

Electoral politics and patron-client relations: The impediment to electoral development in PNG

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Abstract

This article explores the role of elections and application to Papua New Guinea (PNG). The relationship between candidate and the voter is explored from the PNG perspective, to shed light on the voting behavior of citizens and candidates approaches. Exploring deeper into this relationship between voter and candidate, the link between patron-client relations can be found. The article examines how this relationship later becomes a barrier to effective electoral development. Primary to this is the influence of the patron-client relationship upon decision making, allocation of resources, benefits etc., rather than sound development of policy at the electoral level as political investments impede electoral development. In the PNG context such politicking has greatly hindered progressive development, due to investments made to shore up political support rather than for sound administrative effectiveness.

Key words: electoral politics, vote base dilemma, elections, electoral development, politicization, patron-client relations

Introduction

Under-development in developing countries has been one the most widely discussed issues by scholars, policy makers, bureaucrats and other specialists involved in the development arena. Various reasons noted as possible causes have been; poor governance, corruption, poor strategies and the list goes on. In light of this, it cannot be easily denied that the failures are due to one factor. On the contrary, it may be a combination of all these elements. Thus the issue of underdevelopment and stagnation is a challenging one. However in the midst of these challenges, the relationship between electoral politics and electoral development, is an issue that surfaces as something that cannot be neglected. Does electoral politics in itself hold some reason behind this underdevelopment issues that continue to plague PNG? Is the underdevelopment, stagnation etc. linked to the electoral politics? If so why is this so? If so how does it continue to affect the process of electoral development?

As a nation PNG also conducts elections for its political representatives. However, it has not been immune to the underdevelopment issue. Elections have failed to usher in good development outcomes. Instead, PNG has seen stagnation and declining social conditions. Issues such as, poor service delivery, deteriorating infrastructure, high infant mortality rates and low literacy rates in rural areas continue to plague the country (UNDP 2011: 6,

ADB 2010: 5). Can this be the result of electoral politics and patron-client relations? If so, what factors stimulate this and influence it to be an impediment to electoral development? It is therefore the focus of this article to look into the nature of electoral politics, patron-client relations and its impact on electoral development in PNG.

Purpose of elections

Elections form the bedrock of a free democratic society (Amy 2000: 2). It's primary purpose is to enable citizens, to demonstrate their freedom of choice, in choosing their desired leader for public office. Such a leader is one that is often seen as their voice of representation in the various levels of government within the country. Secondly, elections legitimize the government's authority/institutions (Haus & Sweeting, 2006: 271). Such is so as it is one established out of popular suffrage, rather than coercive force or violence. Thirdly, elections become a means in which public officials are pressured, to become more accountable to the public (Ferjohn, 1999: 268). This may eventually force them to be more responsive to local needs (Bormann & Golder, 2013: 360).

There are two main players in this activity; the candidates and the voters. The candidates are usually forced into a situation of how best to get most votes. The voters on the other hand, are using the election as a means to shift policy towards their needs. They tend to assess their risks and benefits and how to make the most of it when casting their ballot. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that what the citizens vote for, shall eventuate, even if their ideal candidate should win.

Voting behavior and candidates strategies

Candidates when trying to secure the most number of votes may resort to a number of strategies. They may align themselves with party policies, as is the case in the developed countries, propose great reforms or even resort to bribery and other illegal acts. Voter numbers are only projections, until the actual ballots are counted. Candidates using this dilemma have to determine how best to secure their votes. Cox and McCubbins note that in doing so, candidates identify three voter groups: support groups, swing groups and opposition groups.

- a) Support groups: Staunch supporters of the candidate, who have supported him and will do so in the near future.
- b) Opposition groups: Those who will always oppose the candidate no matter what.
- c) Swing groups: Those neither supportive nor contradictory rather fluctuating with situations.

(Cox & McCubbins, 1986: 379)

Cox and McCubbins (1986: 379) propose that when taking this into account, strategies are usually made to "invest little (if at all) in opposition groups, somewhat more in swing groups, and more still in their support groups".

Once candidates are voted, they have to deliver on their promises. Failure to do so may cost them the next elections. The struggle to hold this political seat, now spills over from electoral politics (election period) into post election period (once elected). The previous candidate, now elected representative, has to decide how he/she can invest in securing and maintaining support, leading to tradeoffs being made by officials with citizens in preparation to secure next elections. Regardless of this, political investment in strategic voting groups now become more important and often take precedence over development objectives of the constituency. It is in the midst of this process that patron-client relations develop, as a reciprocal relationship between the elected official and the voters. The exact factors determining this relationship are varied according to different regions of the world. Likewise the source of power which forms the basis of the patron-client relations.

Patron-client relations

Patron-client relations is type of friendship between the patron (those who possess or have access to resources such as land, fiscal or authority) and the client. The client basically refers to those whom in some manner, require the goodwill of the patron, to access the benefits which the patron has to offer via his/her standing (Scott, 1972:92; 1972b:8). The basis of this relationship is based on reciprocity, with each needing the other. Thus the patron offers favors and access to resources needed by the clients, in return for their support or assistance. Such a relationship many not be confined to transactions of material goods and fiscal/material resources but may extend to "personal favors and obligations" (Platteau, 1995:767). In general, both parties in some form or manner require the service of the other, often times without the practice of coercive sanctions.

Scott (1972) notes the patron-client cluster and the patron-client pyramid as the two main approaches in which the patron-client relationship is played out.

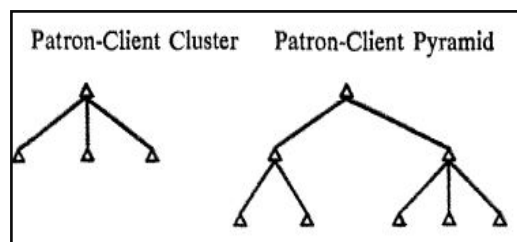


Figure 1: Patron-client cluster and the patron-client pyramid (Scott, 1972:97)

In the patron-client cluster, there is generally one major patron which clients gravitate towards. The patron-client pyramid however denotes a scenario of smaller patrons, with clients under them with one major patron at the top.

The use of patron-client relations

Patron-client relations have been practiced in a variety of forms. Platteau (1995:768) notes that it has been a main element of rural sectors of most developing countries, especially in Asia and Latin America. Many of the tribal societies in Africa and the Pacific Islands also practiced some form of this, under their traditional social orders. Hence, protection and material benefits were often offered in return for support to the dominating chieftaincies and local empires (Leonard et al., 2010: 477).

In modern times, the notion of patron-client has adapted new forms as the situation dictated. Nowhere has this been apparent then the political arena. Scott (1972) for instance notes that it is important to understand these informal systems of government that exist in the developing world, as they very much impact the modern era political situation. Hence, what is termed as patron-client relations may have also been an informal system of social order, previously existent in the traditional societies.

The author has identified five main elements which act as an umbrella, from which patron-client relations operate under in the political sphere. These five are,

- (a) Local strong man
- (b) Land
- (c) Strong party influence
- (d) Religion
- (e) State resources

Local strong man

In this situation, clients in general align to the patron in return for his/her protection and favors stemming from his strong man position. Varying degrees of coerciveness are often used, to either to rally support or maintain support of clients. Examples of these are; the *Cacique* in Mexico (Villarreal, 2002: 479), local boss/power brokers in the Philippines (Sidel, 1997:947) and the *Mafiosi* (Sidel, 1989:24). In the case of the Mafiosi and Mexican Cacique, patronage was given to clients in return for political support in election times. The case of local bosses in the Philippines is similar in nature. The ability of these local strongman to enjoy support and protection from patrons higher up, demonstrates Scott's patron-client pyramid approach. Through this approach they were able to access much needed resources from the higher patron and disperse to their clients. In return support was guaranteed for political purposes such as elections. The main feature existent here is the degree of coercive tactics employed.

Land

Land is the bargaining resource here. The clients are the poor who require land whilst the patrons require the labor. This spills over into the political arena on two occasions. Firstly, when the patron decides to enter politics and secondly, should he/she be aligned with another patron higher up. In this case Scotts notion of patron-client cluster and patron-client pyramid are both at play. Regardless of the manner undertaken political support is always guaranteed from the clients due to dependency on the land. Examples of this can be seen in the Brazil's landed elites who maintain close ties with upper patrons or are themselves involved in politics (Valenca, 1999:8). The key feature here is the access to land which patrons manipulate for political purposes as well.

Strong party influence

In this scenario, the existence of a strong party system has to be in place, in order for it to operate. The party is the main patron, with local strong man acting as intermediaries. Whilst it is similar to the local strong man, its main feature is access to the party by local strong man. While certain coercive sanctions maybe employed, the differentiating factor from the strong man approach is the dependency on access to the party. Unlike the local strong man approach where affiliation is varied and not to one singular party. The Strong Party Influence reveals the dominance of certain influential parties which are essential for local strong man to access favors/resources to distribute to their clients. The party is the ultimate patron with the local strong man being the lesser patron. The party needs the support which the local strong man mobilizes. The people in turn need the favor, resources and attributes offered by the local strong man, as the intermediary between party and clients but with his own agenda at his/her level. Examples of this can be seen in Bangladesh, with dominance of certain parties and the affiliation of lower patrons (Kochanek, 2000:548). Schaffer (1998:127) also notes certain incidences of this in Senegal, by highlighting that locals (clients) in certain areas deemed party affiliation as important, as without party affiliation things could be not so forthcoming.

Religion

The key feature of this, is the ability of the religion to develop a following, which the leaders can utilize to perform as intermediaries. Local religious leaders now replace the role of the local strong man and intercede for their followers with those in power. An influential Islamic sect in Senegal, the Marabouts, is an example of this (Fatton, 1986:64). The Marabouts were able to commandeer great influence through their ability to influence certain aspects of the peanut production on behalf of their followers against the state. The state however needed the support which these local leaders could offer, thus accepted their positions via patron-client pyramid structure.

State resources

Finally the last category is state resources. The ultimate goal is to access resources and protection associated with the ruling elites. Most patron-client relations therefore, indirectly fall into this category. This is found in most parts of the world in its different forms but with this primary goal in mind

Patron-client relations therefore originate from different factors. However, the core principle is the existence of a need by those who are less well off and the ability of those in a better position to fill this need. In the process a reciprocal relationship develops, where by resource is exchanged for support/allegiance. Traditionally this may have been an informal social order. However, its infusion into the modern political arena, is largely a response to the development of modern day politics. From the PNG perspective, the Big Man System was a traditional social order that had in place for a long time. It also depicts this patron-client notion but on a different scale.

Big man system in PNG

Traditionally PNG did not possess an established informal system of government. While chieftaincy was practiced, it generally was not hereditary, except in some select regions. The larger majority of PNG largely practiced the big man system. Under this social order, traditional societies were largely equalitarian societies. Communal needs were emphasized over individualism. Individuals were also not governed by a central political figure. Community members were expected to share things, particularly material wealth with their kinsman and assist others in social events/activities and are free to pursue their own activities (Read, 1959:427). Under the big man system, any male person could assume the role of the big man if they could accumulate enough resources and use it strategically to shore up support. Resources in this sense applied to traditional foodstuff, traditional currency, develop skills in fighting, hunting, sorcery and oratory (Salins, 1963:489). This would enable them to acquire the higher social status in the community.

The big man was not a central political figure, where all political power gravitated to. His position only gave him influence but not actual power. The tenure of this role depended upon the big man's ability to maintain this relationship with his followers. The relationship was often linked to ethnic bonds, such as clans and family relations.

In general, the practice was a patron-client relationship. The system depended upon the ability of the big man to assist his followers with the resources he had, as well as protect them from any instances of danger, threats and sorcery. Given the fluidity of the system, as well as the equalitarian nature of traditional PNG societies, his tenure would come to an end when he could no longer provide these benefits or an when an emerging rival could deliver more than he could. In this event the followers simply realigned with the new big man. Thus maintaining the distribution of benefits was important to the big man in order to maintain his status.

Against this background how does the electoral politics work in PNG, with the patron-client relations carrying over into the post election period, to eventually sideline the development process. In order to understand this one must look into the political culture developed by PNG during elections.

Elections in Papua New Guinea

PNG has been one of the very few developing countries that has maintained democratic elections since independence in 1975. Elections date back to 1964 when it was still a colony of Australia. Three respective elections were held during the colonial era, 1964, 1968 and 1972 using the Optional Preferential Voting (OPV) method (Reilly, 2002:703). After independence: the First Past the Post System was introduced, as the OPV was seen as difficult to manage, whilst the First Past the Post System was seen as easier to use (Reilly, 2002:704). The system however was not suited for PNG's multi cultural background. As the wide ethnic fragmentation resulted in candidates winning with less than 50% of total votes. Some as even as low as 7 percent (Reilly, 2002: 705). In the First Past the Post System, voters were allowed one choice for their preferred candidate. For example, if you have 900 voters, with 20 candidates each representing their own ethnic area, each might get 45 votes. However, say that 18 candidates got 45, whilst one got 44 votes and the winner getting 46 votes. The winner here would have gotten 5.1 % of the total votes which is 46 but yet still be declared the winner, as he got the highest number. The 5.1% of votes in this case do not represent the entire area but only his area, with a few from loyal family/clans man outside his home base. There was therefore a need to overhaul the voting system and use a more effective system, that would enable a winner, that represented at least 50 percent of the total voting population. This was eventually undertaken by the Morauta Government between 1999 -2002 (May, Wheen and Haley 2011: 193). Thus the Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) came to replace the First Past the Post System in 2007.

Unlike the First Past Post System, the LPV system allowed the voter three choices. The counting process went through an elimination process, where by the candidate with the lowest amount of votes was excluded and his second and third preferences distributed to remaining candidates, according to choices indicated on the ballot paper. The winner would be declared when a candidate mustered at least 50+1% of the total majority. From the former example, this would be 456. However, this number would decrease as exhaustive ballot papers increased. Thus the absolute majority tended to decline with the exhausted ballots, also reducing the absolute majority required. In the LPV process the winning candidate often obtains the 50+1% majority but with reduced absolute majority figure, after the elimination process. For this example, the absolute majority may be 400 votes for a winner to win. Regardless of this, the count of first preferences often reveals how fragmented the preferences are aligned to certain areas or groups. However the LPV has proven to be more effective in the winners percentages. LPV was initially used as trials during *by elections* originating from the 2002 election disputes which were held under the first past the post system. However the real time in which

it commenced officially as an election procedure for the whole nation was during the 2007 national elections.

Voting the PNG Way

In PNG the actual reasons governing why an individual decides to vote for a particular candidate is complex. Despite the western norms, practices and purpose of voting, elections are often interpreted in their own way in PNG (Fergusson, 2011:36). Papua New Guinean's tend to have, certain guiding factors which influence the way they vote. Past achievements, qualifications, party policies and development agendas take a back seat to ethnicity, family ties and close relations. Voters reinterpreting the ideals of representative democracy in the PNG context, often vote for whom they see as easily accessible, through the existing relationships. This often also involves a significant effort to mobilize clan, village and tribal loyalties (Standish, 2013:3). Given this dilemma candidates often draw support from the ethnic base, often termed as base vote. This has also given rise to "cash for votes" mentality developing. This however is not dependable, unless it is linked to interlinking relationships such as clan or friendship (Ladely & Willimas, 2007: 20).

On another note, the benefits of public office were seen as a quick way to wealth, by most candidates. Central to this perception was the view that, politicians were rich with access to abundant resources at their disposal (Strathern 1993: 49). As a result, the desire to access this office by candidates became a powerful drug, which also influenced their supporters.

Challenges

This has had a great impact upon electoral politics in PNG. It has led to candidates with their supporters, often resorting to extreme measures to seek victory. Fergusson (2011:38) indicated that incidences of voter intimidation, collusion to create fraudulent electoral were hiccups to effective elections. Six electorates in Southern Highlands were also declared failed elections in the 2002 elections (Diro, 2011:79). However, whilst such practices are not homogenous throughout PNG, it can be wise to say that certain practices, such as: election related violence, vote rigging, etc... are more extreme or common in the highlands regions than the coastal regions. However, it would be unwise to say that the coastal areas are free from all this. The coastal regions have also seen an emergence in harsh electoral activities than those practiced by them as their towns are settled by citizens from other parts of the country. In these cases it becomes the settler/migrants verses the original landowners/settlers or in PNG terms *Papa Graun vs Kam Man* (Matob, 2011:391).

In such melting pots where different ethnic groups combine, candidates go to extremes, to rally the most support. Swing groups are most commonly found here and may constitute a certain percentage of the population. While the Support Group and Opposition Group are easily identifiable, the Swing Group is hard to determine in such settings. Given this complexity, candidates often

resort to direct and indirect forms bribery/offering of material benefits to entice them. Commonwealth observers observing the 2012 elections have noted that, candidates often do not see any wrong in dishing out cash handouts, whilst the voters also see no wrong in accepting such handouts (Post Courier, 24th July, 2012). Chairman of Taskforce Sweep Team, Sam Koim, also noted receiving complaints in relation to "sitting MPs dishing out public funds on the eve of elections"(Erroro. 2012) on so called alleged projects. Sweep Team is an anti corruption organization setup by the government to investigate corrupt practices by public officials and politicians. It was also reported by the Post Courier (24th July, 2012, *Money is not everything*) that over "300 million Kina [US \$ 108 million]was withdrawn from commercial banks" (Post Courier, 24th July, 2012) by candidates, in three months prior the 2012 elections, to be used for elections. Such features demonstrate the extreme measures that candidates undertake during election periods.

The vote base dilemma

During the election period candidates draw from their vote base as a strong hold to launch them into political office. Given the ethnic fragmentation, tribal ties and strong family ties scenario in PNG, such vote bases are usually confined to certain ethnic groups, kinship groups, or particular regions. Such can be proven by low percentages in the winners under the first past the post system and the primary votes under the LPV system. As a result winners often represent certain areas of their constituency, in which they "owe their allegiance"(Reilly 2002:705) to, rather than the entire constituency. Allen and Hasnein (2010:11) also note that, certain individuals often assist candidates financially in return for benefits when elected. This situation however is not without obligations. On the contrary it comes with a certain amount of expectations by the supporters in return for the votes. For this purpose, the term *Vote Base Dilemma* is coined by the author to refer to these expectations, that is expected of the candidate by supporters when in political office.

Post-election Expectations from supporters stem from two main points. Firstly, there is the conception that, as the candidates supporter you must be rewarded for your support. Rewards in this sense often applies to access to financial and material benefits. Secondly, there is the general assumption that political office is strapped with infinite resources. Thus, as his/her supporter the Member of Parliament (MP) is required to assist your needs, problems and issues.

These two assumptions are the result of a society that has reinterpreted the workings, roles and functions of modern day democracy and public bureaucracies in their own context, which is the traditional big man system. Secondly, the changing times in which traditional currencies, such as food stuffs, labor, etc. have become valueless, due to changing lifestyles that require newer forms of currency for modern goods such as, education, health and other material goods. This change requires a rapid transformation of a society that is largely traditional and rural based within a short period of time. Such has not been so forthcoming. While the bulk of rural PNG may be self sufficient, they are forced at times to undergoes activities that require the modern day

currency, which they are often in short supply of. Hence, this is a society that is adjusting to modern times, but still clinging onto old traditional norms of ethnicity and kinship which had traditionally been social safety net buffers against hard times.

Due to this, a significant amount of pressure and expectation is exerted upon the MP, once in political office. These range from traditional and kinship obligations such as funerals, cash handouts to social groups, bride price, compensation, airline tickets, school fees and other activities. Apart from this, the MP also has to take care of visitors/supporters on his premises such as: hence man, political leaders such as campaign managers, their electoral officers and their extended family that often times seems to grow when one is such as office (Ketan 2007: 15). Given the assumption of the limitless resources associated with political office, MPs are required to be extremely generous in their contributions then the normal citizen. Most MPs often "complain of unreasonable demands and expectations from kinsmen, but acknowledge the fact that they cannot maintain their power base without the support of their kinsmen" (Ketan 2007:16). The vote base dilemma comes into play now and haunts the MP as the interpretation of the modern day big man is seen in the MP. He/she is quite helpless as refusal to do so is costly and can cost the next elections.

The effect of vote base dilemma and emergence of patron-client relations

MP's are now pushed into a dilemma as to how to use their office and resources effectively, whilst maintaining political support at all times. Before going on, two important facts should be noted as to how influential MP's have become at the electorate level to better understand the impact on electoral development. Firstly the 1995 Reforms placed significant amount of authority in local MPs by making them the Chair of their local Joint District Planning & Budget Priority Committees (JDP&BPC), whilst limiting that of the Regional MP and Local Level Government (LLG) Presidents. Secondly, it must be noted that 50 percent of the Electoral Development Funds are also the MP's discretionary funds. Thus the post 1995 MP now is quite powerful with funding and decision making influence at the local level then the pre 1995 MP. This has enabled MPs to react towards to Vote Base Dilemma more easily in two ways: *misdirection of funds and politicizing the local bureaucracy.*

One the earliest things that MPs tend to do is, utilize whatever resources available to them to compensate debts incurred during the elections, such may also relate to use of funds to shore up support in the interim and next election (Allen and Hasnein, 2010: 10). Secondly, a significant amount of funds are used to reinforce support at the local level, as the MP rewards and reinforces the clan supporters or most essential strong holds/ leaders (Ketan 2002: 17). This may be in cash or projects allocated to prominent supporters. The priority here now is to maintain social networks, develop strategic alliances in case of potential political rivals. It is here now that decisions are made on the basis of political priorities hence, the most easy source to reward the benefactors is through the use of public funds. In the process vote bases, which often

constitute a limited number of the populace, are recipients at the expense of the majority. The Limus Structure in New Ireland Province, under a former Governor, is a prime example of this. In the Limus Structure, the Governor sought to deliver outside of established administrative systems and go through appointed cronies in selected regions (Kalinoe, 2009:38). This approach focused on material goods rather than service delivery and nearly brought the New Ireland Provincial Administration to a halt. In Southern Highlands, it was also noted that the budgets were drawn up by those close to the politicians, focusing on certain agendas rather than broad service delivery and submitted to province for approval only (Ketan, 2009:103). Ketan (2009) notes that this politics of belly has cost the Southern Highlands Province greatly. The ADB has also noted that, the deterioration of the road system is due to politicization of decision making and funding priorities, resulting in the diversion of funds. Going on further it points out that big-man concept, a "tradition that dictates that those in high office must "share the wealth" if they are to retain their status and influence"(ADB 2012:32) has led to wide misdirection of essential funds. This examples illustrate the consequences involved.

Whilst all officers in the districts are usually appointed via the provincial government administrative system, influential positions such as the District Administrators (DA) are known to be quite politicized by MP's (Allen and Hasnein, 2010: 11). Evidence of this is present in Southern Highlands where MP's handpick their cronies to key positions regardless of merit (Ketan, 2009:103). MP's electoral staff also often consisted of personnel that are handpicked, in return for support during election periods or alongside family/kinship ties, thus meritless for the job (Ketan, 2002:17). The case of Southern Highlands Province has even developed into a situation where it is a "jockey for control of the province between the Huli Speakers in the West, the Mendi speakers in the central area and the Kewa speaking of the east" (Ketan 2009: 100). This has created more than one administration, however those administrations with close connections to MPs stand to benefit more. In Menyama, Aseki District Morobe Province, Kalione (2009:54) points out a case where, the local District Administrator was removed on fabricated grounds of insubordination by the MP and replaced with a crony to ease opposition. In Kerema it was noted by Lovai (2009:87) that the District Administrator and District Treasurer tended to move around with the local MP rather than perform their functions effectively. Standish (2013:16) also noted that it is also common for new Governors and Administrator to remove experienced personal to make way for cronies. The consequence of this can be quite detrimental to the job output, if the personal are not qualified for the job. Such practices have often left highly qualified personnel victims of political decisions rather than sound administrative decisions.

Support groups, swing groups and opposition groups: Where is the investment made?

Coming back to Cox and McCubbins' (1986) proposition of heavy investment in support groups, limited investment in swing groups and little in oppositions groups, the following traits can be identified in relation to this concept in

regards to electoral politics in PNG. Firstly, electoral support for elections is mostly garnered through ethnicity, tribal allegiance and social relations. To the MP, this group makes up the support group. While considerable investment is made by candidates during elections towards voters it now spills into the post election era via the misdirection of funds and politicizing of bureaucracy. In this post election period it should be noted that, first of all heavy investment is made towards the support group. This can be seen in the allocation of benefits, projects and priorities for certain groups, ethnicities and social relations. Also noted here, is the investments that are made during this period to notable leaders/persons even potential rivals in the name of political maneuvering. Such a group would constitute swing groups, as political maneuvering would only be needed in an area where the support is not guaranteed. Finally, the fact that all these takes place at the expense of the majority implies that the majority are supporters of other candidates, thus are the opposition group.

Hence, the perception put forward by Cox and McCubbins is quite true in the PNG case. Heavy investment is made by candidates towards the support groups with certain amount towards the swing groups with little towards the opposition.

The PNG case of patron-client relations

Patron-client relations in PNG whilst similar to many parts of the world, is not actually related to them. The main focal point from which this relationship originates from, is access to benefits of political office. It however incorporates the traditional Big Man System in the equalitarian society, where leaders are required to share and protect in return for allegiance. In the PNG case there is no Local Strong man, Strong Party Influence, Religion and Land. The patron-client relations revolve around the material benefits that come from the political office held. The patrons resources in the PNG context is, the access to resources associated with political office and the clients resource is simply support. There are also two main features central to the PNG case. Firstly, there is the perception by kinsman, clan, family etc. that, should a person from another group achieve this position they would not benefit from it, thus the need to support their own or closet to them. Secondly, like the Big Man System, it is fluid and prone to uprising challenge, should the current Big Man (Political Leader) became incapable of delivering as expected. In this case it would be a simple realignment with the new one. The patron-client nature of PNG has evolved strongly along ethnicity, family and relationships with direct link to whichever patron attributed with these features. This aspect has been the main feature of patron-client relations associated with political office and in turn has been a cause for ineffective electoral development.

The impact upon electoral development

Misdirection of funds stemming from political investment towards support groups has often resulted in effective service delivery being neglected. On the other hand little is done to address income earning opportunities for the majority of citizens, as priorities are prioritized for the supporters rather than

the whole electorate via patron-client relations. While Ketan (2002: 19) has noted that there are cases of successful innovations under good electoral leadership by certain MPs, these however, constitute a very few. The majority have become the victims of misdirection of funds leading to poor electoral development outcomes.

Politicization of the bureaucracy has also affected the electoral development in several ways. It has resulted in under qualified people being drafted into administrative positions in the electorate. The impact of such actions has three main consequences. Firstly, this leads to poor vision/work ethics. As a result effective strategies cannot be planned and developed properly for implementation. Secondly, when an officers position is earned from patronage there is little resistance towards their superiors, when bad decisions /corrupt practices are undertaken, by those responsible for putting them there. As the saying goes one doesn't bite the hand that feeds it. Finally, politicization has enabled systematic colluding by officials and MPs to indulge in corrupt practices. Also by appointing positions such as DA's, it has made MPs more dominating and DAs more submissive to MPs. Some MPs even disregard or act without their DA's knowledge at times (Kalinoe, 2009:38; Allen & Hasnein, 2010: 24).

When an electoral administration becomes compromised by such traits, the output also becomes negative. Citizens become victims to this cronyism, which is non-other than political investments to support groups via the patron-client relations. As noted earlier on the 1995 Reforms have made the MP and the DA two of the most influential and powerful people in electorates. It is here that resolutions are made towards funding of projects. Once approved it becomes the responsibility of the DA to implement all resolutions. Sadly however, such does not eventuate as structured. The author has noted on various occasions through close discussion with numerous local administrative officials and LLG presidents that while resolutions are made in the JDP&BPC meetings, they never seem to get implemented. Resolutions are just good for paper reports only and not actual projects. It seems that the reforms have created an enabling environment for the MP to misdirect electoral resources as desired, towards areas of interest rather than for the welfare of the electorate.

Conclusion

In the course of this paper the question of how electoral politics affected electoral development in PNG has been analyzed to identify how it does so, why it does so and its impact. Hence from the analysis presented several key things can be noted. Firstly, electoral politics in PNG is quite different from many democracies around the world. This aspect on the other hand is not good for effective electoral development outcomes. Secondly, electoral politics actually spills over from election periods and into post-election era to haunt the MP and eventually severely hinder effective development for their electorates. The conclusion can be drawn that, the ethnic vote base which were a blessing for political support, have now become a curse for effective electoral development. Thirdly, given the vote base dilemma, political decisions often

take precedence over effective electoral development objectives. Fourthly, patron-client relations in PNG do not originate from religion, local strong man, strong party system and land. It is linked solely to the desire to access state resources and originates from strong family, clan and ethnic backgrounds. Finally, electorates deterioration in infrastructure and service delivery are often largely to misdirection of funds and politicization of local administrative bureaucracies aimed at appeasing the support group in pursuit of this patron-client relations.

In order for this situation to change requires change in the mindset of the people, to elect good leaders representing fairness, honesty and transparency. However, such an attempt to change the mindset of the people cannot be achieved only through political education and awareness. It also requires sound investment in income earning opportunities and empowerment of the citizens, to enable them to be in control of their lives.

Finally, to conclude it can be said that the relationship between electoral politics and electoral development is interdependent. However, if the political culture is healthy and free from negative traits then the electoral politics will enable a leader to emerge, to eventually complement electoral development. Whilst the notion of such perfect conditions is a dream and realistically speaking, hard top obtain, the challenge for PNG is how best to minimize the effect of electoral politics onto electoral development.

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