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New electoral process in Papua New Guinea

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For the first time Papua New Guinea officially trialed a new electoral process nationwide through its scheduled 2007 general elections. There had been prior widespread skepticism however, over its ability to ensure fairness and success. The main areas of concern were at the implementation level starting with the Electoral Commission and all its technical support through to the susceptibilities of officers, candidates and voters alike largely stemming from their own biases and corrupt predilections. Despite all the misgivings however, PNG went through a fairly smooth election event with minimal technical setbacks, which perhaps only time will uncurl. While describing the author’s experience and observations as a first time candidate in national elections, the paper highlights some principal technical applications of LPV that should require subsequent attention and improvement at policy level. In so doing, a full and fair (i.e. democratic) electoral process may become a reality for PNG through the Limited Preferential Voting method. Applied as it is however, election results are still vulnerably plagued by the ugliness of abuse through vote buying, rigging, and an increasing exploitation of the poverty-stricken rural voters as was previously experienced in the First Past the Post (FPP) electoral method hence, its prostitution! This is a subjective-objective commentary of the author’s experience as a candidate in the 2007 election in Papua New Guinea.”

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