



Power Perceptions and Political Participation in the Digitalized Era:

How Internet Digital Media is Transforming Politics

in Papua New Guinea

By

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Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction.....	1
References.....	5
Chapter 2. Rethinking Power Perceptions and Political Participation in the Digitalized Era	7
Introduction.....	7
Democracy, Political Participation and Power Checking Institutions.....	8
<i>World War II and the Collapse of the Soviet Union</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Are Standard Power Monitoring Institutions Enough?</i>	<i>10</i>
PNG in Perspective: Why have Standard Power Checking Institutions Failed to Deliver?.....	13
<i>Why are Representative Power Checking Institutions Not Enough?.....</i>	<i>14</i>
Rethinking Power Perceptions, Political Participation and New Power Checking Mechanisms in the Digitalized Era	17
<i>Social Media</i>	<i>19</i>
Is Digital Media a Double-Edged Sword for Democracy, Power and Political Participation?	23
<i>Accountability and Control.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Internet Online Digital Media and Selective Exposure</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>The Impact of Internet Online Digital Media concerning Influence and Participation</i>	<i>26</i>
New Media Environment: Communicative Abundance and Monitory Democracy	27
<i>Political Effects of Communicative Abundance on Power Perceptions and Political Participation</i>	<i>30</i>
References.....	34
Chapter 3. Traditional Media in PNG	47
Introduction.....	47
Communication in PNG after Independence.....	47
Traditional Media in the Post-Independence Era.....	50
<i>Radio.....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Television.....</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Newspapers.....</i>	<i>58</i>
Journalism in the Post-Independence Era.....	59
Discussion and Conclusion	64
References.....	68

Chapter 4. New Online Internet Digital Media in Papua New Guinea in the Post-2007 Era	73
Introduction	73
Neo-Liberalism, Deregulation and New Internet Media Information Access, Post-2007	74
Improvements in Mobile Subscriptions, Internet Access and Communication in the Post 2007-Era	77
Alternative Shift from Traditional to Online Digital Media, Post-2007	81
Transforming Roles of Media and Journalism and its Impact on Citizen Perceptions and Awareness towards Power Centres and Political Participation, Post 2007-Era	87
<i>(1) Free and Cheap Access to Information</i>	88
<i>(2) Access to Unfiltered Information and the Power to Reproduce Information Online</i>	88
<i>(3) Widening Space of Citizen Participation</i>	91
<i>(4) Internet Digital Media has Created Awareness Resulting in Disputes Concerning Public and Private Power</i>	93
Discussion	96
Conclusion	99
References	101
Chapter 5. Case Studies and Analysis	110
Introduction	110
Case Study 1: Prime Minister Bill Skate's Alleged Involvement in Fraud and Bribery Deals, 1997-1998	111
Case Study 2: Parakagate Scandal, 2014-2016	112
The Paradox of a New Political Culture on Power Perceptions and Political Participation in the New Digitalized Era	114
Participation and Non-Participation	115
Motives for Non-Participation	116
<i>Understanding and Interpretation</i>	117
<i>Violence</i>	118
<i>Neutrality</i>	119
<i>Employment</i>	121
Motives for Participation	121
<i>Corruption</i>	122
<i>Attack on Rule of Law</i>	123
<i>Democratic Right</i>	124
<i>Others</i>	125
How did citizens and institutions participate?	126

<i>Media: Traditional and Social Media</i>	127
<i>Boycotts</i>	129
<i>Rallies, Forums and Meetings</i>	130
<i>Protest March</i>	131
How internet digital media exacerbate divisions unexpectedly creating new social identity groups and cleavages	132
Conclusion	137
References	139
Chapter 6. Conclusion	141

Chapter 1

Introduction

Over the years, there has been an increase in democratic studies concerning the accountable use of public power, good governance and greater political citizen participation in Papua New Guinea (PNG) since transiting from colonial rule in 1975. Since adopting a parliamentary government system together with representative democratic institutions from its colonial caretaker Australia, most of these studies have largely focused on Joseph Schumpeter's (1942) procedural minimalist definition concerning elections (Reilly, 1997; 2002), voting (Ketan, 2004; Kurer, 2007; Saffu, 1989) and political parties (May, 2008; Okole, 2005; Reilly, 1999). However, despite adopting wide-ranging democratic representative institutions, PNG continues to suffer from poor government accountability and citizen participation (Reilly et al., 2014; Standish, 2007). Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index Report of 2019 identified PNG as stagnant ranking 137 out of 180 countries. This is indicative that more progress is needed to make real change and more importantly, civil society organizations must remain vigilant in holding the government accountable.¹ Furthermore, an Election Observation Report assessing the country's recent 2017 National Elections conducted by the Australian National University, similarly identified marked deteriorations in the overarching election environment.² However, despite these shortfalls research has rarely moved beyond traditional representative institutions to assess other non-conventional power checking monitory mechanisms particularly within the present era. This thesis aims to fill in this research gap by assessing new unconventional power checking monitory mediums that have emerged as a result of advancements in technology and communication.

John Keane (2009; 2013; 2018), argues that advances in internet online digital media has become significant in connecting and mobilizing different citizens in opposition against the abuse of power. Moreover, it has also radically altered power perceptions and political participatory practices within the current digitalized era. For example, Keane (2013: 1), explains that improvements resulting from the internet and online digital media has created the growth and spread of novel monitory bodies and mechanisms that today compliment traditional power checking institutions like elections. Symbolized by the internet, Keane describes this new phenomenon as 'communicative abundance'

¹ Transparency International. (2019). Corruption Perception Index Report. Retrieved 3 March, 2020 from <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2019>

² Nicole Haley and Kerry Zubrinich. (2018). 2017 Papua New Guinea General Elections: Election Observation Report. Australia National University Department of Pacific Affairs. Retrieved 6 March, 2020 from http://bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/news/related-documents/2019_05/png_report_hi_res.pdf

characterized by a revolutionary age of overlapping and interlinked media devices that for the first time in history integrate text, sound and images in digitally and easily storable and reproducible forms. Keane (2018: 106-113), further redefines democracy through the rapid growth of these different kinds of extra parliamentary, power scrutinizing bodies and mechanisms propelled by communicative abundance that flank elections called 'monitory democracy'. These bodies and mechanisms compliment conventional power checking institutions providing the public extra viewpoints and better information about the operations of various governmental bodies while also assisting in strengthening the diversity and influence of citizen voices and choices and monitoring the misuse of power.

Building on Keane's argument concerning monitory democracy and new internet online digital media it should be investigated how these improvements have impacted the ways different citizens communicate, form judgements and opinions and how this affects political behaviour in monitoring the abuse of power in PNG. Based on these new insights, this thesis asks three overarching questions: *What are the impacts of internet online digital media on power perceptions and political participation among citizens in monitoring the abuse of power in PNG? How do they compare with traditional media roles and journalism practices? And how has this affected PNG politics and its process of democratization within the contemporary digitalized era?*

By applying Keane's theory to the PNG case, the thesis attempts to accomplish three specific objectives. Firstly, it argues that Keane has largely focused the application of his theory in Western democracies with little reference to non-Western democracies. The thesis contends that this has become relatively convenient for research and evaluations on internet digital media and politics to skew favouring Western democracies were research have been more prevalent therefore blanketing non-Western democracies. Secondly, it attempts to test the theory of monitory democracy and internet digital media in PNG. PNG provides an ideal test case since after the introduction of Digicel into the market in 2007 there has been an incremental increase in internet and online media dwarfing traditional media sources. Thirdly, it offers fresh insights on the effects of new internet online digital media on power perceptions and political participation within the contemporary era in PNG. Furthermore, it assesses how these insights may also contribute to better understanding other developing non-Western democracies transitioning from traditional media to internet digital media.

The thesis also aims to contribute to existing democratic literature by extending the function of power checking and monitoring institutions beyond traditional representative institutions such as elections. It assesses emerging new trends involving the effects of new unconventional power checking monitory mediums that have emerged as a result of advancements and improvements in internet online digital media in Port Moresby, PNG.

Out of the various areas and regions of PNG, Port Moresby (PNG's capital city) was specifically selected for this research since internet services and improvements have been more evident and clearer within this area. The thesis analyses the impacts of improvements in internet online digital media on citizens and institutional perceptions concerning power and the significance of political participation in monitoring these abuses beyond traditional representative institutions. Results from the thesis indicate changes within PNG's political culture as well as transformations within the country's media and journalism landscape. This has assisted in sharpening emerging new social cleavages. Paradoxically, these new and emerging social cleavages have instead divided public perceptions, attitudes and responses. This has ultimately limited rousing broad public interest, support and collective citizen mobilization in opposition against the abuse of power. Indifferent to other Western democracies, citizen awareness and information from new internet online digital media has further led to the acceptance and endurance of poor governance and accountability in PNG due to emerging new social cleavage divisions.

The thesis is a comparative case study investigating the transforming logic and role of the media, journalism, power perceptions and political participatory roles and responsibilities of citizens resulting from new internet digital media. It analyses two different eras within PNG's history. Firstly, the era after independence and pre-2007. This is the era primarily dominated by traditional media sources such as televisions, radios and newspapers. Secondly, it assesses the post-2007 era where improvements ushered by the internet digital media have been clearer. The thesis argues that both eras represent two starkly different periods in PNG's political history. The former is marked by passive citizen interest and participation concerning national issues. In contrast, the later indicates a break from the later marked by greater awareness, openness and proactiveness among citizens in monitoring the abuse of power and public office.

Data collected for this thesis comprises of interviews, semi-structured questionnaires, news articles, reports and academic research concerning power perceptions and responses from citizens towards incriminating information provided by traditional media and online news media platforms. It focuses on two separate cases. One happened during the 90s, the era largely dominated by traditional media. The other occurred in late 2016, the period after the internet boom in PNG. The case concerning the former involves PNG's ninth Prime Minister Bill Skate, during 1997-1998. The latter is in regard to Peter O'Neil, PNG's Prime Minister during 2014-2016.

Case selection was based on the alleged involvement of two heads of government during two different eras in PNG's political history and their involvement in the abuse of power and public office. Both cases are characterized by the varying effects of traditional and internet online digital media and its impact on citizen understanding and dissent in protest

against these political figures. Similarly, within both cases this thesis discusses how two different Prime Minister's had attempted to use their powers to protect political interests and stifle investigations. However, the former resulted in no opposition from traditional media outlets while the latter led to a brief backlash of events following its exposure by concerned citizens on social media. This was picked up by traditional media sources, assisting in setting the agenda for public debate and action. Both cases and their reactions from citizens were mostly prevalent within the capital city, Port Moresby, whereby improvements and advancement in internet services were more widespread.

By exploring these two cases, this thesis demonstrates how old traditional media as well as new internet online digital media has impacted PNG politics differently within the pre-1990s and post-2007 internet digital era.

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Chapter 2

Rethinking Power Perceptions and Political Participation in the Digitalized Era

Introduction

Over the years, there has been an increase in democratic studies concerning the accountable use of public power, good governance and greater political citizen participation in Papua New Guinea (PNG) since transiting from colonial rule in 1975. By adopting a parliamentary government system most of these studies have largely focused on Joseph Schumpeter's (1942) procedural minimalist definition concerning elections (Reilly, 1997; 2002a), voting (Ketan, 2004; Kurer, 2007; Saffu, 1989) and political parties (May, 2008; Okole, 2005b; Reilly, 1999). However, despite adopting these representative institutions the country continues to suffer from poor governance and weak citizen participation. For example, Bill Standish (2007: 135) highlight concerns with former democratic studies arguing that despite adopting representative institutions during independence the country continues to suffer from poor government accountability and citizen participation. Others such as Henry Okole (2005a: 187-188), discuss historical legacies of the concept of a modern state being superimposed on hundreds of sovereign communities that lacked any sense of nationhood. For these reasons, Okole contends that institutions adopted during independence particularly elections are now either unworkable or outmoded. Yet still, Benjamin Reilly, Mark Brown and Scott Flower (2014: 7), posits that political institutions are insufficient in remedying poor governance without popular attitudes and leadership.

Despite these deficits, few researches have attempted to move beyond traditional representative institutions to assess new monitory mechanism that have come about as a result of advancements in internet media technology. In addition, very little research has been done concerning changing power perceptions and political participatory practices that have resulted from these improvements. This thesis introduces the concept of monitory democracy and further investigates how this new democratic concept may offer new insights into PNG politics. Interesting arguments concerning this theory are the innovative ways advancements in internet digital media technology are able to infiltrate, breakdown and expose hierarchies of power while creating new avenues of political participation beyond standard representative institutions. Given the expanding number of literatures on internet online digital media, power perceptions and political participation, it should be explored how this new concept may offer fresh insights into PNG politics within the contemporary era. In order to understand these improvements this chapter will introduce the traditional literature on power checking institutions and later present an overview of new monitory mechanisms that have resulted from advancements in internet online digital media.

The chapter firstly presents a review of democracy, political participation and conventional power checking institutions such as elections, voting and political parties. Secondly, it discusses these institutions in light of PNG's case and explains why they have proven to be insufficient in checking and monitoring power. Thirdly, it examines how power perceptions, political participation and new power checking mechanisms have evolved and shifted over the past decade beyond conventional representative institutions and assesses how these transformations have incorporated the impact of communication technology and internet online digital media. Fourthly, it presents three core arguments that contradict the liberalizing effects of internet online digital media and argues their limited explanatory insight. These arguments often tend to be skewed in favor of developed Western democracies over other developing non-Western democracies. Indifferent to the former, many countries within the later are beginning to transition from traditional media (TV, radio and newspapers) primarily controlled by the state and other capitalist market forces to new internet online digital media. For these reasons, it is important to understand how these global network digital media systems are impacting the way different citizens within these countries understand power and participate in the political process. Lastly, it introduces the concept of monitory democracy and internet online digital media and explores how they have comparatively altered communication flow, power perceptions and political behaviors. Moreover, this section explains how monitory democracy as a new democratic concept can potentially identify and shed new insights into PNG politics within the contemporary era.

Democracy, Political Participation and Power Checking Institutions

Democracy as a system of government has continually been a debate over concerns regarding the attainment, exercise and scrutiny of power. The '*demos*', a Greek translation of '*the people*' and *kratos* meaning '*rule of power*', was first considered to be practiced in Athens, Greece during 400-500 BC albeit, in a rather primitive form.¹ Indifferent to current forms and practices, Athenian Democracy imposed strict restrictions regarding citizenship while direct participation in politics was reserved for an exclusive minority. John Keane (2009: 3-78), characterizes this as a form of direct 'assembly democracy'. Direct participation in politics was restricted primarily to Athenian born (usually property owning) men and old aristocratic lords who participated in selecting public officials by lot (Sinclair, 1988: 17). Classical traditional thinkers like Aristotle first attempted to define democracy as '*rule of the people*'. Alexis de Tocqueville, following his trip to America in 1831 became convinced that America's

¹ New evidence suggests that democratic practices were also practiced outside in other non-Western countries prior to Athens, Greece. Examples of these countries include parts of Syria Mesopotamia. See John Keane, "*The Life and Death of Democracy*", 2009: 3-79.

healthy political and civil society relations came closest to defining this concept which he later published in his famous work, “Democracy in America”.

In 1942, Joseph Schumpeter (1942: 250-252) argued for a redefinition of the classical concept of democracy since it revoked a common good that all citizens could reach a rational consensus which they then entrusted to specialists with the aptitude and techniques to manage them. Schumpeter (ibid: 262), adds that there is no such thing as a uniquely determined common good and that often those entrusted can manipulate these consensuses. Therefore, he proposes a procedural redefinition of democracy as ‘institutional arrangements for arriving at political decisions where individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s votes. This became known as the revisionist challenge to the classical interpretation of democracy (Cunningham, 2002) and the minimalist model of democracy (Merkel, 2014; Przeworski, 1999).

Seminal voting studies during the 1940s and 1950s focused studies on political participation largely on voting, campaigning and party membership (Berelson et al, 1954; Milbrath, 1965). Sydney Verba and Norman Nie (1972), contended to expand this strict definition by discussing the concept as multidimensional. In their study of America, they organized political participation into four broad modes – voting, campaign activity, cooperative activity and citizen-initiated contact. Others like Robert Dahl (1971), in his famous work on Polyarchy advanced this concept by using two key variables – public contestation and participation, to explain differing routes to democratization. However, it wasn’t until after 1945 and later during the 1970s to late 1990s following two significant world political events that Schumpeter’s minimalist definition rose to the top of the agenda in defining democracy and political participation.

World War II and the Collapse of the Soviet Union

Two significant world events that altered these standard definitions included the end of World War II and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Momentous and historic, these propelled academics to rethink what this meant for democracy. Two of the most famous research were those of Samuel Huntington’s, “*The Third Wave*” (1991) and Francis Fukuyama’s, “*The End of History*” (1992). The former by using maritime metaphors discussed three specific waves of democratization that had swept across the globe. The later of the three, ‘the third wave’, began in the 1970s and lasted up to the late 1990s and was characterized by a transition of countries from authoritarian rule to representative democracy. On the other hand, the later discussed that American style liberal democracy had triumphed over all other alternative forms of government following the collapse of military dictatorships and communism. This meant that democracy in its representative and liberal form no longer faced any political

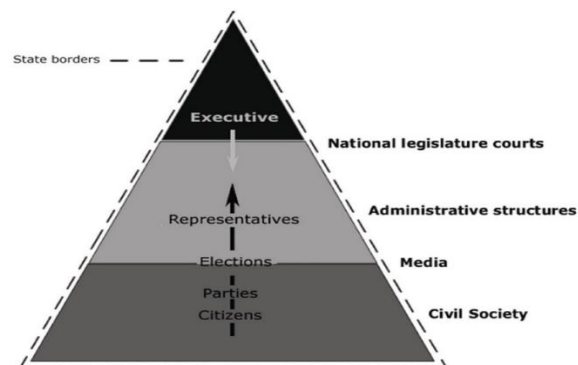
competition.

Ensuing this two-groundbreaking research democratic political participation primarily centered on power checking institutions such as elections (Linz, 1990a; O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Przeworski, 1986), political parties (Diamond and Gunther, 2001; Kitschelt, 1995; Mainwaring, 1999) and the variety of government subtypes (Duverger 1980; Elgie, 1999; Linz, 1990b).

Are Standard Power Monitoring Institutions Enough?

The standard model of political participation and power monitoring institutions has come to symbolize a hierarchical, bottom-up and top-down relationship between and among citizens and elected politicians. Figure 2-1, illustrates that the foundation of this model are primarily periodic free and fair elections. Accompanying elections, there exists freedoms of citizens and parties to freely organize through competitive multi-party elections. In addition, citizens are free to elect their representatives to a legislature which can be either a prime ministerial or presidential system and this takes place within a bureaucratic structure, covered by the media to include newspapers, radios and television. Moreover, procedures are scrutinized by the courts and all this takes place within a given territorial state.

Figure 2-1: Territorially Bounded Representative Democracy



Source: Keane. (2013: 27)

However, over the years a number of scholars have argued that many of the political practices and standard power monitoring institutions have become insufficient in checking the abuse of power. For instance, Larry Diamond (2003: 32) posits that rarely do minimalist concepts of democracy devote much attention and incorporate minimum levels of freedom into actual measures of democracy. Philippe Schmitter and Terry Karl (1991: 78), also argue that the overreliance on privileging elections within democratic

studies over other dimensions, risk committing what they describe as ‘the fallacy of electoralism’. The authors discuss that this is when scholars blindly consider elections, even the ones where specific parties or candidates are excluded or which substantial portions of the population cannot freely participate, as a sufficient condition for the existence of democracy. Electoral fallacy advocates the narrow argument that merely holding elections will channel political action into peaceful contests among elites and accord public legitimacy to the winners no matter how they are conducted. In other examinations, Sonia Alonso, John Keane and Wolfgang Merkel (2011: 23-24) discuss three shortfalls of elections and the representative process. Firstly, elections may lose their purpose if representatives are deemed to be always virtuous, impartial, competent and responsive. Secondly, if elections are merely a means of punishing and rewarding governments instead of a selection mechanism for good politicians then they are ineffective in continuously holding the elected accountable. Thirdly, it is usually the representatives that define and interpret the interests of citizens since the former do not always receive direct daily instructions from the latter.

Nic Cheeseman and Brian Klaas (2018), investigate the paradox of why there are today more elections than ever before but yet the world has become less democratic? In their investigation the authors argue that leaders who hold elections survive the longest then those who don’t through six electoral rigging methods – hacking elections, vote buying, gerrymandering, stuffing the ballot box, divide and rule and tricking the international community. Joel Barkan (2000: 231-238), point to elections as the source of ‘protracted transitions’, within Sub-Saharan Africa by discussing that elections result in long periods of authoritarian rule before genuine competitive free and fair elections bring about an alternative incumbent. Other researchers argue that the notion that regular genuine elections will confer democratic legitimacy and deepen political participation has equally come up short. For example, Thomas Carothers (2002: 15) posits that in many of the third wave transitional democracies regular genuine elections are held but political participation beyond voting remains shallow and governmental accountability is weak. The author further contends that rifts between political elites and citizens in many of these countries are rooted in structural conditions that include the concentration of wealth or certain sociocultural traditions that elections themselves do not overcome. Carothers (ibid: 15-16) advances this argument discussing Nepal’s experience of conducting regular multiparty elections since the 1990s with frequent alterations of power nevertheless the Nepalese population still remain highly disaffected from the political system while there is little real sense of democratic accountability.

Following the failure of the Arab Spring in bringing about any real democratic changes, a few scholars similarly agreed that elections alone are no longer the defining characteristic of even minimalist democracy. Hazem Kandil (2013: 11), explains that elections in Egypt after the Arab Spring played an insignificant role in the process

towards democratization since power was decided independently between the three main aspects of power significant in maintaining stability in Egypt – the military, the security and the old regime. Stephen King (2020), equally argues that internal political pacts and bargaining among the military, elites and socioeconomic groups were far more important in committing all political parties to the rules of democracy and addressing conflicts regarding the Arab Spring.

The deficiencies of elections have not entirely centered on non-Western democracies but equally Western democracies. For instance, Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi (1999: 48), assert that voters even in established democracies do not always have completed information they need to assess and form an opinion regarding the performance of their government. More recent studies indicate that even if voters are politically engaged and well informed, they often vote based on political identities and individual world views over political facts. Christophere Achen and Larry Bartels (2016: 22-36), discuss that voters pick out and ferment facts aligning them with their preconceived versions of candidates rather than using facts to correct their opinion of candidates. Other scholars argue that systematic failures of elections relate to them as being often unfair due to socioeconomic and international factors as well as reasons relating to constitutional power sharing and the agencies of electoral governance (Norris, 2013; 2015). Yet still other arguments point out that justifications concerning elections as assistant mechanisms in maintaining accountability are simply inadequate over the long haul. For example, Ruth Grant and Robert Keohane (2005: 31), argue that since elections are largely marked by horizontal periodic cycles, they prove insufficient in holding power holders vertically accountable since misconduct or incompetence occurs continually.

Moving past elections, a few scholars have similarly argued the breakdown of citizen trust and support of other standard power checking institutions such as political parties. By using cross-national sociological data, Colin Hay (2007: 75) discusses declining levels of interest in conventional politics such as declining turnout in elections, falling party membership and disappearing activists. Hay, explains that politicians could no longer be trusted and are largely self-serving, seeking to maximize votes resulting in political decisions that are no longer in the interest of the community. Other scholars point out growing disengagements of citizens stressing partisan dealignment and isolation of political parties (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Mair, 2013) and an increase in a variety of social, cultural and economic problems between individuals as well as groups (Putnam, 2000; Norris and Inglehart, 2019).

PNG in Perspective: Why have Standard Power Checking Institutions Failed to Deliver?

Comparative and historical democratic literature positively indicates that despite PNG being ethnically diverse and underdeveloped it has nevertheless managed to maintain a long and successful period of democratic rule accompanied by meaningful elections with increasing political participation (Reilly, 2002b: 703). For instance, Larry Diamond (1989: 1) explains that PNG, like India had demonstrated a remarkable vibrant and resilient democratic system within the developing world. Arend Lijphart (1999), in a study assessing thirty-six established democracies discusses that PNG was among the only few to be included within this category. Timothy Power and Mark Gasiorowski (1997: 123-155), in a study analyzing the relationship between institutional choices and democratic survival examined fifty-six democratic transitions within the third world between 1930 and 1995 and equally identified PNG together with India, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago as consolidated parliamentary democracies. Their assessments were measured based off three criteria: regimes coming to power through holding of a second election (usually after countries transitioned to independence), alterations in executive power and at least 12 years of stable democratic experience. Similarly, PNG passes Huntington's two-turnover electoral test.

However, building on these studies to argue PNG as a vibrant democracy can be misleading. Many of these research focus on broad macro assessments of similarly debatable concepts and measurements. These often overlook practical assessments of political practices within the country. In adopting a parliamentary system together with representative democratic institutions from Australia following independence in 1975, democratic literature in PNG have largely focused on Joseph Schumpeter's (1942) procedural minimalist definition particularly involving elections (Reilly, 1997; 2002a), voting (Ketan, 2004; Kurer, 2007) and political parties (Kabuni, 2018b; May, 2008; Okole, 2005b). Nevertheless, these institutions have proven to be insufficient in monitoring power and improving issues concerning governance and political participation in PNG.

In contrast to political party development in Western Europe resulting from structural divisions triggered by both national and industrial revolutions advanced by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967), PNG was slow to develop and industrialization had barely taken off after independence. David Hegarty (1979), argues that contrary to other third world countries where political parties formed the precursor of independence movements, they emerged later during the colonial period and played only a limited role in the process of government transition. Hegarty (ibid: 187-190), identifies four main reasons for this phenomenon. Firstly, there was an absence of a common history of statehood among the people. Secondly, the nature of colonial rule mitigated against

nationalist movements. Thirdly, sufficiently large independent groups or class were non-existent and fourthly, the sheer difficulty of establishing a mass-based party within the country's political community. Consequently, Hegarty contends that this resulted in fragmentation among citizens who formed opposing and often hostile ethnic, tribal and regional identity groups that shared little commonality regarding language and colonial experience. Coupled with the country's diverse topography, this greatly hindered and limited communications causing suspicion between various ethnic groups therefore preventing political associations out traditional local sets.

Overtime, these different traditional groups rose to define PNG's diverse collective identity groups and social cleavages (May, 2004; Reilly, 2008). A large number of researches specifically identify these traditional identity groups and cleavages as one of the principal impediments to good governance, accountability and poor political participation in PNG. This is evident primarily in the literature concerning nepotism, rent-seeking, electoral violence, patronage, clientelism, pork barrel politics and corruption (Allen and Hasnain, 2010; Edmiston, 2002; Lasslett and MacManus, 2018; Rumsey, 1999; Walton, 2018; Wood, 2017). However, nowhere have these studies been more pronounced than within research relating to elections, voting and political parties in PNG.

Why are Representative Power Checking Institutions Not Enough?

Prior to independence PNG had held three elections – 1964, 1968 and 1972. Voting was conducted using the Optional Preferential Voting System,² where voters could vote for either one or an unlimited number of candidates. However, this voting system was perceived to be too complicated for the country's majority who were still illiterate, inconvenient and difficult to manage (Reilly, 1997: 5). As a result, the country reformed its voting system and adopted the First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system in 1975 following independence.

Under this voting system, from a number of candidates contesting voters only had to mark one candidate on their ballot papers and candidates who receive the most votes win. Benjamin Reilly (2002b: 711-713), discusses the FPTP voting system as an attempt by the state to politically engineer voting behavior to achieve specific political outcomes. There was also widespread expectation that a two-or three-dominant-party system would develop in the context of the new voting system. Nevertheless, contrary to majoritarian effects within other contexts Bill Standish (2006: 196-197) later argues that the FPTP voting system in PNG had enabled candidates with a very small support

² The Optional Preferential Voting System was adopted from Australia. It was also used during elections in Queensland from 1992-2015 at the elections for the House of Representatives.

base electoral success. Jon Fraenkel (2004: 122), also posits that the number of candidates contesting elections had increased at every election reaching an average of twenty per constituency during the 2002 National Elections. Adding on, Fraenkel contends that the number of victors obtaining over fifty percent of the votes had plummeted with the majority of MPs being elected on the basis of less than twenty percent of the votes during the last three elections prior to 2002.³

A number of published researchers indicate that most of these electoral issues are largely a consequence of PNG's heavily fragmented ethnic, traditional and regional political cleavages and associated voting practices primarily centered on localized support and based off cultural and language group relations (Edmiston, 2002; Kurer, 2007; May, 2006; Reilly, 2000; Renzio, 2000; Rumsey, 1999; Standish 2007). For instance, in a survey on electoral behavior in PNG during the 1987 National General Elections Yaw Saffu (1989: 15) discusses that the most widely observable feature of elections was the phenomena of localized support for candidates. Saffu, further explains that this localized support was demonstrated by the ability of candidates to attract virtually one hundred percent of the votes of a locality within a wider constituency thereby denying competitors any electoral support within that particular locality. Without any outlook of nationalism and ideology, political parties increasingly identified themselves largely based off the persona, charisma and standing of party leaders within their communities (Hegarty, 1979: 202).

In a study of elections in Mount Hagen, a province located within the Western Highlands Region of PNG, Joe Ketan (2004) in an attempt to make meaningful electoral practices advanced the argument of group pride and supremacy among others during elections. Coupled with increasing candidate contestants representing different localities and groups election focus advanced from mere voting to elections being fiercely contested characterized by electoral violence which became an ever more common occurrence during elections (Reilly, 2008; Strathern, 1993). Ketan, contends that group pride exemplified through electoral success was far more important. Adding on, the author explains that inter-group relations were strategically managed and reinforced through gift giving within clans and tribes beyond the candidates to seek and cement large voter support. Overall, electoral success evidently was determined by local reputation, local perceptions of a candidate's ability to deliver goods and services to his or her supporters and the effectiveness of electoral campaigning.

Candidates increasingly became representatives of their specific and narrow constituent base supporters whom they relied heavily for votes. Matthew Allen and Zahid Hasnain

³ National Elections conducted using the First Past the Post voting system prior to 2002 were during 1987, 1992 and 1997 respectively.

(2010: 9-13), claim that one of the primary ways these have been exemplified is through culture, elections and patronage politics. They identify two primary ways of interaction. Firstly, they discuss electoral patronage through spending large amounts of money on campaigns which is distributed both as cash handouts and in the form of gifts. Secondly, they argue electoral campaigns by constituents who understand that their candidate, if successful will repay and reward them with various forms of patronage including jobs, infrastructure, development projects and contracts.

Following the National Elections in 2002 which was also considered to be the worst and most violent (May, 2003), recommendations were made to change the country's electoral system. Once again, the country opted for a change to the Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) System. This was based off the premise that winning candidates could win with a greater proportion of votes, create cooperation among different candidates, reduce the number of candidates contesting, reduce electoral violence and create political stability (Fraenkel, 2004; Reilly, 2002a; Standish, 2006; 2007). During the 2007 National Elections, voters in PNG voted using the new LPV system. Under this new voting system, voters were able to mark three candidates on their ballot papers. Candidates acquiring an absolute majority of valid votes are declared winners. However, if none of the candidates obtain an absolute majority the candidate with the lowest tally is eliminated and his or her second or third preferences are then redistributed to the remaining candidates. This process continues until one candidate receives fifty percent plus one of the votes remaining and is declared the winner.

Research assessing whether the LPV system have meet expectations have been rather bleak than expected. For example, John Coakley and Jon Fraenkel (2017: 686-687), posit that the average victors vote share had increased from 20.5 percent of valid ballots at the 2002 elections under the FPTP voting system to around 33 percent in both the 2007 and 2012 National Elections. However, they also contend that earlier tendencies regarding increasing candidate contestants were still visible. For instance, in 2012 contesting candidates increased to an average of 29.5 per constituency and neither the 2007 nor the 2012 electoral outcomes have institutionalized political parties in PNG since the country's highly fragmented societies meant that political parties could not organize around ethnic polarities. Other arguments concerning campaigning and voting practices have equally been unconvincing. For example, in analysing data from the 2007 and 2012 National Elections, Nicole Haley and Kerry Zubrinich (2015) identified widespread and increasing vote buying campaign practices under the LPV system where candidates campaigning with money and gifts had performed better than others.

Political parties have equally proven to be of little significance serving as merely engines for establishing coalition governments. For instance, Henry Okole (2005b: 373-376) argues that one of the primary factors limiting the institutionalization of political parties

was the FPTP voting system since candidates did not need to mobilize mass support beyond their local base within each electorate. Without central issues outside traditional cleavages which robust parties could emerge political parties became mere political engines for coalition government formation. Reilly (2002b: 706-707), maintains that since political parties are simply vehicles for achieving and maintaining political power while having little commonality concerning ideology or policy agenda, party-hopping has become part of PNG parliamentary politics for rewards such as the promise of a minister or more direct financial inducements. Michael Kabuni (2018a), advances this argument in assessing similarities and differences on policy concerning autonomy and education among political parties during 2018 and its impact on coalition formations. Kabuni, discusses that political party decisions are not based on ideology but rather on members interests in attaining cabinet portfolios and gaining access to financial resources. Moreover, the author argues that ministerial positions are given roughly proportional to the number of members in each party that make up the coalition government.

Rethinking Power Perceptions, Political Participation and New Power Checking Mechanisms in the Digitalized Era

Seminal voting studies during the 1940s and 1950s focused political participatory practices largely on voting, campaigning and party membership (Berelson et al., 1954; Milbrath, 1965). Sidney Verba and Norman Nie (1972) attempted to expand this strict definition arguing the concept as multidimensional. In their study of America, they organized political participation into four broad modes – voting, campaign activity, cooperative activity and citizen-initiated contact. These extended previous definitions of political participation to consider alternative forms beyond electoral politics such as civic engagement (Norris, 2002; Putnam, 1993).

During the late 1970s significant cultural shifts in the political culture of democracy began to sweep over the Western world. A few authors argued that this was the result of intergenerational, economic, technological and socio-political transformations ushered by modernization (Cain et al., 2003; Inglehart, 1990). Accompanying these cultural shifts were important changes in citizen values and expectations towards their governments. Citizens particularly concentrated among the younger, better educated and politically sophisticated increasingly began to be more critical of their governments and traditional power checking institutions (Dalton, 2004; Dalton and Welzel, 2014; Norris, 2011). These transformations paved the way for the expansion of democratic processes and the relationships between citizens and their governments. Diverging from traditional concepts and practices of viewing voting as the essence of political participation, other engagements based on lifestyle choices, self-expression values and non-institutionalized actions (Dalton, 2008; Bennett, 2012) emerged to redefine political participation. Jan van

Deth (2014: 349), posits that over the last decade political participation has evolved and transformed that it has come to encompass a long list of practices such as voting, boycotting products, donating money, running for office, forwarding emails, contacting a politician or attending a political poetry slam. Other scholars argued that in order to understand the definition of political participation, it is important to recognise the efforts of civil society actors to address issues of public concern beyond elections (Bennett, 2003; Carpentier, 2012; Fenton, 2008). For example, Julie Uldam (2019: 2), discusses that by defining political participation beyond elections, participation can be separated between formal participation such as voting and extra-parliamentarian political participation like volunteering and activism.

Accompanying these changes included a variety of political behaviour literature that has incorporated the impact of new communication and internet digital technology. For instance, Manuel Castells (1996: 469) unpacks the changes within societies affected by internet technology and new online digital media by arguing that they have given birth to new forms of social organization centred on ideas of networks. Adding on, Castell explains that these networks constitute new avenues of social interaction and the diffusion of network logics alters outcomes of experience, power and culture within societies. Eugenia Siapera (2018: 35) similarly discusses that new media technology has widened participation as users choose actively to publish, comment, like and read online content thus shifting passive media consumption to active user participation. Yet still other authors argue that new internet online digital media has evidently democratized the media and the public sphere for citizens to share information free from outside interests (Dahlberg, 2001; Kahn and Kellner, 2004) and created a new participatory media culture (Jenkins, 2006; Siapera, 2008). These arguments support earlier research on media studies that explain the transforming effects of new forms of media extension. For example, Marshall McLuhan (1967: 68) points out that societies have been shaped and transformed by the type and forms of media extensions rather than the content of communication.

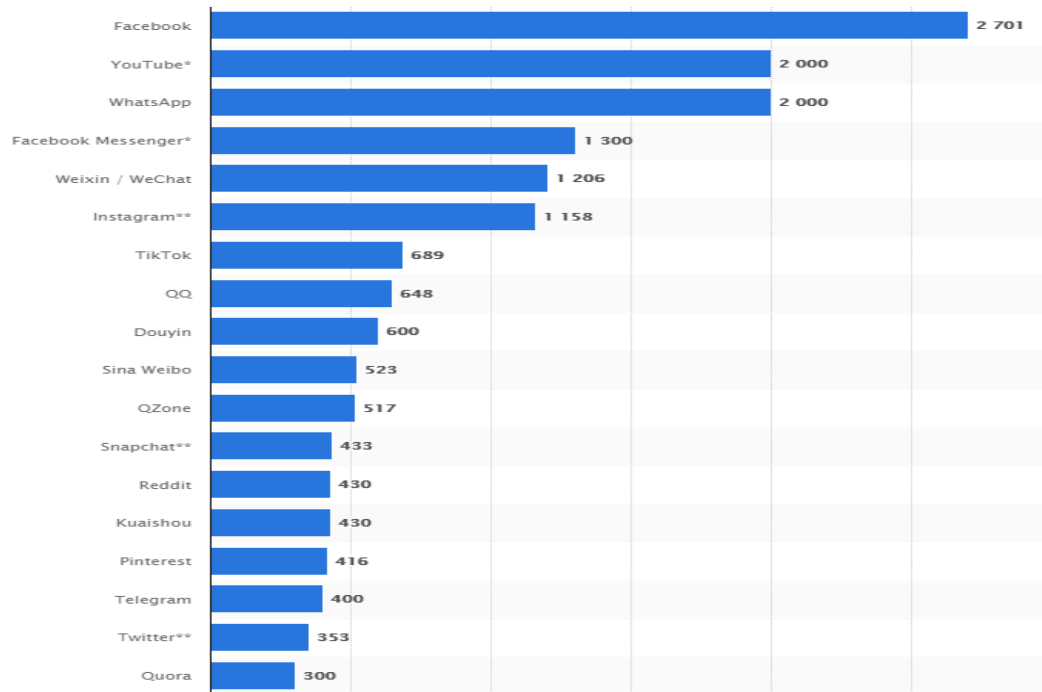
Such transformations generated optimism among researchers predicting that this would assist in re-engaging citizens in participating in the democratic process (Norris, 2002; Shirky, 2011). For instance, new communication and internet online digital media would create more direct e-democracy through online platforms and create public spheres through online consultation (Coleman and Blumler, 2009; Della Porta, 2013). New internet technology would likewise complement social capital (Wellman et al., 2001), affect cultural values (Norris, 2001) and improve citizen engagement with politics (Barber, 1999; Etzioni, 1993).

Social Media

Accompanying advances ushered by the internet were the emergence of online digital media platforms that have created alternative avenues for social interaction and connectivity online. Building on techno-centric arguments, Tim O'Reilly (2005) formally defined these online digital platforms as “*social media*” or “*web 2.0*” that refer to web-based collaborative tools that rely on user-generated content. Angelina Russo, Jerry Watkins, Lynda Kelly and Sebastian Chan (2008: 22), propose a similar definition of social media as those that facilitate online communication, networking and /or collaboration. Caleb Carr and Rebecca Hayes (2015: 50), offer an updated definition of social media as internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others. Jonathan Obar and Steven Wildman (2015: 745-750), provide a synthesized definition of social media that comprise of four commonalities – social media services are interactive Web 2.0 Internet-based applications, user generated content is the lifeblood of social media, individuals and groups create user-specific profiles for a site or app designed and maintained by a social media service and social media services facilitate the development of social networks online by connecting a profile with those of individuals and/or groups.

Since the early 2000s, social media services have exponentially increased in popularity as both a business and social phenomenon. Common among these social media services include Facebook which launched in 2004, Twitter which started in 2006, YouTube which was created in 2005 and recently Instagram which began in 2010. As of July 2020, data provided by Statista indicated in Figure 2-2, reveal that Facebook currently has the largest number of active users totalling 2,701 billion. Rivalling Facebook is YouTube with 2,000 billion active users followed by Instagram and Twitter totalling 1,158 billion and 353 million respectively.

Table 2-2: Most popular social networks worldwide as of July 2020, ranked by number of active users, millions

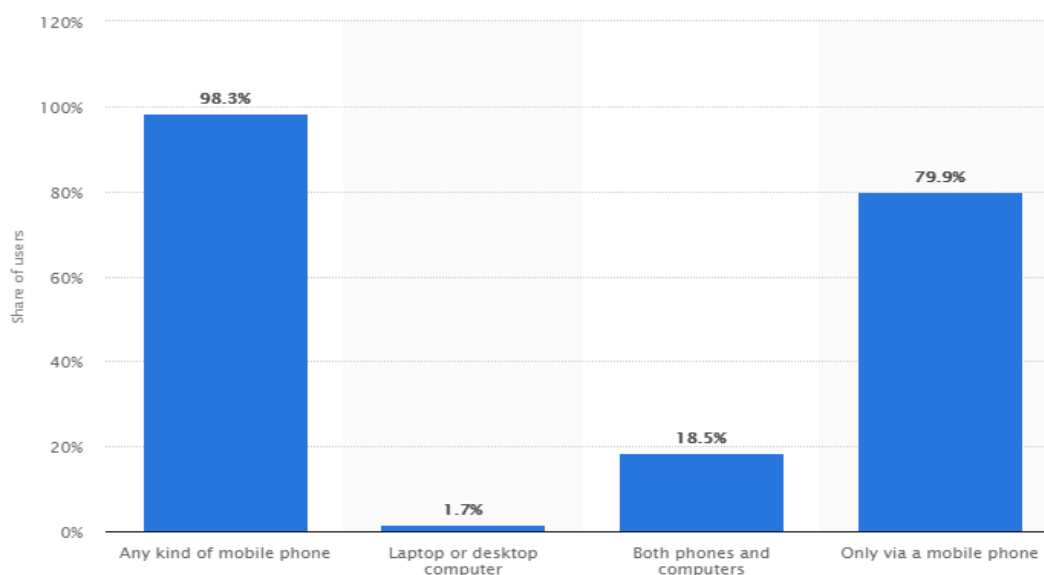


Source: Statista database 2020 on active social media users worldwide. Accessed 12 November, 2020 from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users>

Based on data from Statista shown in Figure 2-3, 98.3 percent of active Facebook users worldwide access the social media platform through any kind of mobile devices compared to 1.7 percent from laptops or desktop computers. Similarly, due to Facebook's accessibility and reach through multiple mobile apps the social media app equally ranks as one of the most downloaded app publishers worldwide.⁴

⁴ Statista database 2020 on leading social networking apps in the Apple App Store worldwide in September 2020, by number of downloads from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/696167/top-iphone-social-networking-apps-worldwide-by-number-of-downloads/>. Also see Statista database on leading communication apps in the Google Play Store worldwide in September 2020, by number of downloads from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/690864/leading-google-play-communication-apps-worldwide-downloads/>

Figure 2-3: Device usage of Facebook users worldwide as of October 2020



Source: Statista database 2020 on Facebook device usage worldwide. Accessed 15 November, 2020 from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/377808/distribution-of-facebook-users-by-device/>

Research on social media primarily prioritized its communicative aspect (Boyd and Ellison, 2007), its capacity for further openness and participation (Mayfield, 2007) and their connectivity and community creation (Mayfield, 2007; Smith et al., 2008). This created increasing optimism as different scholars began to posit that the internet and social media platforms would lower transaction costs by removing obstacles to participation, generate new and improved forms of bottom-up organization and coordination and create new forms of participation to complement existing modes (Bennett and Segerberg, 2013; Bimber et al., 2005; Van Laer and Van Aelst, 2010). For example, Eugenia Siapera (2008) put forward three broad contributions of social media to democratic politics. Firstly, social media may compliment mainstream media which may prioritize the business of making money at the expense of serving politics. With advances in social media, ordinary citizens may take over the responsibilities of checking political actors. Secondly, social media may encourage direct communication between political actors at all levels that allows for deliberation and communal thinking and thirdly, social media may create new forms of subjectivity that may prove beneficial for democracy.

Building from fresh insights resulting from the internet and social media, other authors like Clay Shirky (2011: 29), discuss that prior to the introduction of internet digital media participation was restricted to professional journalists while opportunities for citizens to express themselves were also limited. However, Clay further posits that after its introduction the communication landscape became denser and more complex therefore

providing citizens with greater access to information, opportunities to engage in public speech and an enhanced ability to undertake collective action. Lance Bennett (2012), explain significant shifts in patterns of political participation and collective action coordinated through social media. Bennett argues that new social media have enabled a diverse range of citizens to collectively mobilize based on more fragmented and personalized interests that target traditional political parties, candidates and corporations. Through utilizing social media, Bennett contends that new personalized collective groups become important catalysts of collective action processes as they activate their own social networks. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg (2013), formalize these developments by pointing out the rise of a new kind of logic articulated by social media and political protests. They refer to this logic as “*connective action*”, where personal experiences reflecting an individual’s views and experiences take precedence over class or ideology through online digital networks. A few scholars have argued that this was particularly demonstrated during the Arab Uprising in 2010. For instance, Charles Hirschkind (2010) argues that the use of new online media created new and alternative channels of communication that made it possible for the uprising by exposing cases of injustice, torture and corruption via Facebook and Twitter.

Other authors argue the impacts of social networks created by social media and their relationship in fostering and maintaining relationship ties and social capital. They explain how these are transforming traditional ways of social interaction and communication in the age of new social media. For example, Kevin Johnson, Maureen Tanner, Nishant Lalla and Dori Kawalski (2013), discuss the role of Facebook in forming and maintaining social capital among university students in South Africa. In their study, they contend that there is a strong correlation between the intensity of Facebook usage and perceptions of bridging, bonding and the maintenance of social capital. In another study, Ellison Nicole, Charles Steinfield and Cliff Lampe (2007) by assessing the formation and maintenance of social capital via online social media network sites similarly posit that Facebook actually improved both bonding and bridging capital as well as what the authors describe as maintained capital, or the ability to maintain social capital without direct face to face contact. Judith Donath and Danah Boyd (2004), equally discuss that social networking sites improve weak ties due to their network potential and ease made possible by the technology to include people we do not know very well offline.

Other important arguments of transformations by social media include changing citizen perceptions and subjectivities. For instance, Mark Poster (1995) argues that the internet and online communication has signalled shifts in subjectivity associated with what he refers to as “*digital authors*” or digital online creators of information. Due to digital authors online, Poster further alludes that texts, pictures and videos are radically separated from their creators who are hence unable to control its multiple meanings and use online. Manuel Castell (2004: 221-225), building on network connectivity discuss that new

online digital communication construct new and diverging forms of identity from different dimensions. Castell, contends that meaning is not exclusively local based on locally shared networks but are obtained from a global discourse online. Others like Zizi Papachrissi (2010), point to the erosion between private and public boundaries of spaces and practices by explaining shifts from public spaces for political participation to the private sphere online. Moreover, Papachrissi posits that citizens are able to combine their own personal experiences and politics to abstract new ideas while still being politically active within these new online domains.

Is Digital Media a Double-Edged Sword for Democracy, Power and Political Participation?

A few scholars in contrast argue that the benefits of internet online digital media have been overstated while others claim its limiting determining power on society. Still others discuss the rise of alternative facts, fake news, selective exposure and echo chambers as a result of alternative media sources from the internet media revolution age. This has led to what some scholars describe as a *post truth* era.

Nevertheless, this thesis argues that internet digital media has proven to be more beneficial and over time transformed power perceptions and political participatory practices. Moreover, it contends that it has been conveniently easy for research on internet digital media and politics to skew favouring Western democracies where research and observations are more prevalent therefore, blanketing small developing non-Western countries with similar and comparable interpretations. Literature on internet digital media and politics refute its improvements primarily based on three counter arguments. Each of these arguments will be analysed in detail separately. In addition, this thesis will show how they leave out significant developments relevant in arguing its importance and benefits on politics and democracy within the contemporary era.

Accountability and Control

The first and most widely acclaimed argument carried over from traditional media outlets concerns the issue of accountability and control. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988) in their influential book '*Manufacturing Consent*', provided serious critics to journalism and the news media's relationship to power. They argue how media corporations and its journalists are not entirely independent as we may have presumed. Moreover, they discuss how the media and journalists end up defending the economic, social and political agendas of governments and corporations favouring certain privileged within society while suppressing others largely over profit. This had evidently allowed media corporations to set the agenda, dominate headlines and tailor information to suite

particular interests (Bagdikian 2004; Baker, 2007; Croteau and Hoynes, 2006). This was supported by additional research that similarly explained the media's limited role as a neutral watchdog. For example, Gergana Dimova (2012: 63-85) in comparatively investigating the origins of media information in Bulgaria, Germany and Russia between 1995 and 2005 argues that information rarely come from investigative journalism. Building on these insights, Yankova-Dimova (2013: 1-9) claims that the considerations of making an allegation far surpasses journalism and are instead aimed at monitory considerations and concerns of gaining political capital.

For social media platforms particularly Facebook, Shoshana Zuboff (2019) provide a more recent critic of online digital social media platforms as well as online big tech companies in her book *"The Age of Surveillance Capitalism"*. Zuboff, discusses how dominant internet online digital media platforms can claim online human experience as free raw material data that can be translated into behavioral data. The author argues that these data are then fed into advanced manufacturing processes which she described as 'machine intelligence' and fabricated into prediction products that anticipate what you will do now, soon or later. Zuboff, contends that this new phenomenon creates a new species of power she describes as *"instrumentarianism"* which is power to know and shape human behaviour toward others ends. The author goes on to claim that surveillance capitalism refutes optimism of the internet and digital online media platforms of inclusiveness leading to the democratization of knowledge. Instead, Zuboff posits that digital connection is merely a means to commercial ends.

These arguments fail to explain the tremendous changes that have emerged as a result of advancements in technology and the internet. These improvements have similarly created a variety of wide-ranging and free online social participatory platforms and access to information easily accessible through a host of sources. Moreover, these arguments fall short in articulating how these advancements have comparatively extended control and the pool of participants beyond traditional journalism to engage in the agenda setting process. Free participatory platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have increasingly become new and alternative avenues where citizens can actively debate and share information outside institutional control and oversight. As access and participation incorporate varied citizens outside journalists, new participants begin to redefine concepts of public and private divisions of power which has caused them to direct criticism, publicity and public exposure at the powerful. Through these processes, new participants are given the power to speak their own voices, set the agenda and are able to cut easily through habits, prejudice and hierarchies of power.

Internet Online Digital Media and Selective Exposure

The second argument refers to critics who contend that internet online digital media exposes citizens to selective exposure (Hart et al., 2009; Sears and Freedman, 1967; Stroud, 2008), echo chambers or filter bubbles (Sunstein, 2017). This observation has increased with the emergence of internet digital media (Bakshy et al., 2015; Flaxman et al., 2016), expansion of cable television (Jamieson and Cappella, 2008; Prior, 2007) and the widespread adoption of broadband internet (Garrett, 2009; Hindman, 2009). For example, Engin Bozdag (2013) discusses that algorithms built into online platforms like Google and Facebook attempt to adjust an individual's experience based on his or her personal characteristics, location, browsing histories or social networks.

Other arguments concern the increasing ideological rift among individuals resulting from internet digital media networks. For instance, by analysing the web browsing history of 50,000 U.S. located users who regularly read online news, Seth Flaxman, Sharad Goel and Justin Rao (2016: 298) explain that social networks and search engines were associated with an increase in the mean ideological distance between individuals. However, somewhat counter-intuitive they similarly argue that these are also associated with an increase in an individual's exposure to material from his or her less preferred side of the political spectrum. More recent arguments characterize the rise of internet online digital media and the era of post-truth where alternative facts have replaced actual facts and that feelings have more weight over evidence (D'Ancona, 2017; McIntyre, 2018). Still, others argue that greater access to information and knowledge primarily online, has lowered the bar concerning the depth of knowledge required to consider oneself an expert resulting in misguided and intellectual egalitarianism that has crippled informed debates on significant issues (Nichols, 2017).

This thesis posits that although these findings may seem valid, they largely extend to Western democracies significantly propelled by the success of Trump and Brexit. It is warranted to argue the diverging effects of internet online digital media within Western democracies however, more nuanced research and arguments should be offered for non-Western democracies. This thesis claims that this is a particularly valid argument since quite a few non-Western democracies such as India, South Korea and even China to some extent, are today experiencing increasing and better access to information through online news platforms over traditional media. Assessing the impact of internet online digital media in non-Western democracies could prove insightful in examining how it has affected power perceptions, political participation and politics within the contemporary era. Moreover, better case specific assessments can be made on the effects of internet online digital media rather than broad arguments mainly tailored towards Western democracies.

John Keane (2017), argues that political scientists trained or based in the Atlantic region have a bad habit of ignoring trends in the Asia-Pacific region. Keane also discusses that often when they do, they often misleadingly measure these trends based on their own particular standards cloaked in false universals. Adding new insights, Keane explains that the Asia-Pacific region is a new political laboratory which is arguably at the cutting edge of the twenty first century in terms of media trends and its relationship with communication, politics and the future of democracy. Building on the wealth of literature on internet online digital media, it should be equally explored how this has transformed perceptions of power, citizen political participation and politics outside Western democracies.

The Impact of Internet Online Digital Media concerning Influence and Participation

The third argument relates to influence and participation. Evgeny Morozov (2011: xv-xvii), explains that this argument where the internet will shape every environment that it penetrates and vice versa is a flawed concept which he describes as ‘cyber-utopian bias’ and ‘internet centrism’. Moreover, Morozov claims that communication technologies are simply neutral mediums providing no determining power and have in fact played into authoritarian governments such as China and Iran to control and manipulate society. Michael Schudson (2013: 57), similarly argues that even though internet online digital media provides alternatives to hold governments accountable, it equally provides a platform to elites and accountability forums which could be easily utilized to avoid and deflect accountability. Furthermore, Schudson contends that if the internet gives ordinary citizens new tools for gathering information and expressing views, think of how much more it offers to political professionals who spend forty to eighty hours a week on politics and not forty to eighty minutes.

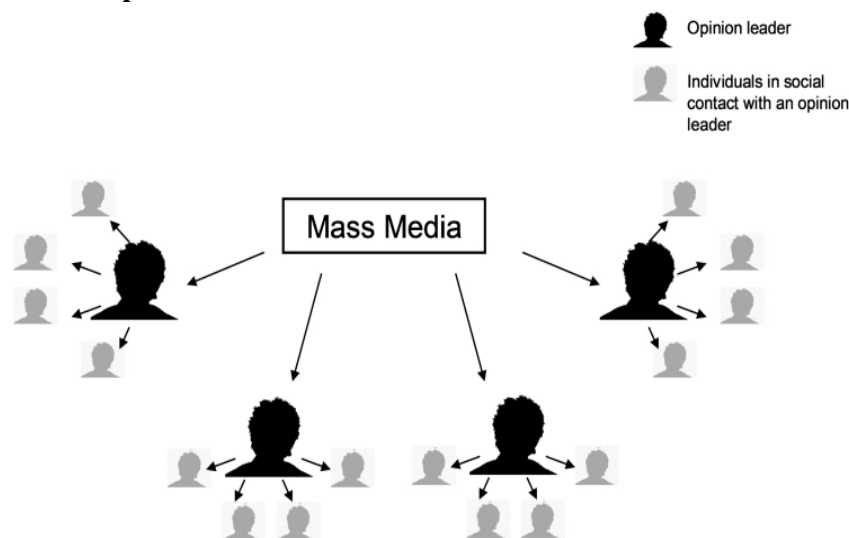
Recently, Andrea Taylor, Erica Frantz and Joseph Wright (2020), argue that improvements and advancements in internet technology have enabled autocracies to integrate these innovations and have therefore become formidable threats to democracy. They explain that roughly during the period between 1946 and 2000 during the same period of digital proliferation dictators ruled for around ten years. However, following the year 2000 this number had more than doubled to nearly twenty-five years. Similarly, Christopher Walker, Shanthi Kalathil and Jessica Ludwig (2020: 127-128), discuss how advancements in information technology and its platforms have enabled autocracies like China and Russia to project what they describe as ‘sharp power’ – using technological interdependence to impair free expression, to compromise and neutralize independent institutions and to distort the political environment. Other scholars even claim that online participation does not equate to actual in-person participation which still creates trust (Zavattaro and Sementelli, 2014; Zolotov et al., 2019). So called ‘keyboard’ or ‘internet’ warriors have become increasingly popular within the internet media age.

Most of these arguments have been equally rebutted accompanied by sufficient evidence indicating that distinct sub-modes of online participation are comparable and have similarly been influential in igniting direct participation offline. Conveniently, a few scholars have been quick to equally point out the unsuccessful cases and experiences of the Arab Spring to argue the limiting effects of internet online digital media. Nevertheless, a significant number of successful protests and social movements over the last decade have had positive and wide-ranging effects due to the use of internet online digital media. The Indignados Protest in Spain, The Occupy Wall Street Movement and recently, protests in Hong Kong over extradition laws against China have all been successful with the aid of internet online digital media. For example, in assessing the impact of social media concerning the Indignados M15 Protest Movement in Spain between 2011 and 2015, Ramon Feenstra, Simon Tormey, Andreu Rippolles and John Keane (2017: 64-91) explain how social media was able to create new and innovative ways to organize and mobilize citizens, set the public agenda and create novel horizontal accountability structures. Rachel Gibson and Marta Cantijoch (2013: 701-716), in their research to conceptualize and measure participation by assessing online and offline participation argue e-participation as a multidimensional phenomenon. Using original survey data from the U.K. general election of 2010, they identify distinct sub modes of e-participation comparable to those occurring offline and that these novel participatory practices may foster new social-media-based types of expressive political behaviour.

New Media Environment: Communicative Abundance and Monitory Democracy

Analysing the impact of traditional mass media on voter decision making during the 1940 U.S. presidential campaign, Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet (1944) discuss the theory of two-step flow model. They posit that traditional mass media content as depicted in Figure 2-4, first reach active media users who they describe as ‘opinion leaders’ that afterwards interpreted this information to comparatively lesser active media users. This proved that citizens rather than being homogeneous collecting information directly from traditional mass media instead obtained information from opinion leaders through interpersonal communications.

Figure 2-4: Two-step flow model



Source: Communication Theory. ‘Two Step Flow Theory’. Accessed 19 November, 2020 from <https://www.communicationtheory.org/two-step-flow-theory-2/>

Nevertheless, over the years this ground-breaking research has come under attack largely due to the rise of the internet and online digital media. Thomas Friedman (2007), has equated the internet as historic world ‘flatteners’ that have created massive opportunities in areas similarly outside politics including commerce, global trade and information rendering geographic divisions irrelevant. Access to internet online digital media and the migration of news from traditional media outlets to online digital media platforms have radically altered the flow of communication as well as public opinion. These transformations have contributed to changing citizen power perceptions and responsibilities towards taking greater and active participatory and monitory roles involving the powerful.

John Keane (2013: 1), explains that improvements resulting from the internet and online digital media has created the growth and spread of novel monitory bodies and mechanisms that today compliment traditional power checking institutions like elections. Symbolized by the internet, Keane describes this new phenomenon as ‘*communicative abundance*’ characterized by a revolutionary age of overlapping and interlinked media devices that for the first time in history integrate text, sound and images in digitally and easily storable and reproducible forms. In contrast to traditional mass media sources, internet online digital media provide multiple options regarding the kind of news people consume, how they are able to access this information and when. Diverging from Lazarsfeld et al., two-step model Lance Bennett and Jarol Manheim (2006), discuss the theory of one-step flow describing the transformation of public communication in the United States. They argue that transformations particularly within communication

technologies and the fragmentation of media industries mean that opinion leaders play a lesser active role in influencing public opinion. Other studies similarly point out how increasing internet and education levels have exposed citizens to a lot more information online that they are now able to question the authority of experts (Nichols, 2017).

In contrast to the era exclusively dominated and controlled by opinion leaders, journalists, political parties and governments that dictated and translated news information and public opinion from traditional media sources this has proven to be difficult in the contemporary era. Keane (2018: 147-179), discusses that barriers regarding access to information and the ability of citizens to speak their own voices and form individual opinions have been vastly reduced. Moreover, Keane contends that improvements in internet online digital media technology has significantly opened and extended the pool of participation to include participants largely outside opinion leaders, traditional journalists and governments. These advancements considerably challenge two main arguments from traditional media, information and public opinion literature. Firstly, due to increasing and widening access of information online, opinion leaders have comparatively less influence in interpreting news information content (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944; Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955) and secondly, that the professional journalist dictates what the public sees, hears and reads about while providing opportunities for citizens to participate in setting the agenda on a variety of social, economic and political issues (Deuze, 2005; Hayes, 2008; Schudson, 2008).

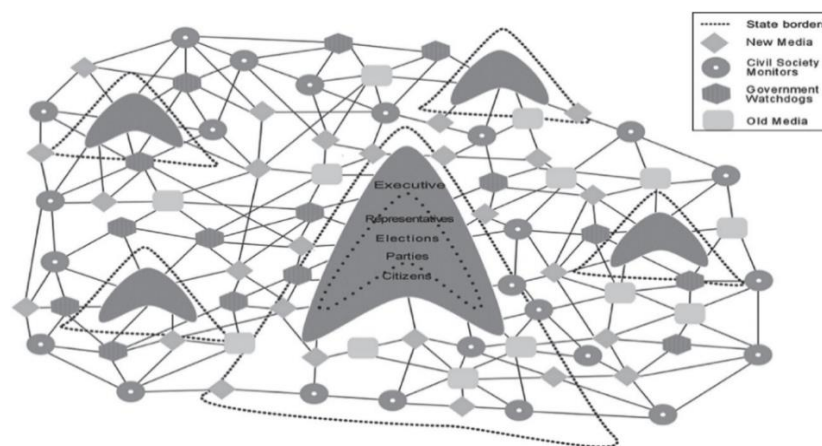
Importantly unlike previous eras characterized by vertical models of information, public opinion and political participation through opinion leaders, journalism, elections and political parties, new online participants incorporate novel horizontal and less constrained political engagements. Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen (2010: 75), discuss that the disruptive effects of internet connection technologies have altered previous arguments regarding one-to-many logic of radios and televisions towards a new dynamic of many-to-many. They explain that this has further exposed power to greater public scrutiny where citizens part-take in rebellion and challenge authority. Indifferent from the traditional press, the authors argue that any citizen with access to internet and a cell phone regardless of living standards or nationality can be given a voice and the power to effect change. Hence, it can be argued that new internet online digital media technologies and communicative abundance have enabled and propelled the public monitoring of power as a new political dynamic.

Keane (2018: 106-113), redefines democracy through the rapid growth of many different kinds of extra parliamentary, power scrutinizing bodies and mechanisms propelled by communicative abundance that flank elections called 'monitory democracy'. These bodies and mechanisms compliment conventional power checking institutions providing the public extra viewpoints and better information about the operations of

various governmental bodies while also assisting in strengthening the diversity and influence of citizen voices and choices and monitoring the misuse of power. Keane (2009: 773), further argues that this is particularly important within the current internet and technological age since elections alone are not enough to monitor power. For instance, the author contends that bolshevism, fascism, Nazism and military imperialism, were all twisted mutations of democracy where leaders of these eras acknowledged that “the people” were entitled to mount the stage of history. Keane points out that the destructive effects of these periods proved that protection and obedience formulas were unworkable and that rulers could no longer be trusted to rule.

Depicted in Figure 2-5, Keane describes this communicative abundance and power monitoring dynamic within the current era as represented by horizontal and cross-cutting communicative networks. Through these new webs comprised of different actors and institutions linked together by communicative abundance they are positioned to better monitor power publicly.

Figure 2-5: Communicative Abundance



Source: Keane. (2018: 112).

Political Effects of Communicative Abundance on Power Perceptions and Political Participation

According to Keane (2018: 147-179), central to the argument of communicative abundance and monitory democracy have been four important political effects on power perceptions and political participation. Firstly, Keane discusses the ‘democratization of information’ marked by cheap and easy methods of information storage that are digitally reproducible. As a result, Keane argues that this has significantly widened access to information online that were at one point exclusively available to a restricted circle of users. This new phenomenon has importantly dismantled information privileges by the

elites. For example, matters that have long plagued traditional media sources in communicating information such as geography, distance, cost and time have been vastly reduced causing some to argue these improvements as historic global levellers.⁵ In addition, a vast number of citizens similarly have the potential to use these materials online. Moreover, citizens are able to potentially assemble scattered and disparate materials that were never previously available, formatting them as new data sets then making them publicly available to others through entirely new pathways online. As a result, new information that were previously controlled by traditional media, opinion leaders and governments are simply able to bypass these conventional channels.

Secondly, communicative abundance has instigated differences between citizens and their representatives regarding the definition, ethical and political significance between private and public divisions. Public exposure is primarily focused on information that at one point considered to be private and that the realm of 'private' increasingly become a contested concern causing backlashes from the powerful in defence of the private. Due to communicative abundance, divisions between public and private information increasingly become sources of legal, political and ethical debate and controversies concerning the private have a long-term positive effect.

Keane (2018: 151), contends that citizens are able to discern that what may be personal can also be political and that the realm of private once hidden and kept secret are deeply entrenched in fields of power. Furthermore, citizens increasingly learn that there are instances where publicity directed at private action are necessary and justified. For example, in April 2016, 11.5 million files were leaked to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists regarding the world's fourth biggest law firm Mossack Fonseca exposing numerous ways where the rich including a number of national leaders and Prime Ministers exploited secretive offshore tax regimes (Harding, 2016). Culminating eventually into what became the 'Panama Papers', journalists from different countries through communicative abundance were able to work together to expose secret rackets which resulted in the resignation and embarrassment of a few prominent Prime Ministers (Evans, 2016). Put differently, communicative abundance has greatly enabled the exposure of abuses of power therefore revealing deep ambiguities regarding private and public distinctions of power.

Thirdly, Keane (2018: 158-159) describes the phenomenon of 'the new muckraking' where increasing cases of disputes between private and public divisions ultimately cause citizens as well as journalists to bombard power holders with criticism, publicity and public exposure. Keane goes on to argue that in recent decades, although citizens strongly identify with democratic ideals nevertheless have grown distrustful and angry of

⁵ See: Thomas L. Friedman. *"The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty First Century"*. 2005.

politicians, governing institutions and leaders in the public sector. These patterns of public dissatisfaction, Keane posits has much to do with the practice of muckraking under conditions of communicative abundance. Comparatively less constrained by institutional ideals, reputations and censorship, ordinary citizens have integrated new monitory responsibilities, agitated by the constant exposure and reporting of abuses of power.

Keane (2018: 165), contends that citizens within communicative abundance have the power to speak their own voices, set the agenda and tear down hierarchies of power. An important case in point is the 15M Movement in Spain of May 2011 (Feenstra et al., 2017; Feenstra and Keane, 2014). Ramon Feenstra, Simon Tormey, Andreu Casero-Ripolles and John Keane (2017: 41), argue that this movement was able to use a wide range of social media platforms to modify the media's role and political agenda, add to the plurality of points of view, promote transparency and denounce those responsible for the political and economic crises in Spain. Moreover, activists were also able to successfully organize street protests through the use of social media which eventually lead to demonstrations, occupation of public squares, stopping evictions, boycotts, popular legislative initiatives and the creation of new political parties.

Lastly, Keane (2018: 170-171) explains that unelected representatives in the era of communicative abundance increase in importance even to the point where their levels of support from citizens cast shadows over the legitimacy and viability of elected representatives and institutions as central organizing principles of democracy. These individuals, groups and associations are publicly perceived as champions of public causes and values where their power is derived from spheres outside the boundaries of electoral politics. Keane (2008: 30-32), discusses that often elected representatives lose favour from citizens and under conditions of communicative abundance, unelected representatives often attract greater media and public support. These unelected representatives are often thought to stand for public causes and thus carve out portions of public constituency and support that are often at odds with politicians and governing institutions such as political parties. Usually media savvy, unelected representatives similarly win public support and respect through their various use of media especially internet online digital media.

This thesis attempts to test Keane's theory of communicative abundance and whether it has nurtured a culture of public monitoring of power as a new political dynamic in PNG politics. This is particularly important since over the past two decades, PNG has experienced significant improvements regarding internet media services and a sudden influx of new online media devices that have arguably dwarfed the influence of traditional mass media. Thus, PNG professes an ideal test case in assessing the impact of Keane's argument. It examines the impact of increasing levels of internet access and new online digital media news platforms on power perceptions and political participation to find out

whether they have instigated disputes among citizens concerning power centres in the current digital age. Moreover, it explores whether these improvements have similarly assisted in uniting citizens to participate outside traditional power checking institutions like elections to monitor the abuse of power and if these actions have had any effects. Given the limited number of literatures on new internet digital media in PNG, it should also be explored how these improvements may provide new insights in explaining transformations in power perceptions and political participation within the contemporary era in PNG Politics.

To analyse this, chapter 3 first presents a background of traditional media sources within PNG after independence, their intended functions and responsibilities towards journalism and state-building.

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Chapter 3

Traditional Media in PNG

Introduction

Understanding just how internet digital media is transforming PNG Politics, equally requires insights into the origins and functions of traditional media outlets and journalism before its introduction in the pre-2007 era. In chapter 3, the thesis investigates these areas, assessing the different rationales of traditional media and their outlook towards journalism, state building, nationalism and communication.

The chapter firstly explores some of the issues concerning communication after independence and their impact on citizens to politically and socially organize, collectively. In addition, this sub-section discusses some of the consequences of the state's ad hoc communication policy and how it dictated traditional media objectives and direction after independence. Secondly, the chapter examines a variety of traditional media sources established before and after independence, issues of ownership, objectives, accessibility and reach throughout the country. Furthermore, this sub-section investigates traditional media experiments by both state and commercial interests in an attempt to create vivid and abstract perceptions of state-hood and nationalism among PNG citizens. Thirdly, the chapter looks at the role and culture of journalists and journalism practices and their complementary state functions to communicate information and educate citizens about the country's new state-hood and nation-hood status. Moreover, this sub-section observes matters concerning participation and the ability of journalists regarding the agenda setting process. Lastly, the chapter discusses the broader implications of traditional media in PNG. By doing so, it refutes arguments advanced by scholars concerning cultural and ethnic heterogeneity coupled by geography as primary explanations hindering perceptions of statehood, nationalism and the recognition of legitimate and authoritative institutions outside traditional sets. In retrospect, it argues that state media and journalistic policy direction, focused towards state-building and nationalism, paradoxically exacerbated divisions among citizens over time.

Communication in PNG after Independence

Contrasting other non-Western democracies that transitioned to independence resulting from nationalist movements, war and bloodshed with its former colonizers during the third wave, PNG's experience was one marked by a peaceful and relatively guided process. However, significant issues concerning illiteracy, topography and cultural

heterogeneity emerged after independence, creating substantial problems for communicating government information and services to many remote regions of the country. These concerns equally created substantial problems that similarly threatened national unity. Henry Okole (2005: 188), in assessing challenges experienced by PNG as an emerging state, expounds on the argument that due to the country's highly fragmented population who shared very little commonality, nationalism was quickly replaced by internal micro-nationalist movements, regionalism and separatist movements.

A number of studies show how different groups from different regions within PNG, soon after independence, opted to breakaway due to concerns regarding ethnicity, economic development and self-determination (Ghai and Regan, 1992; May, 1982; Premdas, 1977). Famous among these groups was the Bougainville secessionist movement for autonomy that began in the 1960s and continued up until the 1990s. In detailing some of the social aspects and origins of the Bougainville rebellion, Collin Filler (1990) discusses a number of grievances. These, Filler observes, included feelings of neglect by the colonial and later PNG government, imposition of the country's biggest copper mine in 1972 without the wishes of the people, ethnic loyalties and landowner issues. Other arguments concern Bougainvillian ill feelings directed at the newly formed PNG government that the copper mine had largely benefited the PNG administration and country while creating both social and environmental breakdown in Bougainville (Crocombe, 1968; Griffin, 1982; Regan and Griffin, 2005). It is estimated that within the seventeen years of its operation, production at the Bougainville copper mine reached a value of 5.2 billion Kina (48,703,200.00 U.S. Dollars) in revenue which represented approximately forty-four percent of the country's export over this period.¹

Communication in PNG after independence was equally challenging due to the country's rugged and impenetrable topography. Coupled with the state's inadequate and inefficient infrastructure and transport services, these greatly hindered communication, causing suspicion between and among various ethnic groups as well as feelings of mistrust towards the state, preventing any political associations outside traditional sets (Amarshi et al., 1979; May, 1982; Okole, 2005; Rooney et al., 2004). These sheer array of diversity among the different people and regions created huge potential risks of disruption following Independence. Suzanna Layton (1992: 299-300) for instance, observes how experiences with the Bougainville rebellion against the Copper Mine within the province, had propelled the new PNG government to promptly contain the issue due to fears of factionalism spreading. Adding on, Layton, further describes just how the media was to play a significant role in this process.

¹ History of Panguna Mine. (2020). Bougainville Copper Limited Webpage. Retrieved on 5 May, 2020 from <http://www.bcl.com.pg/history-panguna-mine/>

Two years after Independence, 1978, the country's Office of Information set out to reformulate PNG's new but relatively ad hoc communication policy, largely focused on promoting national unity, publicizing government initiatives and maintaining state control (Layton, 1992: 299). However, it wasn't until mid-1993, that the government introduced a National Information and Communication Policy and a functioning Department of Information and Communication, to take charge of media information and communications within PNG (Philpott, 1993). Strangely, the state's uninterested attention to create functioning media institutions stemmed from the results of a number of state inquiry reports into traditional media. Evidently telling among these reports was the "*Kalo Report*", a state inquiry review into broadcasting which revealed a variety of harmful results concerning TV program content on public opinion, warning the government against the erosion of local cultures and the viewing of violent and obscene foreign programs (Robie, 1998: 64-69).

Malcolm Philpott (1993: 57-62), by discussing the development of PNG's 1993 National Communication Policy, outlines how this resulted from a five-day national communication policy seminar conducted in Port Moresby in January, 1993. Philpott, quoting the Department of Secretary - Lindsay Lailai, points out that the policy's primary theme was for the state through traditional mass media provide effective communication reflecting nation building, assist in informing the masses and how they can benefit from information. As a result, PNG's 1993 National Communication Policy explicitly reflected and legitimately permitted state control and vetting of information, promoting national and development objectives and empowering the masses. For instance, policy extracts regarding '*content*' and '*ownership*' respectively specify that the power of the media to influence is largely based on its content. Regarding the former, priority must be given to encouraging Papua New Guinea cultures, Christian values and promoting national aspirations amid development objectives (Evens, 2001). Concerning the latter, because the various forms of media can have such a powerful influence and impact on people, national sovereignty and cultural autonomy are at stake. For this reason, it is important that Papua New Guineans have effective control over all types of media at every level - local, regional and national (ibid).

Over the years, researchers have attempted to assess the impacts of traditional mass media and whether they have been effective in achieving some of its objectives. For example, Dick Rooney, Evangelia Papoutsaki and Kevin Pamba (2004) argue how issues of low literacy, a struggling post-economy coupled with its vast cultural diversity and geography had limited the establishment and consolidation of the mass media in PNG following independence.

As is important in assessing media policy objectives, specific traditional mass media communication outlets should also be analysed independently. This is what the next section discusses in more detail.

Traditional Media in the Post-Independence Era

This section investigates a variety of media outlets established before and after independence in PNG. In particular, it explores three of the country's primary media communication platforms – radios, television and newspapers. By doing so, this section moreover, discusses areas concerning ownership, program content, access and reliability in PNG within PNG's post-independence era.

Radio

Prior to independence, radio broadcast was already in use to communicate information by the Australian administration in PNG. This legacy proved to be critical since it was to have consequential impacts on the function of radios after independence. In her study analysing the role of media in transition democracies, Katrin Voltmer (2013) describes the role of the media as being largely influenced and shaped by roles under previous regime and again reshaped and transformed but nevertheless carrying on similar elements of logic under the new regime. Voltmer's argument reflected media functions for transitional democracies including PNG, since many of the media's pre-existing logic continued during the country's post-independence era.

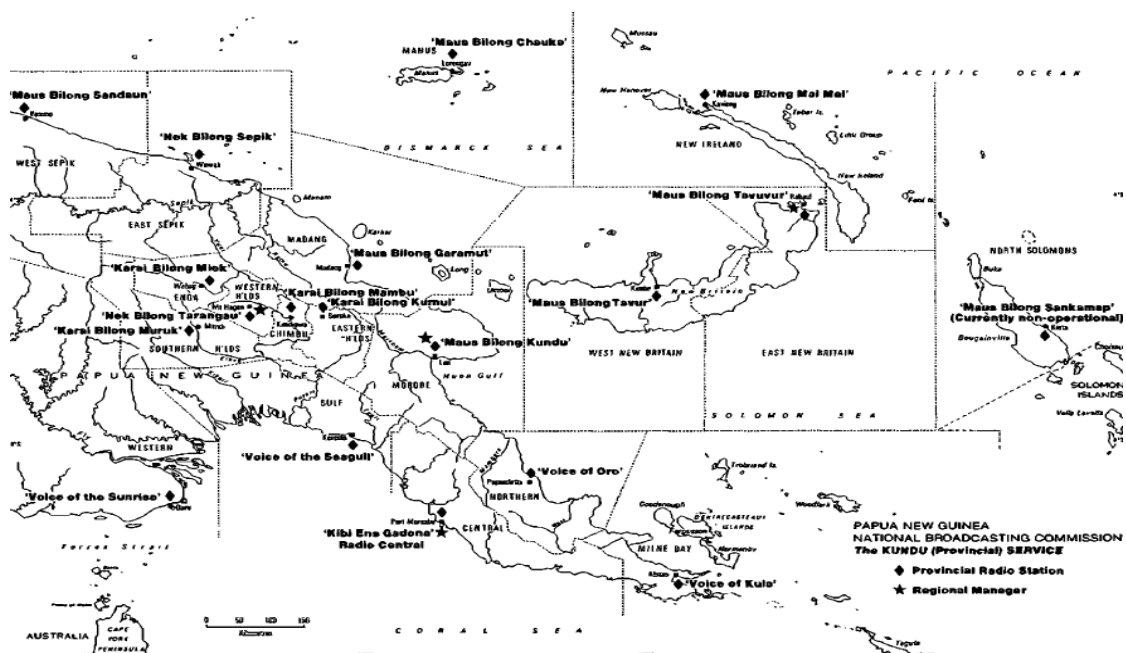
By assessing traditional mass media program content and its relevance to PNG after independence, Musawe Sinebare (1997: 34) clarifies how radios were left over from the colonial administration. Operationally based in the capital city, Port Moresby, Sinebare, discusses how radios were mostly used to disseminate and communicate information by the Australian Administration to its remote administrative bases. Following independence, the author concludes by observing how these radio functions were simply transferred to the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the country's first and biggest state-owned radio broadcasting station.

Information from NBC's radio broadcast quickly became the most effective and dominant transmission of state information and education. Overall, NBC served two important state functions. Firstly, it became the country's primary information communicating medium to the masses. For instance, Malcolm Philpott (1993: 58) quoting PNG Secretary of Communications, Lindsay Lailai, during the 1993 National Communication Policy Seminar in Port Moresby, signalled radio broadcast as the only significant communicative medium, effective for development. The country's diversity and heterogeneity made

radios the preferable means of communicating information from alternative sources, during PNG's initial post-independence years. Sorariba Nash (1995: 36-37), outlines some of the reasons why radios increasingly became the preferable option, since given the country's vast diversity of spoken languages, radio stations could broadcast information in different languages to different people. In addition, Sorariba explains how radios were comparatively cheaper than newspapers over time. Moreover, the author credits radios over substitute mediums since information from radio stations could be received on real time as it is being broadcasted. This was especially important for people located within the more interior regions of the country and distant islands. Secondly, NBC served as a state commercial radio beginning in 1982 selling airtime (Nash, 1995: 42).

Continuous government emphasis on radio broadcast eventually resulted in the creation of NBC provincial and regional stations throughout most of the country. By 1992, NBC had fully functioning radio stations set up in all nineteen provinces throughout PNG, whereby all citizens could access NBC's radio broadcast signal (Philpott, 1992). Figure 3-1, shows NBC's vast provincial and regional broadcasting stations established throughout the country by 1992.

Figure 3-1: NBC Provincial and Regional Broadcast Stations in PNG, 1992



Source: Philpott. (1992: 73)

From the date of its establishment until 1994, the state had full control over the management and operation of NBC, likewise monopolizing the radio market. Symbolic of a powerful past colonial relic of information and mass communication, coalition-

governments formed in the post-independence era have often perceived NBC as an influential messaging medium in reaching out to communities and have equally regarded it as a messenger of those in authority and power. Consequently, NBC information and program content disseminated were, at most times, scrutinized and even suppressed by the state over issues concerning state goals and objectives, particularly involving national identity and unity.

NBC's exclusive reliance on state budgetary funding, Sean Dorney (2000: 243) explains, also meant that the radio station was most vulnerable, compared to other media outlets, to state pressure. For example, Suzanna Layton (1992) reviews how the NBC had been continuously suppressed by the state and military in reporting sensitive issues regarding grievances faced by Bougainville landowners concerning the operations of the Bougainville copper mine. In other studies, Wally Hiambohn (1995: 191-197) similarly detail how the NBC was banned in 1994 from covering a premiers' conference held in Port Moresby to discuss matters relating to the decentralization of state power and threats of secession by representatives from different regions of PNG.

Matters relating to information vetting and censorship have not entirely been the only issues affecting NBC. Since its establishment, citizens have also criticized NBC for being too concerned with national and urban issues while neglecting local and rural concerns. This has encouraged churches to take on a greater and active role in radio broadcasting while also integrating religious teachings and messages into their programs. Joys Eggins (2007: 105-112), in her study analysing the support of church-run radio broadcasting stations contributing to community development in PNG, observes how citizens perceive and assess these radio stations. The study indicated that 91 percent of the rural citizens interviewed listened to church-run radio broadcasting stations and equally agreed that they communicated information relating to local concerns. However, results similarly indicated that respondents failed to make mention of a collective approach in resolving issues faced within their communities.

After 1994, a number of other privately owned and operated radio stations have been established and begun broadcasting however, most of them mainly target commercial market areas like urban cities. For instance, David Robie (2004: 62-63) discuss how new private radio station *Nau FM*, established in 1994 and owned by Communications Fiji Ltd, largely targeted urban youths and expatriates within urban cities in PNG.

Television

Distinct from radio broadcast, televisions (TV) services, on the other hand, were established after independence. Beginning with cable and eventually broadcast, TV services were mainly set up for commercial and private purposes. The country's single

TV station, EM-TV, previously owned by Australian Media company, National Nine Network, and later bought off by PNG state media subsidiary, Media Nugini, was formally granted its broadcasting licence in 1985 and by 1987, officially started broadcasting its programs in Port Moresby (Wilson, 1993: 50). Julianne Stewart, Bruce Horsfield and Peter Cook (1993: 333), observe two primary reasons for the lucrative PNG market for TV services. Firstly, PNG's comparatively larger population distinct from other pacific nations and secondly, new technology made, PNG an ideal choice for television services for Australian and New Zealand entrepreneurs.

However, from the beginning, TVs have been a contentious subject of debate among citizens, churches, politicians and academics. An important theme among these concerns was that there were unclear and underdeveloped regulatory laws regulating TV program content. These had significant implications on TV program content and whether they served state objectives in educating and informing the population as well as promoting commercial, economic and social development. For instance, Robert Foster (1998: 58) offering insights into the policy origins of TV broadcast in PNG, observes that the opposition government in 1985 was strongly against the introduction of TV services due to its potential harm on local languages, cultural identity and heritage owing to unregulated foreign programs by external commercial interests.

Stewart, Horsfield and Cook (1993: 341) from the outset, argue that the decision to introduce TV services in PNG was influenced mostly by foreign TV companies rather than local public debate or government priorities. Helen Wilson (1993: 51-53), summarizing a special board of inquiry report – "*Kalo Report*", in 1987 indicated how the absence of external program regulation, technical support and indigenous program resulting from speedy government decisions to introduce TV broadcasting in PNG was a serious point of national concern. The author, based on the report, further revealed a lack of local broadcast and production content, adding that many of EM TV's substitute programs consistent with local content were through the advertisements of overseas consumer goods.

In 1983, Benedict Anderson published his seminal work *Imagined Communities*, which has since greatly influenced studies regarding the formation, spread and institutionalization of nationalism. In his book, Anderson (1983: 37-46) details advancements in capitalism, the successful Reformations owing to the spread and mass consumption of print media and the powerful convergence of vernaculars that dismantled the diversity of human language as primary catalysts to the origins of a national consciousness. These determinants, Anderson observes, when morphed over time, illuminated new perceptions of an imagined community and eventually carved out conceptions for the modern nation. Anderson's argument, to some extent, reflect how

state sanctioned TV advertisements and commercial interests explored avenues in creating abstract perceptions of state-hood and nationalism among PNG citizens.

Building from Anderson's argument, Robert Foster (1999; 2002) attempted to incorporate commodity consumption as a medium to nation making. This is particularly important for cases such as that of PNG which constituted a weak state. In his study, Foster assesses how commodities such as Coke and Pepsi, in their marketing and consumption in PNG, through TV advertisements, might or might not create images of a national community. Commercially constructed, Foster observes how Coke and Pepsi advertisement's incorporated images of PNG's diverse culture to legitimate their commercial stance by sponsoring national events such as cultural shows. Figure 3-2 and 3-3, show examples of national advertisements by Pepsi and Coke incorporating these diversities.

Figure 3-2: Advertisement for Pepsi-Cola, 1995. *Hiri Moale Festival 1995, Official Program*



Source: Foster. (1999: 274)

Figure 3-3: Advertisement of Coca-Cola, 1992. *Port Moresby Show 1992, Official Program*



Source: Ibid. (1999: 276)

Foster, evaluates how these mass advertisements and consumption of Pepsi and Coke strived to unite both the old local traditions and global modern consumption of these commodities that cross-cut PNG's rich diversity as a unifying theme in creating an imagined community. Pepsi and Coke, Foster observes, symbolize the state while mass consumption advertisement and consumption by PNG's diverse population acted as the unifying and rallying medium in conjuring national perceptions.

Strangely, with few reservations, Foster, explains how rather than creating collective identities from these collective images and practices, citizens merely perceived themselves as individual national members of PNG rather than possessing any loyal or civic identity. The practice of mass advertisement and consumption, Foster alludes, simply created avenues for citizens to participate in both sub-national and international identities concurrently, rendering national identity a psychological conditional choice rather than a social unifying fact.

On the other hand, a few researchers have attempted to evaluate practical TV functions and their impacts by analysing program content broadcasted by EM TV and their bearing on public perceptions. For example, Amos Thomas (1994: 9-11) examining EM TV's program content from August 1990 to February 1991, discovered that many of its content were tailored for a much more Western audience, presumably the Australians, which was where most of these programs originated, both for entertainment and commercial. Table 3-1, illustrate these program contents and the percentage of viewing time by PNG viewers.

Table 3-1: EM TV Program Content and Percentage of Viewing Time, 1990–1991

EMTV Programming By Programme Category 1990/91								
<i>Programme category</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Av. hrs per week</i>	<i>% of total Viewing Time</i>
SitCom/Soap	11.0	11.0	14.0	14.5	14.0	14.0	13.1	21.5
Crime/Western	14.0	12.0	13.0	13.5	14.0	9.5	12.7	20.8
Children/Cartoons	12.5	13.5	12.0	8.5	11.0	11.0	11.4	18.8
Movie, Drama, etc	8.5	11.0	9.0	6.5	7.5	11.0	8.9	14.7
News/Magazine	7.0	4.0	10.0	6.5	10.0	13.5	8.5	14.0
Sports	3.0	4.0	3.5	0.5	0.5	2.5	2.3	3.8
Gameshows/Music	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.5	1.8	3.0
Documentary/Education	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	2.5
Religion	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.6	1.0
Total	59.5	59.5	64.5	56.5	59.5	65.5	60.8	100.0

Source: Thomas. (1994: 10)

In addition, Thomas, equally identified programs from Western and other Asian countries being televised more than local program content. Table 3-2, show the different countries where many of these programs originate from and the percentage of viewing time by local PNG watches.

Table 3-2: Country Origins of EM TV Program Content and Percentage of Viewing Time

EMTV Programming by Country of Origin 1990/91								
<i>Country of origin</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Av. hrs per week</i>	<i>% of total Viewing Time</i>
USA	39.0	35.5	30.0	33.0	30.5	29.5	32.9	54.1
Australia	7.5	9.0	24.5	13.5	14.5	21.0	15.0	24.7
Britain	2.5	3.5	2.0	0.0	3.5	0.0	1.9	3.2
International	1.0	2.0	0.0	2.5	1.0	3.0	1.6	2.6
Papua New Guinea	9.5	9.5	8.0	7.5	10.0	12.0	9.4	15.5
Totals	59.5	59.5	64.5	56.5	59.5	65.5	60.8	100.0

Source: Ibid. (1994: 11)

David Robie (1995: 25), similarly argue that apart from a few local program content, seventy-five percent of EM TV's program content were from foreign television sources. Adding on, Robie, claims how often, these programs were overwhelming and out of character, offering little relationship with the country's lifestyle and culture.

More recent studies similarly indicate little improvement. Dick Rooney, Evangelia Papoutsaki and Kevin Pamba (2004) conducted a content analysis whereby fifteen editions from EM TV's news programs were analysed from February 15 - 19, 2004. Their analysis indicated how news sources mainly rely on government, police and emergency services as well as other organized events and press statements. Table 3-3, illustrate the primary sources of news items that were used during EM TV's news programs.

Table 3-3: EM TV News Content Analysis

Main source of news item	Frequency (n = 90)	Percentage of total
Parliament or Government	43	47.7
Media Conferences	10	11.1
Emergency Services	10	11.1
Law Courts	2	2.2
Public Event	2	2.2
Foreign Stories	11	12.2
Others	12	13.3

Source: Rooney, Papoutsaki and Pamba. (2003)

Results from the study indicate very little opportunity for anyone else to participate and to be heard or represented through EM TV's news programs. This was largely due to the state's heavy-handed domination in news agendas. In other studies, Rooney (2004), surveying EM TV's program content, similarly pointed out how even though the quantity of PNG development program content has improved, the vast majority of program content nevertheless, focus on entertainment and information with little reference to the country. Table 3-4, indicate these results from surveying EM TV news program in March, 2004.

Table 3-4: Time allocated by program type

Type of programs	Number of hours broadcast (programs of PNG origin)	Number of hours broadcast (programs of non-PNG origin)	% of total programs with PNG origin	% of total programs with origin from other countries
Development	80.5	0	52.10	0
Entertainment	26	192	16.82	49.58
Information	42	102	27.18	26.33
Others	0	48	0	12.39
Sport	6	45.25	3.88	11.68
TOTAL	154.5	387.25	100	100

Source: Rooney. (2004. 31)

With very little emphasis from the state to regulate EM TV's program content, coupled by an absence of public opinion from the masses, it could be argued that TV programs poorly represented the population and were rather imported institutions. Joseph Anyanwu (1995: 52), by qualitatively assessing TV programs in PNG and their impact on traditional cultures discusses that since most TV programs were foreign and alien to PNG's own traditional system, rather than educating and informing, they have instead become fantasy mediums of entertainment and amusement.

Newspapers

Newspaper firms were already established and publishing print news prior to independence however, circulation and readership were mostly limited within urban centres particularly Port Moresby. All the major dailies were and are still exclusively owned by foreign cooperation and churches. Among the first newspapers was the weekly *Wantok* newspaper. This daily began in 1962 by late Catholic Father Frank Milalic, in Wewak, a province located outside the capital, Port Moresby (Cass, 2011: 216). The newspaper is owned by a consortium of mainstream Christian churches and unlike other newspapers, publishes its content in *Tok Pisin* - a lingua franca spoken in PNG.² From its beginning, *Wantok* had strived to be a nationalistic and pro-active partner in nation building, reporting issues covering a wide range of political, social and religious issues while also encouraging readership and promoting literacy. However, in an interview with its founder, Philip Cass (2011: 208-224) describes how attempts to sell copies in bulk, its usage for classroom learning and circulation in other regions of the country had failed in the late 1970s. This, the author explains, was due to doubtful religious perceptions, the state's focus on English as the standard language in schools and objection by citizens who spoke their own languages. However, over time *Wantok* has gradually been accepted as a mainstream weekly newspaper. Circulation remains low, totalling 4,600 copies per week.

Initially, the country's biggest newspaper, *Post Courier*, was established in 1969 and is owned by South Pacific Media Ltd, a subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch's, Herald and Weekly Times (Robie, 1995: 21-22). Other newspapers included the *Nuigini Nius*, owned by expatriate businessman, Dennis Bauchanan, which closed in 1990 (Layton, 1992: 301). In November, 1993, PNG's Prime Minister, Pias Wingti, as part of its "Look North Foreign Policy", focused towards creating better relations with the Asian region, officially launched the *National* newspaper (Robie, 1994: 47). The *National* is solely owned by a subsidiary of former Malaysian Senator Datuk Tiong - *Rimbunan Hijau* (RH), which also happens to be the country's single biggest forest development and logging

² Word Publishing Company Limited. (2020). Wantok Niuspepa Bilong Umi ol Papua Nuigini Stret. Retrieved on 11 June 2020 from <http://wantokniuspepa.com/index.php/about-us>

industry. Since 2007, newspaper circulation from the *National* had surpassed *Post Courier* and is currently the biggest source of daily news with a circulation averaging 66,000 compared to the latter of 30,000 (Andy Ng quoted in Gabriel and Wood, 2015: 326).

Politicians including former Prime Ministers have refused to adhere to international pressure against the *National's* supposed destruction to the country's forests and issues of transparency, arguing its substantial contribution to the local economy.³ State Ministers have similarly supported the company against international observers such as Greenpeace by disproving claims of dubious and illegal forestry license approvals in full page reports in the *Post Courier* and *National*.⁴ However, other opponents contend that the state had merely aligned itself solely to commercial interests. For instance, David Robie (1994: 52) argues how critics within both the media and opposition have accused *Post Courier* as being too close to the government and the powerful timber industry lobby, dominated by the Malaysians, to be considered truly independent. In other studies, Jennifer Gabriel and Michael Wood (2015) in their article analysing RH's influence in the forestry sector, detail some of these critics against the forestry firm. They describe how as the company established itself in PNG, it had equally created alliances with politicians and even bribes to lobby controversial forestry laws. Moreover, they explain how through its newspaper firm, *Post Courier*, RH was able to defend itself against NGOs while legally attacking its critics.

Apart from private commercial alliances, newspapers also heavily depended particularly on government revenue since eighty percent of their advertising space were taken up by state departments and agencies (Solomon, 1995: 119). This has, at times, limited newspapers on reporting sensitive state issues undermining its freedom to report fairly.

Journalism in the Post-Independence Era

This section explores the logic and role of journalists and journalism in the post-independence era. In doing so, it discusses themes regarding journalistic practices, culture, freedom from state intimidation and censorship and the role of journalists in the agenda setting process.

Traditional mass media, incorporating journalism, in many democracies have most often been normatively defined by integrating Western ideals and practices such as free and

³ They're our forests, says PNG. (2003, October 27). *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved on 24 May 2020 from <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/theyre-our-forests-says-png-20031027-gdhnvk.html>

⁴ PNG minister defends Malaysian logging firm. (2004, February 23). *ABC News*. Retrieved 24 May 2020 from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2004-02-23/png-minister-defends-malaysian-logging-firm/140352>

fair, impartiality, watchdog, facticity, transparency and accountability (Christians et al., 2009; Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009; Schudson, 2008). However, although journalism in developing countries like PNG share common traditions with those in the West, there are marked and important differences.

Beginning in the 1960s and 70s, a new form of journalism began to emerge in response to the urgent need for social, economic and political development among transitional democracies in Asia, Africa and Latin America (Domatob and Hall, 1983; Musa and Domatob, 2007; Richstad, 2000). Coined by Alan Chalkey (1968) as “*development journalism*”, journalists were to play a major role in assisting the state promote development and modernization agendas. In stark contrast to its Western counterpart, Richard Shafer (1998: 42) defines development journalism as “the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible social equality and the larger fulfilment of the human potential”. Adding on, Brian Massey and Li-jing Chang (2002) present development journalism as a collaborative relationship between the media and government as national development partners. Still, Jim Richstad (2000: 279) characterizes development journalism as a shift in development focus to news of economic and social development while working constructively with the government in nation building.

Like many of these developing counties, David Robie (2005: 86) observes that journalists in PNG have equally been slow to grasp Western journalistic realities, adopting its principles. In differentiating journalism between the West and PNG’s, Robie points out how journalism in PNG often report information from an indigenous standpoint which are often at variance with those of the West. In PNG, the author contends that, an independent voice, language, culture and solidarity have become the primary mental of journalism. Robie (2013: 98-104) claims how developing countries like PNG also reflect either two types of journalism. Radical or revolutionary journalism – journalism seeking independence from colonial rule, and development journalism – as in the case of independent states. Since independence, the author argues how journalism’s primary focus in PNG has been that of the latter. Journalists worked largely in the communications field and have often been expected to assist during the nation-building process by upholding the new political system and assisting critics understand the new nation (Robie, 2008: 22).

In 2001, a comparative interview survey study involving forty-three journalists from Fiji and sixty-three journalists from PNG were carried out to assess the role of journalists and how they perceive the media and its role in both countries (Robie, 2005). Responses from PNG journalists reflected notions of development journalism mainly concerning the role of the media as a primary medium in nation-building and educating the masses. Based on

the survey, 73 percent of journalist respondents regarded their role as a watchdog for democracy, followed by an educator (52%), defender of truth (35%) and nation builder (33%). Diverging from more important Western normative journalistic functions, perceived roles including, agent of empowerment, the people's "voice"/mouthpiece, a critic of abuses and communicator of new ideas, received lower emphasis from journalists totalling are modest 30 percent and are mere 6 percent respectively. Table 3-5, illustrate these comparative responses by journalists from PNG, including those of Fiji as well.

Table 3-5: Journalists Media Role Perceptions in Fiji and Papua New Guinea

How Fiji, PNG journalists view their professional media role, 2001

<i>Perceived role*</i>	<i>Fiji</i> <i>N = 43</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>PNG</i> <i>n = 63</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i> <i>n = 106</i>	<i>%</i>
1. Watchdog of democracy	32	74%	46	73%	78	74%
2. Agent of empowerment	8	19%	19	30%	27	25%
3. Nation builder	15	35%	21	33%	36	34%
4. Defender of the truth	17	40%	22	35%	39	37%
5. Neutral, uninvolved reporter of facts	13	30%	16	25%	29	27%
6. An entertainer	5	12%	5	8%	10	9%
7. A critic of abuses	9	21%	4	6%	13	12%
8. An educator	18	42%	33	52%	51	48%
9. Communicator of new ideas	2	5%	4	6%	6	6%
10. The people's "voice"/mouthpiece	14	33%	19	30%	33	31%
11. Politicians using other means	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
12. No response	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%

Source: Robie. (2005: 90)

Even though a few researchers and institutions argue that the media in PNG has performed credibly, news issues of national concern have nevertheless been influenced either directly or indirectly by the state. Therefore, subjects of national interest reported by journalists that dictate the agenda setting process have largely been shaped and monitored by the state. This is particularly important since direct participation regarding traditional media was exclusively restricted to professional state and private journalists. These journalists fully controlled and dominated what the masses could read, listen and talk about (Deuze, 2005: 451).

Anti-government reporting was often suppressed over matters concerning stability and unity. This has at times, suppressed journalists in upholding their ethos of informing and reporting government corruption and scandals. For instance, Suzanna Layton (1992) documents how journalists and media from NBC, Post Courier and the National were pressured by the state to promote national unity, report state information and project state control during the initial stages of the country's bloodiest civil crises in Bougainville. Layton, discusses how issues of landowner disorder, river pollution and peaceful

demonstrations by Bougainvilleans had been ignored. Instead, Bougainville landowners were reported by both the Post Courier and National as criminals, sabotages and gangsters. Censorship and suppression to both domestic and international journalists, Layton explains, was demonstrated by denying access to information of state suppression by the PNG police and military forces against the landowners, banning foreign news reporters from travelling to Bougainville, state confiscation of tapes and the lack of in-depth reporting by journalists.

Lately, a majority of these issues have been voiced by senior journalists who claim that restrictions persist regarding traditional media freedom in the country. During the 2018 World Press Freedom Day, for example, Titi Gabi, a former senior journalist of EM TV attested that there was no media freedom and that the mass media had become merely public relations for the powerful.⁵ In quoting senior journalist Jean Morea, from the Post Courier, Himmat Shaligram (2019) explain this context in relation to the local cultural tradition of *“big man mentality”*. Discussed as a culture restricting the ability of journalists to challenge those in power or respectable figures in society, Shaligram contends how, this practice has often limited journalists in probing and reporting more in-depth news. On the other hand, Joe Kanekane (2003: 107-113) describing challenges when reporting corruption in newspapers in PNG, detail more structural and legal obstacles including contempt, threats, legal suites, reliability of information and compromise.

Results from Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) 2020 preliminary report regarding threats to media freedom revealed how threats on media freedom and reporting are often obvious during significant national events and that often, objective reporting is every so often, hampered by political interference.⁶ To assess the different viewpoints of numerous print media in PNG, TIPNG conducted a content analysis of various newspaper sources to evaluate concerns of bias on reporting governance issues in 2017. This was in accordance with significant national events that included the 2017 National Elections, politics, law and order and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders’ Summit.

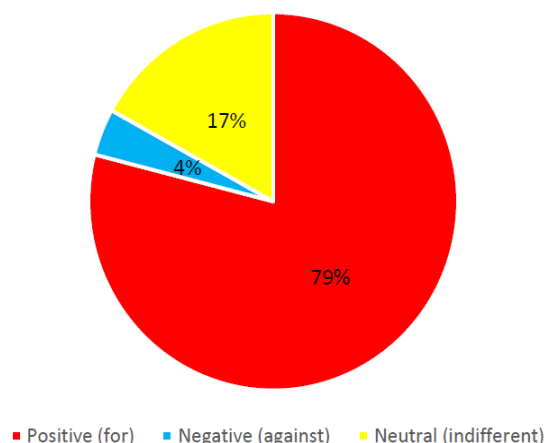
Results related to one of the questions asked correlating to stories from a positive, negative or neutral standpoint, overwhelmingly expressed extensive support, reflecting an immense positive assessment of the Prime Minister, Peter O’Neil, in 2017. Figure 3-4,

⁵ Pacific Media Watch. (2018, May 3). Journalists work ‘in fear’ in PNG, says media freedom advocate. Retrieved on 23 May 2020 from <https://asiapacificreport.nz/2018/05/03/journalists-work-in-fear-in-png-says-media-freedom-advocate/>

⁶ Transparency International Papua New Guinea. (2020, May 3). TIPNG Media Trends Report Preliminary Statement. Retrieved on 23 May 2020 from <https://www.transparencypng.org.pg/tipng-media-trends-report-preliminary-statement/>

depicts these results where newspapers in PNG indicated a 79 percent support and positive view of the Prime Minister in comparative contrast to a negative and neutral assessment of 4 percent and 17 percent respectively.

Figure 3-4: TIPNG Preliminary Findings from Media Reports



Source: Transparency International Papua New Guinea. (2020, May 3). ‘TIPNG Media Trends Report Preliminary Statement’.

Webpage <https://www.transparencypng.org.pg/tipng-media-trends-report-preliminary-statement/>

As a result, journalists who have often attempted to challenge these culture and narrative have repeatedly ended up either being side-lined, suspended or fired from employment. In 2013, for instance, Reporters Without Borders (RWB) reported and condemned PNG Prime Minister, Peter O’Neil, for relieving and legally summoning at least five respected journalists from the NBC.⁷ This resulted from the Prime Minister’s objection regarding an NBC news coverage of a disputable case allegedly involving the government’s controversial nationalizing of *Ok Tedi* gold mine.

However, famous among these cases was that involving, Scott Waide, one of the country’s long time serving and best journalist’s with EM TV. In a report by Blessen Tom (2018) the author disclosed how Waide had been suspended for broadcasting a New Zealand news piece that criticized the government for spending on forty Maserati luxury

⁷ Reporters Without Borders. (2013, November 8). Three TV journalists sidelined for criticizing Prime Minister. Retrieved on 3 June 2020 from <https://rsf.org/en/news/three-tv-journalists-sidelined-criticizing-prime-minister>. Also See, Pacific Media Watch. (2013, November 3). Journalists fired for critical reporting about Prime Minister. Retrieved 4 June 2020 from <http://pacific.scoop.co.nz/2013/11/papua-new-guinean-journalists-fired-for-critical-reporting-about-prime-minister/>

Sedans for the APAC in 2017. Waide's suspension was later leaked through Social media networks, igniting a firestorm of protests which eventually led to his reinstatement. In other reports, Vincent Moses (2018) revealed how EM TV had no choice but to suspend Waide since the organization was state owned and that sensitive reporting would be questioned, queried and even acted upon. Moses, further observes that EM TV was not at fault since it only acted upon instructions from the government.

Discussion and Conclusion

Primary explanations describing PNG's limiting conceptions of nation unity, state-hood and nationalism, as previously alluded to, have often been attributed to cultural heterogeneity, topography, transport infrastructure and illiteracy. This has equally hindered the recognition of legitimate and authoritative institutions such as the PNG state, as citizens form micro opposing cultural and traditional group sets and identities. Even though these arguments seem valid, a closer look into the issue at stake proves that there are deeper clarifications than those that merely meet the eye. Following independence, state media policy was to play a significant role in overcoming most of the issues mentioned above by directing state information, TV program content, news sources and journalistic practices and culture. However, in the state's pursuit in directing media policy towards national unity and state building, this section argues that it has paradoxically exacerbated divisions among its citizens.

Radio broadcast, as discussed previously became the most effective medium of information, however this was somewhat one-sided since information was heavily slanted largely in favour of the state. Moreover, due to its basic features, state information relayed were somewhat biased since, there was very little feedback concerning state information and its impact on the different communities. Overall, state information broadcasted throughout the country by NBC was equally presumed to be a one-size-fit-all which was, to some extent, inconsistent with the sheer diversity among the different communities. Even though important, this inconsistency was given less attention by the government since it regarded NBC as a mere information machinery without taking any stock of its impact on the vastly different communities. As different communities assessed state information by radio broadcast, based off their own communal interests, this contributed to resenting perceptions of uneven developmental aspirations between and among the different people and communities.

In contrast, TV programs and newspapers both shared are similar commercial interest. On the one hand, even though commercial TV programs attempted to create a sense of nationhood among consumers, across a variety of cultures, many of EM TV's program content nevertheless remained completely irrelevant and alien to many of PNG's

population. Somewhat, caught between the old traditional cultures and modernity, commercial nationalism became a rather ambiguous and contested concept which further blurred the lines of state perceptions and national unity. It is no wonder, that the mass consumption of TV commercials created individual perceptions of national members rather than collective identities, since these practices were foreign and out of touch with collective cultural practices among different traditional groups. On the other hand, newspapers were more of a commercial alliance pact between the government and commercial interests. Clothed by the government as domestic employment generating institutions, newspaper firms have mainly served the interest of government officials and politicians over educating PNG citizens and defending the truth. Ironically, these two qualities were what, journalists in PNG presumably strived to adhere to (Robie, 2005).

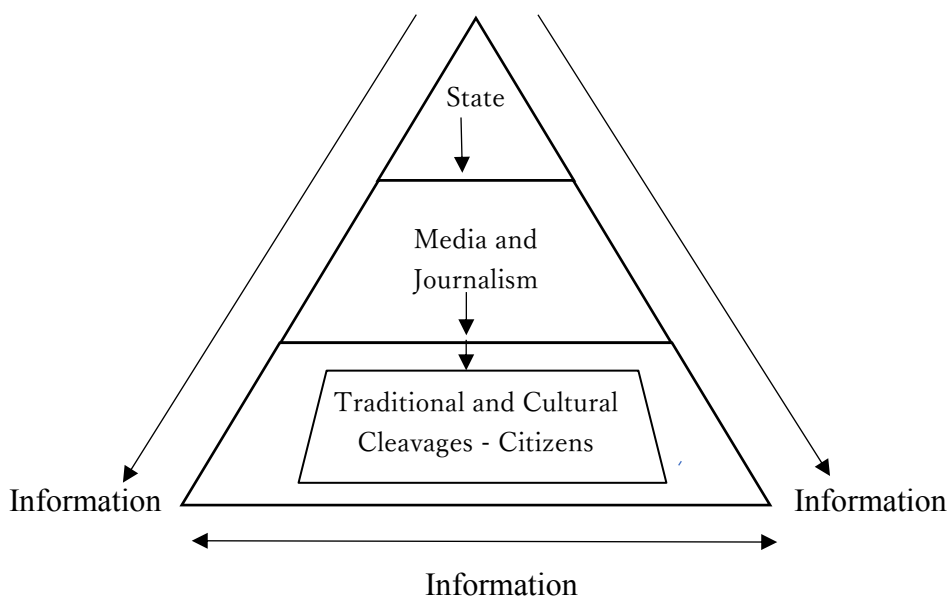
The practice of development journalism, even though, it has been successful in a few previously developing countries, particularly in East Asia, it has had opposite and diverging effects in PNG. Direct participation in the agenda setting process solely reflected the aspirations of individual politicians or the government of the day, while overlooking the needs and aspirations of the people. Since participation was exclusive to professional journalists, they were among the only legitimate and authoritative professionals capable of representing the needs of the people, apart from elected politicians. Limited from direct participation in setting the agenda on communal development, people in PNG formed or resorted to their cultural groups and traditional sets, which further exacerbated divisions among communities and between communities and the state. As a result, direct political participation came to be perceived as more of a communal practice for the exclusive betterment of the community rather than the state and country as a whole.

It is primarily due to these uneven impact of state media policy and journalism on public perception and participation that citizens seldom participated effectively despite adopting representative democratic institutions, such as elections. In addition, it is largely due to these media impacts that citizens rarely showed much dissent towards politicians and the government based off information from traditional media. Traditional identity groups, that formed as a result of state media policy, proved to be buffers that prevented participation against the state. Late Anne Dickson-Waiko (2003: 250), a professor of PNG history studies at the University of Papua New Guinea, equally observed that up to the late 1990s, civil society had not shown much opposition towards the state. Oddly enough, this was the state's primary objective, which it attempted to accomplish through monopolising and directing media and journalism.

Figure 3-5, depicts a flow chat that illustrates how state media policy and information was communicated in the post-independence era and the different levels of participation. Information flowed entirely from the state to journalists, who then passed it down to

citizens. However, due to non-existent feedback mechanisms and concerns from the government concerning state information, participation gradually evolved solely within new and existing traditional identity groups, limiting any chance of national unity, conformity and effective participation through democratic representative institutions.

Figure 3-5: State directed policy on information and levels of participation



In conclusion, this section argues that due to traditional media being heavily filtered by the state and private interests it failed to monitor the government. This arguably diverges from the role of traditional media in Western democracies. For these reasons, traditional media played an insignificant role in PNG politics. In addition, citizens remained passive regarding national issues as social divisions within society reflecting citizens' interests eventually centred largely on local concerns. As a result, social cleavages within PNG's society became heavily structured based on traditional, cultural and regional divisions.

Media outlets and journalistic practices, dominated by both state and commercial interests, proved to be unreflective and unresponsive to the needs of many of the people. Adding on, participation was narrowly confined and restricted to professional journalists due to the nature of media sources and heavy-handed state influence. With very little to go on with, as far as participation, representation and development were concerned, this evidently resulted in the creation of new and existing traditional groups. Political association, participation and socialization primarily evolved within these groups that reflected the variety of micro-states within a super state of PNG. Coupled with the sheer diversity brewing resent participation within and outside traditional sets, for the exclusive betterment of these individual groups, proved more important.

As citizens began to traditionally organize and participate these greatly reduced perceptions of any legitimate and authoritative institutions including the PNG state, outside traditional groups. Interests among individuals and communities similarly began to diverge based on different communal needs which equally created discontentment and mistrust. These also created deep and sharp divisions among the different traditional groups and communities. Overall, since communities were not represented and could not participate through traditional media, citizens never felt part of what the media was all along trying to establish from the start, “PNG Nation State”.

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Chapter 4

New Online Internet Digital Media in Papua New Guinea in the Post-2007 Era

Introduction

This chapter investigates the effects of improvements in information, communication and new internet digital media. It also examines PNG's transforming political culture resulting from these improvements. Diverging from PNG's past post-independence era, this section specifically explores how these improvements have created novel trends in journalism and citizen understanding towards power perceptions, centres of power and political participation both online and offline in the new post-2007 era. Overall, this chapter asks how the internet digital media has changed PNG's political culture in the contemporary era?

The chapter firstly discusses how these significant improvements have come about in PNG. Here, it focuses on major political and economic structural reforms, imposed by the World Bank beginning in the 1990s and major economic developments that commenced in early 2008. These developments gradually liberated the once monopolized state telecommunication's market. Eventually, this slowly opened up the market for outside international and more effective telecommunications and internet service providers. Secondly, the chapter presents and analyses new data from reports by both domestic and international bodies concerning major improvements in communication, information and more importantly, internet access in PNG. Thirdly, the chapter explores how these improvements are gradually changing past-experiences regarding citizen awareness and political participation specifically in urban cities, like Port Moresby. By doing so, it details how these improvements have triggered new rationales and methods of political participation among different citizens both online and offline. Fourthly, the chapter broadly compares these improvements, making clear how they differ from PNG's old pre-2007 years. In addition, unlike Western democracies it outlines how components of democratic political culture associated to principles of "transparency" and "accountability", failed to take root in the country. However, in the years after 2007 through improvements by online internet digital media there is now a growing cultural shift in PNG's political environment. Moreover, the chapter critically contemplates arguments regarding the absence of PNG's political culture of openness and monitoring proposed by post-modernist researchers. These post-modernists have conveniently reduced their arguments to colonial experiences, historical legacies and ethnic diversities. Instead, this section argues that constraints in the media landscape and journalistic

reporting were the primary reasons that prevented the emergence and growth of a political culture among citizens and political system. Lastly, the chapter ends with a conclusion summarizing the chapter's main arguments.

Neo-Liberalism, Deregulation and New Internet Media Information Access, Post-2007

Attempts to improve communication, information and transmission initially began back in the 1990s from assistant programs and later, structural adjustment programs by the World Bank and PNG government. On January 4, 1990, PNG was granted 17.2 million U.S. Dollars by the World Bank to improve both its technical and administrative telecommunications services (National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Policies, 1992: 60). However, most of these were primarily focused on improving state owned and operated, Post and Telecommunications Corporation (PTC).¹ These assistance centred on improving telephone lines and services, transit exchanges and long distance networks, replacing international satellite dishes, improving talex services, replacing old radio stations, training communication engineers, improving administrative performance and monitoring, introducing modern information systems and improving customer focus (Stanley, 2008: 19-20).

Similarly, during this period the state also implemented major political and economic reforms after receiving its first set of loans from the World Bank (Kavanamur et al., 2005). One significant component included deregulation which gradually opened the market to competition against monopolized state-owned entities. Nevertheless, rather than the telecommunications market deregulation was only limited to certain sectors of the economy such as the banking sector.

By 2005, the PNG government started to initiate reforms to introduce mobile competition into the market (Duncan, 2013: 436). Ronald Duncan (2013: 434), discusses that the push to deregulate the telecommunications market were based off three important factors. Firstly, following its creation in 1996, Telikom was granted exclusive monopoly rights to provide all forms of telecommunications services within PNG for at least 5 years (1996–2000) and later extended from 2000–October 2007. By early 2007, Telikom's monopoly privilege was drawing to an end. Despite the state's monopoly over the

¹ The Post and Telecommunications Cooperation (PTC) was established in 1982 as a legal commercial state entity. However, due to a shift in government policy in 1996, it was split into three different entities - Telikom, Post PNG Limited and Papua New Guinea Telecommunications (PANGTEL). Telikom was put in charge of telecommunications services for state profit, Post PNG Limited was responsible for postal services for state profit and PANGTEL acted as a state licencing and regulatory authority. See Stanley (2008): pp. 19-20.

telecommunications market through its agency PTC and later, Telikom, and even with assistance from international organizations, its services had improved very little over the past two decades.

Absent of any competition, average call rates were expensive (Batten et al., 2009: 10), while mobile coverage and internet services were of poor quality even in urban areas (Amanda Watson quoted in Berry, 2016: 2). In fact, during these periods, telephone, mobile and internet subscriptions among PNG citizens were at its lowest ever in PNG's history. For example, figures provided by the World Bank in 2009 shown in Table 4-1, reveal that from 2000–2007, according to data per 100 people, telephone line subscriptions decreased from 1.2 percent–0.9 percent, mobile cellular subscriptions increased from 0.2 percent–4.7 percent,² while internet penetration remained at a mere 0.5% (Cieslikowski et al., 2009: 264). Moreover, growth rates indicated in Figure 4-1, remained sluggish without any significant increases and developments from 2000–2006. These deficits warranted the government to rethink Telikom's extension and introduce competition.

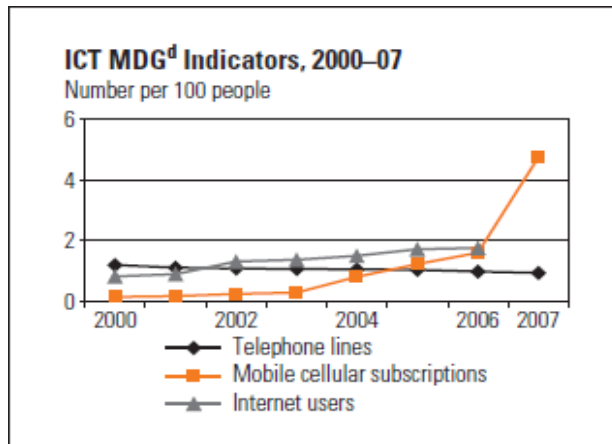
Table 4-1: Figures from Information and Communication Technology, Millennium Development Goals 2000–2007

	Papua New Guinea		Low-income group	East Asia & Pacific Region
	2000	2007	2007	2007
Sector performance				
Access				
Telephone lines (per 100 people)	1.2	0.9	4.0	23.1
Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)	0.2	4.7	21.5	43.7
Internet subscribers (per 100 people)	0.5	—	0.8	9.3
Personal computers (per 100 people)	5.2	6.4	1.5	5.6
Households with a television set (%)	8	10	16	53

Source: Cieslikowski, Halewood, Kimura and Zhen-Wei Qiang. (2009: 264)

² This increase was largely focused on individuals in government, commercial and business sectors. Gradual state and private business development in PNG increased the number of cellular subscriptions for both fixed landline and mobile phone subscriptions.

Figure 4-1: Growth Trends from Information and Communication Technology, Millennium Development Goals 2000–2007



Source: Ibid

Secondly, after the formation of a new coalition government in 2002 new programs by the PNG government assisted by the World Bank were implemented in an attempt to fix problems related to governance, politicization and development. As argued by Lois Stanley (2008: 19), state entities such as Telikom and other state asserts became the central focus of attention. This Stanley asserts was based on the rational that governments should not operate state entities like businesses since they did very poorly incurring huge public debt, failing to invest on upgrading infrastructure and politicizing decisions at the board and management level. Other studies similarly point to the heavy-handed influence of the government as both an operator and regular of state commercial entities as primary reasons explaining their ineffective and cumbersome services (Howell et al., 2019; Turner and Kavanamur, 2009).

Thirdly, by early 2000 important negotiations and agreements were underway for major economic developments in PNG. Momentous among these was ExxonMobil's Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Project. By May 2008, an official agreement between ExxonMobil and the PNG government was officially signed for ExxonMobil's massive nineteen billion U.S. Dollar LNG project in PNG.³ This enormous project began to speed up government reforms particularly in the telecommunications and internet sector since state provider Telikom's cumbersome and inefficient services meant that it could not support development without competition (Oxford Business Group, 2012: 103).

³ History of ExxonMobil PNG LNG. ExxonMobil PNG LNG Webpage Retrieved on 3 July, 2020 from <https://pnglng.com/About/History>

As early as March 2006 a tender and selection process was underway and by March 2007, “Digicel” a Caribbean telecommunication and internet service provider was issued its operating licence and commenced operations three months later. This opened the telecommunications market to competition against the monopolized, expensive and inadequate state-owned telecommunication and internet service provider Telikom PNG. From 2008–2009, Digicel quickly and aggressively began to expand its network coverage investing in excess an estimated 450 million Kina (130 million U.S. Dollars) in PNG’s mobile telecommunications market (Batten et al., 2009: 11). Duncan (2013: 440) posits that in setting up its services in PNG Digicel was able to extend its network coverage by two strategic moves. Firstly, it established widespread coverage very quickly and secondly, the company placed mobile phones in the hands of as many Papua New Guineans as quickly and as cheaply as possible. Digicel similarly took additional steps to introduce and continuously upgrade its quality and access of cheap 2G, 3G and 4G internet network and services particularly in urban centres thus, providing PNG’s first high-speed mobile broadband service (Berry, 2016: 4).

Put together, these improvements were to have important impacts which comparatively improved the level, quality and access of telephone, mobile and internet subscriptions among citizens in the post-2007 era. Furthermore, these improvements have relatively made it possible to access information and communicate, creating a higher degree of connectivity and networking by citizens both online and offline in the years after 2007.

In the following sections, these improvements are discussed in more detail and supported by data from reports by both international and domestic organizations.

Improvements in Mobile Subscriptions, Internet Access and Communication in the Post 2007-Era

This section presents and details new data from reports by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Telecommunication, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), We Are Social: Hootsuite PNG Digital Reports, Global Systems for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA) and PNG’s own National Information and Communication Technology Authority (NICTA).⁴ These data show significant improvements in mobile subscriptions, internet access and communication in the years after 2007.

⁴ The Information and Communication Technology Authority (NICTA) was created in 2009 as a standalone supervisory state entity, regulating operational licenses and technical functions mainly of telecommunication organizations. It is largely responsible for issuing operational licences, determining telecommunication and interconnection prices and making recommendations to the Minister for Communication in PNG. See Howell et al., (2019): p 102.

As mentioned previously, after the state had deregulated and liberated the telecommunication market, Digicel's entrance in 2007 were to have significant contrasting effects to periods prior. This was especially evident in the level, quality and access of mobile subscriptions and internet access broadly throughout the country. However, these improvements were particularly noticeable in urban towns and cities such as Port Moresby and Lae two of the country's biggest cities.

Data indicating the number of PNG mobile subscribers prior to 2007 show periods marked by extremely low subscription rates while periods after 2007 reveal exponentially higher rates. These two periods, pre- and post-2007 thus, mark two starkly different periods with regard to communication, information and connectivity in PNG's history. For instance, according to data from a 2013 report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), displayed in Table 4-2, prior to market liberalization in 2007, with high tariffs and low coverage, the total number of Telikom mobile subscribers and network coverage was estimated to be only 100,000 and 1.60 percent respectively in 2006. However, from 2007 the number of mobile subscribers had doubled and by 2011 had exponentially increased to 2.4 million while network coverage had significantly improved from 4.69 percent in 2007 to 34.22 percent in 2011.

Table 4-2: Mobile-Cellular Telephone Subscriptions in Papua New Guinea, 2006-2011

Year	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Number of subscribers	8,560	100,000	300,000	874,000	1,417,546	1,909,078	2,400,000
Penetration (subscriptions per 100 inhabitants)	0.16	1.60	4.69	13.35	21.15	27.84	34.22

Source: Asian Development Bank Extended Annual Review Report. (2013: 5)

Additional findings presented by PNG's telecommunication regulator NICTA for the years following 2011 shown in Table 4-3, similarly reveal major improvements in telephone subscriptions. This data show further increases in mobile subscriptions in PNG from 2.4 million in 2011 to 3.56 million in 2015.

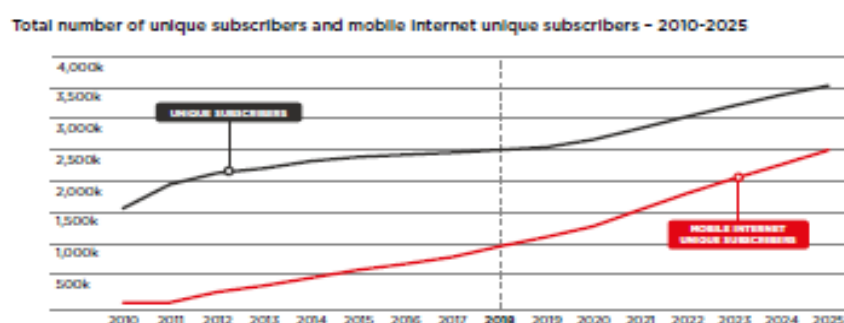
Table 4-3: Mobile-Cellular Telephone Subscriptions in Papua New Guinea, 2005-2015

	Mobile-cellular telephone subscriptions										
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Papua New Guinea	75,000	100,000	300,000	874,000	1,417,546	1,909,078	2,400,000	2,709,000	3,000,000	3,358,900	3,560,000

Source: Adeg. (2016)

Other more recent reports equally indicate significant increases and improvements in mobile subscriptions and more importantly internet mobile subscriptions. For example, in a 2019 report released by GSMA on Digital Transformations and the Role of Mobile Technology in PNG data presented also indicate growing trends in internet mobile subscribers. Figure 4-2, illustrate these increasing trends regarding internet subscribers in PNG from 2010-2020. Moreover, the data similarly show projections in internet access beyond 2020 indicative of further growing and expending access.

Figure 4-2: Digital Access in PNG



Source: Highet, Nique, Watson and Wilson. (2019: 18)

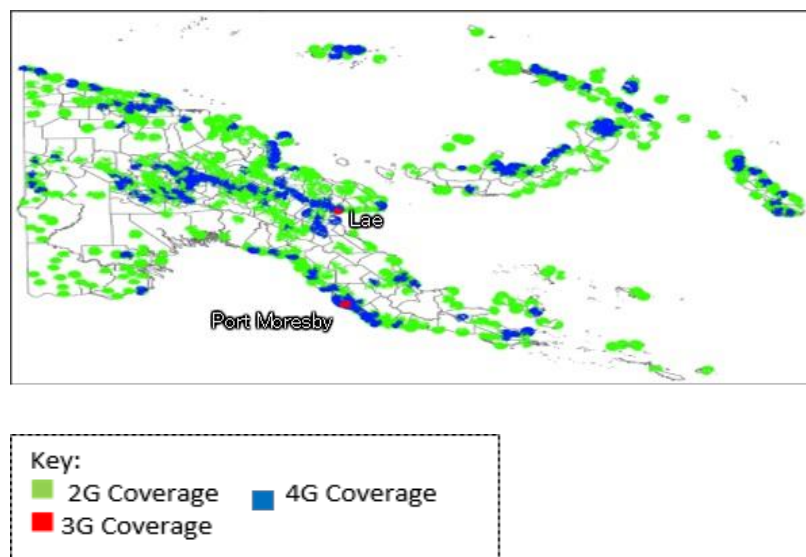
By 2016 Digicel with the support of the World Bank, claimed an estimated access coverage of 90 percent of the country's population (Berry, 2016: 5). Internet 3G access on the other hand was estimated to be at 40.9 percent largely through mobile handset devices (Highet et al., 2019: 19).

Yet, additional data on internet subscriptions likewise indicate growing trends in access to communication and internet access. For instance, according to ICT Hootsuit 2020 PNG Digital Report it is estimated that the country currently has around 1.10 million internet

users and 2.87 million people out of a total of 8 million use a mobile phone.⁵ To illustrate these improvements Figure 4-3 show Digicel's extensive network and internet access and coverage throughout PNG.

Compared to Telikom's exclusive and limited subscribers and network coverage Digicel's sheer number of mobile subscribers, extensive network coverage and mobile internet services have provided citizens alternative access to news on online social media platforms particularly Facebook. Indifferent to the pre-2007 era dominated by traditional media sources the advent of these new developments has gradually provided alternatives for citizens to shift their preferred mediums of news and information online. An increasing number of citizens are today moving from traditional media platforms to online digital media news on social media.

Figure 4-3: Digicel Network Coverage Map, Papua New Guinea



Source: Digicel Papua New Guinea, Webpage

<https://www.digicelgroup.com/pg/en/mobile/explore/network/coverage---map.html>

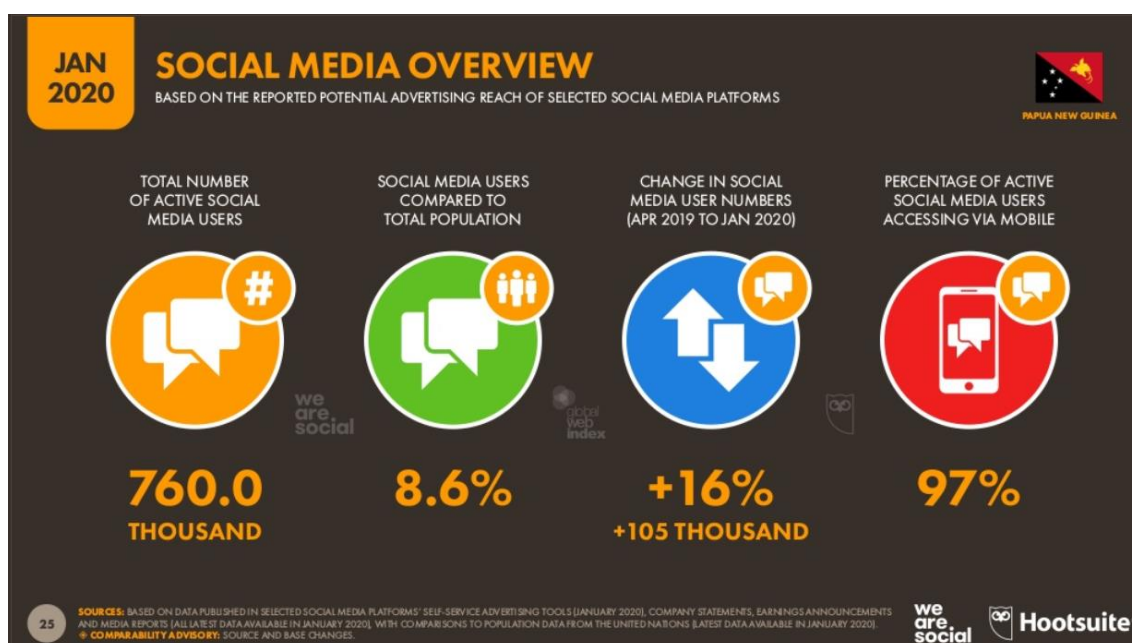
⁵ We Are Social. Hootsuit Digital Report 2020, Papua New Guinea: Internet Users and Mobile Connections in Papua New Guinea. Retrieved 3 April, 2020 from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-papua-new-guinea>

Alternative Shift from Traditional to Online Digital Media, Post-2007

This section investigates how Digicel's improvements within the telecommunications market have gradually provided alternative avenues for citizens to shift media mediums of accessing news and information. This is primarily from traditional mainstream media news sources to online social media platforms particularly Facebook on mobile handsets.

Although a majority of citizens rely on traditional media sources to access news and information the advent of Digicel's cheap mobile phones along with its extensive network and internet coverage has seen a gradual increase in access to online news platforms particularly on Facebook and to a lesser extent Twitter. Data provided by ICT Hootsuite 2020 PNG Digital Report on Social Media estimates that there are currently 760,000 active social media users in PNG and that 97 percent of these active users access these platforms largely via mobile devices. Figure 4-4 show these findings regarding active social media users in PNG.

Figure 4-4: Social Media Overview, Papua New Guinea

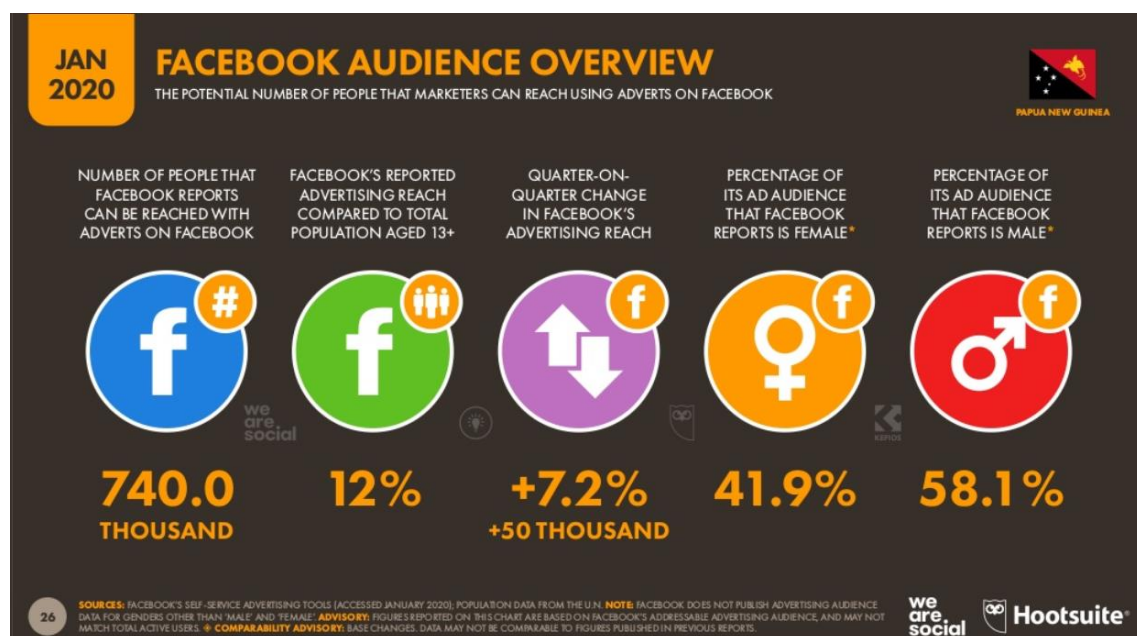


Source: We Are Social. Hootsuite Digital Report 2020, Papua New Guinea: Social Media Overview in Papua New Guinea. Retrieved 3 April, 2020 from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-papua-new-guinea>

Social Media platform, Facebook, currently has the biggest number of active users in PNG. This is also supported by Hootsuite's ICT 2020 PNG Digital Report which indicates that there are at present 740,000 active Facebook social media users in PNG. However, it

should be noted that this figure represents an increase from earlier years as far back as 2014, with only 260,000 active Facebook users (Kemp, 2014). Sarah Logan and Joseph Suwamaru (2017: 289), posit that a growing number of PNG citizens prefer using Facebook since the platform provides avenues for sharing news in a country which has until now been absent of any truly national news services. Moreover, they argue that in the era dominated by traditional media sources newspapers took days to move across the country while limited electricity and reception in certain areas meant that neither the radio nor TV had been truly national. Data regarding active Facebook users by Hootsuite's ICT 2020 PNG Digital Report are shown in Figure 4-5.

Figure 4-5: Active Facebook Audience, Papua New Guinea



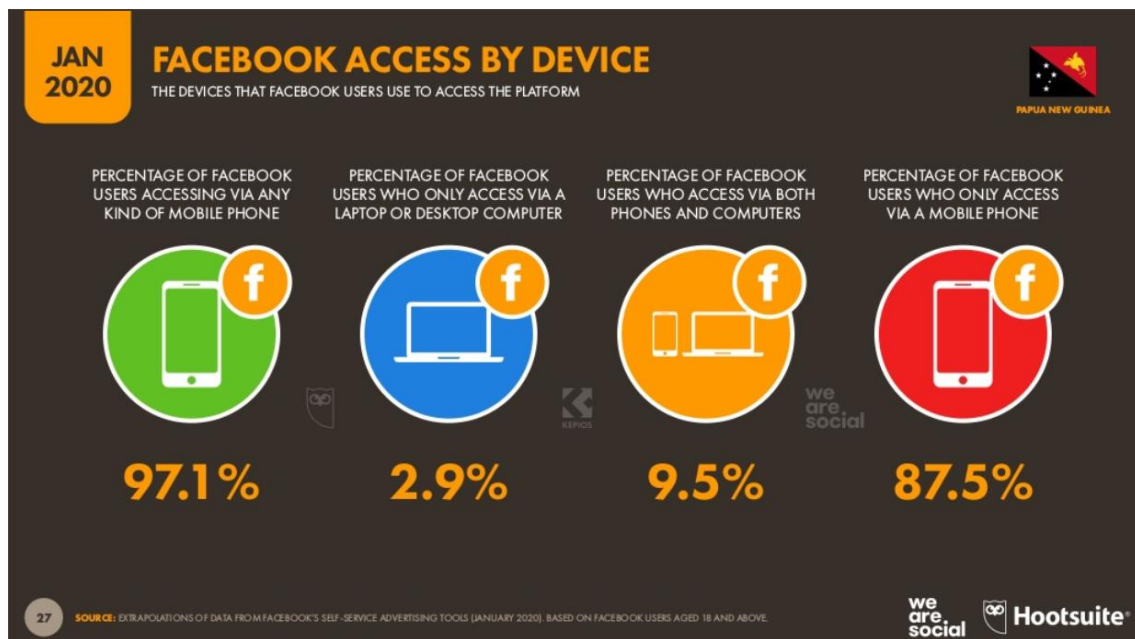
Source: We Are Social. Hootsuite Digital Report 2020, Papua New Guinea: Facebook Audience Overview in Papua New Guinea. Retrieved 19 July 2020 from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-papua-new-guinea>

Based on a 2014 survey on citizen access to information in PNG the majority of internet users are young, more educated, largely located within urban areas and fall within the age group of 15 - 24 (Debeljik, 2014: 42).

The majority of active Facebook users access the social media platform through mobile phone devices rather than laptops or desktop computers. This is attributed to the portability and reliability of accessing information efficiently, quickly and on real time (Intermedia, 2012). Findings shown in Figure 4-6 by Hootsuite ICT 2020 PNG Digital Report regarding mediums by which citizens access Facebook reveal this insight. Based

on the report from citizens aged 18 and above 97.1 percent of active Facebook users access the social media platform through mobile phones rather than 2.9 percent through laptops or desktop computers.

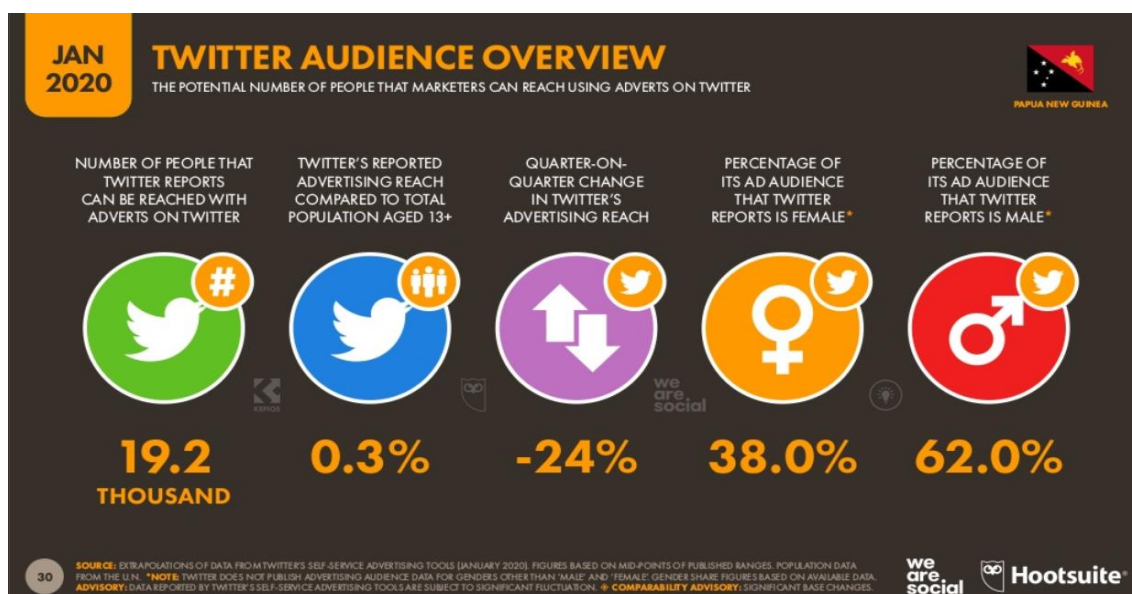
Figure 4-6: Citizen Preferred Facebook Access Devices, Papua New Guinea



Source: We Are Social. Hootsuit Digital Report 2020, Papua New Guinea: Facebook Access by Device in Papua New Guinea. Retrieved 19 July 2020 from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-papua-new-guinea>

Twitter on the other hand has fewer active users compared to Facebook. Hootsuite ICT 2020 PNG Digital Report indicate an estimated number of 19,200 active Twitter users in the country. Figure 4-7 illustrates these findings regarding active Twitter users in PNG. To date, there has been very little research concerning why PNG citizens prefer certain social media platforms like Facebook compared to others such as Twitter.

Figure 4-7: Active Twitter Users, Papua New Guinea

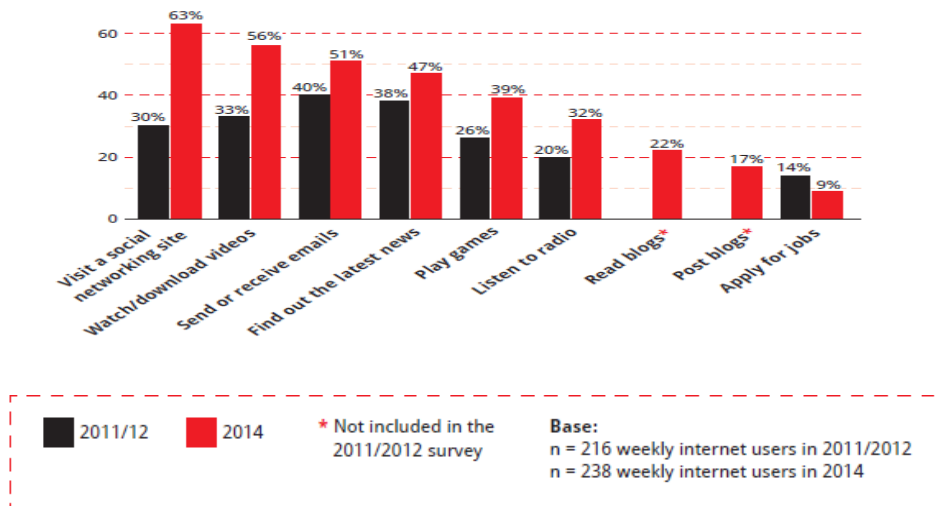


Source: We Are Social. Hootsuit Digital Report 2020, Papua New Guinea: Twitter Audience Overview in Papua New Guinea.

Retrieved 19 July 2020 from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-papua-new-guinea>

Despite limited specific and comparable data over time, a few survey reports indicate an increase of internet usage in accessing news information, particularly on social media networking sites. For example, during 2011 and 2014, the NBC carried out a national survey regarding citizens access to information. From a sample size of 216 and 238 weekly internet users interviewed in 2011 and 2014 respectively, apart from watching/downloading videos and email usage, the survey indicated a 33 percent increase of respondents indicating weekly visits to social networking sites and a 9 percent increase of respondents claiming to have gone online to find out the latest news (NBC, 2014: 45). Data from the survey shown in Figure 4-8 illustrates these comparable increases regarding weekly usage of internet for different activities.

Figure 4-8: Weekly use of internet for different activities in 2011 and 2014



Source: National Broadcasting Commission. (2014: 45)

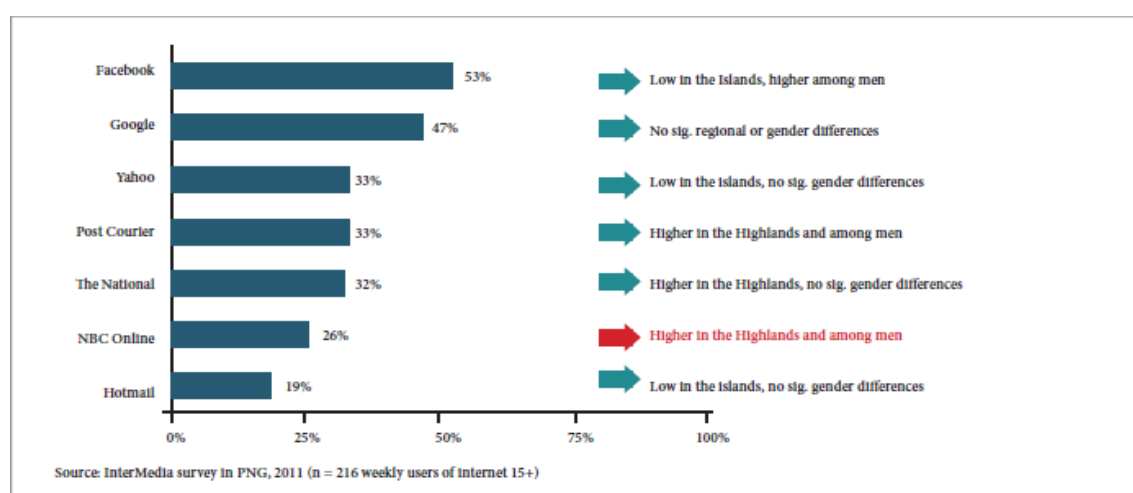
Are significant number of Facebook groups have also been created that cover a range of topics and issues. From regional matters to bible study groups and issues on gender-based violence Facebook has provided an avenue where citizens can participate by discussing certain topics that they perceived as matters of national, regional or local importance. However, the biggest PNG Facebook groups with the most members and most prominent are those groups that focus discussions on governance, economics and other related social issues (Logan and Suwamaru, 2017: 289).

Logan and Suwamaru (2017: 289-292) discuss that three of PNG's largest and oldest Facebook groups discuss and debate themes within these categories. These groups are *Sharp Talk*, *Paitim Garamut* – meaning beating a drum, and *PNG News Page*. Firstly, *Sharp Talk* was created in early 2011 as a forum to empower the voiceless majority of PNG to voice their opinions on matters of public interest. The Facebook group by 2017 had over 27,000 members. Secondly, *PNG News Page* Logan and Suwamaru contend was established in 2012 and is currently the largest group. The group was created to inform PNG citizens, shape public opinion and to be a catalyst for change in society. The group in 2017 had a membership of 112,000. Thirdly, *Paitim Garamut* they assert, has around 10,000 members and was founded in 2013. Its main goal is to provide a creditable platform for meaningful, objective and constructive debate on national issues and for citizens to provide alternatives and solutions to the government and private sector while also independently investigating and publishing credible information on issues affecting PNG. Since then, membership of these Facebook groups has increased over the years.

PNG News Page currently has 166,135 members, Paitim Garamut has 40,521 members while Sharp Talk members have increased to 31,000.

Results from a 2012 survey indicate that Facebook's weekly audience is significantly larger than any one news site in PNG. Based on the survey out of two hundred and sixteen weekly internet users surveyed, fifty-three percent had accessed Facebook in the past week compared to thirty-three percent and thirty-two percent of participants who accessed the websites of two of the country's main newspapers (Intermedia Survey, 2012). Figure 4-9 shows these comparable data regarding weekly visits to internet platforms to access news and information.

Figure 4-9: Profiles of Websites' Weekly Audience



Source: Intermedia. (2012: 53)

Adding on, other similar Facebook groups have equally flourished over the years and have similarly gained prominence through the issues discussed and its membership. Table 4-4, show some of PNG's Facebook news groups that have since become alternative news platforms indicative by their increasing membership numbers. Most of these groups have a total membership of more than ten thousand followers.

Table 4-4: Facebook News Groups, 2020

Facebook Group	Date Created	Issues of Focus	Current Membership
PNG News Page	13 th May, 2010	Governance, Politics, Economics, Social	166,135
Sharp Talk	9 th May, 2011	Governance, Politics, Economics, Social, Cultural	31,000
Paitim Garamut	30 th October, 2013	Governance, Politics, Economics, Social	40, 521
PNG Political Limelights		Governance, Politics, Economics	23,358
PNG Loop		Local News	147, 294
PNG News (Current and Breaking)	27 th March, 2012	Domestic Current Affairs	80, 029
Kramer Report		Politics, Governance	129,735
PNG News and Current Affairs	1 st June, 2017	News that make headlines and current affairs	35,472
PNG Breaking News		Governance, Politics	85, 707
PNG Happenings Today	14 th October, 2018	Governance, Politics	17, 458

Source: Author's Compilation (2019)

Transforming Roles of Media and Journalism and its Impact on Citizen Perceptions and Awareness towards Power Centres and Political Participation, Post 2007-Era

This section probes into comparatively analysing the broad historical and disruptive effects and trends these improvements have triggered on transforming media dynamics and journalism. Moreover, the section examines how these transformations have changed citizen perceptions and awareness by illuminating centres of power and alternative

avenues of political participation both online and offline. Overall, four important points will be discussed in this section.

(1) Free and Cheap Access to Information

Firstly, growing communication and internet access to online news on Social Media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have enabled citizens especially within urban towns such as Port Moresby greater and cheaper access to information. However, on the other hand Logan and Suwamaru (2017: 288) also posit that it is also important to note that internet access is not exclusively limited to urban-educated users. Rural users, they contend, equally access Facebook when signals can be accessed.

Moreover, this information in contrast to the era dominated by traditional media can now be accessed by citizens reliably and on a real time basis. This is particularly significant for PNG for reasons that access to news information during the previous era were hampered or delayed for reasons relating to cost, distance, topography, transportation, weather, electricity and coverage. For instance, before the internet boom Anna Solomon (1995: 124) explains that high travel costs were a big factor that dictated whether domestic media organizations travelled to rural areas outside urban centres to cover issues of local rather than national concern. Sorariba Nash (1995: 36), further expounds on this arguing that newspapers in particular were expensive, heavy and costly to transport and that they deteriorated rapidly in tropical climates like PNG's. News and information from televisions on the other hand were limited as a result of partial access to electricity coverage and that costs were too expensive for most citizens (Rooney et al., 2004).

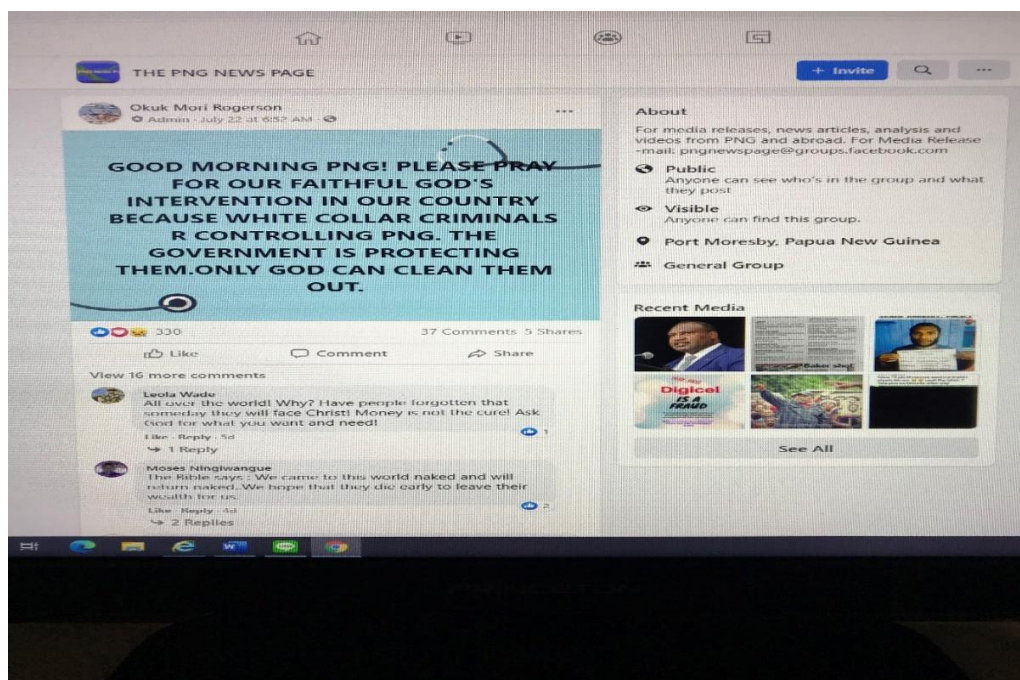
(2) Access to Unfiltered Information and the Power to Reproduce Information Online

Secondly, information and issues of national concern during the pre-2007 era that would have been inaccessible, censored or available only on a restricted basis mostly to elites can today be accessed freely online. Furthermore, in comparison to news and information by traditional mainstream media sources these improvements have importantly made it cheaper and easier to reproduce information and making them available through entirely new pathways online. This greatly reduces the states heavy handed influence in politically dictating or censoring news content. For example, in the pre-2007 era the heavy reliance of newspapers on the government for advertising revenue has at times undermined its freedom to report fairly on controversial issues (Solomon, 1995: 119). In addition, politicians have been known to use fear and control tactics to intimidate and instil fear into the press and journalists through parliamentary privileges, contempt and other legal suites (Hiambohn, 1995; Kanekane, 2003). Politicians arguing national unity and state security were keen in making sure that certain information were banned from being relayed by traditional mainstream media. Thus, certain specific information was

exclusively kept secret from the public and were known by only a particular group (Cabinet or Executive Government) or people (politicians and top bureaucrats).

Nonetheless, in the years after 2007 due to the rise and prominence of Facebook news pages like Shark Talk, Paitim Garamut and PNG News Page important differences are evident. Firstly, improvements in access to information online have provided alternative avenues for citizens to access news and information anywhere and at any time, simply with a mobile phone. Secondly, concerning the participation and spread of information, citizens have the opportunity to discuss, reproduce and share information simply by clicking Facebook's "Like" and "Share" button on personal pages, friends' pages or groups hence, widening the access of information shared to other active Facebook users. Thirdly, citizens have direct access to post and share photographs, videos and text on national issues such as national court decisions, electoral misconduct, issues relating to corruption and even accessing live parliamentary debates and proceedings. Figure 4-10 and 4-11 show pictures of two separate posts on two of PNG's prominent Facebook pages on politics and governance. These posts concern issues relating to alleged high-level corruption and matters associated with collusion and faking court orders to avoid investigations by a prominent politician and one-time Prime Minister.

Figure 4-10: Post on PNG News Page Alleging High-Level Corruption



Source: Okuk Mori Rogerson. Post on PNG News Page Regarding High-Level Corruption. Retrieved 28 July, 2020 from <https://www.facebook.com/groups/pngnewspage/permalink/3282484938456365/>

Figure 4-11: Post on Alleged Collusion and Forgery to Avoid Warrant of Arrest by Top Politician and Former Prime Minister



Source: Kramer Report Page. ‘O’Neil’s lawyers Charged for Forgery’.
Retrieved 28 July, 2020 from
<https://www.facebook.com/kramerreportpng/posts/1789995477803417>

John Keane (2013: 25-28), describes these changing trends as the “democratizing effects of information” which the one-to-many logic geometry of radio, newspapers and televisions are now complimented with many-to-many by digital media. Moreover, Keane adds that these improvements importantly tear down barriers dividing producers and consumers of information making new and vital information accessible to comparably many more users. This is often at great distances coupled with less time and costs.

(3) Widening Space of Citizen Participation

Thirdly, contrasting the pre-2007 era, greater access to internet and online social media news platforms have progressively opened and widened the pool of participation incorporating bloggers, activists, NGOs, associations, politicians and other concerned likeminded citizens. Furthermore, in what Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg (2013) characterize as ‘connective action’, internet online social media has additionally mobilised and connected these different individuals together. Fundamental is also the fact that new online participants are today not only consumers of information, but are moreover, producers and disseminators of information as well. This is particularly important within PNG’s post-2007 era as these developments have set themselves apart from contemporary media and journalism relating to issues of control and autonomy.

The introduction of new online information consumers, producers and disseminators today principally challenges the basic profession of journalism namely, the professional journalist is the one who determines what the public sees, hears and reads about (Deuze, 2005: 451). Contemporary nuances, concerning news and information participation in the post-2007 era diverge sharply from periods before. Vertical models of participation mostly dictated by state journalists through traditional media are today being complimented by new online participants. However, indifferent from mostly professional state journalists new online participants incorporate novel horizontal, less constrained and dictated political engagement.

The inclusion of new online news participants has similarly led to the rise and prominence of what some researchers refer to as ‘citizen journalism’ (Allan, 2013; Allan and Thorsen, 2009; Luce et al., 2017). Although its conceptual definition has not yet been definitively defined, Luke Goode (2009: 2) provides a useful working definition. According to Goode, citizen journalism refers to a range of web-based practices whereby ‘ordinary’ users engage in journalistic practices. Citizen journalism Goode posits, may include practices such as current affairs blogging, photo and video sharing and posting eyewitness commentary on current affairs. With a variety of citizens freely and openly discussing and debating an array of content online what has gradually emerged as a result is also unique to the post-2007 era. Diverging from past journalistic practices these improvements have instigated disputes among users and citizens concerning the political implications of private and public divisions of power. Keane (2013: 32), refers to this as ‘the new publicity’ where divisions between private and public power become blurred as citizens direct attention and publicity at all things personal. What results Keane argues, is that what traditionally used to be called private today becomes public thus, creating backlashes in defence of the private.

Instances where centres of power have become weary of online digital media thus, instigating attempts for radical reforms have similarly occurred in PNG in the years after 2007. In May 2018, for example, PNG's Communication Minister announced that PNG would ban Facebook for a month supposedly for research purposes to crack down on fake news (Geteng, 2018). Citizens on the other hand took this as an attempt by the state to crack down on free speech and civil rights (Wali, 2018). After the news went viral on social media and questions were raised in Parliament from the opposition the Prime Minister later came out in a separate press statement retracting that there would be no ban on Facebook in PNG (Patjole, 2018).

Based off discussions and debates on national and governance issues online by a myriad of participants this has for the first time in PNG's history also breathe new life into the public sphere outside elite and traditional groups. A large number of studies explaining issues of poor governance argue PNG's weak state, acts of corruption and its link to certain (however not all) cultural norms and practices as some of its primary reasons (Kombako, 2007; Larmour, 1997; Payani, 2003; Walton, 2015). For example, David Kombako (2007: 32-36) contends that the practice of nepotism where family members, relatives, persons of the same language groups, clan members or political cronies are employed into positions of power as deeply entrenched in PNG. By doing so, Kombako discusses that political affiliations are maintained and strengthened as a means of keeping political rivals away from information and policy implementation. Kombako further adds that one of the reasons this practice has managed to gain grounds and spread was due to the cultural practice of '*wantok system*' – an intricate network of people from an extended family, tribe or language group who help each other in times of need and emergency. However, what has resulted is that this practice has politicized and destabilised the bureaucracy and state-owned enterprises. Investigations of alleged abuses regarding the awarding of contracts for major construction and infrastructure projects coupled with a flagrant disregard of public tender processes and other breaches dealing with the award of contracts are just some examples (Allen and Hasnain, 2010; Dinnen, 1997; Ketan, 2013).

Nevertheless, in April 2018 President of PNG Institute of Engineers Brian Alois employed by the state Department of Works and Infrastructure became one of the country's widely publicized state whistle-blower. This came after he openly exposed massively inflated contracts and payments by the government to upgrade and maintain road projects to contractors (Ngutlick, 2018). But as a consequence, Alois was quietly suspended. Given the supposed involvement of prominent government Ministers and politicians it was not surprising that this exposure received very little attention from mainstream traditional media. However, certain individual citizens managed to catch wind of this and began writing, posting and sharing this information online on blogs and Facebook pages. This created a huge backlash from citizens (Gawi, 2018; Jackson, 2019)

as well as PNG's Engineers Association (Mou, 2018a; Yalo, 2018) recalling for his reinstatement. In addition, other politicians similarly active on Facebook openly questioned the Minister for Works and Infrastructure during a Parliament sitting demanding transparency (Mou, 2018b).

(4) Internet Digital Media has Created Awareness Resulting in Disputes Concerning Public and Private Power

Fourthly, as internet digital media integrate new online participants and further blurs the contours between private and public divisions of power this has abruptly instigated disputes among citizens both online and offline. This has caused new online participants to bombard centres of power and power holders with criticism, publicity and public exposure. For example, Logan and Suwamaru (2017: 290-291) discuss how Facebook has exposed a new sense of national awareness culminating in occupying public spaces, petitions and protests both online and offline against government scandals and corruption. In 2014, for instance, they explain how protests against then Prime Minister Peter O'Neil regarding allegations of corruption saw the emergence of hash tag and meme activism via Facebook and to a smaller extent Twitter. This included hash tags such as #OccupyWaigani, #arrestPeter and memes like "I am the 99%" all associated with the global Occupy Movement.

This new online media practice is in stark difference to the era before internet digital media in PNG. New online media participants have incorporated new media roles and responsibilities by constantly scrutinizing and monitoring centres of power. Further agitated by the constant and continuous reporting and exposure of high-level corruption, these new online media roles and responsibilities are quickly becoming standard online media practice. This new online media monitory responsibility is what Keane (2013: 40-51) characterise as "muckraking". This practice, Keane explains, is when new online participants continuously keep significant themes alive by repeatedly reporting and exposing them. Creating rifts between citizens and power centres Keane posits that muckraking additionally creates doubt and distrust towards secrecy, silence and public institutional performance. In other cases, muckraking has either complimented and challenged professional journalism giving victims the power to speak their own voices, set the agenda and moreover, cut easily through habits, prejudice and hierarchies of power (Keane, 2018: 165-166).

Other authors have even argued that due to such new practices ultimately mainstream media are forced to cover issues on online media by citizens thus, making them visible concurrently on traditional media outlets (Bakardjieva, 2012; Feenstra et al., 2017). Maxwell McCombs (2004), further expounds on this by adding that such actions generate and attract public perceptions and opinions. McCombs asserts that this is the first step

towards getting an issue onto the public agenda to shape public opinion and is an initial step towards citizen political participation.

An example of this would be issues regarding gender-based violence and killings in PNG and how online media news on Facebook as well as traditional mainstream media has ramped up public opinion and support. This has created nationwide public outcry, formation of associations and groups (both online and offline), petitions, workshops and peaceful street-protests. This has at times forced the government to take action. Furthermore, continuous reporting and exposure of cases regarding gender-based violence and killings have even attracted the attention of international organizations. For instance, in June of 2020, Jenelyn Kennedy a nineteen-year-old teenage mother of two was brutally murdered by her husband at their residential home in Port Moresby (Finkeo, 2020). Pictures of Jenelyn's battered body was uploaded onto Facebook after a doctor took out his frustration online that the young teenage mother had suffered a slow, deliberate and painful death (Godfrey, 2020; Kuku, 2020b).

The post eventually went viral creating mass public outcry online as users expressed hate, curiosity and disappointment (Kora, 2020b). Spikes in public outcry online eventually spilled offline as citizens began wearing black to work in her remembrance (David, 2020) and a two day nationwide peaceful protest march was organised by citizens to petition the government and rally against gender-based violence and killings in the country (Munoz, 2020; Sukbat, 2020b; Whiting and Harriman, 2020). Other concerned citizens even went as far as emailing ministers directly through an official website demanding change (Gabi, 2020). Some responded favourably however, on the other hand this created heated debate among a few other ministers who lashed out against the bombardment of messages online (ibid).

Ultimately, due to increasing public outcry both online and offline mainstream traditional media could not ignore the issue and hence, covered the issue on both newspaper and EM TV. For example, the same picture of the deceased bruised body was printed on the front page of the National newspaper a few weeks after it was initially posted on Facebook (Kuku, 2020c). Following this, the National newspaper was quick to cover many of the aspects relating to the case all the way leading up to the final arrest of the victim's husband (Kuku, 2020a). In addition, EM TV news also broadcasted the issue on its 6 pm bulletin news over a period of time (Gunga, 2020; Mogi, 2020; Sea, 2020). Journalists from EM TV even conducted a live interview with the victim's maid where they uncovered shocking acts of violence against her and the deceased (Kora, 2020a). This became headline news on its 6 pm evening news on the 26th of June, 2020 two weeks after news of the murder was initially posted on Facebook.

Photo: Employees from Kumul Petroleum Wearing Black in memory of Jenelyn



Source: Gabriella Munoz. “Business says enough is enough: it’s time to stop violence against women in Papua New Guinea”. (15 July, 2020). Business Advantage PNG Webpage <https://www.businessadvantagepng.com/business-says-enough-is-enough-its-time-to-stop-violence-against-women-in-papua-new-guinea/>

Photo: Protest for Jenelyn and Gender Based Violence in front of Parliament House



Source: Jemimah Sukbat. (2 July, 2020). “Push for govt action on GBV”. Loop PNG News Online Webpage <http://www.looppng.com/png-news/push-govt-action-gbv-93258>

A mass funeral service was organised in Port Moresby by the deceased family where the Prime Minister, other senior ministers and the Police Commissioner all attended. During the funeral service the Prime Minister condemned the killing and vowed to strengthen laws protecting females in PNG (Sukbat, 2020a). Adding on, the Police Department was personally tasked to prioritise and investigate the murder and ensure that justice was served (Graue, 2020; Rungula, 2020). The rise of public outcry and protests both online and offline against the murder of Jenelyn Kennedy even caught the attention of international organizations. For instance, a few days after the victim's post went viral on Facebook the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) released a press statement condemning the killing and called for urgent action to bring her perpetrators to justice.⁶

In the next section the thesis discusses the wider implications of these improvements on changing trends in political culture and political participation in PNG politics.

Discussion

As discussed in chapter 2, following independence development and national unity became the core focus of the different coalition governments formed in PNG. These core beliefs were extended and reflected within the country's mainstream traditional media and journalistic practices. Overall, new internet digital media has created new monitory practices that are gradually being adopted by traditional media sources. This is very different from Western democratic journalism principles and practices that initially emerged with the introduction of traditional mainstream media sources. For instance, Katrin Voltmer and Gary Rawnsley (2019: 240) discuss that mainstream traditional media comprise largely of two primary roles. Firstly, they provided an avenue whereby all citizens can participate, be heard and engage with each other. By doing so, they assert that citizens could make better informed decisions concerning different political alternatives. Secondly, the media acts as a watchdog. These arguments are further supported by other researchers who contend that mainstream traditional media are a vital precondition for the transition and functioning of a democracy (Dahl, 1989; Huntington, 1991; Voltmer, 2013), and are responsible for holding governments accountable (Hayes, 2008; Schudson, 2008; Kelley and Donway, 1990). All in all, the primary role of Western Journalists was to report freely and critically thereby constantly scrutinizing power centres and providing information to the wider public (McNair, 2009; Schudson, 2018).

⁶ UNICEF Papua New Guinea. (2 July, 2020). "UN calls to redouble efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women and children". Retrieved on 12 August 2020 from UNICEF Webpage <https://www.unicef.org/png/press-releases/un-calls-redouble-efforts-prevent-and-respond-violence-against-women-and-children>

Unlike Western democracies, this was not the logic behind traditional mainstream media and journalism in PNG in the pre-2007 era. Hence, the thesis argues that a healthy democratic political culture consisting of attitudes, norms and beliefs that shape the way democracies around the world function were stifled and failed to take root in PNG. Fundamental among these borrowing from Schudson (2015) was the culture of “disclosure” and the “right to know” about government decisions from and by traditional mainstream media and journalism to hold them responsible for their actions.

This had more to do with PNG’s broader political cultural shifts rather than its electoral and legal aspects. To put things plainly, what failed to take root in PNG after independence as a result of state directed mainstream traditional media, market capitalist forces and development journalism were fundamental ideas and practices embedded in principles regarding “transparency” and “accountability” within PNG’s political system. These political deficits greatly obscured the ways which citizens evaluated the country’s political system, the different ways which the government is thought to work in a democracy and the role of self within its political system. So, despite adopting democratic institutions, fundamental political cultural concepts and practices regarding transparency and accountability were not established after independence. Paradoxically, since these concepts and practices were ironically absent this left democratic representative institutions bare of their fundamental democratic power checking functions.

However, following the introduction of Digicel after 2007 accompanied by improvements in accessing, participating, reporting and sharing news on online digital social media platforms like Facebook, significant changes are emerging and are quickly beginning to take root. These changes are directly generating a new political culture of openness, assertiveness and proactivity both online and offline thus, quickly shifting PNG’s political landscape from its past pre-2007 era. This is marked by a new post-2007 era symbolized by more embolden citizens taking-charge of matters concerning corruption, governance and other social issues both online and offline. As an increasing number of citizens, groups and organizations gain access to information and further participate in voicing their opinions of doubt and distrust, criticism and scepticism against the government have become an acceptable and justifiable practise equally online and offline. This has bolstered citizens to legitimately speak and act more forthrightly. These continuous trends have illuminated faults lines within power centres and have further pronounced them more loudly to the public than at any other time in PNG’s history. Significant is also the fact that these political practices are increasingly being performed outside conventional democratic institutions like elections.

Similar improvements are already supported by a few authors who argue that internet digital media would re-engage citizens and create new avenues of political participation in the political process (Bennett and Segerberg, 2013; Norris, 2002; Shirky, 2011).

However, this thesis argues that internet digital media does more than these. In doing so, it posits that specific democratic political cultural practices paramount to the performance of democracies can also emerge as a result. Moreover, notions of democratic political culture associated with transparency and accountability which may have possibly taken the West an extended period of time to establish through mainstream traditional media (Munck, 2019; Schudson, 2015; Zaret, 1999), may quickly become well rooted in PNG in a rather short span of time through online internet digital media. Denoting a phenomenon somewhat similar to that of a shock therapy online internet digital media in PNG has suddenly and dramatically jumpstarted the country's political system in effect creating perceptions and behaviours associated to democratic beliefs and values. This burgeoning political culture is at present emerging and quickly becoming standard political practice in PNG both online and offline.

Adding on, the thesis argues that although the role of ensuing transparency and accountability has been traditionally associated to mainstream media and journalism the introduction of online media is quickly beginning to change this dynamic. This is particularly evident in PNG where improvements in the political process by new online digital media has not only nurtured a growing democratic political culture but further extended the boundaries of roles traditionally held by mainstream media to include online media. At the same time, ordinary citizens as well as different groups created online have the potential to perform watchdog and other monitory roles towards power centres. This has subsequently ended the monopoly of journalists and traditional mainstream media over information and the public scrutiny of power centres. Improvements accompanied by online media today mean that ordinary citizens can act as public monitors, exposing and criticizing the misuse of public power for private gain as well as discussing and protesting against national social issues both online and offline.

Building on these arguments the thesis moreover, refute claims by researchers who have reduced their arguments concerning the absence of a political culture from a post-modernist perspective (Hegarty, 1979; May, 1982; Okole, 2005). These scholars have conveniently argued their case largely based on PNG's unique colonial experiences, historical legacies and cultural and ethnic diversities as primary causes explaining this phenomenon. For example, Henry Okole (2005: 187-188), argues three primary reasons explaining this experience. Firstly, PNG's highly fragmented population and rugged topography restricted the institutionalization of most of the institutions adopted from the country colonial caretaker Australia. Secondly, uneven exposure to Western contact during colonization meant that different regions of the country gradually adopted modern Western political practices. Others on the other hand stuck to their own traditional practices. Thirdly, was the absence of any nationalist concepts among the population. In its replacement were internal micro-nationalist movements, regionalism and separatist movements. This section, refute these post-modernist arguments and rather contend that

constraints in the media landscape and journalistic direction and reporting were the primary reasons that prevented the emergence and growth of healthy democratic political cultural concepts and practices among citizens after independence.

However, in the years post-2007, improvements in communication and internet digital media indicate substantial effects noteworthy to transforming media logic, journalism and citizen responsibilities towards power centres. This is gradually creating a political culture absent during the period under traditional mainstream media. Signalling a break from the past pre-2007 era two important changes are now taking place in PNG as a result. Firstly, this has enabled citizens to single out specific individuals, groups and institutions that in retrospect form the bedrock of representative democracy that influence and control important national decisions. These individuals, groups and institutions have come to characterize and symbolize centres of power therefore attracting focus, attention and interest from citizens. Secondly, these improvements are quickly transforming citizen perceptions and attitudes towards power centres and issues of national and social concerns. Being more aware by information from online social media Facebook citizens have taken an active and more proactive role in speaking up rather than being passive and unreceptive. Furthermore, citizens have adopted additional responsibilities indicative by taking greater monitoring roles and responsibilities both online and offline in being critical of state-power as well as national issues affecting the country.

Conclusion

It can be said that the eras of pre- and post-2007 represent two very different periods in PNG's political history. Under the former, the state had complete monopoly over information by dictating and directing traditional mainstream media and journalistic practices. In addition, market capitalist forces similarly affected what could and could not be reported by traditional mainstream media. Over the years, these factors greatly impeded the growth of important democratic principles and practices associated to the political culture of transparency and accountability conventionally associated with traditional mainstream media. This was nevertheless, not the result of colonial experiences, historical legacies and cultural heterogeneities as what some post-modernists claim to be.

However, under the later the introduction of Digicel and improvements by way of access, production, reproduction and spread of information on online social media platforms have significantly loosened the monopoly of the state and journalists over information. Important changes are gradually becoming evident which are comparatively distinct to the former era. Due to the introduction of online internet social media platforms easily accessible through mobile handsets citizens have become better aware of issues

concerning high-level corruption and other national and social issues affecting the country. This has ultimately created a new political culture of openness, assertiveness and proactiveness.

This has similarly resulted in the acceptance and normalizing of citizens in becoming more critical of power centres and national governance issues both online and offline. This is quickly creating a new political culture where concepts and practices associated with transparency and accountability are firmly taking root within the country. This is in contrast to Western democracies that developed a similar political culture built over a much-extended period of time under traditional mainstream media. Additionally, new online internet media has further created and extended new monitory roles and responsibilities among citizens both online and offline. In addition, these participatory roles go far beyond traditional mainstream media, journalism and even elections in the years after 2007. As a result, citizens have become more aware and observant of individuals, groups and institutions representative of power centres and additionally taken on new assertive monitory roles in keeping constant tabs on these institutions as well as national social issues.

To properly understand how both traditional mainstream and new online internet digital media has played a role in PNG politics the next chapter presents two separate case studies. These involve two separate political scandals involving fraudulent payments. One happened in the late 1990s while the other in the early 2010s. By comparing them, it clarifies how politics has changed with the advent of new internet digital media within the contemporary era. Moreover, it analyses the responses from citizens who had either produced, shared, commented or simply viewed information online on Facebook regarding the second case in Port Moresby during 2016.

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Chapter 5

Case Studies and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter contemplates PNG's newly found political culture ushered by the internet and online digital media while discussing what the theory of monitory democracy has come to mean for citizens regarding power perceptions and political participation. Two different and separate case studies will be investigated concerning the impact of traditional media in the late 1990s and internet online digital media in early 2010. Both cases are in regard to the tenure of two different Prime Ministers and their involvement concerning fraudulent payments. By exploring these two cases, this thesis demonstrates how old traditional media as well as new internet online digital media has impacted PNG politics differently within the pre-1990s and post-2007 internet era.

The first case involves allegations concerning PNG's ninth Prime Minister Bill Skate during his tenure between 1997-1998. Skate was alleged to have been involved in gang killings, political bribes and fraudulent payments worth 37 million Australian Dollars (22 million U.S. Dollars) while attempts to prosecute those involved were repeatedly being blocked during his time as Prime Minister. However, despite this information being reported in the newspaper and radio stations there was no public dissent and protest from citizens. Ironically, journalists as well as citizens supported Skate in arguing the case as one concerning defamation and smearing. The second case on the other hand involves PNG's Prime Minister Peter O'Neil during 2014-2016. Nevertheless, distinct from the later, news generated from Facebook and later picked up and reported by traditional media news sources succeeded in creating a brief backlash from certain citizens, associations and institutions. This case involves allegations uncovered in 2013 of O'Neil approving the payment of more than 30 million Australian Dollars (20 million U.S. Dollars) to one of PNG's largest law firms for services alleged to have never been rendered for in a letter signed in 2012. By reviewing these two cases, this thesis shows how the advent of the internet and online digital media within the post-2007 era has altered PNG politics within the contemporary digitalized era.

Next, it examines the responses from citizens who had either produced, shared, commented or simply viewed information online on Facebook regarding the second case in Port Moresby during 2016. For this section, it examines the motives explaining why some citizens decided to protest in opposition while others chose to refrain from participating. Moreover, it further analyses the different channels of participation among respondents who indicated participation either online, offline or through both channels.

For this purpose, feedback collected from semi-structured interviews, telephone interviews, e-mail interviews as well as close-ended questioners comprised of a random sample of thirty-one participants will be analysed. Respondents comprise of state legislators, police personal, parents, state employees, journalists, international observers, associations, investigators and students from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG).

Case Study 1: Prime Minister Bill Skate's Alleged Involvement in Fraud and Bribery Deals, 1997-1998

By campaigning for a transparent and clean government Bill Skate was elected governor of Port Moresby and eventually became the country's ninth Prime Minister on July, 1997. During his term in power Skate quickly began nationalizing important state institutions to consolidate his power. In November, during his first year in power Skate was exposed on the Australian Broadcasting Cooperation Television through a secret video recording. Filmed by a close business associate the video captured Skate discussing political bribes and gang killings (Kerr, 1999: 57).

During the same month the Post Courier newspaper published a related article revealing the Prime Minister paying bribes to the police minister and collaborators within the media (Philemon, 1997). However, due to the role of the Australian media this enabled the affair to be portrayed as interference by a former colonial power. Skate was able to use this to his advantage arguing the act as a set-up by foreign opposition to remove him from power (Sterba, 1998). Public dissent from both politicians and the public was minimal. Local reporters and journalists in support of the Prime Minister swiftly began to describe the issue as shame making for the country throughout traditional media sources (Standish, 1999: 10).

A year later, a journalist from the *Sydney Morning Herald* in Australia published another article involving the Prime Minister. This was in regard to fraud payments worth 37 million Australian Dollars (22 million U.S. Dollars) linked to Skate (Murdoch, 1998: 1). Prior to becoming Prime Minister while being governor of Port Moresby in June 1997 Skate had initiated an investigation into his office. Through his campaign as an anti-corruption champion an Australian detective Joe Noonan was tasked to lead this investigation. In an interview with Murdoch, Noonan revealed huge amounts of fraud, intimidation and death threats by criminals as well as the new governor of Port Moresby who had unexpectedly terminated investigations. Noonan finally fled the country after six months in fear of his life. Although this information was scraped off NBC (Standish, 1999: 10) it did get managed to be published in the Post Courier newspaper. A report from the newspaper article claimed that criminal gangs linked to Skate had been

fraudulently using his name to have cheques written out to avoid investigations of theft and false billing (Pacific Islands Report, 1998). Moreover, the report discussed how attempts to prosecute those involved were repeatedly being blocked and that investigators had to leave after threats and fear of murder were directed at them.

The head of Port Moresby's Catholic Church cited corruption, inflation, breakdown of services, unethical behavior among leaders and rising levels of unemployment to rally its members surrounding these issues (Standish, 1999: 14). In a bid to influence public opinion, he attempted to persuade members to change the government while warning the country of a popular uprising. However, despite attempts by investigators and churches to influence public opinion very little dissent was expressed by citizens in protest against the Prime Minister's actions. Members from the University of Papua New Guinea's (UPNG) famous NGO group Melanesian Solidarity were similarly left disillusioned and betrayed by some of its members (Robie, 1997). During the 1997 elections, thirteen of its Ex-members had successfully won seats (Griffin, 1997: 77) but ended up forging alliances with Skate's ruling party (Dixon, 1997). Ironically, are few of these included heads of popular mainstream churches (Waiko, 2003: 249). These left citizens mistrustful towards activism and movements of change.

Through nationalizing state institutions, the Prime Minister and his ruling party used its powers to replace competent and experienced senior officials with its less qualified political cronies. Since state institutional heads turned out to be severely compromised professional civil servants similarly became demoralized and apprehensive due to perceptions of fear in the bureaucracy (Standish, 1999: 8). Through dominating important state institutions particularly, the police, military, central bank and the Port Moresby City Administration, Skate was perceived untouchable. On July 1999, Skate was finally removed from power however not over public opposition but through a vote of no confidence in Parliament when ministers voted to elect a new Prime Minister and form a new government (ibid: 21).

Case Study 2: Parakagate Scandal, 2014-2016

The Parakagate Scandal involving the Prime Minister Peter O'Neil during 2012-2016 share similar characteristics relating to Bill Skate's tenure during 1997-1998. However, distinct from the later news generated from Facebook and later picked up and reported by traditional news media sources succeeded in creating a brief backlash from certain citizens, associations and institutions.

In a bid to gain support and legitimacy after forming a new government in 2011 the Prime Minister advocated a populist stance concerning the investigation of corruption as one of its government's main policy agendas. Through cabinet approval, O'Neil

established an anti-corruption agency – Investigative Task Force Sweep Team (ITFST), an anti-corruption agency tasked to investigate long-running allegations regarding the misuse of public funds. In 2013 the agency uncovered evidence involving the state's approval of more than 30 million Australian Dollars (20 million U.S. Dollars) to one of the country's biggest law firm Paraka Lawyers for services alleged to have never been rendered in a letter signed by the Prime Minister in 2012 (Walton, 2013). Hence the name Parakagate was given by the media characterizing the scandal.

After a year of investigations, the ITFST served the Prime Minister a warrant of arrest in 2014. This came after an Australian Forensic expert company Fairfax Media examined the evidence and confirmed the letter and signature to be authentic. However, the Prime Minister vehemently challenged this alleging forgery while his lawyers also challenged the warrant in court. In an attempt to further protect himself from arrest and trial the Prime Minister radically dismissed key law enforcement figures opposed to his decisions including the deputy police commissioner, his assistant and the attorney general (Davidson, 2014). Furthermore, his government gradually began to reduce and eventually slash annual budgetary funding for the ITFST (Walton and Hushang, 2017).

While these events unfolded in the courts the country's burgeoning civil society expressed its views on Facebook, Twitter and various blog sites (May, 2017: 8). These expressions online provided to citizens information about the case and what was happening in the courts. Most of the views expressed online communicated deep contempt and anger towards the Prime Minister and his use of power. Disgruntled students from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) as well as activists communicated their activities online by posting their demands for O'Neil to step down pending investigations. Furthermore, they began posting on Facebook and Twitter live videos of boycotts, rallies and protests against the Prime Minister actions (ibid: 6).

Following the Prime Minister's refusal to adhere to questioning by the ITFST students from the UPNG began boycotting classes and a petition was drafted accusing O'Neil of compromising the dignity and integrity of the Prime Minister's office and misusing legislative and executive powers (Matasororo, 2016: 15). In April 2016, a political activist attempted to organize a rally at a public park however this was called off by the police on account of it being unlawful and illegal (Yapumi, 2016). Other workers similarly went boycotted work and went on strike. For example, 'A National Disobedience Day' was organised by a coalition of workers in health, energy, aviation and maritime in support of student protests (May, 2017: 17).

During May 2016 students met at the UPNG campus with their parents, citizens and civil groups to present their petition to the Prime Minister. The next day O'Neil came out live on EM TV stating his intentions that he would not step down or resign from office. From then on, the UPNG students decided to organise a peaceful protest march to parliament.

However, before they could proceed walking from the campus to parliament they were quickly intercepted by the police. They attempted to arrest the UPNG student leader and other organizers of the protest however a scruffle instantly broke out among students and the police. The police responded by firing tear gas and live ammunitions at the students critically wounding eight (Tlozek, 2016). Massive public outcry in retaliation of the shooting of unarmed students on social media and traditional media lead the opposition government to push for a Vote of No Confidence through PNG's supreme court. However, during the parliament sitting the oppositions Vote of No Confidence was easily beaten by the Prime Minister and his ruling party by a margin of 85 to 21.

Following the shooting citizens simmered down in preparation for the national general election which was held in July the following year, 2017. Exposure of the Prime Minister's hard-line tactics especially online had already created distrust and anti-government sentiments which then became the rhetoric candidates and parties campaigned on. This separated voters into two separate blocks – pro and anti-government. The exposure of protests online managed to impact election results concerning the Prime Minister and his ruling party. From a total of 54 members that contested from his ruling party, only 22 retained their seats including the Prime Minister (Kabuni, 2017). Nevertheless, it remained the party comprising the highest number of members and was therefore invited to form a new government. By successful politicking through establishing coalitions with other smaller parties O'Neil and his ruling party once again managed to form a new government. This allowed him and his ruling party to return to power while the ITFST was finally disbanded in 2017 (Pokiton, 2017).

The Paradox of a New Political Culture on Power Perceptions and Political Participation in the New Digitalized Era

This chapter contemplates PNG's newly found political culture ushered in by the internet digital media while discussing what the theory of monitory democracy has come to mean for citizens concerning power perceptions and political participation. For this purpose, feedback collected from semi-structured interviews, telephone interviews, e-mail interviews as well as close-ended questioners comprised of a random sample of thirty-one participants will be analysed. Respondents comprise of state legislators, police personal, parents, state employees, journalists, international observers, associations, investigators and students from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). All participants either produced, shared, commented or simply viewed and read news (written posts, pictures or videos) online on Facebook regarding the Parakagate Protest in Port Moresby during 2016.

Before proceeding with the analysis, the chapter firstly identifies which respondents, and how many of them, actively participated online and offline against the scandal. It also points out which participants refused to participate. Secondly, based on the respondents who indicated refusal in participating, the chapter examines the central motives clarifying these decisions and non-action taken by this group of respondents. Thirdly, based on the respondents who on the other hand admitted participation the chapter explores the primary rationales explaining the different motives taken by this group of respondents. Fourthly, it investigates how respondents chose to participate whether online, offline or through both channels. This is then followed with a discussion analysing the impact of new online internet media concerning the scandal. Even more significantly, this section outlines whether or not PNG's new found political culture resulting from the internet online media has either united or further divided citizen perceptions and actions towards addressing the abuse of power. Adding on, from the analysis and findings the chapter assesses how John Keane's theory of monitory democracy should be refined in light of PNG's assessment and whether there are any implications to PNG's political system reflective as well to other developing countries. Lastly, the chapter ends with a conclusion summarizing the chapter's key ideas.

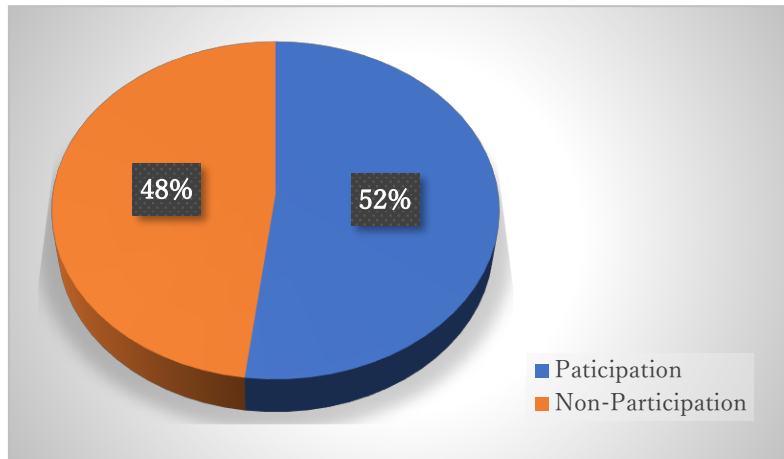
Participation and Non-Participation

According to the thirty-one respondents who part-took in this research, sixteen indicated some form of participation either online or offline while fifteen others admitted refusal from participating. Those participants comprise mainly of members within established workers' associations such as the PNG Doctor's Association as well as the National Academic Staff Association (NASA). In addition, a few politicians from the opposition, as well as a political activist, similarly indicated participation. A respondent from international NGO Transparency International PNG Chapter equally admitted participation. However, the majority of the sixteen respondents comprise largely of students from the UPNG.

The other fifteen participants that instead opted to refrain from participating mostly comprised of respondents affiliated primarily with state departments and institutions. These included police personals, a state legislator and a state lawyer both employees of the State Department of the National Courts and Solicitor, parents as well as a nurse. Two journalists employed separately by the country's biggest newspaper Post Courier and television network EM TV equally refrained from participating. A respondent from the Investigative Task Force Sweep Team (ITFST), the unit tasked to investigate the scandal similarly indicated refusal to participate in any form. A first year UPNG student respondent correspondingly decided to refrain from participating in the protest and left campus to return home. Two other respondents employed separately by a diplomatic

consulate and an international observers' institution also choose to abstain from protesting. Figure 5-1, on the next page indicate in percentage the number of respondents that participated in opposition against the scandal and those that refused.

Figure 5-1: Percentage of respondents indicating participation and non-participation



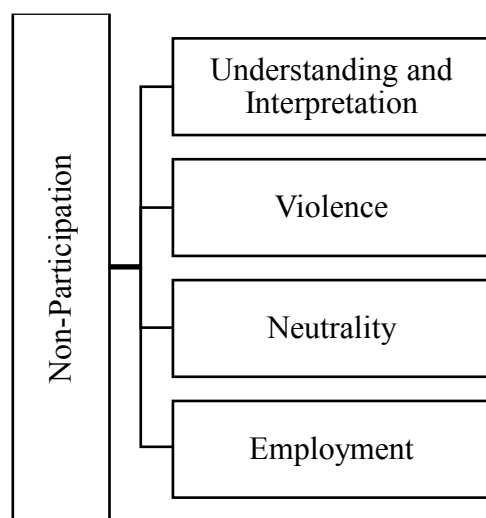
Base:
N = 31

Source: Author's Compilation

Motives for Non-Participation

Through analysing the responses from the fifteen participants who indicated refusal to participate against the scandal, four notable themes were generated. These four themes comprise of – understanding and interpretation, violence, neutrality and employment. Figure 5-2, illustrates a map outlining these four general themes, explaining why this group of respondents decided to refrain from participating. Each of these themes will be discussed in more detail separately.

Figure 5-2: Map of themes generated from non-participants



Source: Author's Compilation

Understanding and Interpretation

A few respondents (6) chose to refrain from participating as a result of variations in understanding and interpretation concerning the scandal. This was particularly focused around matters concerning how the issue should be addressed and by whom. Almost all participants echoed the argument that legality, democratic institutions and procedures matter and should take precedence above everything else. Any push for change outside these conventional institutions and procedures are undemocratic and unconstitutional. For instance, a state legislator contended that protesters especially UPNG students, knew very little regarding details of the case. The respondent states, *“these protests are politically motivated to stir up popular unrest and instability, this is a matter for the National Supreme Court and Parliament to address not protesters, this is how democracies function”*.¹ By stating his opinion on the matter the respondent subtly alluded to the legality of the process of change and the legitimacy of decisions made as a result.

On a different note, a female parent employed by the state Department of Transport discussed that she abstained from participating due to her children (two were students from UPNG). Her abstinence was to show to her children that she did not agree with the protests. She stressed on the fact that parents and guardians should not support acts of protests since this may jeopardize the education of students as well as the academic

¹ State Legislator. *Interview*. September 22, 2018.

year. The respondent argued, *“the cost of living particularly in Port Moresby has increased rapidly over the years, my responsibility to pay for my children’s education is for them to be educated not protest”*.² Overall, her decision to refrain from participating was based off increasing expenses both academically and monetary while also portraying a responsible role model.

Two police personal questioned admitted that protests of any sort and the occupation of public spaces were unconstitutional and illegal. Moreover, these practices similarly placed the well-being of the innocent and uninvolved at risk. In their defense, both police respondents conceded, *“protests in PNG create opportunities for public disorder, chaos and criminal activities, placing the lives and safety of the general public at risk”*.³

This response equally resonated with a state lawyer, employed by the state National Court and Solicitor. The respondent asserted, *“protesters did not receive authorization from the courts or the Port Moresby City Administration to protest this is illegal any protest action must first seek legal and administrative approval”*.⁴

Besides this, an employee employed by the same state legal department briefly outlined, *“any attempt to remove an elected Prime Minister from power, would only be legal through democratic institutional means, either by a Vote of No Confidence in Parliament or through elections, anything else outside these systems for change can be interpreted as unconstitutional and therefore, illegal”*.⁵

Violence

Decisions made to refrain from protesting especially offline similarly related to concerns involving its legality. This prompted some respondents (5) to avoid participation out of fear or the threat of violence. Interestingly, the fear of violence not only steamed from police brutality but also opportunists and petty thieves cloaked as genuine protesters. For example, two female parent respondents argued participation as a risky and dangerous exercise. One commented, *“we women are often vulnerable to opportunists who often prey on defenseless females, Port Moresby is not safe”*.⁶ Another respondent however, discussed a grueling experience after she witnessed the brutal beating of a few attendees during a public rally. She explains, *“I watched as an elderly man was beaten and punched and his camera taken from him this man didn’t pose a threat the police will not hesitate to use physical force or live bullets to stop*

² Female Parent. *Interview*. March 3, 2019.

³ Police Personals. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaires*. April 21, 2019 and August 18, 2019.

⁴ State Lawyer. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. May 16, 2019.

⁵ State National Court Employee. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. June 14, 2019.

⁶ Female Parent. *Interview*. March 3, 2019.

protesters".⁷ In the end she concluded that participating against the government was just not worth the risk since it incurred huge costs for results she perceived as unachievable.

A male parent respondent in contrast, expressed his objection to participate since this would only serve the interest of specific groups of people with unclear agendas. Adding on, he affirms that these groups even threaten anyone who refuse to participate with physical force and violence. The respondent mentioned, "*you have specific groups of students at UPNG intimidating and threatening other students who refused to protest, this only serve the purpose of these groups*".⁸

A journalist working with the country's biggest television network EM TV equally argued the threat of violence as a primary motive regarding her reluctance to participate. Based on her observation, journalists have often been perceived as state collaborators reporting bias or misleading information. These perceptions could potentially result in violence during protests from angry and frustrated protesters. The respondent admitted, "*we have often been miss-understood regarding our role as journalists by the public, we face violence from protesters who sometimes take out their anger and frustration on us*".⁹

Apart from the majority of UPNG students who participated against the scandal, there were a few that refrained. One of these students was a first-year female student respondent. Clarifying her reasons for non-participation the respondent commented, "*this was my first time to protest, it was frightening*".¹⁰

Neutrality

The majority of respondents (9) discussed a maintenance of neutrality as a central factor justifying their rejection to participate in protest. This was particularly evident among respondents from important state institutions, media organizations, diplomatic and international observers' institutions. A common theme among these group of respondents was due to the fact that they risked compromising the reputation of their institutions as well as their carriers.

Two police personal for instance, when questioned commented that it was a requirement according to their duties to remain neutral during such occasions. Only by remaining natural, they explained that they could carry out their responsibilities effectively. One

⁷ Female Parent. *Interview*. May 24, 2019.

⁸ Male Parent. *Interview*. July 21, 2019.

⁹ EM TV Journalist. *E-mail Interview*. March 20, 2019.

¹⁰ UPNG Female Student. *Telephone Interview*. August 3, 2019.

police respondent claimed, *“our duty is to maintain law and order, not create it”*.¹¹ Another police respondent instead noted, *“only neutral policemen can legitimately use force during protests to maintain order”*.¹²

On the same note, two respondents from the state National Court and Solicitor explained that they risked compromising the reputation of the institution they worked under. Both respondents contended that this was fundamentally important since the case involved high-level politicians with an exceptionally large amount of money. This meant that employees employed under the institution directly presiding over the case were strictly forbidden to protest in any form. A state lawyer wrote, *“we risked compromising the courts as well as our legal and justice system”*.¹³ Another court employee similarly remarked, *“I work with the justice system, I can’t protest”*.¹⁴

Similar arguments were also expressed from views indicated by a journalist with EM TV as well as Post Courier newspaper. The former argued, *“TV is still the biggest supplier of information, we should not be an outlet stirring up unrest compromising the quality of news content”*.¹⁵ The later however pointed out, *“we can be liable to legal suites especially due to ongoing investigations since the case has not yet been sorted out in court”*.¹⁶

A respondent from the state watchdog ITFST directly involved in investigating the case similarly maintained abstinence due to the severity and sensitivity of the case as well as the organization’s stance on the issue. Participation may jeopardize the task force’s stance as being politically and independently neutral. The respondent explained, *“the taskforce is politically and independently neutral, we have to be neutral for citizens to trust that we are not politically bias”*.¹⁷

On the other hand, a respondent from an international observer group as well as a member from a diplomatic mission in Port Moresby equally refrained from participating as a result of the case being an internal domestic matter. The former stated, *“this is an internal issue”*.¹⁸ The later similarly commented, *“conflict of interest”*.¹⁹

¹¹ Police Personal. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. April 21, 2019.

¹² Police Personal. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. August 18, 2019.

¹³ State Lawyer. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. May 16, 2019.

¹⁴ State National Court Employee. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. June 14, 2019.

¹⁵ EM TV Journalist. *E-mail Interview*. March 20, 2019.

¹⁶ Post Courier Newspaper Journalist. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. March 19, 2019.

¹⁷ Investigative Task Force Sweep Team. *E-mail Interviews*. February 5, 2019 and March 12, 2019.

¹⁸ International Observer. Parakagate Scandal. *Questionnaire*. August 16, 2019.

¹⁹ Diplomatic Embassy. *E-mail Interview*. May 20, 2019.

Employment

The least number of respondents (3) discussed the motive of employment as a reason for non-participation. This was expressed mainly among employees from state administrative, legal and law enforcement departments. Specific instructions from the State Chief Secretary were sent out to all heads of departments as well as employees of state government departments. These instructions clearly instructed state employees not to participate. Boarding motives of neutrality, non-adherence to these instructions would result in immediate suspension and termination. For example, a male parent respondent employed with the state Department of Provincial and Local Level Government as well as a police member were adamant concerning these instructions. The former clarified, *“we were instructed by the Chief Secretary, not to participate or we’d risk immediate suspension or termination”*.²⁰ Adding on, the respondent subtly alluded that finding employment particularly in a city like Port Moresby was a long and at times, difficult process. Participation was simply not worth the risk since unemployment was too great a cost. The later similarly commented, *“we were specifically instructed by the Police Commissioner not to participate”*.²¹

A state lawyer equally opted to refrain from participation based on retaining his employment status. However, in contrast to the previous respondents, his motives were much more glaring. In his assessment, he discusses two pressing arguments concerning employment. The respondent wrote, *“government protest is risky for many government employees because the state is the largest employer in PNG, if we lose our jobs our families especially kids would suffer since Port Moresby is such an expensive city to live in”*.²²

Motives for Participation

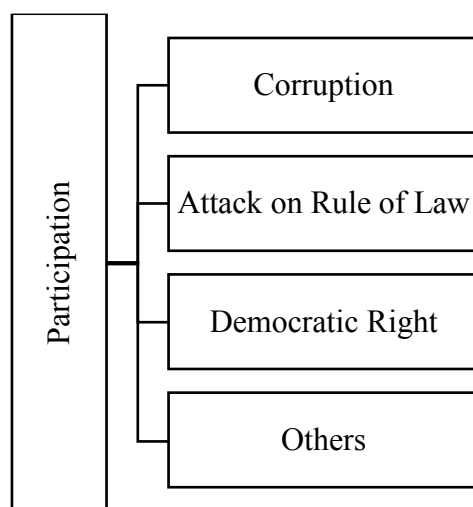
By analyzing the responses from the sixteen participants that protested, four important themes were generated. These four themes include – corruption, attack on rule of law, democratic right and others. Figure 5-3, depicts a map illustrating these themes explaining why some citizens chose to protest in response to the scandal. These themes will be discussed in more detail separately.

²⁰ Male Parent. *Interview*. July 21, 2019.

²¹ Police Personal. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. August 18, 2019.

²² State Lawyer. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. May 16, 2019.

Figure 5-3: Map of themes generated from participants



Source: Author's Compilation

Corruption

A significant number of respondents (8) argued high-level corruption as their primary motive for participation. This largely included the direct implication and alleged involvement of the Prime Minister during his tenure in power.

Most respondents identified high-level corruption especially among politicians as a big problem in PNG. For instance, a respondent with Transparency International PNG (TI PNG) vocally explained, *“corruption is a long-standing governance problem in PNG this is indicated by our annual Corruption Perception Index Reports”*.²³

Two senior lecturers from UPNG, on the other hand, responded by discussing the responsibility of holding public office and performing public duties in association with morality and principles. One respondent wrote, *“those in public office should have a higher moral standard, this was a breach of public trust and misuse of power”*.²⁴ Another respondent equally noted, *“the Prime Minister is not fit to hold public office anymore, he should step down”*.²⁵

A majority of UPNG students also participated due to high-level corruption however, their concerns were much more specific. This directly related to their future prospects concerning employment as well as those citizens residing in the rural villages. For

²³ Transparency International PNG. *Interview*. January 4, 2019.

²⁴ UPNG Lecturer. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. August 1, 2018.

²⁵ UPNG Lecturer. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. December 8, 2018.

example, one student respondent mentioned, *“if corruption continues like this, we will not find good jobs later and our qualifications would become meaningless”*.²⁶ Another respondent instead stated, *“we are fighting on behalf of our people in the village”*.²⁷

Beside these responses, two other UPNG student respondents contended that they were equally fighting for those citizens less fortunate who are poor and reside in rural villages throughout the country. It was believed that due to the misuse of power by politicians, these unfortunate group of citizens were affected the most. One respondent wrote, *“many citizens in rural villages continue to suffer without basic services due to corruption, we are the voice of these silent majority fighting against corruption in PNG”*.²⁸ In a similar manner, another student commented, *“why will my people in the village continue to suffer at the expense of politicians at the top, we have the power to stop this”*.²⁹

These arguments were also echoed by a member from the opposition. The respondent asked, *“why are citizens in PNG rich with natural resources suffering? Corruption doesn’t just steal money from citizens but also their future. The country is blessed with so many natural resources but due to greed and corruption most of our citizens continue to suffer”*.³⁰

Attack on Rule of Law

A substantial number of participants (8) equally chose to participate in protests due to perceptions of an attack on the rule of law. This mainly involved the Prime Minister who had consistently attempted to avoid questioning and arrest by stifling investigations, challenging legal court decisions, replacing key bureaucrats and refusing to step down from office. For instance, a respondent from the NASA wrote, *“despite power, status or politics the rule of law should be maintained and fairly applied”*.³¹

Another respondent from the opposition as well as a political activist questioned why the Prime Minister had to go to great lengths if he had nothing to hide? The former admitted, *“we questioned the Prime Minister about the scandal, who had ordered the shooting of unarmed students, he should also explain why investigations were terminated”*.³² The later however, viewed the Prime Minister as being one immune from the law. The later instead noted, *“there are two separate laws, one only applicable*

²⁶ UPNG Student. *Telephone Interview*. February 18, 2019.

²⁷ UPNG Student. *Telephone Interview*. February 13, 2019.

²⁸ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. April 2, 2019.

²⁹ UPNG student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. March 24, 2019

³⁰ Opposition Member. *Interview*. February 17, 2019.

³¹ National Academic Staff Association. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. February 11, 2019.

³² Opposition Member. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. February 9, 2019.

*to the Prime Minister and another for ordinary citizens”.*³³

The other remaining respondents all comprising of UPNG students likewise participated in protests based on similar motives. One student respondent described the attack in reference to authoritarian tendencies, indicating that democracy in PNG was in trouble. The respondent remarked, *“the Prime Minister thinks he is above the law, PNG is moving towards an authoritarian system”*.³⁴ Another student respondent affirmed, *“the Prime Minister must step down and let the rule of law take its course”*.³⁵

On the other hand, other UPNG student respondents understood that the best way citizens could trust politicians, legal establishments and PNG’s democratic system was if the Prime Minister stepped down to allow for investigations. One respondent expressed dissatisfaction stating, *“our system of government is being taken over by powerful politicians who dictated our courts. How can we believe in them anymore, are they fair?”*.³⁶ Another student respondent commented, *“we vote politicians to represent us, we trust them with our votes. How can we trust the Prime Minister anymore?”*.³⁷ Yet still another student wrote, *“if only the Prime Minister step down from office and allow investigation we will stop protests”*.³⁸

Democratic Right

Student respondents from UPNG, NASA, PNG Doctor’s Association and Transparency International (7) all agreed that it was a democratic right to collectively speak up against the Prime Minister and the misuse of public office. UPNG students were primarily vocal concerning this motive. According to the UPNG student representative council president, university students were perceived to be the country’s only neutral body and voice of the eight million silent majority population. For example, the UPNG student president explained by answering, *“if no one will stand up, then it is up to students to take the responsibility by leading the protest against the Prime Minister”*.³⁹

Three other student respondents likewise discussed similar reasons relatable to motives concerning democratic rights. However, they claimed that since they were being educated at the country’s top university thus, they represented the next generation of future leaders and had the power to change the government. Therefore, they had every right to protest on behalf of themselves as well as the people of PNG. One student

³³ Political Activist. *E-mail Interviews*. June 15, 2019 and June 18, 2019.

³⁴ UPNG Student. *Telephone Interview*. February 13, 2019.

³⁵ UPNG Student. *Telephone Interview*. February 18, 2019.

³⁶ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. March 24, 2019

³⁷ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. June 2, 2019.

³⁸ UPNG Students. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. April 26, 2019.

³⁹ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. April 7, 2019.

respondent stated, “we are young and educated we have the power to bring change to this system by uniting together in protest”.⁴⁰ Another student respondent claimed, “we are the next future generation of leaders, we have the right to protest”.⁴¹ Adding on, another student commented, “we don’t fight for our rights, that’s why they don’t care, we must know that we have the right to defend our right to speak up”.⁴²

A respondent from the PNG Doctor’s Association also agreed that it was a democratic right to protest. The respondent further discussed that in the past citizens have remained ignorant concerning national issues. However, due to Facebook younger and more educated citizens are taking a more proactive role in speaking up against the abuse of power. By comparing his experience when he was in university and the new generation of younger tech savvy generation, he explained that the younger and newer generation represented a new era of proactive citizens. However, the respondent further added that its members’ stance to protest were not only in line with students from UPNG but also included other reasons. Nevertheless, the respondent still commented, “students are the next future leaders and the generation that will suffer the most, they have every right to protest”.⁴³

Lastly, a respondent from TI PNG, denounced the actions of the Prime Minister as well as the police describing these practices as those practiced by police states. The respondent expressed this by stating, “fundamental democratic citizen rights to protest were suppressed by state institutions which were used against government critics”.⁴⁴

Others

Oddly, other important motives such as inflation, economic mismanagement, influencing public opinion and generating support received the least number of responses (4). For example, a respondent from the PNG Doctor’s Association and NASA were the only two respondents to argue the scandal in relation to inflation and economic mismanagement. The former, interestingly described the country’s public health condition as one characterized by poor and lack of proper medical drugs and facilities. The respondent noted, “the wealthy have access to better health facilities from private medical services or pay for treatment overseas particularly in Australia, Singapore or Philippines. Other citizens less fortunate are left to suffer. This is not fair”.⁴⁵ The later, in contrast contended that they along with the university have been

⁴⁰ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. June 2, 2019.

⁴¹ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. March 24, 2019

⁴² UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. April 26, 2019

⁴³ PNG Doctor’s Association. *E-mail Interview*. May 2, 2019

⁴⁴ Transparency International PNG. *Interview*. January 4, 2019.

⁴⁵ PNG Doctor’s Association. *E-mail Interview*. May 2, 2019.

ignored by the state for too long. Poor academic facilities, internet, remuneration, accommodation and staff welfare were perceived to be neglected issues. The respondent commented, *“we have been neglected by the government for too long. The university currently has poor academic facilities, internet and remuneration for academics. Accommodation and staff welfare are big problems”*.⁴⁶

Apart from associations, a UPNG lecturer as well as a political activist asserted that they participated in order to influence public opinion. The first respondent wrote, *“we protested to influence politicians from the government to move to the opposition for the up-and-coming parliament sitting to remove the Prime Minister by a Vote of No Confidence”*.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the second respondent attempting to take an active role outside the university participated in order to bring together other like-minded citizens to generate public support. The respondent claimed, *“people in Port Moresby are too afraid to protest but if we come together this will help other citizens too fearful to come out and protest. There is strength in numbers”*.⁴⁸

How did citizens and institutions participate?

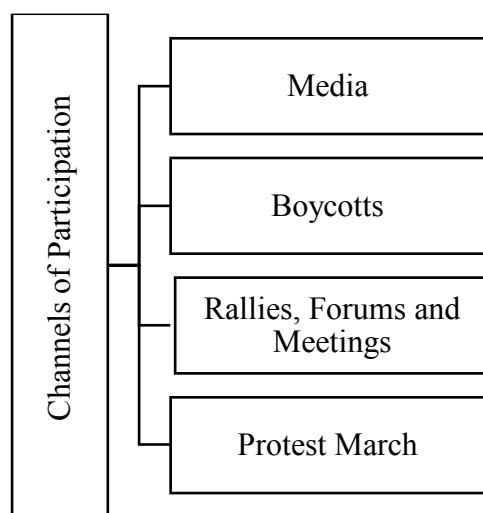
Protestants were also asked to explain how they participated in monitoring the scandal. This included participation both online and offline. Based on assessing these responses, four main themes were defined and analyzed – media (both traditional and social media), boycotts, rallies, forums and meetings and protest march. Figure 5-4, displays a map identifying these four themes. Each of these themes will be discussed in more detail separately.

⁴⁶ National Academic Staff Association. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. February 11, 2019.

⁴⁷ UPNG Lecturer. Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. December 8, 2018.

⁴⁸ Political Activist. *E-mail Interview*. July 18, 2019.

Figure 5-4: Map of themes concerning channels of participation.



Source: Author's Compilation

Media: Traditional and Social Media

The majority of participating respondents (10) admitted participating through domestic television network (EM TV), international online news (Aljazeera and BBC) and on Facebook. Many of the respondents indicated that traditional media sources in PNG particularly EM TV and the National were not reporting what was happening. Protesters mainly learned of what was happening from international online news and on social media. For example, a member from the opposition explained that exposing powerful individuals especially on social media provided new avenues to communicate directly with citizens especially the younger generation. However, the respondent also discussed that this was dangerous and therefore, merely revealing the abuse of power in PNG can be classified as a significant act of participating against the misuse of power. The respondent asserted by stating, *"citizens provide alternate views from TV and newspaper, they have not always been fair in reporting. This assist keeping transparency and accountability. This is dangerous but I believe the people have the right to know"*.⁴⁹

This response was also in line with another member from the opposition who claimed that he was able to provide alternative information on social media concerning the scandal. The respondent commented, *"as leaders we have the responsibility to tell the*

⁴⁹ Opposition Member. *Interview*. February 17, 2019.

truth to citizens, social media provided a platform to speak the truth”.⁵⁰

A respondent from the NASA as well as the PNG Doctor’s Association together similarly admitted participation by expressing their support of UPNG student protests and other socio economic-issues on EM TV. The former expressed that, *“during the protest, we were approached by journalists from EM TV asking if we could be interviewed, this was a good opportunity to show our support”*.⁵¹ In contrast, the later had to personally call EM TV to ask for an interview. The respondent affirmed, *“we felt the responsibility to come out and show our support. We couldn’t be silent anymore as we watched our people continue to suffer. We called EM TV and we were interviewed for around 40 minutes. This was also featured on EM TV 6 pm news”*.⁵²

Besides participating through domestic television network EM TV, four UPNG student respondents also added that they participated through social media Facebook and on international news network Aljazeera and BBC. Two student respondents specifically discussed creating Facebook pages such as #UPNG4PNG which eventually became the rallying theme for the student protests. This Facebook page was created for two specific reasons. Firstly, to communicate with the younger population and secondly, to bypass traditional media particularly newspapers which were perceived to be spreading fake news. According to the first student respondent he explained, *“Facebook is very common among the younger population, we believe we can reach out to these group on Facebook”*.⁵³ The second respondent instead mentioned, *“Facebook is where everyone can see what is really going on, what we are fighting for. There are no edits and bias like those in the Post Courier Newspaper. They reported that I was carrying a gun, this is fake”*.⁵⁴

On the other hand, two other UPNG student respondents believed that participating on international news networks Aljazeera and BBC by being interviewed, foreigners could see how UPNG students represented a new generation fighting against a dishonest and unfair government. One student respondent asserted, *“we want the world to see what we are fighting for, it is not easy but we have no choice. We want to see change”*.⁵⁵ Another student respondent explained, *“if we get support from other countries like Australia, we can change this government”*.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Opposition Member. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. February 9, 2019.

⁵¹ National Academic Staff Association. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. February 11, 2019.

⁵² PNG Doctor’s Association. *E-mail Interview*. May 2, 2019.

⁵³ UPNG Student. *Telephone Interview*. February 13, 2019.

⁵⁴ UPNG Student. *Telephone Interview*. February 18, 2019.

⁵⁵ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. April 7, 2019.

⁵⁶ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. March 24, 2019.

A UPNG lecturer and a respondent from Transparency International PNG, similarly expressed participation through both domestic and international news networks as well as publications. However, these were based on different concerns. The former admitted that during an interview with EM TV the respondent argued for the establishment of an Independent Commission Against Corruption Bill to be passed as a law. This would legally assist and warrant effective investigations and prosecutions regarding cases of similar magnitude. The respondent commented, *“as an academic, I want people to know what is really important. The interview gave me the chance to speak to different people. We talk about big things like development and economy but we cannot even manage corruption”*.⁵⁷ The later however revealed that when interviewed by Aljazeera and BBC, he focused largely on the fact that very little was done concerning the case. Moreover, attempts to return the money had been unsuccessful. The respondent remarked, *“people have to know what is going on and demand accountability, right now people don’t really understand that. Huge amounts are being misused without oversight”*.⁵⁸

Boycotts

A few respondents (8) participated directly by refusing to go to work and attend classes. For instance, a respondent from the PNG Doctor’s Association and NASA explained that they boycotted work for close to three months. The former revealed that although the majority of its members refused to go to work, others chose not to. By clarifying this position, the respondent explained, *“a few doctors and nurses refused to participate in the boycott, some still felt a moral and ethical duty towards patients”*.⁵⁹ The later in contrast, discussed that its members were more adamant in their stance. Adding on, the respondent commented, *“we were prepared to return teaching and even conduct extra remedial classes to make up for lost time if the Prime Minister payed attention to our demands as well as the students”*.⁶⁰

Four UPNG student respondents similarly refused to attend classes over a period of four months. This was based on two primary reasons. Firstly, to show student solidarity and support and secondly, since the majority of students and lecturers equally refused to attend lectures and tutorials. For example, one student respondent expressed, *“during our university student council meeting, all student representatives agreed that we should boycott classes in protest”*.⁶¹ Another student respondent similarly insisted, *“there was*

⁵⁷ UPNG Lecturer. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. December 8, 2018.

⁵⁸ Transparency International PNG. *Interview*. January 4, 2019.

⁵⁹ PNG Doctor’s Association. *Email Interview*. May 2, 2019.

⁶⁰ National Academic Staff Association. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. February 11, 2019.

⁶¹ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. April 7, 2019.

no point in going to classes because everyone was protesting".⁶² Interestingly, one student respondent admitted, *"at first I did not take boycotts seriously but on the second week when we went to attend class, there was no one inside the room"*.⁶³ Being unclear whether to go ahead and exactly how to proceed during the first week of protests, one student respondent similarly revealed, *"at first we didn't think we could boycott classes but through Facebook, awareness, posters, and campus conversations we gained the students support. This took time, many students were unsure whether to go to class or boycott class"*.⁶⁴

A UPNG lecturer as well as a tutor refused to attend classes in protest against the Prime Minister to step down and in support of student protests. The first respondent admitted, *"I boycotted teaching and joined the student protest against the Prime Minister. During the boycott we collected signatures from students to petition the Prime Minister to step down"*.⁶⁵ The second respondent explained, *"students refused to attend classes in protest, I also refused to attend classes since students were not interested in attending classes"*.⁶⁶

Rallies, Forums and Meetings

During boycotts, a number of respondents (8) discussed organizing and attending rallies, forums and meetings. These activities were mainly organized by two group of respondents. Firstly, students from UPNG organized forums and meetings on campus to create awareness and support among other students regarding the scandal. For example, four UPNG student respondents confirmed attending forums and meetings organized on campus. Out of this, two student respondents admitted attending these events to show their support, to better understand what the student protest was about and to find out what kind of actions the students were planning to take. One student commented, *"we wanted to learn what was going on. Since everyone did not attend class, we wanted to know what other students were up to. We all meet during the forum on campus"*.⁶⁷ Another student wrote, *"I attended the forums with my friends to listen to students talk about the protests"*.⁶⁸

On the other hand, two other student respondents discussed that they directly assisted in organizing and talking during these events on campus. One student respondent stated, *"we wanted students to see that we are fighting for the good of this country. If we want*

⁶² UPNG Student. "Parakagate Scandal". *Questionnaire*. March 24, 2019.

⁶³ UPNG Students. "Parakagate Scandal". *Questionnaire*. April 26, 2019

⁶⁴ UPNG Student. "Parakagate Scandal". *Questionnaire*. June 2, 2019.

⁶⁵ UPNG Lecturer. "Parakagate Scandal. *Questionnaire*. December 8, 2018.

⁶⁶ UPNG Tutor. "Parakagate Scandal". *Questionnaire*. October 24, 2018.

⁶⁷ UPNG Student. "Parakagate Scandal". *Questionnaire*. June 2, 2019.

⁶⁸ UPNG Student. "Parakagate Scandal". *Questionnaire*. April 7, 2019.

to represent PNG, we have to take a stance”.⁶⁹ Another student respondent insisted, “as a representative of the university students, I had to let the students know that if we do not do anything we will continue to suffer”.⁷⁰

A respondent from NASA also clarified that most of its members had attended these events organized on campus by students. The respondent noted, “we supported the students by attending forums organized on campus, it was a movement for change”.⁷¹

Secondly, public rallies were also organized outside the university campus at public parks. The majority of these rallies were organized by political activists through Facebook and word of mouth. These gatherings were to create spaces and opportunities for a variety of citizens to attend and also speak openly and freely in order to set the agenda concerning corruption involving politicians. One political activist wrote, “when the police came to stop the rally, we presented our petition. As citizens we have a constitutional right to protest against the government. We presented our petition for the Prime Minister to step down”.⁷² A lecturer from UPNG also indicated that he had participated by attending a few of these rallies held at one of Port Moresby’s public park. The respondent admitted, “I attended to show my support outside the university. When the police wanted to arrest organizers, we yelled at them to let them go”.⁷³

Finally, a respondent from the PNG Doctor’s Association discussed that its members had also organized a public forum to openly express their stance on the issue however, these were organized separately. In describing their stance, the respondent maintained, “we are a separate and independent association. We support students but we also have other agendas we think are important to our members”.⁷⁴

Protest March

The least number of respondents (6) discussed an attempt to organize a peaceful protest march to parliament. This was after five months of consistent public media protest, public rallies, forums and meetings. For example, a UPNG lecturer admitted that he along with students attempted to organize a peaceful protest march from the university to parliament. However, the march was quickly contained after police opened fire at students. The respondent admitted, “this was the last phase of the protests, there was nothing else we could do”.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ UPNG Student. *Telephone Interview*. February 18, 2019.

⁷⁰ UPNG Student. *Telephone Interview*. February 13, 2019.

⁷¹ National Academic Staff Association. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. February 11, 2019.

⁷² Political Activist. *E-mail Interviews*. June 15, 2019 and July 18, 2019.

⁷³ UPNG Lecturer. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. December 8, 2018.

⁷⁴ PNG Doctor’s Association. *E-mail Interview*. May 2, 2019.

⁷⁵ UPNG Lecturer. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. December 8, 2018.

Apart from this, the only group of respondents who confirmed participating in the attempted peaceful protest march were mostly UPNG students. Two student respondents explained that it was supposed to be a peaceful protest march to parliament. The protest march was a final act of resistance mainly by UPNG students to coincide with a parliament debate which was to be held on the same day. One student respondent stated, *“we could not wait any longer, we protested inside the university, even petitioned the Prime Minister but he did not step down”*.⁷⁶ Another student respondent instead commented, *“standing to march to parliament, I felt pride and patriotic. Many students waved the PNG flag, we were not carrying any sticks or stones”*.⁷⁷

On the other hand, two other student respondents revealed having a heated argument with the police who had ordered them to return to campus. In response, they claimed that the police had no right to stop the protest. Adding on, they explained that the police were being used by the Prime Minister to stop the protest march. For instance, one student respondent contended, *“I argued with the police because they had no right to stop us but they came forward to arrest me”*.⁷⁸ Another student admitted, *“we formed a barricade while holding our hands in the air to show this was a peaceful protest and we were unarmed”*.⁷⁹ At least one other student respondent also expressed that after the police opened fired at students, they all dispersed and chaos quickly broke out. The student respondent expressed, *“we were shot without concern by live bullets, we were terrified and ran for our lives”*.⁸⁰

How internet digital media exacerbate divisions unexpectedly creating new social identity groups and cleavages

Based on the variety of responses explaining why citizens chose to participate in protest against the scandal it is clear that internet digital media is beginning to have a liberalising effect on certain members, associations and institutions within PNG’s society. This is particularly evident within urban cities like Port Moresby where improvements in internet services and online digital media have been more evident. In addition, individual citizens for example lecturers, university students, political activists as well as a variety of associations and institutions are today gradually seeing eye to eye concerning national issues. As a result, different citizens are able to directly participate collectively outside traditionally accepted channels of political participation such as elections. These new avenues of political participation largely symbolize a new era of citizen openness,

⁷⁶ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. April, 7, 2019.

⁷⁷ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. April 26, 2019

⁷⁸ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. June 2, 2019.

⁷⁹ UPNG Student. *Telephone Interview*. February 13, 2019.

⁸⁰ UPNG Student. “Parakagate Scandal”. *Questionnaire*. March 24, 2019.

awareness and proactiveness in monitoring public power. This is comparatively distinct from the era previously dominated by traditional media. During this period, due to strict control over traditional media outlets, information and journalistic practices, citizens remained largely passive regarding national matters and were more concerned with local issues. Political participation was also reduced exclusively to elections and were predominantly based along different but yet closed regional, cultural and traditional social identity groups and cleavages.

However, after the dawn of internet digital media in 2007 and the liberalization of information online different citizens, associations and institutions are increasingly taking a more proactive stance in jointly monitoring power both online and offline. Interestingly, these monitoring practices are today able to move outside and beyond local concerns. This is particularly evident by the ever-increasing level of awareness and understanding concerning public power and public office, general living standards and negative perceptions of future prospects from participating respondents. Adding on, a few citizens have also become conscious regarding justice, impartiality and their democratic citizen right to protest whenever powerful politicians misuse laws that guarantee these principles. Moreover, they are similarly able to better evaluate the performance of certain public institutions in reference to political misconduct and abuse of power. These improvements in citizen awareness and understanding have nurtured proactive and new thriving political practices in monitoring power. As a result, this has given rise to the creation of a new burgeoning political culture reflected by strong citizen demand for transparency, accountability and openness.

However, this thesis also argues that despite significant improvements resulting from new internet digital media other citizens on the other hand, have also become ever more divided concerning the abuse of power. This has equally resulted in diverging perceptions concerning who should monitor public power, how public power should be monitored and through which channels. Breaking from past historical and cultural social identity groups and cleavages predominant during the era dominated by traditional media respondents indicate the emergence of two new distinct social identity groups and cleavages. Firstly, participating respondents comprise of a group of citizens that come from fairly liberal institutions. This comprise of university academics, students and political activists. These citizens have made clearer the power of liberal entities such as associations and NGO institutions like the UPNG, student representative council, Transparency International as well as different workers associations. Apart from past traditional and cultural social identity groups and cleavages which citizens have commonly identified themselves under this new group is today able to collectively mobilize and connect different citizens. This new group is what this research defines as *progressives*.

The members of the group progressives comprise of different age groups, gender and most importantly, traditional and cultural social identity groups and cleavages. Key factors that categorize members within this group are the liberal institutions they are associated with. Adding on, this also include generation not exclusively involving age groups but also the tech and internet generation. The majority of its members tend to be born within the late 1990s and early 2000. Hence, they tend to be younger in their mid-late twenties, better educated and politically minded. Other members from this group also come from associations and institutions that are open and non-partisan towards particular individuals such as past traditional social identity groups. Values and interests within this group cross-cut across different individuals of different traditional identity groups. These associations and institutions tend to foster collectiveness among its members. Lastly, participatory actions against the state by citizens within this group comparatively incur lesser direct server consequences.

Secondly, the majority of the non-participants comprise of respondents directly related to the state. This is particularly evident through employment with important state institutions. This comprise of state legal employees, state transport and local government employees, police, journalists and diplomatic international institutions. These institutions are comparatively more conservative and less enthusiastic of changing traditional perceptions and practices established during the pre-2007 era. Instead, they are rather conformists to traditional notions of bureaucratic and legal processes while also having an immense fear of state repercussions. Comparatively conservative than the progressives this new group is defined in this research as *loyalists*. Similarly, unique to the post-2007 era of internet digital media, this new group is able to bridge together citizens from different traditional and cultural social identity groups and cleavages. Members are comparatively reserved and identify themselves as well as others based on conservative values and interests. Members within this new group chose to refrain from participating and instead continued working thereby showing their loyalty and support for the state.

Key factors that categorize members within this new group are primarily employment and occupation and the roles and responsibilities that come with this. Members within the loyalists similarly do not cut clearly across age groups. The majority tend to be born within the late 1970s and early 1980s, periods where traditional media was most active. The majority tend to be older men in their late-forties and mid-fifties and comparatively more practical rather than visionary. In addition, members tend to distrust and refuse to adopt new online modes of information seeking and communication. Furthermore, the loyalists are comparatively less receptive to changing conventional bureaucratic and legal processes of change. Members also tend to come from institutions largely controlled by the state and are comparatively loose with less unified membership associations. Lastly, loyalists are also comparatively less inclined to protest against the state since it directly does not serve their interests.

In a recent opinion poll conducted by the National Newspaper online, citizens were asked to vote whether they agreed with moving a motion in parliament of no confidence in order to remove James Marape, PNG's current Prime Minister succeeding Peter O'Neil. From a total of 3,998 participants that voted, 1,968 or 49.22 percent of respondents votes 'No' while another 2,030 or 50.78 percent of respondents voted 'Yes'. Although specifics regarding age, occupation and gender were not clearly identified, this data does shed some light concerning two different political factions in PNG politics. This is due to an almost even split among voters indicating support towards the Prime Minister of the day and those that voted to remove him from office. On one hand, you have one group that supports the government of the day. This group voted to keep the current Prime Minister thus indicating no changes in government. The other group do not support the Prime Minister and instead voted to remove him thus, projecting changes in the government, Prime Ministership and important state department ministers. Figure 5-5 show the results from this opinion poll survey taken from the National Newspaper online.

Figure 5-5: Opinion poll whether to move a motion in parliament of no confidence to remove the current Prime Minister James Marape.

■ OPINION POLL

Do you agree for a motion of no confidence to be moved against Prime Minister James Marape?

No

49.22%, 1968 votes

Yes

50.78%, 2030 votes

Total votes: 3998

Source: The National Newspaper Online. Opinion Poll whether to move a motion to remove James Marape as Prime Minister. Accessed 3 December, 2020 from <https://www.thenational.com.pg/parlt-court-case-adjourned/>

According to Keane, new internet digital media has become significant in connecting and mobilizing different citizens in opposition against the abuse of power. However, for the case of PNG it merely made clearer long-lasting divisions that have been present among the people. However, indifferent to the era after 2007 cleavages outside traditional and cultural groups had been latent. According to the Parakagate Scandal, citizens collected

new information from new internet digital media however they interpreted this strictly to their own favor. As a result, this separated and clustered citizens into two different social identity groups which additionally dictated their participatory motives, reluctance and channels of participation in monitoring the case. Moreover, while new internet digital media has created awareness among a few citizens it has similarly and paradoxically further exacerbated divisions by dividing citizens based on their generation, institutions of association, socio-conditions and their relation to the state. As citizens come to interpret information from new internet digital media this has also created the emergence of two separate social identity groups and cleavages where a variety of citizens are beginning to identify and associate themselves. These two new social identity groups and cleavages were comparatively indiscernible during the years before 2007. However, due to new internet digital media in the post-2007 era this has made these new social identity groups and cleavages ever clearer and more distinguishable.

Similarly diverging from the period before 2007, progressives and loyalists indicate novel identity groups outside traditional and cultural cleavages which were not present before the introduction of new internet digital media. During this era, cultural, traditional and regional alliances were the primary factors that divided citizens mainly based on local concerns. However, after 2007 new social identity groups and cleavages have come to divide citizens based on socio factors such as employment, occupation, education, income and generation. These groups are increasingly emerging to define a new era in PNG Politics. Interestingly, these emerging social identity groups have come to unite a cross section of citizens encompassing different cultural, traditional and regions together. Nevertheless, they have further alienated these groups into two different and separate groups at the same time additionally deepening divisions among citizens. This has made it challenging for citizens to unite and participate in monitoring the abuse of power by powerful politicians outside and beyond elections within PNG.

In arguing the theory of monitory democracy in PNG, Keane's theory should be refined. Instead of uniting citizens in opposition against the misuse of power new internet digital media has further widened divisions among citizens creating emerging new social identity groups and cleavages. This thesis argues that Keane's arguments of the new publicity and muckraking do not always translate into clear and unified monitory perceptions and practices against the abuse of power. Moreover, connectivity and unity among a cross-section of citizens according to the PNG case have proven to be more difficult. This is particularly important since national rather than local issues cut across different citizens from different traditional, cultural and socio backgrounds made up of are wide variety of factors. This is largely significant for most non-Western democracies where the state continues to remain the largest public service provider and employer to the majority of its citizens. For these countries the state may still be perceived as the only source of security and support. Any action to challenge this status

quo by citizens would comparatively not be as rewarding as those in the West. Besides information from internet digital media, any attempt to confront the state would require the collaboration of citizens from cross-cutting social identity groups that are made up of associations and institutions less associated to the state. This would require an expanding private sector and liberal private institutions that are able to monitor and challenge the state.

In order for monitory democracy and new internet digital media to monitor power, the ability of citizens to protest outside elections to monitor the state should be spread across different sectors and entities within society. For the PNG case, citizens primarily within these groups comparatively felt more capable and empowered to monitor and regulate state power. These groups should comprise of different yet countervailing cross-class alliances. Only then can internet digital media have any real effect in uniting citizens to monitor the state's use of power.

Conclusion

This thesis argues that internet digital media after 2007 has had significant improvements regarding citizen understanding and awareness on important national issues. This is comparatively different from the years primarily dominated by traditional media sources. These improvements have created a burgeoning new political culture reflected by collective citizen participation outside elections for greater transparency, accountability and openness. Different citizens from a variety of traditional, cultural and regional social identities and cleavages are also able to better mobilize and participate based on other new socio factors.

Despite these improvements, citizens have similarly become ever more divided after 2007. Diverging perceptions and understanding in addressing the abuse of power have caused other citizens to remain passive in support of the state. This group of citizens are comparatively reluctant of changing PNG's status quo regarding traditional bureaucratic, legal and political practices central during the pre-2007 era. Altogether, these two new groups have created two new distinct social cleavages that diverge from those before 2007. This were mostly based on traditional, cultural and regional identity groups. The research goes further to describe these two new groups as progressives and loyalists.

In light of PNG's new case, arguments proposed by Keane evident in Western democracies due to internet digital media may not hold true for other non-Western democracies. This is particularly important since for many non-Western democracies the state still remains the largest employer and service provider to the majority of its

citizens. Citizens associated to these state institutions despite having access to information online may be reluctant to challenge the state and the existing status quo. Moreover, state resistance by other private and liberal institutions and association may not prove effective despite better awareness and openness from information online. For monitory democracy and internet digital media to be effective, information online must also be able to connect citizens from different social cleavages. These social cleavages should similarly comprise of citizens, associations and institutions less associated to the state. At the same time, national issues of contention similarly need to cross-cut different citizens within these cleavages outside those traditionally long established. These cross-class alliances along with online information may prove more fruitful for monitory democracy and new internet digital media.

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Chapter 6

Conclusion

Due to the state's monopoly over traditional media during the pre-2007 era, the media played an insignificant role in monitoring the abuse of power during this period. Citizens remained primarily passive during this era and instead focused largely on local issues forming cleavages divided along traditional, cultural and regional lines. Citizens rarely participated in national state politics since they rarely looked outside and beyond their individual traditional sets. This had led to various issues of governance involving the misuse of power by powerful political representatives based on these traditional sets at the expense of important national issues. However, after 2007 the introduction of cheap and accessible communication devices and internet services has transformed the role of the media, journalism, citizen perceptions and political practices within the country. This new era is marked by comparatively open, critical and proactive citizens that demand and protest for greater accountability and transparency beyond traditional representative institutions such as elections.

Importantly, this thesis argues that PNG had skipped over an important process of democratic development and institutionalization regarding the role of the media during its initial years of state building. Traditional media merely acted as a mouth piece of state propaganda while catering for capitalist interests. Unlike other Western democracies during their initial process of state development, PNG had failed to institutionalize the principal democratic role of the media as a watchdog institution tasked to educate, criticize and stimulate debate concerning the accountable use of public power. However, after 2007 internet online digital media has radically transformed power perceptions and political participatory practices both online and offline among citizens in monitoring public power. This has meant that PNG has leapfrogged rapidly as a result of these technological changes without properly going through any initial intermediary steps during state development. As a result, PNG provides fresh insights into new democratic development paths within the contemporary era as a result of new internet digital media.

Diverging from traditional theories of media studies and democratic development largely focused on the Western experience, PNG provides an ideal test case in assessing the role of new internet digital media and new routes to democratic progress within the new digitalized era. These tests and new insights might not be applicable to other Western democracies that had formally developed and institutionalized the role of the media during their initial stages of state development. The PNG case criticizes conventional Western literature arguing the primary democratic function of traditional media as power checking and monitoring institutions. Instead, it argues that this media responsibility largely extends to internet digital media as well as ordinary citizens outside journalism.

To simply argue the role of the media and democratic development in PNG as those similar to conventional Western democratic theories basically as a one size fit all would be incoherent and simply wrong. It may be argued for the PNG case that internet online digital media has for the first time in PNG's history re-launched the process of democratic development within the present era. It shows how online digital media has created and made clearer rifts between two distinct social identity groups and cleavages primarily outside traditional sets that have long since dictated PNG politics. These two groups diverge sharply in terms of their understanding and participation based on their association to the state. This is primarily significant since the state continues to remain the largest employer and public service provider to the majority of its citizens.

Three important implications are worth noting as a result of the PNG case. Firstly, it may provide novel insights for other developing democracies transitioning from traditional to internet digital media. This is primarily important due to the rise of the internet, mobile handsets and the explosion in popularity of online news platforms and social media. Moreover, it could also provide new understandings regarding the role of the media and journalism for similar countries that had embarked on the path of development journalism during their initial stages of state development where the media's primary role was to assist in articulating state interests and development. Secondly, it may provide fresh insights concerning power perceptions and political participation resulting from internet online digital media within the current digital era. What can be described as the public sphere where citizens come together and exchange opinions, deliberate and form public opinion is rapidly changing within the current digital age as an increasing number of people move online. What are some of the implications that online deliberation has on public opinion and political participation offline towards power centres? Thirdly, it may explain new democratic development routes propelled by new internet online digital media within the contemporary digital era. These new democratic paths comparatively diverge from traditional democratic development theories based on two primary factors. The first being that democratic development is initiated by internet digital media however processes are reversed. This means that principle democratic functions of the media are being re-institutionalized within a country that has already moved ahead in establishing itself as an independent state along with other primary democratic representative institutions. The second point is that the primary role of traditional media and journalism as watchdogs are extended to include internet online media as well as ordinary citizens outside traditional journalism.

Whether these novel trends will endure into the future, affecting PNG politics and its process of democratization is an area of research outside the scope of this research to comment. This opens additional room for further research to properly grasp monitory democracy's impact on the development of power perceptions, political practices and democratization.

Keane's attempt to theorize monitory democracy propelled by new internet digital media should be redefined in light of the PNG case. Firstly, internet digital media does not ultimately unite citizens against the abuse of power. This is especially important for the PNG case due to the complexities of state power. Moreover, varied citizens within different social cleavages assess and interpret these complexities differently according to their own interests. Secondly, access to information resulting from internet digital media do not nurture rationality, concession and unity among citizens. The PNG case show that there is a multi-facet of factors that influence decisions to participate in opposition against the abuse of power. Thirdly, in different to other Western democracies, the PNG demonstrate that power holders do not inevitably step down from power due to incriminating information or citizen outcry. Instead, they have often successfully challenged this through citizen crackdown, challenging court decisions and even weaponizing state institutions to arrest critics. Besides monitory democracy and the impact of new internet digital media the PNG case illustrate that there needs to be substantial groups of private associations made up of citizens employed by private entities less associated to the state. These groups can be able to forge alliances and collaborate on cross-cutting issues. This is largely important since a large portion of the population will not criticize or protest against the state since it does not directly serve their interests. The state will continue to dictate citizen perceptions and behaviour due to its heavy-handed influence on employment and service provision.

Additional research should similarly be directed at practical citizen political participatory practices incited by the liberalization of information through internet digital media and whether these practices have any real impact chastening power. Furthermore, how can monitory democracy and new internet digital media effectively unite citizens from cross-cutting social identity groups? Finally, what other forms of collective identity groups are citizens likely to create if they are to monitor power outside their social identity groups? These are areas of research I intend to pursue in the future by monitoring trends concerning the development and usage of new internet digital media while investigating the emergence of new social identity groups and cleavages in PNG. As the country continues to develop with the introduction and continuous improvements in internet digital media technology, its impact on citizen understanding to participate in new ways to monitor power may become a defining determinant of monitory democracy and democratization in PNG and other non-Western democracies.