iso ge wari mi (from your words)
Imo ne Oro da aiya be ra (you are the real mother of Oro)

Appendix 2. List of the 2017 Oro National Elections Candidates

Box #	Candidate name	Electorate	Party/Independent	Note
10	Wesley Tengerepa	Provincial	Independent	Finished 29 th in 2017
11	Norman Taylor Sorari	Provincial	People's Progress Party	Finished 11 th in 2017
12	Mark Gabriel Baia	Provincial	Independent	Finished 5 th in 2017
13	Robert Ralewa	Provincial	PNG Party	First contested in 2002
14	Jerold Isamo	Provincial	United Party	Finished 18 th in 2017
15	Timothy Titipu	Provincial	Independent	Finished 21 st in 2017
16	Oswald Tamanabae	Provincial	Melanesian Alliance Party	Finished 14 th in 2017
17	Thomason Manuda	Provincial	Independent	Finished 20 th in 2017
18	Michael Ukuto	Provincial	Independent	Finished 10 th in 2017
19	Joe Sil Gala	Provincial	PNG Youths Party	Finished 15 th in 2017
20	Suckling Ongapa Arari	Provincial	Independent	Finished 13 th in 2017
21	Damien Jagona	Provincial	Independent	Finished 7 th in 2017
22	Lionel Fairi	Provincial	Coalition for Reform Party	Finished 19 th in 2017
23	Rex Embahe	Provincial	National Alliance Party	First contested in 1997 Finished 12 th in 2017
24	John Randolp Kerari	Provincial	Independent	Finished 27 th in 2017
25	Christopher Edwards Waitoba	Provincial	Independent	Finished 27 th in 2017
26	Bob Baroi	Provincial	Independent	Finished 25 th in 2017
27	Yauraba James Banduru	Provincial	Papua and Niugini Union Party	Finished 9 th in 2017

28	Jean Eparo Parkop	Provincial	Social Democratic Party	Second-time contestant Finished 8 th in 2012, 2 nd in 2017
29	Isaac Ihava	Provincial	Independent	Finished 22 nd in 2017
30	Sylvanius Siembo	Provincial	PNG Country Party	First contested in the 1992 elections Won the 1997 elections Finished 8 th in 2017
31	Anista Matbob	Provincial	Independent	Finished 31 st in 2017
32	Robert Dademo	Provincial	Independent	Finished 28 th in 2017
33	Owen Awaita	Provincial	Independent	Finished 16 th in 2017
34	Jake Nathan Dave	Provincial	Independent	Finished 26 th in 2017
35	David Nui Arore	Provincial	People's National Congress	Member for Ijivitari Electorate since 2007 Finished 4 th in 2017
36	Gary Juffa	Provincial	People's Movement for Change Party	Party leader and incumbent Governor for Oro Province since 2012, re-elected in 2017
37	Joshua Tigari	Provincial	Independent	Finished 30 th in 2017
38	Prisca Mauve	Provincial	Paradise Kingdom Party	First-time candidate, finished 24 th

39	Benjamin Karu Ijumi	Provincial	Independent	First contested in 1997, finished in 23 rd
40	Allen Mesa	Provincial	United Resources Party	First contested in 2007 Finished 3 rd in 2017
10	David K Sanduwa	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 28 th in 2017
11	Norman Wesley Ivahupa	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 32 nd in 2017
12	Allan Jogioba	Ijivitari	PNG First Party	Finished 29 th in 2017
13	Clinton Tara	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 30 th in 2017
14	Charles Paine	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 16 th in 2017
15	Damien Agesi Aseari	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 17 th in 2017
16	Richard Masere	Ijivitari	National Alliance Party	First contested for Oro provincial seat in 2012 Elected in 2017
17	Winterford Barua	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 8 th in 2017
18	John Oiari	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 18 th in 2017
19	Fred Gumaba	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 27 th in 2017
20	Hudson Arek	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 33 rd in 2017
21	John David Boino	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 12 th in 2017
22	Dennis Stevenson	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 26 th in 2017
23	Isaiah Mamure	Ijivitari	PNG Party	Finished 3 rd in 2017
24	Lucian Roimabe	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 19 th in 2017
25	George King Baure	Ijivitari	People's Party	Finished 6 th in 2017

26	Bungewa Philemon Sapuda	Ijivitari	United Party	Finished 20 th in 2017
27	Redmond Godara	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 23 rd in 2017
28	Stafford Mongi	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 25 th in 2017
29	John Sirigoi	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 24 th in 2017
30	John Warisan	Ijivitari	United Resources Party	Finished 2 nd in 2017 Has been contesting since 2007
31	Erastus Kambui	Ijivitari	PNG National Party	Finished 10 th in 2017
32	Dunstan Sawaraba	Ijivitari	Melanesian Alliance Party	Finished 31 st in 2017
33	Sheldon Deilala	Ijivitari	People's National Congress	Finished 4 th in 2017
34	Joseph Kopapa	Ijivitari	People's Progress Party	Finished 13 th in 2017
35	Simon Eroro	Ijivitari	Coalition for Reform Party	Finished 21 st in 2017
36	Joy Travertz-Arore	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 9 th in 2017
37	Jerry Weiba	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 11 th in 2017
38	Sylvanus Bawo	Ijivitari	New Generation Party	Finished 22 nd in 2017
39	Brian Muraba Tieba	Ijivitari	Grass Roots United Front	Finished 15 th in 2017
40	Pol Garata Toki	Ijivitari	Independent	Contested for Oro provincial seat in 2012 Finished 5 th in 2017
41	Benson Kavia Garui	Ijivitari	Independent	Finished 7 th 2017
42	Tim Digori Mumuni	Ijivitari	Papua and Niugini Union Party	Finished 7 th in 2017
10	Collin Jamua Wogea	Sohe	Independent	Finished 21 st in 2017

11	Wowoia David Beu	Sohe	Independent	Finished 41 st in 2017
12	John Kivo	Sohe	Independent	Finished 32 nd in 2017
13	Sebastien Gambe Vevehupa	Sohe	Independent	Finished 11 th in 2017
14	Jerry Gibson Asina	Sohe	Independent	Finished 25 th in 2017
15	Anthony Nene	Sohe	Independent	Finished 6 th in 2017
16	Fabian Sangari	Sohe	Independent	Finished 18 th in 2017
17	Solomon Nenemi	Sohe	Grass Roots United Front	Finished 28 th in 2017
18	Peter Bagiro Tebora	Sohe	Independent	Finished 10 th in 2017
19	Paulinus Uhena	Sohe	People's party	First contested for Oro provincial seat in 2002 Finished 3 rd in 2017
20	Donald Simeni	Sohe	Independent	Finished 12 th in 2017
21	Joseph Nanplas Klapat	Sohe	Melanesian Alliance Party	Finished 24 th in 2017
22	Ginggebeng Daima	Sohe	Independent	Finished 26 th in 2017
23	George Soka	Sohe	Triumph Heritage Empowerment Party	Finished 30 th in 2017
24	Petersandy Davurapa	Sohe	Independent	Finished 40 th in 2017
25	Dickson Lomas Daima	Sohe	Independent	Finished 38 th in 2017
26	Ruben Malewa	Sohe	Independent	Finished 33 rd in 2017
27	Theophilus Beu	Sohe	Independent	Finished 27 th in 2017
28	Henry Neville Kaha	Sohe	Independent	Finished 20 th in 2017
29	Peter Atu Oresi	Sohe	People's Action Party	Finished 4 th in 2017

30	Helen Yambali Porari	Sohe	Paradise Kingdom Party	Finished 23 rd in 2017
31	Maureen Bakaia Duwang	Sohe	Papua and Niugini Union Party	Second-time contestant Finished at 22 nd in 2017
32	Jeff Gore Agumi	Sohe	National Alliance Party	Finished 14 th in 2017
33	Bobby Repo	Sohe	PNG One Nation Party	Finished 17 th in 2017
34	Gerald Hnagiri	Sohe	PNG Destiny Party	Finished 15 th in 2017
35	Alicia Toroi	Sohe	Independent	First-time candidate
36	Kible Bonga	Sohe	PNG National Party	Finished 35 th in 2017
37	Jerry Geno Noese	Sohe	People's Progress Party	Finished 13 th in 2017
38	Steven J Taimbari	Sohe	Independent	Finished 42 nd in 2017
39	John David Botude	Sohe	Independent	Finished 16 th in 2017
40	Josiah Urrio	Sohe	Independent	Finished 36 th in 2017
41	Fred Daingo	Sohe	People's Movement for Change	Finished 5 th in 2017
42	John Dademo Waiko	Sohe	Independent	Finished 19 th in 2017
43	John Guba	Sohe	Independent	Finished 29 th in 2017
44	John Henry Jiregari	Sohe	Independent	Finished 37 th in 2017
45	Malchus Awota Esegeta	Sohe	Independent	Finished 7 th in 2017
46	John Bob	Sohe	Independent	Finished 34 th in 2017
47	Delilah P Gore	Sohe	People's National Congress	Elected in 2012 Finished 2 nd in 2017
48	Stephen Kila Pat	Sohe	Coalition for Reform Party	Finished 9 th in 2017

List of the 2017 Oro National Elections Candidates

49	Danston Ihove	Sohe	Independent	Finished 31 st in 2017
50	Henry Johns Amuli	Sohe	Independent	Elected in 2017
51	Frank Kerari Ba'kingia	Sohe	Independent	Finished 39 th in 2017

Appendix 3. People's National Congress Party Support across Papua New Guinea

David Arore (front), Peter O'Neill and Delilah Gore (sitting behind) at PNC rally, Popondetta



Source: Charlie Clyde Tikaro Facebook page.

PNC rally in Manus



Source: PNG 4 PNC Facebook page.

PNC rally in lalibu with party leader, former prime minister Peter O'Neill



Source: PNG 4 PNG Facebook page.