CONTROL, ALT, DELETE: HOW FIJI’S NEW PR ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND MEDIA COVERAGE AFFECTED ELECTION RESULTS FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES IN THE 2014 ELECTION

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ABSTRACT

International strategies to improve election outcomes for women candidates focus heavily on campaigning schemes targeting change in voter attitudes, defending female quota systems, scrutinizing political parties’ approaches, and challenging gender stereotypes. In the Pacific, these strategies have dominated pre-and post-election discussions. There has been less focus on two areas of growing significance: the type of electoral system and the media. This study examines the impact of these two factors on election outcomes for women candidates in Fiji’s 2014 election. Our findings indicate that, on the surface, both appeared to make a positive contribution to the results for winning women candidates. At a deeper level, however, a different narrative constituted by various other aspects of electoral engineering and media politics in Fiji can be identified.

Key words: women candidates, electoral system, media, Fiji