20. Guns, Money and Sex: Assessing the Impact of Electoral System Reform on Political Culture in Southern Highlands Province

Nicole Haley and Ben Dierikx

Overview

Papua New Guinea's 2007 general election offered the first nationwide test of the new limited preferential voting (LPV) system, which replaced the first-past-the-post system, under which all previous post-independence elections had been conducted. In this chapter we make some observations about recent electoral reform in Papua New Guinea, particularly the impact of reforms on the *Organic Law on National and Local-level Government Elections*, which saw the introduction of LPV after the 2002 election. The chapter seeks to explore the extent to which electoral system reform, in particular the introduction of LPV, has influenced the conduct of elections and political culture in the Southern Highlands. The chapter draws on the reports of domestic observers in the Koroba-Lake Kapiago and Kagua-Erave open electorates and Southern Highlands provincial electorate (Figure 20.1) as part of the 2007 Domestic Observation (see chapter 5). It finds that although the 2007 election was considerably less violent than other recent elections, contestation has not diminished, as evidenced by the widespread fraud and malpractice witnessed.

It also finds that voting irregularities and money politics were more pervasive than in previous elections; individual voters were observed to have greater access to cash and were more mobile than in past elections, so they were better positioned to seek out transactional extra-marital sexual relations. The chapter finds that the 2007 election provided a context for heightened sexual activity, which has important implications with respect to HIV transmission.

Figure 20.1: Southern Highlands Province open electorates

Background

Changes to the *Organic Law on National and Local-level Government Elections* were in part a response to the proliferation of candidate numbers. Elections in Papua New Guinea have typically attracted large numbers of candidates and are fiercely contested. With each general election prior to 2007 candidate numbers had increased and, as a consequence, members of parliament (MPs) had, over time, been elected with smaller and smaller mandates. In recent elections single constituencies have been contested, on average, by upwards of 25 candidates, and in some cases by as many as 50–60 candidates, and in the three general elections prior to 2007 the majority of candidates were elected with less than 20 percent of the vote and many (16/103 in 2002) with less than 10 percent of the vote. Concerned by this trend, the Morauta government (1999–2002) embarked on a program of electoral reform which saw the introduction of LPV and legislation aimed at strengthening political parties.

With the introduction of LPV it was hoped that the 2007 election would be more peaceful and would see the election of MPs with wider and more representative

mandates.¹ According to the then electoral commissioner, Reuben Kaiulo, the reintroduction of preferential voting was 'premised on the need to reduce the number of candidates to ensure that the MP has a wider basis for support and endorsement, and also to promote collaboration among candidates and counter the surge in violence' (PNGEC 1997:13).

Assessing the impact of limited preferential voting

We do not seek to offer a comprehensive assessment of the impact of LPV in this chapter, but instead seek to explore some aspects of changing political culture in the Southern Highlands, particularly those that seem to be linked to the introduction of LPV. (Chapter 13 tests some of the more general claims and presumptions about LPV.)

Without a doubt, the 2007 general election in Southern Highlands Province (SHP) was less violent than either the 1997 or 2002 elections. How much this improvement can be attributed to LPV and how much to the huge investment in security (see chapters 6, 7 and 8) will become clearer over ensuing elections. Certainly it had been felt that LPV would contribute to improved security, and observers around the country reported that campaigning in 2007 was generally quieter, far more relaxed, and more accommodative than in past elections and that overall levels of violence, particularly in the Highlands, were substantially reduced (Haley and Anere 2009).

Compared to 2002, there was only a handful of election-related deaths, no airstrips were closed for security reasons, and there were few road closures. One exception was the Tangi road, between Koroba and Lake Kapiago, which was closed for extended periods due to election-related violence which saw a young man (the brother of one of the SHP domestic observers) killed and the threat of payback killings. For the most part, campaigning was more accommodative, with candidates in the Southern Highlands able to move around freely and campaign more widely than they had been able to in the earlier first-past-the-post elections something that had also been observed in the various LPV by-elections (Standish 2006:200; Haley 2006). That said, there were individual candidates (for example, Ben Peri in Koroba-Lake Kapiago and David Basua in Kagua-Erave) whose freedom of movement was curtailed due

¹ Standish (2006) provides a detailed exposition of the reasons for and claims used to promote preferential voting.

to unresolved disputes from previous elections, and there was certainly less freedom to campaign across ethnic boundaries in the Koroba-Lake Kapiago case, as compared with campaigning during the 2006 by-election (see chapter 21).

While candidates were generally able to travel around more freely, they tended to campaign in much the same way as they had under the old first-past-the-post system—that is, by concentrating their efforts on areas where they believed they had base support. There was little concerted collaboration and no serious evidence of widespread preference swapping either between parties or between individual candidates, although Ben Peri and Matthew Magaye did enter into a formal preference-swapping agreement (see chapter 21).

Even though there was less overt violence overall in the 2007 election in the Southern Highlands, intra-provincial regionalism which resulted in a fair degree of pre-polling tension and post-election-related violence remained evident (cf. Ballard 1989; Haley 2007a). Ethnicity and regionalism were also observed to play a huge part in campaigning in the Kagua-Erave and Koroba-Lake Kapiago Open electorates and were reflected in the way people allocated their preferences. In both electorates ethnically closed campaigning was the norm with candidates and voters alike espousing the view that preferences should be retained within the one cultural, linguistic or ethnic area.

In the Koroba-Lake Kapiago case, this is particularly noteworthy because the 2006 LPV by-election had seen candidates move about freely and successfully campaign across the ethnic divide—something that had not happened in either the 1997 and 2002 General Elections or the 2003 supplementary elections (see Haley 2002; 2004; 2007a). The return to ethnically closed campaigning is significant and signals the need to rethink the assumption that LPV will enable candidates and elected MPs to develop cross-electorate support bases.

While the 2007 election was generally more peaceful than previous elections, it remained highly competitive, as evidenced by widespread fraud and malpractice (see chapters 5, 8, 20 and 21). Observers across the Southern Highlands also witnessed bribery and intimidation on the part of candidates and their supporters. That intimidation was commonplace was also reflected in post-polling surveys. In a survey of 400 Southern Highlands voters (200 men and 200 women), 73 men (37 percent) and 97 women (49 percent) reported that they experienced intimidation when casting their vote, and a similar proportion felt that the 2007 election was worse than 2002 (see chapter 5). Many even felt that the election had failed (see chapter 20).

Influence of guns

Guns did not feature as extensively in this election as they had in the 1997 and 2002 polls, although they were present in the Southern Highlands in significant numbers despite the imposition of a 10-month state of emergency/special police operation in the lead-up to the election. Members of the SHP Provincial, Kagua-Erave Open and Koroba-Lake Kapiago Open observer teams all reported seeing firearms during nominations, the campaign period, in the lead-up to the poll, and even on polling day, but these and other weapons such as bush knives, axes and bows and arrows tended not to be openly displayed at polling places or used to intimidate and/or influence the vote, as they had been in the past.

During the campaign period, in particular, observers throughout the Southern Highlands reported seeing homemade weapons and a variety of high-powered weapons, including M16s, AR15s, self-loading rifles and an Ultimex 100 in civilian hands. They also noted the presence of black market ammunition in the province in the lead-up to polling. Observers reported that ammunition costs ranged from as low as K5–7 per M16/AR15 (5.56 × 45 mm) round to as high as K25 as one moved from west to east across the province. Shotgun cartridges varied between K10 and K20 per cartridge and observers reported that the price of self-loading rifle ammunition was consistently around K25 per (7.62 × 51 mm) round. This is consistent with pre-state-of-emergency pricing (see Haley and Muggah 2006) and suggests that there was no shortage of ammunition at the time of the election despite the fact that the Southern Highlands had been under a state of emergency since August 2006. The variation in prices reflects the geographical location of the observers in relation to supply sources, rather than any artificial inflation or deflation due to the campaign or election.

Key candidates in the Southern Highlands were also reputed to have armed their own militia. One sitting MP even provided police uniforms to his militia. These were distributed on 31 January 2007 in the presence of an observer, who photographed the distribution. Another sitting MP had a fake mobile squad vehicle kitted out in Port Moresby, shipped to Lae and then transported to the Highlands. Observers saw this vehicle being loaded at the wharf in Moresby and photographed it in SHP. On polling day the occupants of this vehicle made several unsuccessful attempts to intercept ballot boxes known to contain votes for an opposing candidate (see chapter 8). Their attempts were thwarted by conscientious polling officials and the Papua New Guinea Defence Force. There was also another incident, which observers caught on film, in which the occupants of this same vehicle fired upon the crowd in Tari after they were denied access to the Tari police station where the ballot boxes for the Hela region were being held.

During the campaign period observers repeatedly witnessed armed police travelling with or in the company of high-profile candidates and electoral staff. Uniformed mobile squad officers were seen providing security to the MP for Mendi, Michael Nali, while uniformed general duty police were seen providing security to the then Tari-Pori MP (Tom Tomiabe), Koroba-Lake Kopiago MP (John Kekenso) and Kagua-Erave MP (David Basua). Auxiliary or reserve police were seen with Francis Potape (the current MP for Komo-Magarima) and Alfred Kaiyabe (the former Komo-Magarima MP).

While the overall visibility of guns and other weapons remained low throughout the campaigning and polling period, threats of violence did overhang the election in some places. For the most part these threats tended to be successfully contained by the deployment of armed security forces, although there was significant and ongoing post-election violence in Kagua-Erave Open electorate, following the withdrawal of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force in early August 2007.

Influence of 'money politics', vote buying and gifting

Although guns played a less significant role in this election, 'money politics' was more significant than ever before. During the campaign period huge amounts of money and gifts of various kinds were observed to change hands and many candidates (winning and losing alike) were reputed to have spent upwards of K1 million. The then sitting member for Kagua-Erave, David Basua, for instance, was widely reported to have distributed K300,000 to men and women at Kagua station in the week leading up to the poll (Eves 2008), while the then governor, Hami Yawari, was observed to be distributing both cash and cheques at a rally in Tari late in the campaign period. In the Southern Highlands voters and observers alike asserted that LPV had contributed to the proliferation of 'money politics' in that candidates were able to move around more freely, but having done so were under pressure to reward people for pledged support.

Observations made by domestic observers during the 2007 election indicate a shift in gifting and vote buying culture in the Southern Highlands, and suggest that LPV has ushered in a new era of opportunism with respect to vote buying in particular. Under LPV voters have three preferences to allocate. Many voters made the most of this by courting and promising support to several candidates in return for modest cash payments. The amount being paid by individual candidates to individual voters was observed to vary from place to place and candidate to candidate, although typical payment configurations were K100, K50, K20 (Tari-Pori); K50, K25, K10 (Nipa-Kutubu; Tari-Pori) and K20, K10, K5 (Koroba-Lake Kopiago) for 1st, 2nd and 3rd preferences respectively. On the eve of polling one particular SHP candidate was observed to pay K1000 per

person to voters willing to commit their first preference to him. By contrast, an observer based in Ialibu-Pangia reported that a flat rate of K20 was being paid per vote, regardless of preference.

Payments to individual voters were much less common in past elections. Indeed where vote buying occurred it typically took the form of a single payment to a local leader or household head in respect of a certain number of promised/guaranteed votes. Such payments were made on the basis of name lists provided to candidates or their campaign managers. LPV of course provides the opportunity for multiple payments, and for multiple configurations of voting preferences, which seems to have diminished the role of local leaders in vote buying/selling while enhancing individual agency.

The movement of voters across ward and electorate boundaries also seems to have increased with the introduction of LPV. In SHP thousands of people were seen capitalizing on the new opportunities LPV presented by moving across electoral boundaries, to sell their votes to other candidates, turning three payments into up to 12 payments per person. This was particularly so in the Hela region² where many Huli voters were witnessed or reported to have voted in the Komo-Magarima, Tari-Pori and Koroba-Lake Kopiago Open electorates as well as for the provincial seat. Similar movements and voting practices were observed in the eastern end of the province, with many voters voting in both the Ialibu-Pangia and Imbonggu electorates.

On an even larger scale some particularly enterprising voters (mostly men) capitalized on the rolling elections in the Highlands by voting in several provinces. Mt Hagen youth, observed voting in Koroba, reported that they had accepted payments from candidates in three provinces and that they had promised to vote in SHP, in their home province of the Western Highlands, and then again in Chimbu.

Grandstands and opening ceremonies also served as money-making ventures during this election. They were erected and organized by clans, church congregations, youth and women's groups, and school committees as an innovative means of generating funds. As noted above, campaigning in the 2007 election was far more accommodative than in the past. Candidates travelled in each other's company, were for the most part permitted access to each other's base areas, and were present in large numbers at rallies, sports events and opening ceremonies in previously unprecedented ways (see Figure 20.2). Groups

2 The people occupying the western end of SHP, namely the Duna, Huli and Bogaia, along with their Paiela neighbours in Enga Province, share the view that they descend from a common ancestor, Hela. On the basis of this connection they have been pushing for more than three decades for a separate Hela province, which would incorporate the Koroba-Lake Kopiago, Tari-Pori and Komo-Magarima electorates. Collectively these electorates/districts are referred to as the Hela region (see Haley 2007a).

that had erected a grandstand were observed to send out invitations to both the open and provincial candidates inviting them to speak at their event, whether it be a church opening, the opening of a new classroom or teacher's house, a youth or church rally, or a women's group meeting. Invited speakers were expected to pay for the privilege. Observers confirmed that hire rates ranged between K100 and several thousand kina per speaker, and that some events netted upwards of K20,000 (see chapter 21). In addition there were unconfirmed reports of candidates paying as much as K30,000–40,000 for the privilege of using a grandstand to campaign in Kagua-Erave (Eves 2008). It seems that this particular enterprise has been made possible by the introduction of LPV, in that what candidates were clearly vying for at such rallies were second and third preferences.

Figure 20.2: Candidates at a rally in Koroba

Gifting was also observed throughout the Southern Highlands and manifest in a multitude of ways. Some candidates financed people's travel home, paying for air fares, chartering planes and hiring public motor vehicles for days on end. Others gave road clearing and/or road, bridge and airstrip maintenance contracts, while others offered inducements in the form of food and drink, pigs, building materials and household items such as blankets, spades, bush knives,

stereos and even cars. Several candidates were also reputed to have assisted with the transporting of dead bodies, while contributions to funerary feasts were common.

Although not widely reported, some observers in the Southern Highlands reported credible accounts of women, but more particularly young girls, being gifted to candidates, campaign managers, electoral officials, police and Defence Force personnel during the election period.

While vote buying and gifting assumed some novel forms in the 2007 election in the Southern Highlands, one thing that remained the same was the element of implied or explicit coercion that the acceptance of money carries. For example, the then sitting MP for Tari, Tom Tomiape, was seen by one observer travelling from church to church visiting congregations and making donations to support church activities. He was also observed to be making congregation members sign an oath to the effect that they would vote for him in return for his donation. In another case, voters were warned that 'God would strike them down' if they failed to honor their commitments. Similar such threats have been used by candidates in the Southern Highlands in the past (see Robinson 2002).

Throughout SHP people expressed dismay about the amounts of money that had changed hands during the election, saying they had seen 'nothing like it before'. Many people interviewed claimed to have voted for, or to have given preferences to 'the money candidates' out of fear—not because they had received money but because the candidates concerned were clearly 'connected'. It is evident then that money was not merely used to buy votes or to display prestige, but to generate fear. In some parts of SHP money took the place of guns in this regard.

It is not merely the huge amounts of cash distributed that set the 2007 election apart from earlier elections in SHP, but the way it was used. We have noted the declining use of name lists in favour of cash payments to individual voters, and the increased mobility of voters seeking out inducements for pledged support. It is also evident that candidates are now having to rely on larger and larger networks in order to finance their campaigns, and that wealthy individuals (businessmen and community leaders) are financing or contributing towards candidates' campaigns in order to create indebtedness and to ensure that the candidate is beholden to them should they win. Indeed it is not uncommon to hear talk of 'backing' candidates. This happens at the local level as well. Instead of candidates hosting huge campaign rallies and supplying voters with pigs and beer, as was common in the past, voters themselves are now killing the pigs as a show of support for their preferred candidate as well. Supporters who provide financial or other assistance to candidates expect to see their investments repaid with interest.

Over the course of the last election cycle, then, cash has seemingly begun to be used differently. Although it continues to play a central role in SHP politics, it is not so much a case of cashed-up candidates coming home once every five years to distribute largesse as a means of securing votes; rather, money or support in kind is now being used by voters, willingly or otherwise, to secure a share of the much sought-after spoils of public office. A Kopiago woman in her early thirties complained bitterly about this. She summed up the shift by explaining that in 1997 her local candidate had paid her K900 for a large pig that was killed at one of his many campaign rallies; in 2002 he had paid her K400 for a similar such pig and had promised the balance of the payment upon election; in 2003 he had killed one of her pigs entirely on credit; and in the 2006 by-election he had returned, seeking yet another of her pigs. In both 2006 and 2007 she was expected to provide a pig gratis as demonstration of her ongoing support. From her perspective, she had no choice but to give the pigs, as she felt she needed as much as anything to protect her earlier investments, in the event that the candidate in question proved lucky on this occasion. Elsewhere in the Southern Highlands, voters told of contributing to their local/preferred candidate's campaign so that he might bribe the polling officials, security personnel and counting officials to his advantage.

The inflationary aspect of elections seems to be of particular concern to candidates in the Southern Highlands, with several complaining that LPV has inflated voter expectations. Several candidates expressed concern that the incredibly large amounts of money now being spent on electioneering would mean that the winning candidate's discretionary funds would be unlikely to suffice when repaying the debts incurred in financing a Highlands-style election campaign. Late in the campaign period, Ben Peri, who was contesting Koroba-Lake Kopiago Open for the seventh time, lamented that even if he won, he would never be able to repay the debts incurred over seven elections. He further asserted that he would have been a much wealthier man if he had never entered politics, and that the expectation to contest is crippling. In so much as standing for election can increase individual and group prestige, not standing can diminish one's standing within the community.

Women's participation

In the lead-up to the 2007 election there had been concerted electoral and civic awareness in the five SHP open electorates in which the 2002 elections had failed (Figures 20.3, 20.4 and 20.5; see also chapter 4). This was conducted by the Ima Kelo Group under Nicole Haley's coordination. In total 104,163 individuals (men, women and children) attended 343 awareness sessions conducted over a six-month period (November 2006 to April 2007). Bearing in mind the extent to which the SHP's electoral rolls are inflated (see chapter 21), we estimate

conservatively that 50 percent of the eligible citizens in the activity area were reached. Of more than 100,000 people who attended the awareness sessions, 36,951 were women of voting age (Haley 2007b:7).

Figure 20.3: LPV awareness at Waneke, November 2006

Figure 20.4: Civic awareness at Lake Kapiago

Figure 20.5: LPV awareness at Lake Kopiago

Observations made during the campaigning and polling periods suggest reasonable levels of awareness regarding the new voting system among women voters in the Southern Highlands. Observers throughout the Southern Highlands also reported a mood of optimism among women voters and particularly high voter turnout of women on polling day. At many polling stations in SHP women appeared to outnumber men two to one. We attribute this to two things: the awareness and the large security presence. Many women interviewed on polling day expressed optimism that they would be able to vote freely, although for many this proved not to be the case. As noted above, 97 of the 200 women voters (49 percent) interviewed in post-polling surveys in SHP reported some form of intimidation when casting their vote.

Of the 201 candidates who contested the 2007 elections in SHP only three were women, namely Margret Kawa (Imbonggu Open), Epiya Janet Kang Nisa (Mendi Open) and Janet Koriama (Tari Open). Observations made across the province reveal that very few candidates explicitly discussed gender issues or sought to secure women's votes, although some strong assertions by women of their rights and opinions were observed during the campaigning and polling periods. Only two SHP candidates consistently raised women's issues, these being Joseph

Warai and Janet Koriama, both of whom contested Tari-Pori Open electorate. Janet Koriama was observed to campaign on issues of women in politics, women's rights, development and services, and good governance.

2007 saw the official introduction of separate voting compartments intended to allow for gender segregated polling. These were meant to ensure women more freedom of choice when exercising their vote. In the Southern Highlands this policy change was met with outright opposition. Awareness teams attempting to convey the policy change were confronted by angry men opposed to the changes. One observer in Tari-Pori Open electorate reported being confronted by a group of men who were yelling 'we do not support women's rights to vote separately from men as we have already paid the bride price of pigs and money, they are ours, and we own them'. The asserted ownership of women clearly extended not only to their votes but to their names. Indeed some observers reported widespread consternation about the notion that women should be afforded the opportunity to exercise their own choices. They further reported that if women were permitted choice they might choose to vote for candidates other than those their husbands and brothers might be supporting and this meant men would lose some of the 'sure votes' they were seeking to claim. At Koroba, election officials went further, asserting that the policy change was a cultural affront inflicted upon them by outsiders from other countries. Interestingly, the policy change came about after intense lobbying from women and civil society groups in Chimbu, particularly *Meri I Kirap Sapotim*.

On the campaign trail only two candidates, Joseph Warai and James Marabe, were seen to have engaged women campaign managers. Both candidates contested Tari-Pori Open electorate. Across the province observers noted that women tended to play mainly support roles during the campaign period—cooking food, providing hospitality and entertaining guests. Accounts of women attending rallies varied somewhat and were dependent on both the time of day and location as well as the role women were playing at the particular rally. Upper estimates suggest that between 40 and 50 percent of participants at rallies during daylight hours were women, while lower-end estimates suggest only 20 percent of participants were women during the evenings. Young girls were also observed to attend rallies in significant numbers. The majority of women at rallies were reported to be either observing or participating in singing and dancing or in a logistically more supportive role such as providing hospitality or cooking. In one instance a group of beautifully dressed young women claimed prominence at a large rally at Koroba airstrip, by mounting a silent protest, weaving their way through the crowd carrying blood-red knives bearing the name of a young man who had been killed in election-related violence in the lead-up to polling (Figure 20.6). These women were seeking to provoke their menfolk into avenging his death.

Figure 20.6: Women protesting at Koroba, 28 June 2007

HIV/AIDS and the 2007 election in SHP

The 2007 election revealed that HIV/AIDS is not a pressing electoral issue in SHP, with very few candidates making mention of it at rallies or elsewhere. This is consistent with observations made elsewhere in the country (see Haley and Anere 2009:63) and not particularly surprising, because what voters want of their political leaders are basic services—roads, schools, medical supplies, police and magisterial services, not policy statements and prevention strategies. That said, observers across the Southern Highlands noted that HIV and AIDS had a higher profile in the 2007 election than in earlier elections. Indeed as documented elsewhere (Haley 2008), the HIV/AIDS epidemic had not figured at all in campaigning in either the 2002 general election or the 2003 supplementary elections in SHP.

Those observed to explicitly raise the issue of HIV/AIDS included Joesph Warai and Janet Koriama (Tari-Pori Open), Petrus Thomas (Koroba-Lake Kapiago), and Jacob Sekewa (SHP Provincial). Warai was a member of the provincial HIV/AIDS committee and former director of the Community Based Health Care Program in Tari, while Janet Koriama was head of the Tari women's association. Both had established histories of community engagement.

Although the electoral and civic awareness undertaken in the lead-up to the election had included material on HIV and elections (see Figure 20.7), HIV/AIDS awareness materials were largely absent during the campaigning and polling periods. Observers in SHP reported the presence of awareness materials at only three polling stations visited. This represents a lost opportunity because, although HIV/AIDS awareness is not a core electoral commission function, elections provide the opportunity to conduct HIV/AIDS awareness in areas that are generally beyond the reach of the state and lack the formal infrastructure (due to the breakdown of essential services) through which awareness messages might ordinarily be channelled. Election-related HIV/AIDS awareness is also important because experiences from Africa have shown that HIV/AIDS impacts on the costs of running elections because by-elections brought about through the death of the incumbent MP are increasingly commonplace.

While HIV/AIDS awareness in SHP was limited during the election period, there was widespread evidence of behavior that appears to enhance the risk of HIV transmission and strong evidence to suggest that elections provide a context for heightened sexual activity (see also chapter 12), which further increases the likelihood of HIV transmission. Specifically, individual voters were observed to have greater access to cash and were more mobile than in past elections (see above, concerning groups of young men travelling from province to province under the sponsorship of candidates), so that they were better positioned to seek

out transactional and extra-marital sexual relations, both by increased fiscal capacity and by the greater geographical opportunities afforded by increased mobility. Coupled with this, observers in SHP reported that campaign houses and discos featured significantly in campaigning and politicking in SHP and that both were popular meeting places. Individuals were reported to frequent multiple campaign houses seeking out inducements from candidates.

Figure 20.7: HIV awareness at Pakule, Ialibu, 22 April 2007

Across the region campaign house opening hours varied widely, with some observers in Tari-Pori noting that one campaign house was open only during daylight hours. Others in the same area were observed to be open 24 hours a day. In the first instance no women were seen frequenting the campaign house, although they were observed to be patronizing other campaign houses in the same area. Generally, observers noted not only the presence of local sex workers but also of young girls and married women engaging in transactional sex. Observations made at some night-time events suggested that young unmarried girls accounted for around a fifth of all the night-time attendees at campaign houses.

Typically, observers reported cannabis use, the consumption of free food and alcohol, and evidence of transactional sex along with political campaigning and strategizing at campaign houses. They also observed that many establishments, particularly discos, did not charge women a gate fee, as a means of encouraging

women's attendance, and that there seemed to be less surveillance of women's sexual activity during the election period. Some observers and local leaders specifically reported that women who did not ordinarily engage in transactional sex were seen to be doing so in the context of the election. This is consistent with Gibbs and Mondu's detailed findings in respect of campaign houses in Wabag (see chapter 12).

Conclusion

The introduction of LPV has influenced the conduct of elections in the Southern Highlands and brought with it some significant changes to SHP political culture that have important ramifications for future elections. Of these, local innovations in respect of gifting, vote buying and money politics have seen the quantity of money and gifts being made available increase markedly in the face of voters' ability and willingness to pledge support to multiple candidates. LPV also saw record numbers of women voters at polling booths, although observer accounts reveal that women's experiences of the elections were somewhat less positive than initially hoped for. Indeed early optimism that women would have more freedom of choice under LPV proved unfounded in that men continued to assert their rights over those of women, insisting that women remain their property and should therefore vote in accordance with their wishes.

The proliferation of money politics, which we see as related to the introduction of LPV, gives cause for concern for a number of reasons, not least because it seems to have inflated the cost of elections and facilitated the heightened sexual activity reported during the election period. The changes to SHP political culture witnessed at the 2007 election thus warrant closer attention in terms of how they might be implicated in the epidemiology of the burgeoning HIV epidemic, especially as similar patterns have been noted as contributors to the spread of the pandemic in Southeast Asia in the early 1990s.³

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