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**EMPOWERING NI-VANUATU
WOMEN:
AMPLIFYING WANTOK AUTHORITY
AND ACHIEVING FAIR MARKET ACCESS**

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by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to several people who have greatly influenced my matrilineal leadership, management and governance roles, and my dreams for tertiary studies:

- My '*Na Vuhu Sule*' maternal grand-mother, Komala Pui Alice Onekara Moses Ova;
- My '*Na Vuhu Sule*' maternal grandfathers: Paul Tarihi Tavue, Ezekiah Tahiroro and Amos Woja Palo;
- My three parents, my biological mother, Elizabeth Moses Ova; my mother's smaller sister and step-mother, Rose-Morin Prasad; and my father, Bisun Prasad Maliu;
- My siblings: elder brother, Arnold Thomas *Chule* Prasad, younger brother, Peter *Sakere* Prasad; and my three sisters, Margareth *Onekara* Peato, Esther *Valao* Tavue and Alice *Tiholala* Pipite;
- My two '*Na Vuhu Sule*' maternal uncles: Chief Jeffery Moses Ova and Samuel Moses Ova;
- My dedicated '*Na Vuhu Garae*' spouse, Rovea Thomas;
- My three '*Na Vuhu Sule*' children: *Kopui* Bronwyn Sylvie Kalmet, *Komala* Cinderella Donna Thomas; and Leniker Jeremiah Rajesh Thomas and;
- All anonymous participants who shared in this research study; and
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ABSTRACT

The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) report on Vanuatu's implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) notes that many urban disenfranchised Ni-Vanuatu women live in poverty and have little access to paid employment. The women who do gain paid employment in formal jobs rarely gain access to positions of authority. The United Nations (UN) offered two strategies to improve the position of Ni-Vanuatu women in Vanuatu. The first is informed by CEDAW in Article Eleven on Employment. The "Equity Desk of the Vanuatu Department of Strategic Management" and the "Vanuatu Department of Women's Affairs Gender Planner" (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, pp. 12-13) have been charged with the responsibility of implementing Article Eleven and developing Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) programmes for the public sector. This strategy aims to increase women's access to paid employment in the formal employment sector and encourage women to achieve positions of authority. The second strategy offered by the UN is the establishment of microfinance projects aimed at providing disenfranchised urban women unable to find employment with a means to own and run microfinance businesses to earn a living. Both these strategies have the overarching aim of improving the well-being of Ni-Vanuatu women.

This study has investigated the extent to which access to formal sector jobs and the implementation of microfinance businesses in the informal sector addresses the well-being of Ni-Vanuatu women. These programmes are being implemented within a complex historical, socio-political cultural and economic environment (Van Trease, 1995). This complexity includes the continuance of Wantok systems of governance in the form of matrilineality (predominant in Vanuatu) and patrilineality (adopted from Christian influences in 1800s and colonial legacy in 1906) (Van Trease, 1987; Facey, 1981; Allen, 1981 & Macdonald-Milne & Thomas, 1981). Matrilineal cultural values bequeath patrimony and legacy of lineage and land inheritance from mothers to daughters. Matrilineal women share power with men in community affairs (Maltali, Sandy & Tamashiro, 2009). In patrilineal communities, patrimony and legacy of lineage and land inheritance is passed from fathers to sons (Van Trease, 1987). Patrilineal mothers and daughters have no lineage, land inheritance, or power-sharing rights (Stege, Maetala, Naupa & Simo 2008). Both Wantok systems are based on

communal values practised primarily in the rural sector. Urban centres are organised around a modern-cash and market-economy and a governance framework based on the British Westminster model and the French Head of State model (ILO, 2006). This European generated governance system is underpinned by values informed by liberal competitive individualism and an assumed commitment to meritocracy. It is, however, a system of governance steeped in patriarchal nuances as a direct legacy of the colonial regime now adapted and administered by the Vanuatu's ruling elite, referred as Vanuatu's urban patriarchy throughout this thesis.

The theoretical frameworks used in this research draw on both liberal feminist studies and on an adaptation of subaltern scholarship (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). The focus is on the legacy of imperialism and colonisation, the politics of power and hegemony, and the expressions of equal rights, emancipation and empowerment as these pertain to the well-being of women in Vanuatu.

Three sets of qualitative empirical observations were collected: i) a focus group discussion with 20 employer and employee representatives; ii) 36 conversations with women employed in the formal employment sector who held positions of authority within their respective organisations; and iii) 39 conversations with women who owned a microfinance business. My field notes were analysed thematically using a point and counterpoint framework crafted from my interest in the work of Huxley (cf Baker & James, 2000a & 2000b & Dawson, 2009). The point is informed by a liberal feminist lens (Gamble, 1999 & Heywood, 2000). A counterpoint to this liberal feminist interpretation is generated from a post-colonial feminist perspective through an adaptation of subaltern studies (Thomas & Humphries 2010 & 2011; Gamble, 1999 & Spivak, 1988). I draw on my Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice (MWFV) to form a standpoint in the discussion and to frame insights drawn from the ideas associated with the solidarity economy (Allard, Davidson & Matthaei, 2009; Harvey, 2006 & Harding, 2004).

Point/counterpoint/standpoint for the research as a whole

Point: Liberal feminist strategies for the emancipation of women (and the intended improvement and well-being of their families associated with this perspective) encourage women to pursue better living standards, achieve empowerment in the home, and seek formal jobs or other market-based income opportunities. If in formal jobs, women are encouraged to seek positions of authority. For these women, the major transition in orientation is the move from Wantok-related patterns of responsibilities and opportunities to those made available in the formal Western-generated economy. These Western ways, with emphasis on individualized opportunity, appear to offer financial gain and familial influences, particularly to women born into patrilineal lineage descent groups.

Counterpoint: Viewed through the adaptation of subaltern perspectives that I have applied to the liberal feminist remedies for the enhancement of well-being for the women of Vanuatu, it appears that the women of Vanuatu are involved in multiple and simultaneous complex master/slave relationships (Kohn, 2005 & Honderich, 1995). These relationships are exemplified in salaried/professional occupations held by women, between the women and their employers and work-place cultures, between women and rural and urban patriarchal hegemonies, and between women and the cash and market economy. While EEO activities can be seen to make a difference in the lives of some women, taken together, these interventions are reducing the overall well-being for Ni-Vanuatu women more generally. For the Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs, master/slave relationships could be discerned between the Vanwods MFI's social control of the Mamas, the Vanuatu Government's imposition of high business licence fees to the Mamas, the Mamas and their greater dependence on the cash and market economy, and the Mamas and their relationship with rural and urban patriarchal hegemonies (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). These forms of systemic subservience interpreted from the women's narratives provide a caution against the uncritical adoption of Western liberal feminist ideals (DeVault, 1990). It is matrilineal women; however, who appear to suffer the most from their move into the urban centres as there they must contend with an urban patriarchal hegemony, an impediment which they had not encountered in their former rural communities governed in accordance with matrilineal Wantok values.

Standpoint: The research findings suggest that all women in this study worked long hours, experiencing discrimination and oppression, received low pay, and experienced increased financial obligations as a result of their engagement in formal and informal jobs. As well as being increasingly dependent on inadequate and unsustainable livelihoods in the urban areas, family and Wantok social relations were challenged and diminished as a consequence of their necessary commitment to their jobs and the demands of urban living. Access to traditional forms of authority and sustenance was undermined.

I conclude that, overall, the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes along with the establishment of microfinance projects devised for the emancipation of the disenfranchised women of Vanuatu, while apparently proving beneficial from a liberal feminist interpretation in granting urban women with access to incomes, property and power-sharing, may provide an element of liberation for women of patrilineal descent groups but add new dimensions of patriarchal inhibitors for women of matrilineal descent groups who take up employment under the Westminster rules of governance. The remedies taken as a whole, while promising improved well-being through market-based income generation, remove women from the Wantok kinship social support networks embedded in their indigenous Wantok governance frameworks causing complex problems and hardships for them. Drawing on my Matrilineal Wantok Feminist standpoint position, I suggest that the Solidarity Economy, which combines aspects of market access while still engaging in the traditional systems of social organization, offers an alternative organisational and economic framework for developing and enhancing community well-being in both the rural and urban areas of Vanuatu.

ACRONYMS, TERMS AND MEANINGS

1.1 Matantas and Big Bay Terms and Meanings

Lineage ancestry and roots form the basis of land and lineage inheritances and the creation of patrimony and legacies in matrilineality in the Big Bay region of Espiritu Santo, in the Republic of Vanuatu. ‘*Na Vuhu*’ is the Big Bay language term for lineage or totem, followed by the name of the lineage/totem. There are many lineage ancestry and roots operating in the Big Bay region such as *Na Vuhu Sara* (Grass Broom Line); *Na Vuhu Torou* (Taro Line); *Na Vuhu Maliu* (Net Line); and *Na Vuhu Garae* (Line Flying Fox) among many others. However, three of the prominent lineages that feature in this research that operate in Matantas Village, Big Bay region are: the ‘*Na Vuhu Sule*’, the matrilineal Line Stone or Stone Line, *Na Vuhu Woji* and *Na Vuhu Garae Chiloliliu* (Flying Fox looking up).

1.2 Bislama Terms, Acronyms and Meanings

Certain Bislama words used in this thesis are explained below:

Haos-gel	Domestic employees or domestic servants recruited as paid or unpaid labour to manage the urban women’s primary caring and nurturing roles in the homes
Kastom ekonomi	Vanuatu’s indigenous traditional gift economy similar to the peasant economy
Mamas	Vanwods Microfinance Incorporation (MFI) active and financial members
MITGM	Melanesian Indigenous Traditional Governance Model (MITGM) prevalent in the Melanesian states of Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Fiji adapted in this thesis as Vanuatu’s Wantok governance models of matrilineality and patrilineality
Storian	Personal conversational narratives with urban Ni-Vanuatu women in waged jobs; salaried/professional occupations and Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs
Wantok	Indigenous traditional Wantok kinship social network system

WGM	Also known as Wantok governance frameworks incorporating of the matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok governance models
WDGM	Westminster democratic governance model adopted from colonizers, France and Britain

1.3 Other Terms, Acronyms and Meanings

Certain English terms and various acronyms and their meanings are presented below:

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CEDAW	United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
Churning sea	Capitalism's rules and procedures that entrap urban Ni-Vanuatu women in their capitalistic pursuits
Colonial Masters	France and Britain as colonizers of the former New Hebrides from 1906-1980
Counterpoint	Arguments presented through a post-colonial, subaltern lens and voice
CRC	United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child
DSM	Vanuatu Department of Strategic Management
DWA	Vanuatu Department of Women's Affairs
EEO	Equal employment opportunity implemented programmes under CEDAW for urban Ni-Vanuatu women to acquire positions of authority in formal jobs
Focus group	Focus group discussion with employer and employee representatives
Formal economy	State and private-sector formal economy or formal sector jobs that pays wage and salaries to full-time employees
Formal jobs	Also known as the formal employment sector for waged jobs and salaried/professional occupations

House-girl	Domestic employees or domestic servants recruited as paid or unpaid labour to manage urban women's primary caring and nurturing roles
ILO	International Labour Organisation
Informal jobs	Also known as the informal employment sector where urban Ni-Vanuatu women are employed as domestic servants, house-girls or as Vanwods Microfinance Incorporation (MFI) <i>Mamas</i> or microfinance entrepreneurs
Land inheritances	Land inheritances through matrilineal and patrilineal lineage descent
Liberal feminist ideals	Liberal feminist concepts of justice, equity and egalitarianism offered by United Nations instruments of implemented EEO programmes and microfinance projects
Lineage inheritances	Lineage, ancestry and roots operating in matrilineages and patrilineages in Vanuatu
Matrilineal gender equality	Matrilineal Wantok governance model framework incorporating elements of justice, equity and egalitarianism in its approach
Matrilineages	Also known as matrilineality where lineage and land inheritances and the creation of patrimony and legacies are transmitted from matrilineal ancestors to mothers and to daughters and sons
Matrilineal standpoint	Arguments presented using my Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice (MWFV) and standpoint position
Microfinance projects	United Nations' established microfinance projects for disenfranchised urban Ni-Vanuatu women also known as Vanwods MFI
Master's House	Metaphor for capitalism/global economy and its rules and procedures that have a dominant hold on urban Ni-Vanuatu women pursuing the cash and market economy

Master's Ship	Metaphor adapted for this thesis meaning the ' <i>hold or hegemonic embrace of the Master's House</i> ' on urban Ni-Vanuatu women who leave their indigenous matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models
MDGS	United Nations' Millennium Development Goals
MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MJ&SW	Vanuatu Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare
NZAID	New Zealand Aid International Development Agency
NZHC	New Zealand High Commission
Patrilineages	Also known as patrilineality, where lineage and land inheritances and the creation of patrimony and legacies are passed from patrilineal ancestors to fathers and to sons
Patrimony and legacy	Land and lineage inheritances passed from matrilineal and patrilineal mothers to daughters and sons
Peasant Economy	Similar to the Vanuatu's <i>Kastom Ekonomi</i> where organization of the society is based on family units cultivating subsistence agriculture for sustenance and maintenance
Post-colonial subaltern lens	Arguments presented as a counterpoint (contradictions) to the liberal feminist rhetoric using a post-colonial subaltern voice and lens
Point	Arguments presented as the point from a liberal feminist rhetoric of justice, equity and egalitarianism
Octopus	The Capitalistic mechanism in the form of a tool and hegemonic embrace to keep urban Ni-Vanuatu women in subservience to their urban centre cash and market pursuits
Solidarity Economy	An alternative economic model for developing and enhancing community well-being and for socio-

	political-and-economic organization in the rural and urban areas of Vanuatu combining liberal capitalism but still engaging through the indigenous and traditional systems of social organization by distributing work to groups with similar motives and outcomes where owners of solidarity economy projects have equal ownership rights
Standpoint	Arguments presented in a particular standpoint and position
Urban Ni-Vanuatu women	Ni-Vanuatu women who have moved into the urban centres to seek senior managerial positions and microfinance projects
Urban patriarchy	Known as the urban elite male decision-makers
United Nations	Strategies of implemented CEDAW-EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects
VNCW	Vanuatu National Council of Women (VNCW)
VNPF	Vanuatu National Provident Fund (VNPF)
Vanuatu patrilineages	Vanuatu's rural and urban socio-political-and-economic organization that subjugates and oppresses patrilineal women
VNSO	Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO)
Vanwods	Vanuatu Women's Development Scheme (Vanwods)
Vanwods MFI	Vanwods Microfinance Incorporation (MFI)

1.4 A Note on Matrilineality in Vanuatu

Although matrilineality still exists in Vanuatu, no research as yet has been undertaken to ascertain the extent to which various communities are still matrilineal in nature (Maltali et al. 2009 & Van Trease, 1987). Matrilineality is scattered throughout Vanuatu. For example, matrilineality is still operative on the island of Espiritu Santo especially in the areas of Big Bay, West Coast, Port Olry, Hog Harbour, and South Santo regions of the Sanma Province (Allen, 1981). It also exists in the Banks/Torres regions of Torba Province; in the northern part of Pentecost, eastern parts of Ambae,

the island of Maewo in the Penama Province and on Efate and surrounding islands of the Shefa Province.

Matrilineality is predominant in the northern parts of Vanuatu (see Chart 1.1) while patrilineality prevails in Ambrym and Malekula (Malampa Province), some parts of Ambae and southern Pentecost (Penama Province), and in the islands of Epi (Shefa Province), and Erromango, Tanna, Aneityum, Aniwa and Futuna (Tafea Province) (Van Trease, 1987). Based on the number of islands practicing patrilineality, this system of traditional governance appears to have undermined the predominant matrilineal communities of Vanuatu.

In this research, I have identified the incompatibility of the Christian and colonially introduced traditional patrilineages with the predominant indigenous matrilineages' framework. Vanuatu's contemporary patrilineages operate on a traditional, cultural, social and historical scenario of valorising men and oppressing women. The values of patrilineages were adopted from Western-imported influences whereby men assumed headship of their families and claim the role of decision-makers. Regardless of lineage, both patrilineal women and matrilineal women are allocated the primary care for the young, elderly and the infirm. Both groups of women are responsible for nourishing members of their society through produce from their gardens and collected resources, cooking meals, child care and nurturing services and participating in community feasts. Both groups of women receive minimal recognition for the pressures of their primary caring and nurturing roles in the commitment to responsibilities demanded of them in the income-generating spheres of jobs and businesses. In terms of expressing their authority, I suggest that matrilineal women fare better than their patrilineal sisters because their authority is formally recognised and extended into governance roles. Matrilineal women hold a voice, space and have land and property rights in community affairs. Patrilineal men, where they can assert their influence, display their superiority to patrilineal women by refusing to grant them a voice, space and land and property rights. Patrilineal women's responsibilities in the domestic sphere are endorsed and variously valued as patrilineal men use their reproductive and productive labour to benefit them-selves and their lineages because patrilineal women hold no rights, even to their children. Children born in patrilineages belong to fathers and their clans. Property rights passes from patrilineal ancestors to

fathers and to sons while the needs of mothers and daughters are ignored. Because these human rights are withheld from patrilineal women, they are severely discriminated against, oppressed, subjugated and marginalized by their patrilineal societies. In this context, the United Nations agenda of promoting and defending individual rights and empowerment is attractive to them. On the other hand, matrilineal women are recognized and valued for their roles in creating patrimony and legacies and transmitting lineage, property and land inheritances to their children. Matrilineal children belong to matrilineal mothers and their clans. In terms of property rights, matrilineages ensure that land and lineage inheritances are distributed equally to all children, regardless of gender. Matrilineal women upon marriage, have the prerogative to bring their spouses into their communities to create future matrilineal generations. The greater influence of competitive individualism operates within a liberal agenda, risks weakening the matrilineal authority and communal systems of social security.

Kirgis Jr. (1994) highlights the contents of the United Nations' International Bill of Human Rights (1945) and offered to nation states by the United Nations in 1989 called on nation states to institute "equal rights and self-determination of [its] peoples" (p. 304) into any foreign governance models they adopted. This Declaration persuades indigenous people to maintain their indigenous ways of life according to their cultural traditions, and ultimately transmit indigenous, cultural and traditional knowledge, values and beliefs to their off spring to keep their indigenous mode of life, knowledge, and cultures and traditions intact (Maltali et al. 2009 & Van Trease, 1987). In Vanuatu, the indigenous matrilineal Wantok governance models and its '*Melanesian Voice*' is used to sustain Vanuatu's rural populations as has been the case for thousands of years (Maltali et al. 2009 & Narokobi, 1980, 1983a & 1983b). By comparison, the relatively recent interventions, from the European traders and missionaries' influences to the emancipation from subsistence economics offered by capitalism to the (economic) liberation of women promised by CEDAW – life in urban Vanuatu has not delivered social security or enhanced the well-being for many Ni-Vanuatu women. Liberal interventions, while perhaps offering material advancement for some, have not met their promise of universal emancipation in Vanuatu or elsewhere. Liberal feminist interventions in the lives of women have been received with hope and commitment, but produced patchy results. Radical remedies well-

articulated in the literatures have not been effective to address the issues of women's marginalisation and poverty.

Feminist research encompasses the full range of knowledge building that includes epistemology, methodology, and method including the feminist standpoint theory which postulates that knowledge depends heavily on a person's "cultural, social, and historical location" in that people who "occupy marginal positions in culture can offer more insightful, more complete interpretations of that culture than those who do not possess the double perspective" (Smith, 1987, p. 15 & Harding, 1987). Consistent with this view, in this thesis, I explain and amplify my *Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice* (MWFV) in this research study.

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CHAPTER THREE

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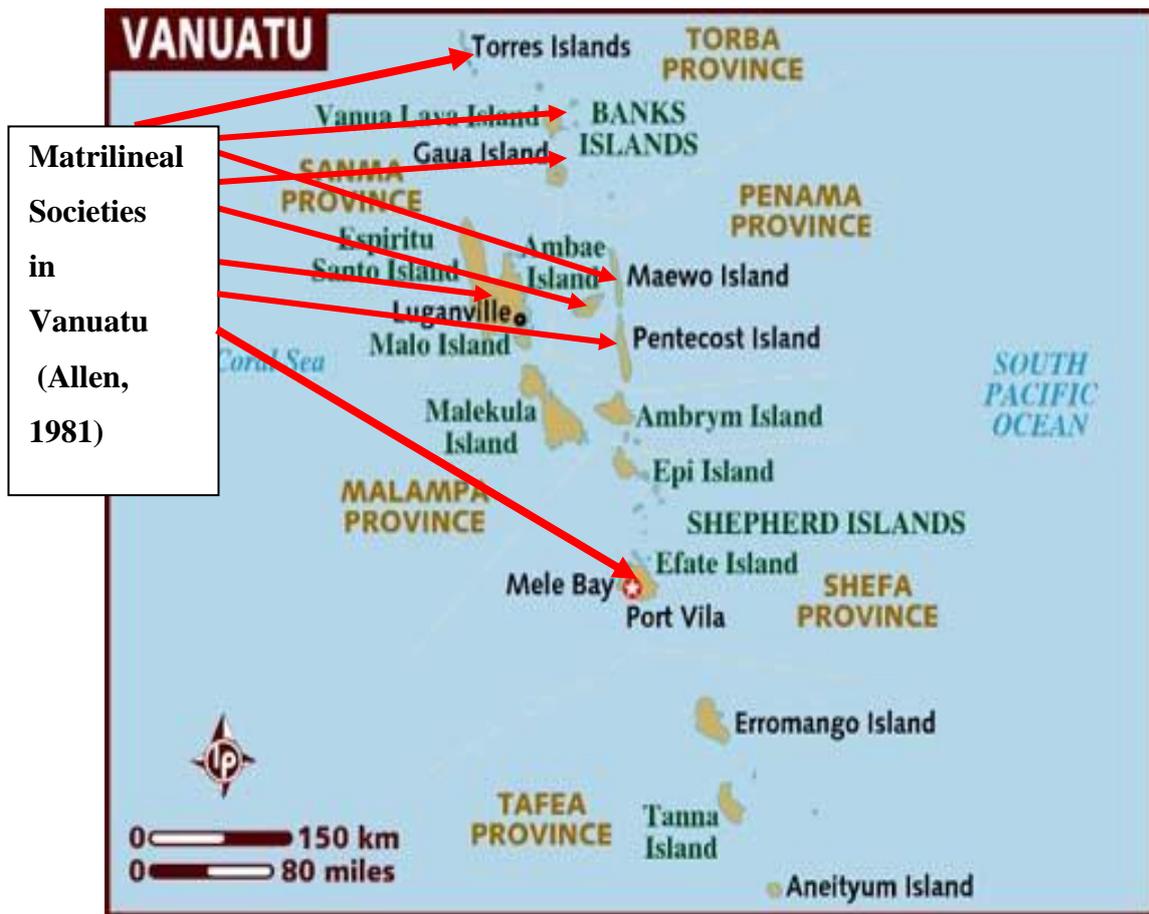
CHAPTER ONE

The Quest: Transforming Patriarchy In Contemporary Vanuatu

1.1 Introduction

Hage & Marck (2003) attest that patrilineality pre-existed in Vanuatu prior to the arrival of early explorers with authors such as Van Trease (1987); Facey (1981) and Narokobi (1981) positing that matrilineal Wantok systems of governance guided many Melanesian communities of the Pacific until patrilineality became widely established. The Big Bay region has always been matrilineal in orientation. Patrilineality is when lineage and land inheritance is passed from the paternal ancestors to a father and to a son. However, in some patrilineal societies, women do participate in chiefly customary ceremonies to upgrade their status within these societies. The disruption to the matrilineal indigenous traditional Wantok systems has a long history linked to the colonisation of the Pacific by Europeans, particularly through the influence of the early Christian missionaries. Matrilineality is when lineage including in some areas land inheritance is passed from the maternal ancestors to a mother and to a daughter. However, in most matrilineal societies, men are still the leaders, big men and chiefs although in some matrilineal societies. A matriarchy is when women are the power-holders of a society. There is no record of women holding power in any matrilineal societies in Vanuatu except that women do participate in the decision-making process with their men in matrilineal societies, if they assert for this privilege. Vanuatu does have female chiefs who are not matriarchs but do have influence and govern certain people within their customary jurisdiction. This disruption has been amplified in the way distorted patrilineal ideals and colonial urban patriarchy have been combined in the current form of governance in Vanuatu. Patriarchy refers to men who control the decision-making process as women are largely excluded from it in Vanuatu. Under the patrilineal regime, marginalisation and impoverishment of women have been exacerbated. Through this research, I call on the authority of women, particularly as mandated in matrilineal descent groups, for a review of the current call for greater participation of Ni-Vanuatu women in the development of Vanuatu's future. A Vanuatu map as Chart 1.1 detailing islands that contain matrilineal lineage descent societies is displayed next:

Chart 1.1: Map of Matrilineal Societies in the Republic of Vanuatu



Source: Adapted from the Lonely Planet Guide (2013).

The late Grace Mera Molisa as a matrilineal woman, who personally experienced patrilineal complexities, argues that Vanuatu's rural leaders of patrilineal communities hold the ultimate responsibility for imposing the belief that Ni-Vanuatu women are inferior to men (Molisa, 1992). In such patrilineal communities, women have no direct property rights, patrimony, nor legacy for children they bear (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The combined influences and out-workings of traditional patrilineages and the incoming values of the Christian missionary have resulted in subjecting women and children to the men of households (Miles, 1997, & Macdonald-Milne & Thomas, 1981). These dynamics of control have been amplified in contemporary rural and urban governance. Although Molisa (cf Lini, 1995) implies in 1978 that boys' assertiveness and girls' subservience happens all over Vanuatu's traditional societies, in her subsequent work. Molisa (1992) and Huffer and Molisa (1999) the authors reaffirm that matrilineal societies are common and devised to

operate on egalitarian values. This egalitarian situation is not evident in all matrilineal societies as is the case in contemporary Vanuatu.

The notable unequal status and influence of women in contemporary Vanuatu and the extreme poverty of many urban women in this jurisdiction has encouraged the introduction of two programmes generated from the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The first is designed to bring greater equality of employment opportunity (EEO) to urban women in waged jobs and salaried/professional occupations (to be referred to throughout this thesis as women in formal jobs). The second is the establishment of microfinance projects to grant microfinance to urban women to engage in business (to be referred to throughout this thesis as women in informal jobs also known as '*Mamas*'). My research examines these two interventions through a point-counterpoint device for my analysis in order to form a 'standpoint' (a process described more fully in Chapter Five and demonstrated in Chapters Six, Seven and Nine respectively). I begin this chapter with an explanation of the particular way in which patriarchy has become established in contemporary Vanuatu. I then set out a depiction of gender inequality in urban Vanuatu, to which the two United Nations programmes are deemed as an emancipatory response, a response promising to improve the well-being of Ni-Vanuatu urban women in formal and informal jobs.

1.2 Establishing Patriarchy in Contemporary Vanuatu

A female of the human species in Vanuatu traditional society is viewed as secondary and inferior to men... In childhood a boy is allowed to assert himself, while a girl is continuously taught subservience (Grace Mera Molisa cf Lini, 1995, p. 2).

The complex allocation of authority and responsibilities in traditional societies and the study of the associated gendered dynamics as forms of social organisation and maintenance of order and control are exemplified in the work of Grace Mera Molisa (1992, 2000a, & 2000b). This focus is repeated in the works of other writers concerned with understanding the organisation of gender in Vanuatu and the impact of such gendering on organisation (Warsal, 2009; Strachan, Saunders, Jimmy & Liku 2007; Piau-Lynch, 2007; VNCW, 2005; Tor & Toka, 2004; Randell, 2003; Molisa,

1992; Lini 1995 & Mackenzie-Reur, 1995). Hilda Lini Motarilavoia also a matrilineal woman and the late Grace Mera Molisa were co-founders of the Vanuatu National Council of Women (Molisa, 1992 & VNCW, 2005). They were ardent human rights and feminist advocates. Lini originates from the island of Pentecost while Molisa comes from the island of East Ambae as both islands come under the jurisdiction of the Penama Provincial Government Council in the Republic of Vanuatu (ILO, 2006). Lini, a journalist by profession, in Macdonald-Milne et al. (1981) asserts: “The women of Vanuatu must raise their voices, not hide them” (p. 120). Lini’s call for women to be assertive and vocal and the prodding by Grace Mera Molisa for women to claim their human rights signals the need for women to withdraw from their positions of subservience and assume their rightful places in Vanuatu’s decision-making processes and its future direction (Molisa, 1987, 1992, 2000a & 2000b).

Sela Molisa, the spouse of the late Grace Mera Molisa from the island of Espiritu Santo is also of “matrilineal descent” (Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981, p. 122). In a story entitled, “Sela Molisa – Supportive Partner” (cf Randell, 2003) he is reported as saying: “Vanuatu cannot progress without half of its human resources – women – contributing to its development” (p. 40). He too regards the oppression of Ni-Vanuatu women as being the work of missionaries and Vanuatu’s traditional cultures. His intention was to urge Vanuatu’s patrilineages and urban patriarchy to recognise the important roles that women play or can actively play in Vanuatu’s socio-political, cultural and economic contexts (Dalesa, 2002).

Viran Molisa the eldest daughter of the late Grace Molisa and Sela Molisa re-affirmed her father’s egalitarian practices, stating her father “[looked] after [her] mother and [respected] her” (Randell 2003, p. 43). Furthermore, Sela Molisa supported his spouse’s work for Ni-Vanuatu women’s human rights in her voluntary work to “contribute a lot to the development of women, and the education of people about the Constitution, the laws, the UN Conventions and the Comprehensive Reform Program” (Randell, 2003, p. 40). For example, Sela Molisa states: “Ever since [Grace] lost her job in formal employment in 1990...I have been helping to finance everything that she has been doing” (ibid, p. 40). These examples clearly portray that both matrilineal and patrilineal women saw the necessity to speak out against Vanuatu’s patrilineages and

urban patriarchies' for ignoring women's contribution to Vanuatu's societies. Molisa, in VNCW (2005) states:

It is women who contribute the biggest amount of labour in our economy through unpaid work to sustain our families in every Vanuatu home. The unpaid work of women is not counted in our national system of accounting but it is the women of this country who carry the burdens of the daily life of the nation, and it is the women who give us peace and stability. The sooner national leaders, who are men, realise that our women are our most valuable asset and therefore should be educated and treated right, the sooner we can begin to move in the direction of creating the kind of Vanuatu society that future generations can look back on and thank us for. (pp. 5-6).

The observed imposition of gender dynamics as expressed by Molisa in 1978 (cf Lini, 1995 & Molisa, 1992) needs more careful analysis. Such an analysis will be woven into the text of subsequent chapters of this thesis and influences my call, in my final chapter, on the authority of women in both patrilineal and matrilineal societies to address the specific forms of urban patriarchal powers which is a product of unbalanced gendered relations in both traditional and modern communities that are overlaid with patriarchal values amplified in Vanuatu's urban centres and most evident in the governance of the jurisdiction now known as Vanuatu.

1.3 Relegating Women to the Periphery: Domestication and Marginalisation

The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) stresses "women have been and continue to play a significant role in contributing to the social and economic developments [of Vanuatu]" (p. 9). Nevertheless, the Vanuatu Government does acknowledge that there is an under-representation of women in decision-making positions in Vanuatu. The Republic of Vanuatu (1997) argues "women feel their contribution... is undervalued and that too little attention is paid to their special needs" (p. 12, cf The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). This sense of under-appreciation is particularly pertinent as the women reflect on their past participation in the emancipation of Vanuatu from colonial rule. Ni-Vanuatu women such as Grace Mera Molisa, Hilda Lini, Nerry Taurakoto, Mildred Sope, Lesline Malsungai, Rebecca Sau, Hazel Tavoia, Hanson Matas Kelekele, Mary Lini, Lucy Leitapanga Sandy, Dorothy Regenvanu, Leitak Leifineriki

Sokomanu, Keasi Timakata, Charity Kalpokas, Marilyn Tahu, and Anna Tevi battled alongside Ni-Vanuatu men for Vanuatu's independence (Molisa, 2000a & VNCW, 2005). Vanuatu's new urban patriarchy replacing colonial rulers alienated most of these women from executive power except for Grace Mera Molisa (VNCW, 2005). Molisa (2000a) argues that "women were busy keeping their homes safe, the men...claimed the power of the constitutional posts and senior administrative positions...[setting] the scene for the struggle women are now experiencing" (p. 56, cf The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Patrilineages and urban patriarchy then combined to set the scene for women's discrimination, subjugation, oppression, and relegation into the domestic sphere in Vanuatu. Men's dismissal of the value of women and the denial of their aspirations for positions of authority in the governance of Vanuatu was carried into their marginalisation in emerging market opportunities. Employers (including senior female gate-keepers) either overtly or covertly prevent aspiring women from securing positions of authority in constitutional and corporate governance.

Those few Ni-Vanuatu women who have been able to secure positions of authority in formal jobs continue to face glass-walls and glass-ceilings and remain stuck to sticky floor impediments (Piau-Lynch, 2007). The ILO (2006) attests to the scarcity of women in senior management positions in both the public and private sector in Vanuatu: "Employment data clearly indicates that women are significantly under-represented in senior level positions with only 40 of the 368 (9.2%) of management and political leadership positions occupied by women" (p. 53). In the political arena over the past 30 years, only five different women (3 rural: 2 from Epi in the Shefa Province, 1 from Malakula in the Malampa Province; 2 urban) have held constitutional seats (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The most recent female Member of Parliament is from Malampa Province. Piau-Lynch (2007) acknowledges Vanuatu Government's efforts to promote and support gender equality in Vanuatu has failed, as fewer than 3.8% of women are voted into Vanuatu's Parliament - the lowest in the world, thus drawing attention to Ni-Vanuatu women's marginalization.

Ni Vanuatu women's aspirations for employment are linked to their need to generate a livelihood for themselves and their dependents. Many rural matrilineal and patrilineal women migrate into the urban centres because of the need to secure jobs as expressed by Rodman, Kraemer, Bolton, and Tarisese (2009) to earn incomes, access better

housing, and enhance their living standards by having potable water, electricity and electronic gadgets in their homes and also to offer education to their children. However, when access to formal jobs is difficult, many women are encouraged to a form of self-employment through the creation of micro- enterprises. This is deemed the best means of earning incomes to reduce their poverty (Salong, 2008). As in the formal employment context, however, here too women find themselves under pressure. Vanwods microfinance female entrepreneurs, also known as Mamas, have recognised the difficulty of owning and maintaining their microfinance businesses because of the pressures they experience at the hands of the leaders of their ‘savings’ social clubs, and from the directives of Vanwods MFI. These leaders act as gatekeepers, scrutinizing new recruits for a period of not less than a month to authenticate their regular attendances at weekly Vanwods MFI social club meetings, and their diligence in making weekly personal savings before they are allowed to enrol as full-term members of the Vanwods MFI. The Mamas’ full membership will grant them access to microfinance loans to help with the setting up of their microfinance businesses. Women who do not meet this pre-requisite for enrolment into Vanwods MFI (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011) will not be granted loans. For many, domestic labour or prostitution (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004) remains as a means to generate a livelihood for themselves and their dependents.

Randell (2003) argues that the situation of female inferiority fits Vanuatu urban patriarchy’s emphasis on the superiority of men in positions of authority in Vanuatu’s constitutional and corporate governance. Assumed notions of traditional values and customs expressed in the attitudes of men are frequently blamed as the cause of women’s marginalization in positions of authority. Yet, the evidence would suggest otherwise. For example, a former Prime Minister, Edward Nipake Natapei, echoes the conflicted views of Ni-Vanuatu women’s discrimination, oppression and marginalisation as resulting from men’s attitudes in the Foreword to Randell’s Ni-Vanuatu role models, Part One: Successful women in their own right, reaffirming:

Many of the issues that arise in the women’s lives relate to men’s attitudes, reactions and behaviour. It was often men who provided the challenge and the support that helped these women to achieve success – be it as fathers, brothers, partners, mentors or colleagues. But there were also stories of negative social attitudes and institutional systems which made it difficult for women to develop

their confidence and abilities. It seems that often men's own insecurities made them feel threatened or jealous of the success of their partners or colleagues. In many cases in this book, such opposition steeled the [women] to persevere but at high emotional cost. I hope that future generations of men will have a more positive attitude to women and so make the path smoother for them (p. 4).

Given the under-representation and marginalization of women in decision-making positions in Vanuatu, in this research I focus on two related practical interventions of the United Nations: the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes for urban women in waged jobs and salaried/professional occupations in the formal employment sector; and the establishment of microfinance projects to support local enterprise for urban poor women. These two United Nations' programmes aim to provide formal and informal jobs to urban Ni-Vanuatu women. It is assumed this participation will be the path to their liberation, emancipation, and their empowerment, and a path out of poverty. Investigating these objectives within a complex socio-political, cultural and economic environment, I wish to identify whether the current EEO programmes implemented in Vanuatu's public and private employment sectors have effectively endorsed and encouraged women's participation and advancement into positions of authority. Secondly, I also investigate the extent to which urban women's participation in microfinance projects reduces their poverty and enhances the women's and their families' well-being. Finally, I assess the effectiveness of the two programmes in terms of their contribution to the emancipation and empowerment of women of Vanuatu – the stated intention of the CEDAW interventions.

The overarching research question for this study is:

To what extent do the United Nations' CEDAW programmes for EEO and the establishment of microfinance businesses address the emancipatory aspirations and well-being needs of Ni-Vanuatu women?

The supplementary questions I have used to guide me in the enquiries that would meet the general objectives of my investigation are:

a) How do women report their aspirations and experiences for advancement and equality in constitutional power, corporate governance and economic activities in Vanuatu?

- b) What challenges do women face in contributing to improving living standards of the people of Vanuatu?
- c) In what ways would the women like to see their opportunities and effectiveness enhanced?
- d) What evidence demonstrates that glass ceilings/walls/cliffs/escalator/sticky floor problems documented in the international organisational literature also affect women in Vanuatu in their [aspirations for inclusion in] governance, senior management and entrepreneurial activities?
- e) Do family configurations, societal norms and traditional lineage systems encourage or discourage Ni-Vanuatu women in aspiring for positions of authority and entrepreneurial activities in the formal contexts?
- f) What actions or measures of social and ethical responsibility and moral obligations should the Vanuatu Government and policy bodies take to enhance the advancement and equality of women into constitutional power, corporate governance and entrepreneurial activities in Vanuatu?

I understand that there is a danger in having multiple research objectives. With regard to my study, however, my position at the outset was to tackle a complexity with a number of dynamics I could not be certain of at the outset. My intention was to be guided to some extent by the interlocutors in my research. As such, a more open research agenda seemed appropriate.

Huffer and Molisa (1999) posit that women in Vanuatu's rural and urban societies are born with inherent desires for justice, equity and equality and a desire to have a voice, space and property rights in community affairs and in Vanuatu's future direction. Randell (2003) highlights Ni-Vanuatu women desire their "basic human rights of recognition, equality and financial independence" (p. 5). In this research I examine the impacts and effects of liberally-orientated aspirations and interventions evident in the development of Vanuatu. I explore the unique dynamics of indigenous cultural norms of patrilineality and matrilineality and the now prevailing urban patriarchal mind-sets in the daily lives of Ni-Vanuatu women in their formal and informal jobs. I investigate and discuss the effectiveness of CEDAW-inspired EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects to positively reduce the discrimination and oppression faced by Ni-Vanuatu women at the hands of employers, gate-keepers,

spouses, and business operators. An initial insight into the complex historical socio-political, cultural and economic context within which these programmes are implemented is introduced next and will be extended in Chapter 2.

1.4 Becoming Vanuatu

The dynamics of contemporary patriarchy in Vanuatu have their origins deeply entwined in the influence of incoming Europeans (Van Trease, 1987 & Facey, 1981). Prior to the European's arrival (Hage & Marck, 2003), people lived in relatively small and interdependent communities organised along matrilineal and patrilineal descent lines (Allen, 1981).

1.4.1 Pre-colonial organisation

The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) states:

Archaeological evidence from Lapita pottery suggests that human settlements on the islands of Vanuatu have been occurring for at least four thousand years. Only in the last 200 years have the islands been settled by European traders, missionaries, planters and colonial administrators. (p. 1)

Furthermore, ILO (2006) states:

Vanuatu ...was settled from Solomon Islands in the West about 3,500 years ago. The language and culture was part of the greater Austronesian culture which originated in South East Asia and extended through migration across the Pacific... The Lapita people who settled later extended their migration and influence to Fiji. (p. 77)

Villages, areas and regions in pre-colonial Vanuatu had specific names. For example, the village name of 'Matantas' is a Big Bay language term. The village was named because of activities surrounding the '*Na Vuhu Sule*' lineage and its totem as retold in this story:

An old Na Vuhu Sule woman discovered a hole containing sea water but kept it hidden from her children and others in the village. When she cooked, she would take some sea water and add it to the food to season it. Her dishes always tasted better than other residents' dishes. Her two inquisitive boys wanted to find out how their mother was able to cook food in such a way that tasted much better than food from other family members. One day, they hid in a secret place to observe their mother doing her domestic chores. They saw how she removed a stone from a hole in the ground, and scooped out some liquid and then replaced the stone in its place. As soon as the mother was out of sight, the two boys pushed away the stone to investigate this liquid. The sea water angrily started spurting out of its hole and ran down the hill towards the valley and into the Matantas Village engulfing the whole Big Bay area.

Matantas was named because the 'eye of the sea' was released from on top of the *Matantas* into other areas of Big Bay. The two Big Bay terms that became *Matantas* are 'Namatana' which means 'the eye of the' and 'Tas' which means the 'sea'. 'Namatanatas' became 'Matantas' as recorded during the colonial era. Another name for *Matantas* is 'Vemarana', which is discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

In this pre-colonial configuration of the islands now known as Vanuatu, inhabitants were governed through the Wantok governance model (Maltali, Sandy & Tamashiro, 2009; & Stege, Maetala, Naupa & Simo, 2008). The term "Wantok" (ILO, 2006, p. 79) is synonymous with the Bislama word 'Manples' (Crowley, 2003) meaning people from the same village, island, region, province, or country, holding and practicing similar cultural and community values and beliefs, and understanding and speaking the same language(s). The ILO (2006) states *Wantok* is the "socio-cultural network which links together social groups through exchange, ceremonies, land rights and other forms of cultural practices...an ideology which binds people of similar language, genealogical lines and history into a unitary social complex" (p. 79). Furthermore, "The Wantok system is a generic term in Melanesia to refer to one's kin or those closely linked together either socially or biologically...[and has] been a major force in shaping group identity and support... as well as traditional obligations" (ibid, p. 79). The Wantok kinship social security network system is an indigenous traditional reciprocal social security and support mechanism offered by community members to other community members, providing them with free labour, land rights, exchanges, ceremonies and cultural practices.

Matrilineal systems (Stege et al. 2008; & Van Trease, 1987) transmit patrimony, lineages and property rights from mothers to daughters. Within these societies, the needs of men are never ignored, as it is the men who assume the roles of hereditary chieftains, big men and figureheads (ILO, 2006). These male leaders and figureheads share leadership and decision-making with matrilineal women in community affairs. Matrilineal women are valued and respected because of their roles in transmitting patrimony and legacies to future generations (Maltali et al. 2009; & Van Trease, 1987). Women's social roles are extremely important in matrilineal societies as the former President of the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs, Chief Tom Numake of Tanna Island in the Tafea Province states, women are “the backbone of everything that the chiefs do for their family, community, village and the country as a whole” (p. 5, cf Randell, 2003). This comment applies to both matrilineal and patrilineal societies as women's productive and reproductive labour are valued. Furthermore, Randell states women are “engaged in subsistence agriculture and other day-to-day roles, such as mother, nurse, food provider, community leader and first educator” (ibid, p. 5). Women's varied responsibilities keep the community socially cohesive and are recognised in the matrilineal Wantok governance model through the provision of justice, equity and egalitarian values (Huffer & Molisa, 1999). The well-being needs of both genders in matrilineality are met by providing them with distinct social, leadership and governance roles and an identity through lineage and property rights through land inheritance with the ability to cultivate food for their nuclear and extended family members' sustenance (Maltali et al. 2009 & Stege et al. 2008).

1.4.2 Introducing imperialism, colonization and patriarchy

The effects of early [European] imperial interests into the Pacific were significant. Three different European explorers sailed through the archipelago. Two of them remained to colonise these islands. Captain Ferdinand de Quiros (ILO, 2006) was the first to lead a Spanish expedition that landed at Matantas Village in 1605 (Gutch, 1971). It was De Quiros who named the island, '*Tierra Australis del Espiritu Santo*' assuming that he had come across the “much imagined great southern continent” (ILO, 2006, p. 77). Espiritu Santo is also known by its short form, '*Santo*' or '*Canal*' (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). While these explorers assumed authority to name and map Vanuatu, the Spaniards did not stay. Louis Antoine de Bougainville of France was next to sail through the region in 1768 (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004) with

Captain James Cook naming the group of islands the ‘*New Hebrides*’ in 1774 (ILO, 2006).

Foreign sandalwood traders together with Christian missionaries sent by the London Missionary Society arrived in Vanuatu in 1839 (Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981 & Cox, 1958). ILO (2006) states:

In the early 19th century, English missionaries had arrived in Vanuatu together with sandalwooders who traded in sandalwood for the Asian market. Once the sandalwood was depleted the sandalwood traders turned to blackbirding, the practice of kidnapping locals for forced labour...They were taken to work in sugar and cotton plantations in Queensland and Fiji. (p. 77)

France and Britain extended their claim into the archipelago with a joint naval commission in 1887 ostensibly to stop the ‘black birding’ (ILO, 2006, p. 77). The commission was replaced by a joint condominium colonial rule in 1906. European interests did not cease, however. Foreign traders such as the British Burns Philip (BP) and the French La Compagnie Française de la Nôuvélles-Hébridès (CFNH) continued to amass huge tracts of alienated indigenous land (McDonald-Milne et al. 1981). France and Britain had established colonial rule in the New Hebrides (ILO, 2006) from 1906-1980. The French and English languages became two of Vanuatu’s national languages. The two colonisers ran separate French and British education, policing and judicial systems, with duplication of services occurring on either side. Western notions of gendered influence prevailed – achieved largely through the work of missionaries.

1.4.3 Overlaying matrilineality with gendered Christian values

Early missionaries who entered Vanuatu set out to Christianise the inhabitants, persuading converts to re-align their family structures according to the Biblical doctrine of Ephesians 5:22 “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord” (p. 4, cf The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). In this fundamentalist form of Christianity, the man is designated as the head of the family and is deemed the sole decision-maker. Women in this way of organizing communities had no active roles in shared governance (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Women were required merely to submit to their spouses. Van Trease (1987) argues “some early missionaries – in particular, Peter Milne of Nguna – sought to suppress the matrilineal tradition because it appeared to him to be

contrary to the scriptures” (p. 9). The change of family structures became known as patrilineality (Van Trease, 1987) and it was imposed on the matrilineal inhabitants of Vanuatu. Patrilineality incorporates elements of colonial and Christian values with indigenous cultural values (Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981). This new configuration has seen the development of a *Wantok* system based on values that now recognise and promote the superiority of men (ILO, 2006). In patrilineages, mothers and daughters have no voice, space and land/property rights in community affairs (ILO, 2006; The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004) as their social and cultural roles are merely to grow their spouses’ patrimonies and legacies. Lineage and land inheritances are transmitted from patrilineal ancestors from fathers to sons. Concepts of justice, equity and egalitarianism which gave traditional rights to women in matrilineality were not part of patrilineal traditional cultures.

Although patrilineal women’s traditional gender roles are important in patrilineages, “men continue to be seen as the head of the family and women as primary care providers” (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. 42). Randell (2003) argues in some islands “women are not allowed to participate in community decision-making and are generally expected to do what their husbands want them to do” emphasising the Christian admonition that women must keep quiet and be submissive to their husbands (p. 5). Furthermore, the Republic of Vanuatu (2004) states the “stereotype of a woman as a housewife, fully occupied at home with the family and housework while fathers are heads of the household continues to be the dominant perception” in Vanuatu (p. 42). It is in this way that the matrilineal *Wantok* system came to be overlaid and eventually controlled through patriarchal values - first those of the incoming colonial powers and later by a group of men from patrilineal heritages continue to persist with these values and benefitting from them in the new arrangements. This new form of governance was not to continue unchallenged, however. Resistance was brewing.

1.4.4 Resisting the legacy of colonial rulers

The *Nagriamel* Movement (Beasant, 1984) was an indigenous movement founded by the late Jimmy Tupou Pantutun Stevens, a New Hebridean with Tongan descent (also known as Moli, a common Espiritu Santo term for chief). Stevens gained indigenous support from “Chief Buluk from the Santo bush people” (Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981, p. 47). Many people from other islands of Vanuatu joined Stevens in his fight to

reclaim alienated indigenous land from the European owners. The *Nagriamel* Movement carried an additional aim, which was to create a confederation of islands (Banks/Torres Federation and Tanna Federation) with Espiritu Santo as its centre, and become the “State of Vemarana” (Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981, p. 51). The confederations would cover the whole of the New Hebrides. Nevertheless, Moli Jimmy Stevens could not convince church members who headed the New Hebrides Government of National Unity of this vision. On 29 May 1979, Moli Jimmy Stevens declared Espiritu Santo as the Provisional Government of Vemarana. The term Vemarana is another name given to the area of Matantas in Big Bay. This move created conflicts with the Government of National Unity and Moli Jimmy Stevens was branded a secessionist. This revolt ended with the Santo Rebellion late in 1979, when the first Vanuatu Prime Minister, Fr Dr Walter Hadye Lini, sought help from his Melanesian big brother, Papua New Guinea and its Kumul Defence Force (ILO, 2006) to stop the Santo Rebellion and jailed Moli Jimmy Steven for mutiny.

Despite Britain and France’s formal withdrawal as colonial rulers in 1979, they influenced the New Hebrides Government of National Unity to adopt the Westminster Democratic Governance Model incorporating the British Westminster parliamentary system and a French head of state framework systems of communication and governance models. This model operates in the urban areas of Vanuatu where 23% of the population now resides (VNSO, 2009 & ILO, 2006). Provincial governments in Vanuatu governed 77% of the rural population (VNSO, 2009 & ILO, 2006). These new forms of governance incorporated the-by-then well-established adaptation of the Wantok systems into contemporary patriarchy.

The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) acknowledges, “The social structure in Vanuatu is [now] principally patriarchal featuring men as administrators of the societies” (p. 5). Throughout this thesis, Vanuatu’s rural patriarchy refers to patrilineality or patrilineages and urban patriarchy refers to Vanuatu’s current ruling elite. These two systems now coexist with the development of ever greater competitive Western individualism in Vanuatu. Within this environment, women, particularly those who uphold community values, assert women’s authority and who take the responsibility for those who are fragile (such as the young, ill, and the elderly) are clearly disadvantaged and discriminated against.

To various degrees, Wantok governance systems of matrilineality and patrilineality (ILO, 2006) still operate within the rural communities. There, by and large, rural women can exercise their responsibilities and have their personal needs met through their various engagements with matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models and their kinship network social systems. When these rural women migrate into the urban centres however, they no longer have their indigenous and traditional kinship and network systems to support them. In the various transitions from the *Wantok* systems of old to Vanuatu's contemporary context, many women of the region have lost the benefits of rural security and found themselves in vulnerable and often impoverished lives (Rodman, Kraemer, Bolton & Tarisese, 2009). The issues facing women in Vanuatu are similar to many issues for women facing the pressures of intensifying globalisation. They are also under pressure to address the unique shape this process takes in this jurisdiction.

When Vanuatu became a sovereign state, it had been and remains influenced by Western, global and international pressures to accede to various international instruments from the United Nations (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The United Nations has been and remains a powerful vanguard of Western notions of emancipation delivered through Western style democracy and liberal market economies. As discrimination against and oppression of women continued under the new regime, however, various Ni-Vanuatu women such as the late Grace Mera Molisa (Randell, 2003) and the members of the Vanuatu National Council of Women and other women's groups and bodies (VNCW, 2005 & VNCW, 1996) worked fervently to notify Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy of women's marginalization. As a member of the United Nations, Vanuatu was persuaded to accede to the CEDAW to help redress women's marginalization in Vanuatu (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004).

1.5 Intensifying Globalisation: The UN in Vanuatu

The Vanuatu Government is committed to three United Nations' conventions: the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In April 1995, it acceded to CEDAW. Accession to UN conventions is the responsibility of member states. Although implementation of programmes is

undertaken voluntarily, members must be seen to be committed to them or risk being censured. Vanuatu must abide to these conventions designed to address women's marginalization and human rights practices in Vanuatu. Vanuatu's refusal to voluntarily abide with conventions may negatively impact its membership to the UN. The Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of the Child also incorporate policies to address the marginalisation of women and children in Vanuatu. The CEDAW convention (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004) was offered to specifically to address the discrimination and oppression that is manifest in this region along with the early imposition of European missionary values (Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981), colonial rule (ILO, 2006), and in their contemporary adaptation by Vanuatu's ruling elites (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). For many women, the CEDAW offers a remedy to patriarchal expressions of power and control. Through its tenets, women are promised liberation, emancipation, and empowerment (Ashcraft, 1998; & Tuttle, 1986) to incorporate their inclusion into the leadership of the country, in positions of authority, and as income earners for their families – currently all inhibited by demonstrable gender discrimination as it is now understood in Western terms.

The United Nations (2000 & 2008) stipulate discrimination to be:

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. (cf The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. 21)

Distinctive social justice goals were incorporated by the United Nations' Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP, 2008). In a speech on 24 October 2008, Dr Noleen Heyzer, then Under-Secretary- General of ESCAP, reiterates the United Nations' objectives of creating "an inclusive and equitable society...ending violence, promoting tolerance, advancing development and ensuring equality; protecting human rights and alleviating poverty" (ESCAP, 2008, p. 1).

During the time the United Nations has been working on the transformation of discriminations of many kinds, there has been a more belated recognition of the betrayals of indigenous peoples and the undermining of their sovereignty. Persistence from indigenous researchers and activists has culminated in the ratification of the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous peoples. The articulation and recognition of these rights now encourages indigenous people, in principle, to incorporate their indigenous traditional governance models alongside any externally adopted governance models (International Indigenous Women's Forum Association for Women's Rights in Development, 2010).

In its affiliation with the United Nations, the Vanuatu Government made an explicit commitment to promote, coordinate and facilitate justice, equity and egalitarianism in all its institutional arrangements and related decision-making processes (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). To this end, various governments in Vanuatu had implemented a number of policy initiatives and interventions to facilitate the entry of more Ni-Vanuatu women into positions of authority (ibid). For example, Vanuatu's Electoral Commission Act (2002) aims to increase the number of women in constitutional power, while the Vanuatu Ministry of Women's Affairs' Act in 2004 hopes to place more women into civil service and ministerial roles. The Vanuatu Ministry of Education's 2005's Gender Equity in Educational Policy, Objective 9 is to increase the number of female principals and females in senior positions in schools; while the Vanuatu Department of Women's Affairs' 2003's strategic objective is to lobby for more female participation in Vanuatu Government's decision-making process. Furthermore, the Vanuatu National Council of Women and the Vanuatu Women in Politics' institutional terms and objectives is to incorporate more women into decision-making positions in both the formal and informal employment sectors (ibid). For those women who could not secure salaried or waged jobs in this configuration of employment, microfinance business ownership is offered as another path to emancipation. To this end, the Vanuatu Women's Development Scheme (WODS) was set up by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Women's Affairs in 1996, initially launched as the WODS, but now known as Vanwods MFI (Vanwods (2001).

The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) states:

the overall goal of realizing the potential of women as partners and beneficiaries of the development process... a partnership between Government and UNDP to provide poor and disadvantaged women with reliable and affordable microloans to start income earning activity and to be able to save regularly with the aim of putting in place a beneficiary owned microfinance programme that serves a large number of poor women. (p. 112)

The Vanwods MFI goals is to “incorporate women’s issues in mainstream development: planning, participation in economic activities; strengthening organizational structures of the nation and provincial councils of women and improve the status of women and children” (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. 112). Urban poor and marginalised women can access financial assistance from Vanwods MFI (Winn, 2004). The focus is on providing women from rural areas with little or no basic education with opportunities to own and operate microfinance businesses (Salong, 2008).

1.6 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

According to Kirsch, (1999) feminist principles of research were developed “in critiques of objective, positivist methods in the social sciences especially in research on women” (p. 1) as feminist scholars have decreed “more research for women in order to honour the voices of participants, to create opportunities for reciprocal learning, and most importantly, to empower participants to change the conditions of their lives” (p. 3). The interpretive method searches for disguised contradictions hidden in ideology, and open spaces for previously silenced voices (Wood, 2001). The complexity of urban and rural dynamics in the aspirations and manifestations well-being of women in Vanuatu, and in the light of the Vanuatu Government’s commitments to address gendered discrimination, its persistence intrigued me. I found I needed to revisit the literatures several times in order to find the insights I needed to thread my observations into an analyses that accounted for the complexity that is in contemporary Vanuatu. I have laid out this thesis to reflect these return to the literatures and what I was able to gain there as insight. In this study I thus, use a complex three part feminist orientation (Bell, 2005) to draw together the literatures

with the experiences reported by urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs and their relationship with Vanuatu's rural (patrilineality) and urban patriarchy.

Because my research employs a qualitative, interpretivist and subjective method, it involves three distinctive groups of women and men in different settings:

- i. Urban employer representatives (men and women) who attended the focus group discussion;
- ii. Urban women in waged jobs; and urban women in salaried/professional occupations (subsequently referred to as women in formal jobs) seeking career opportunities or positions of authority in the formal employment sector; and
- iii. Urban entrepreneurial women (referred to as Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs or women in informal jobs – also known as *Mamas*) supported by a major microfinance provider: the Vanwods Microfinance Incorporation (MFI).

The locations for this research are the urban centres of Port Vila and Espiritu Santo with the field empirical observations taking place from October 2009 to May 2010.

1.6.1 Field work

I prepared a standard letter for all participants; participant's information sheet 2009; semi-structured questionnaires and participant's biographical details for urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs; and participant's consent form (see Appendixes A-G). The field work for this research was generated through semi-structured one-to-one in-depth personal conversational narratives with urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs and a focus group discussion with employer representatives. Pattong (2002) states conversations can "yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge" (p.4). This personal engagement allows a researcher to explore the experiences, feelings, and opinions of others. Bell and Bryman (2007) argue that "narrative is a powerful and different way of knowing" (p. 22). The focus group discussion with the employer representatives provided feedback from employers on the implementation of their organisation's CEDAW-EEO programmes while the personal conversational narratives from the urban women in formal jobs highlighted their dealings and

relationship with their employers and fellow workers and also urban women in informal jobs of their experiences in owning, operating and maintaining microfinance businesses.

The empirical observations were initially planned as a thematic content analysis (Dawson, 2009 & Kirsch, 1999) to highlight the benefits for women of the implementation of EEO programmes in seeking positions of authority and owning and operating microfinance businesses. This made a feminist orientation an obvious choice. I conducted a series of conversations explained more fully below. However, initial reading of my field-notes suggested there would not be one feminist theory that could adequately express the complexities of the ideas and concerns I came to hear about. At times there were notable contradictions and inconsistencies within and across the stories of the participants. This required a return to the feminist literature as reviewed in Chapter Five. As an outcome of this re-visiting the literature, three theoretical constructs were developed to fully explain the affiliation and aspirational needs of these women as well as the sometimes conflicting and contradictory interpretations found in their stories: a liberal feminist analysis is used to examine the women's desires for non-discriminatory and non-oppressive work-places and business opportunities that promise to generate their liberation, emancipation and empowerment as illustrated in Chapter Six. An adaptation of the post-colonial subaltern voice/lens is crafted to explain the nuances of foreign Western and international influences, the rural patrilineal and urban patriarchal discrimination and oppression as demonstrated in Chapter Seven. As a response to these diverse readings of the participants' narratives, I have generated a matrilineal feminist indigenous standpoint. It is in this voice that I draw on my matrilineal knowledge and experiences to discuss, in Chapter Nine, the themes when viewed through a *Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice*. The three analyses are presented as a 'point', 'counterpoint' and 'standpoint' positioning explained more fully in Chapter Six, Seven and Nine.

To further explain my eventual standpoint (presented in Chapter Nine) as a reflection on my analysis presented in Chapters Six and Seven, I saw the need to settle on an explanatory theoretical framing of the post-colonial critique of capitalism. This required a further prior return to the literatures (as reviewed in Chapter Eight). The most powerful effect of these return to the literatures influenced my final selections of

metaphors for this report. In the next section, therefore, I introduce my chosen framing of ‘the Master/slave relationships’ and provide a sample of the metaphors that I will use throughout the thesis to explain the complex hierarchical master/slave relationships for urban women in formal and informal jobs.

1.6.2 Master/slave relationships and metaphors for thinking with

The term master/slave was derived from the work of Kohn (2005) in Frederick Douglass’ *Master-Slave Dialectic* highlighting the struggles between the Master and slave in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit Discourse*. Hegel (1977, cf Kohn 2005) explaining the master attains “self-consciousness” of an “authoritative” nature (pp. 104-110) when he forces the slave to submit to his point of view and withholds reciprocal recognition of the slave’s point of view. The violent struggles between the master and slave end when the slave chooses “submission and life over death” (p. 497) thus instituting a master/slave relationship that ensues. The articulation of Two Worlds: The Master-Slave Relationship Reconsidered (cf Morris, 1984) argues that socio-economic systems in the Third World today are depicted as “slavery...as these local economies are always shifting and never completely capitalist, but not really traditional or non-capitalist” (p. 983) either. Morris (1984) stresses that capitalism does not intend to obliterate other traditional economies but works in collaboration with them. In his articulation, “Life in non-capitalist societies can remain rooted, not in the logic of the market, but in traditional concerns of family and community” (ibid, p. 983). Furthermore, Morris stipulates that “peasants use the opportunities provided by capitalists [working] as part-time or seasonal wage labourers to help reproduce their non-capitalist world” (ibid, p. 984). By applying this scenario to Vanuatu’s case, although Vanuatu has subscribed to capitalism since the arrival of its colonial masters in 1887-1906-1980, Vanuatu’s *Kastom ekonomi* (Westoby, 2010 & Jolly, 1996) has remained intact in the matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models. For rural residents, we see capitalism assisting Vanuatu’s *Kastom ekonomi* through the despatch of overseas Ni-Vanuatu seasonal workers, who on their return to Vanuatu, return to their *Kastom ekonomi*. The urban women’s struggles are epitomised through complex hierarchical master/slave relationships imposed by capitalism manifested in employer discrimination and oppression, senior female gate-keeping impediments, corruption, and unethical work-place practices, and cultures non-conducive to the women wishing to secure and maintain positions of authority. The contrasting values of *Wantok* social,

political, and economic arrangements with those of the residual colonial influences and contemporary Western notions of development generate specific conditions of conflict and opportunity for Ni-Vanuatu citizens. My concern is with the dynamics generated for women in positions of authority, between the women, and rural and urban patriarchal hegemonies and between the women, and the cash and market economy in their formal and informal jobs.

I have adapted the lexicon of subaltern studies and the insights into the master/slave dynamic to graphically depict how I have come to see the situation of women in Vanuatu. The terms: '*The Master's Ship*', and '*the shaky ramparts of the Master's ship*' and '*the Master's tools*' (Lorde, 1996) are metaphors drawn from an adaptation of post-colonial/subaltern studies devised as a response to my initial reflections on the seeming contradictions and conflicts in the narratives of participants that I recorded in my field notes (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). I use these terms to express the global capitalist system and its control and hold over economies and the people of various nation states, especially in Vanuatu as the case in point. The Master's Ship refers to the Global Markets – the vehicle of the Master of Capitalism (Honderich, 1995). The ramparts of the Master's Ship depict capitalism's supporting organisations. These include the various forms of stock exchanges; the international banking systems, and the rules for trade and exchange. The United Nations (UN) and other international organisations provide support in the promotion of (Western ideals of) freedom and good governance in particular through the activities of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its associated leadership programmes. The examples under investigation in this research are the, United Nations' EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004).

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

The report on my research is laid out in eleven chapters. In this chapter, I have outlined the structure, introduced the complex socio-political, cultural, and economic environment of Vanuatu. I have sketched how missionary and colonial influences undermined the dominant matrilineal Wantok governance model and changed family structures in Vanuatu. I noted how, on independence, Vanuatu's urban patriarchy adopted colonial legacies. I demonstrated the extent to which women have been

moved to the periphery of modern urban Vanuatu, as domestic servants or as junior non-decision-making employees. This situation is inconsistent with the espoused values of liberal democratic organisation – a governance model to which Vanuatu aspires. I explained how this leads to UN's influence in Vanuatu through two remedies intended to combat the marginalization of Ni-Vanuatu women: i) the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and ii) the establishment of microfinance projects. The fundamental research question and the supplementary research questions for this research study were identified, as I provided an initial sketch of my research methods and I explained how I decided on the three theoretical frameworks (or voices) I have chosen to analyse the field notes.

In Chapter Two I explore more deeply the complex socio-political, cultural and economic context introduced in Chapter One. Reference is made to Vanuatu's inclusion as a Melanesian state, the roles chiefs and big men played to govern their subjects and the use of the *Melanesian Voice* to govern and communicate with rural inhabitants during the New Hebridean era and today. Land alienation conflicts between indigenous land owners and the British and French companies created the *Nagriamel* customary movement (Beasant, 1984), an institution which was mandated to fight for the return of alienated customary land. *Nagriamel* was also responsible for instigating the Santo rebellion prior to the independence of the New Hebrides. Because of Ni-Vanuatu women's acute subjugation and marginalization, the UN intervened, arriving in Vanuatu shores in 1985, and pressuring the Vanuatu Government to accede to the CEDAW, which it did in 1995. The United Nations' offered two remedies: EEO programmes for women in waged and salaried/professional jobs to access positions of authority, and microfinance projects for urban Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs.

Chapter Three reviews secondary data that depict urban Ni-Vanuatu women's experiences of discrimination and oppression, leading to their subjugation and marginalization. The kinds of jobs women accessed, incomes they earned, and the poverty status of some of these women were highlighted. Some rural female migrants obtained informal jobs as 'house girls' in their own land and, for some women, prostitution appears to be the only option to make a living in Vanuatu's urban centres. The philosophy and methodology of the research study are explained in Chapter Four

where I explained my preference for a qualitative interpretive paradigm. I explained my research process and how it was that I came to distil the list of themes from the research story to that point. Reflections on my initial reading of my field-notes in relation to the themes prompted a return to the feminist literatures, reported in Chapter Five. From this reviews, three theoretical lenses in the ‘point/counter point’ framing were crafted to generate insights from the integration of my literature reviews, my understanding of the influence of the CEDAW and the experiences of my research participants. Chapter Six demonstrates the application of this framing as ‘point’ – a liberal feminist analysis of the themes listed at the end of Chapter Four. A review of these themes is undertaken in Chapter Seven and presented as ‘counterpoints’ using the adaptation of the post-colonial subaltern voice and lens. The issues raised in Chapters Six and Seven drew my attention to the literatures about diverse economic arrangements and their opportunities and consequences culminating in a critical review of several economic models: the free market economy/capitalism/neo liberalism, peasantology, Vanuatu’s matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models’ *Kastom ekonomi*, the Igbo indigenous economic model and the social and solidarity economic models (Chapter Eight). Together Chapter Two to Eight inspired the crafting of my *Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice*, a voice I used in my ‘standpoint’ on the themes I revisit in Chapter Nine. In Chapter Ten I drew together the various strands of this research and sound my MWFV as if through a loudhailer! I provided a graphic image of how I have come to see the plight of Ni-Vanuatu women struggling for survival on the rough seas of the intensifying global market – a hope to find a place on the Master’s ship, their pressures to climb the slippery ladders to its decks, the great risks of falling off, and for those who do, the stresses of the clutches of an octopus lying in wait to press them back on that slippery ladder to try again. In chapter Eleven, I recognised the limitations of my studies and I laid out some ideas for future ways this work may be progressed.

CHAPTER TWO

‘I Christen you Espiritu Santo; and you, the New Hebrides’: Vanuatu’s complex socio-political, cultural and economic environments and the context of this research study

2.1 Introduction

Vanuatu’s contemporary socio-political, cultural and economic environments are more closely examined in this chapter. They have their origins in the complex colonial disruption of the indigenous matrilineal Wantok systems of organisation by incoming British and French control. The introduction of the Westminster political system, the eventual withdrawal of the Western powers, and the more recent uptake of governance responsibilities by Ni-Vanuatu has culminated in the patriarchal government of the early decades of the twenty-first century. Aspects of this history that have generated the current life conditions of Ni-Vanuatu women were introduced in Chapter One. There I reviewed the reports documenting significant discrimination, marginalisation, and exclusion of women in political and financial affairs. I noted that for many urban Ni-Vanuatu citizens, poverty is endemic and the concern about this situation led to the introduction of two United Nations remedies to gendered alienation and impoverishment: i) CEDAW-EEO programmes for women in formal employment, and ii) microfinance projects for women entrepreneurs. These remedies are intended to liberate, emancipate and empower the marginalised Ni-Vanuatu women.

This chapter begins with a fuller explanation of the Melanesian traditional Wantok models of governance and the significance of matrilineality in this form of organisation. I explain more fully how, following the arrival of explorers, Christian missionaries, and traders, patrilineal and urban patriarchal mind-sets, values of superiority, and beliefs were introduced undermined and entrenched. I explain how the colonial state integrated and assimilated chiefs into the new national governance framework in order to resolve urban disputes. This is followed by an outline of the continued undermining of the traditional Wantok means of governance which paved the way for Vanuatu’s current urban patriarchy to assume the governance of Vanuatu’s post-condominium era. This patriarchy, now well established, is entrenched paradoxically at a time when the *Melanesian Voice* is also claimed as a necessary and significant participant in the international arena. I highlight Vanuatu’s provincial

administrations with Vanuatu's demographic indicators and underline the arrival of the United Nations through its call to Vanuatu to incorporate more indigenous forms of governance with its Westminster governance framework. The Chapter concludes with an outline of how it was that the contemporary Government of Vanuatu, despite its patriarchal orientations, accepted the introduction of the two United Nations generated programmes of gender reform.

2.2 Indigenous Matrilineal Wantok Governance Model

The UNESCO (2011) identifies indigenous peoples to be:

Non-dominant sectors of society [who] are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems. (p.1)

Bolton (1999) and Rundle and Hickey (2008) affirm that for thousands of years, indigenous people have used their customs and indigenous traditional knowledge and practices to guide their everyday life. They operate in their traditional knowledge of planting, harvesting, hunting, gathering, caring, nurturing, doctoring, healing, conservation and preservation. The former UNESCO Director-General, Frederico Mayor acknowledges indigenous people's immense wisdom of local species and consumption as food, medicines, fuel, and building materials (UNESCO, 2011). They hold extensive knowledge of their environments and how these ecosystems function because they live so close to nature. Furthermore, they use local techniques to manage their bio-diversity and complex ecosystems. It is how these indigenous people acquire and use the knowledge of their environments and their relationships with them that give them cultural identity.

Hofstede (2001) characterises nation states and societies by using the categories of individualistic, collective and reciprocal attributes. Scott and Marshall (2005) describe socialist collective action as deeds practiced by a group either directly, or on its behalf, through an organization to achieve members' shared interests. In the categorisation of Western analysts, such a system of governance may be considered a socialist system. Codrington (2008) describes Melanesia as the '*islands of the black skinned people*'. Fox (1958) attests that in the "Melanesian social system every member of a clan is

responsible for the act of any other member” (p. 8). Belshaw (1950) defines Melanesia as small with unique communities united by their daily habits and sentiments. Communities are usually comprised of one or two hundred people who speak the same language or many other languages. For thousands of years, certain communities of thirty or fifty people may occasionally engage in tribal fights with other communities (Gutch, 1971). Nevertheless, each community’s method of burial, local folklore, forms of art, types of canoe, and other cultural traits are not similar. Merriam Webster (2008); Encarta (2011) and Encyclopaedia Britannica (2008) identify that Melanesia hosts multiple languages with the spoken languages originating from the Austronesian group of languages. Before European imperialism, colonisation, and Christian contact, Melanesians and their populations generated their own diverse cultures, values, knowledge and wisdom to guide them. Narokobi (1983a) called this guidance “revealed truths” (p. 3). Maltali et al. (2009); Stege et al. (2008), Reddy (2009), White (2006), Farran (2002), Huffer and Molisa (1999); Guillaud and Walter (1998), Van Trease (1987) and Narokobi (1983a) have written about the Melanesian Indigenous Traditional Governance Model (MITGM) prevalent in Melanesian states such as Vanuatu, Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands and adapted in Vanuatu’s context, to mean the indigenous matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models. People are identified through group and community membership centring on the well-being of the collective group which highly values reciprocity. Vanuatu is a relatively new jurisdiction in the group of Melanesian islands in the Pacific practicing ancient values of collective and reciprocal attributes. During the European traders and Christian missionaries’ entry into the New Hebrides, certain indigenous persons attacked and killed a few of their visitors attracting a negative label, “the land of the savages” (Softpedia News, 2007, p.1) and Melanesians as “unknown savages”. (Fox, 1958, p. 1)

ILO (2006) specifies that the Vanuatu *Wantok* System is a major force for “shaping group identity and support” and operates an indigenous social security system known as the ‘Wantok kinship network social security system’ or the ‘Wantok system’ providing social security to rural residents who are engaged and governed under its communal, collective and reciprocal systems (p. 79). The indigenous peoples of the New Hebrides live in social groups and communities, in either the rural areas or in the urban centres (Van Trease, 1987). They live collectively in their indigenous or

procured land (Maltali et al. 2009). In this region, '*Kastom*' is the means whereby citizens understand how "to belong to themselves and to their place [and their] way of life" (Bolton 1999 p. 1) without any external party influence. Sanga and Walker (2005) highlight that "people" are the fundamental resources of any cultures and the "kastom wealth of a community" (p. 107). This system is not limited to family members within a nuclear family system only, but may extend to any other persons who become part of the group through marriage or residence (ILO, 2006).

Facey (1981) and Van Trease (1987) highlight the pre-existence of matrilineality in the pre-condominium era undisturbed till 1839 when Christian missionaries entered the New Hebrides. People in rural communities are socialised from birth into strong cohesive in-groups incorporating extended family such as uncles, aunts, and grandparents, who are all equally responsible for the caring and nurturing of people within their Wantok kinship network social security groups. Vanuatu's indigenous and traditional societies have high socialist collectivist and reciprocal attributes (ILO, 2006). Huffer & Molisa (1999) makes reference to the protocols of matrilineages as a system practicing equalitarianism and that its customary practices defined men and women as equals. ILO (2006) stresses "The relatively egalitarian nature of the Vanuatu community allows women to rise up the socio-political ladder in terms of decision-making" (p. 79). Decisions in community affairs are made to benefit both genders.

I also share this view as explained in the context of daily life in the Matantas Village during the time of my ancestors and in today's society. Although chiefs, big men and leaders hold figurehead titles for administrative and governance roles in their communal social units, matrilineal rules and protocols of Big Bay's matrilineages' prescribe that male chiefs and big men must include matrilineal women into any social, economic and political decisions in community affairs. In matrilineages, both genders cooperate to make collective and reciprocal decisions on land distribution, day-to-day societal operational matters, management and governance in community affairs (Maltali et al. 2009; ILO, 2006 & Huffer and Molisa, 1999). Big Bay's matrilineages operate on the concepts of justice, equity and equalitarianism (Steger et al. 2008). There is equal sharing of resources to all within these societies, regardless of genders. In contrast, Maltali et al. (2009) comment that matrilineal systems of North of

Pentecost did not arrive by chance but due to the “historical status and power of women in their traditional society” (p. 25). Matrilineal practices in terms of chiefly hereditary titles and the *Wantok* kinship network social security system for Matantas Village in the Big Bay region of Espiritu Santo, is discussed next.

When a matrilineal chief descends from the 'Na Vuhu Sule', this chiefly position is occupied by maternal uncle(s) of the Line Stone matrilineages' descent cultural society. When the presiding chief intends to transmit his hereditary title onto one of his Line Stone nephews (the son of his eldest or youngest sister, but not his biological son) he will perform a customary ceremony to grant a title bestowal (McLeod, 2007). His biological son has no Line Stone hereditary rights, as he belongs to his mother's clan and lineage. In Big Bay's matrilineages, it is the mother of a child who decides which lineage and clan the child is born into, and what land rights and hereditary systems they are entitled to (Steger et al. 2008 & Van Trease, 1987). A man who originates from the Line Stone and marries a woman from another social tribe or a foreign woman does not hold any customary rights to the children he fathers with her, as these children become the property of his wife, her clan and lineage. In matrilineality Van Trease (1987) speaks of women being adopted into lineages based on their marriages. In Matantas Village when an exogamous marriage happens between a Line Stone man and a foreign woman who does not belong to a local clan and lineage of the Big Bay region, the foreign woman must first undergo an initiation and adoption ceremony usually into her father-in-law's lineage. This initiation and adoption is to create a '*Wantok kinship network social security system*' safety net for her and her children, so they can have access to land and resources to support and maintain themselves in their new residence. If the spouse of the foreign woman passes away, the wife has her adopted-and-affiliated-clan and lineage as her '*Wantok kinship network society security*' framework for assistance. The foreign woman will create patrimony and legacies for her adopted-and-affiliated clan and lineage. The unfortunate case of a prominent leader of North Pentecost is highlighted when a *Wantok kinship network social security system* was ignored to cater for his foreign wife and children (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). When this leader suddenly died, all his properties in his village were reclaimed by his clan and lineage, leaving his wife destitute, with only an urban property, purchased and registered in her name.

Big Bay women's prominent status in transmitting lineage, patrimony and land inheritance (property) rights to future generations is depicted in the names that women are given according to the sequence of their births. For example, a woman who is the first-born of any matrilineal Big Bay family is called a '*Kopui*'. The '*Kopui*' is seen as the next in line to assume her mother's place to create progenies and transmit all matrilineal rights to newer generations. The second born daughter of a matrilineal family is called a '*Komala*' which can also mean a 'daughter/girl' in the Big-Bay lingua. A '*Komala's*' role in creating and transmitting matrilineal rights to her children is just as important as the role of the '*Kopui*'. In Big Bay, it is customary to emphasise the status of a first born daughter by calling her '*Komala Pui*' or the 'First-born Daughter'.

In Big Bay, the matrilineal governance system and land ownership gives lineages the ability to forge ties with other lineages, and acquire multiple wives from these relationships. The capacity of a '*Na Vuhu*' not only to care for its lineage but also other lineages living under the chief's jurisdiction shows the power and status this particular lineage holds. The '*Na Vuhu Sule*' is a prominent lineage holding upper-class status in the Big Bay region and on the island of Espiritu Santo. The customary name '*Navok*' is a name used only by the '*Na Vuhu Sule*' lineage holders, chieftains, leaders and big men. For example, ancient '*Navok Rauri*' of the '*Na Vuhu Sule*' killed over 1,000 pigs to receive the highest chiefly status not only in the Big Bay region but on the island of Espiritu Santo. *Navok Rauri* and his *Na Vuhu Sule* lineage owned huge tracts of land in Big Bay. Because of *Navok Rauri's* leadership powers, he acquired 100 wives from forging ties with other lineages in Big Bay. His wives worked in his gardens and tended his pigs so that he could maintain his status as a prominent chief, governor, big-man and an influential leader in Matantas. Furthermore, *Navok Rauri's* first wife also held important chiefly status because she killed pigs to achieve her chiefly title of '*Uju*'. The attainment of the status of '*Uju*' signifies the ability of a woman to carry a load on her head and back in the Big Bay region and to care for the physical and spiritual needs of people under her jurisdiction. When people visited the home of an '*Uju*', they stooped low and tip-toed, to gain access to her. In stooping low and tip-toeing, they showed their respect for her chiefly status. An '*Uju*' is also considered sacred because she has undertaken a sacred ritual of '*tambu faea*' (sacred fire) to give her spiritual powers. For *Navok Rauri*, his first wife was the only woman

who was entrusted to provide meals for him. His health and well-being remained in her hands. Gutch (1971) highlights that in neighbouring villages in Melanesia, rural inhabitants would plan and undertake violent attacks and execute raids on others for the purpose of a ceremonial or a customary feast. It is not uncommon in the Big Bay region for other lineages to work black magic/sorcery spells to kill all members of a lineage and to a claim and ownership to their indigenous land and resources.

Two other lineages, the '*Na Vuhu Woji*' and the '*Na Vuhu Garae Chiloliu*', also owned land within the boundaries of Matantas area. As no members of these two lineages survived, the '*Na Vuhu Sule*' has become the sole custodian and owners of these land boundaries extending past the Jordan River into the Worowoke area of the Big Bay region. '*Na Vuhu Sule*' land boundaries start at *Vunavilai* (a boundary which was established by Chief Naru of Sara Village and Chief Paul Tavue of Na Vuhu Sule of Matantas Village witnessed by the President of the Nagriamel Movement, Moli Jimmy Stephens, and other Matantas and Sara Village family members, in the early 1960's. It extends to *Broke Stone*, to *Vunavira*, down to *Na Vatier* past *Onekara*, past the current Matantas Village location at the *Natapoa Tree*, right down to *Raikara* and then reconnecting to *Vunavilai*.

Mahele, the last descendant of the *Na Vuhu Woji* lineage of Matantas Village married *Tihovalao* of the *Na Vuhu Sule*, who bore him a daughter called '*Komala Pui Onekara Alice*' also known as '*Alice Komala Pui Onekara*'. '*Pui*' is short for '*Kopui*' or first-born. '*Onekara*' is the name of the area in Matantas that this girl was born from. She received a Christian name of '*Alice*' when she was baptised into the SDA church. As *Mahele* was the last descendant and chief of the *Na Vuhu Woji*; his wife *Tihovalao* also held a chiefly status. Big Bay women also kill pigs to receive chiefly titles. For example, *Alice Komala Pui Onekara*, (*Tihovalao*'s daughter) also held a chiefly status of '*Uju*'. She had one of her front tooth removed from a place called *Tannahoe* in *Maloeta*, in the *South West of Big Bay*, to attain her chiefly status. It was through *Tihovalao* and *Alice Komala Pui Onekara* that the *Na Vuhu Sule* lineage has remained intact. *Alice Komala Pui Onekara* gave birth to two daughters, *Kopui Elizabeth Moses Ova* and *Komala Rose-Morin Moses Ova*. These two women were my biological and step mothers.

While it is true that in the Big Bay region, men have always assumed the spokesmen, chiefs, big-men and leadership roles, matrilineal women fare better than their patrilineal sisters because they have access to a voice, space and land and property rights in community affairs. Matrilineal women do speak their concerns and also jointly make decisions on the distribution of land and property rights to other lineage land users in the Big Bay region, especially in the Matantas Village. In matrilineality, both men and women share governance in community affairs and domestic chores. However, the sharing of domestic chores by some patrilineal men only happens in the urban context because of religious influences and because the women are now economic contributors. Both the husband and wife in the urban context must collaborate to keep the house running effectively and efficiently. Although there is some provision in patrilineality to include women in community governance, this privilege is only given to daughters whose fathers have no male heirs to replace them in old-age. The daughter's role is to be custodian of her father's land and properties until such a time that she bears a son with another man, who will then assume the responsibility of looking after his grandfather's land and property. As for the matrilineal governance system, only direct female descendants of a land-owning lineage or an adopted female into that land-owning lineage can transmit lineage, patrimony and legacies to future generations and not any females who are not directly connected to the land-owning lineage. For example, a daughter's son in the patrilineal governance system will not carry his grandfather's lineage because he belongs to his biological father's clan and lineage. In this case, lineage changes hand because the grandson with his father's lineage will take over the land and property ownership of his grandfather who no longer has a male heir. In Matantas Village, the current governors and administrators of the *Na Vuhu Sule* comprises both men and women as depicted in the chart below:

Chart 2.1: Governors and Leaders of the Na Vuhu Sule in Matantas Village



I am also an influential decision-maker in this structure. The Na Vuhu Sule governors/administrator’s committee is responsible for distributing land and property rights to the children and grandchildren of the Na Vuhu Sule to build residences and make food gardens. This group of administrators also have the power to re-allocate undeveloped land distributed to other lineages, to the newer generations of the Na Vuhu Sule who currently have no land assigned to them. If Matantas matrilineal women did not have equal rights and influence as their matrilineal brothers, uncles and grandfathers, then I and other matrilineal women would not be part of any decision-making process in Matantas Village.

Indigenous matrilineages operate on a gift-exchange economy as Farran (2002) states sharing these with other members of their society with Westoby (2010); Guillard et al. (1998) and Jolly (1996) calling this social and economic system as Vanuatu's *Kastom ekonomi*. Bartering has always been a part of Vanuatu's traditional society including indentured and wage labour. Also the access to commodity has also been part of Vanuatu's history. ILO (2006) highlights that rural inhabitants cultivate subsistence agriculture and hunt and gather resources from the forest and land, river and sea to support the nuclear and extended family members and even visitors to support centuries of gendered responsibilities and entitlements, and contributing to societal communalism, social cohesion, reciprocity and general well-being. Land in Vanuatu with people and their labour, and resources from the land and forest, rivers and sea, are required to meet the basic needs and the traditional obligations of individuals. Land is owned by indigenous communities with common descent, kinship and residence matrilineal or patrilineal customary owners. In matrilineages, land ownership is egalitarian as both genders own land under their specific lineages (Huffer & Molisa, 1999). The ILO (2006) stresses land belongs to the group as their ancestors are buried there. People derive their "social status, power, livelihood, name and rights to land" (p. 78). Land represents survival, a source of income, and the basis where people seek political power, social status (ILO, 2006) and their links to both the spiritual and cosmic world and ultimately a facet to preserve their cultural identity as Vanuatu's indigenous and traditional populations. Matrilineal and patrilineal lineages, tribes and social clans who live on the land are the custodians of the existing flora and fauna to safeguard these for future generations. They must do so in gender sensitive ways for the survival of the community as a whole.

In matrilineality, members of the community have an obligation to help other members during their times of need with the expectation that this will be reciprocated when their time of need arrives (ILO, 2006). In matrilineages, chiefs, big men and heads of nuclear and extended family units acknowledge the assistance of their wives, women and children in community affairs (Maltali et al. 2009). Molisa (1992) labelled Ni-Vanuatu women as "the mother of humanity" (p. 14). Maltali et al. (2009) agree that women's roles are important for ensuring "social cohesion and harmony" (p. 25) within matrilineality. Interactions between a household and other members of the community, tradition, kinship and the community-wide needs for security and survival

are essential elements of rural life (Van Trease, 1987). Rural life is communal and socially cohesive: “individual rural households rarely function without reference to others in the community” (Rundle & Hickey, 2008, p. 577). Marriages, deaths, festivities become the responsibility of everyone in the community. In Matantas Village, gift exchanges around birth, weddings, and funerals don’t appear to be competitive affairs but reciprocal in nature providing a family with the opportunity to host a feast for the benefit of the community. For example, during the shaving of moustache ceremonies signifying that a boy has reached adulthood, parents will host a public ceremony where the young boy is publically shaved and a communal feast is given to the village attendees. Village members will bring the young man presents to signify his transition into adulthood. It is the norm for parents to continue this ceremony until all their sons have undergone a shaving-the-moustache public ceremony. Two of my relatives underwent a shaving of moustache public ceremony, with all members of the family assisting with the festivities’ expenses providing contributions of cattle, rice, oil, onion, salt, garlic and free labour during these events.

As Melanesian countries like Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea no longer embraced their MITGM and matrilineal Wantok governance models, conflicts arose between ingrained indigenous and newly acquired governance models. Trompf (1994) and Facey (1981) refer to conflicts that occurred between newly introduced religious rules and demands in contrast to the originally unified indigenous matrilineal traditional governance models of Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.

2.3 Vanuatu and its Wantok ‘Melanesian Voice’

Vanuatu recognises the importance of maintaining its ‘Melanesian Voice’ through the work of hereditary and elected chiefs’ pastoral caring roles to govern their subjects as “a forum for reflection on world and domestic events from the standpoint of Melanesians” (Narokobi, 1981, pp. 3-4). Narokobi (1980) asserts that the Melanesian Voice governs Melanesian inhabitants. and is the indigenous knowledge, the cultures, values, wisdoms, the basis of truth that comes from persons within these communities, villages or nations who are “endowed with a sense of good and bad by the Divine Source” (pp. 3-4). Narokobi explains that Melanesia has inherently unique good and evil features with some features being globally shared with other communities. He stresses the “Melanesian Voice [can also be] positive, creative and constructive”

(Narokobi, 1983a, pp. 3-4). Through the Melanesian Voice (Narokobi, 1983b), chiefs in Vanuatu serve, protect and maintain their villages, communities and societies.

A clash between Westernised values and the indigenous Melanesian Voice is illustrated through Rundle and Hickey (2008) when they impressed that the underlying reason for the mismanagement of tropical near shore fisheries in Vanuatu is the unwillingness and the inability of aid donors and development agencies to adopt non-Western alternatives of empirically proven conservation values. They reiterated that in many clans, villages, communities, and societies in Vanuatu, traditional leaders introduce marine resource management measures within their jurisdictions to address over-fishing. Restricted locations and taboos are placed in specific closures lasting up to three years, allowing fishing stocks to recover. In this regard, the Melanesian Voice had empirically proven value and had supported conservation practices (Rundle & Hickey, 2008 & Narokobi, 1983) supporting Melanesians for thousands of years. Vanuatu's *Melanesian Voice* is thus recognised in both the global and local arena by supporting the growing commitment to indigenous sovereignty as stated in the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous people offered by the United Nations as outlined by the International Indigenous Women's Forum Association for Women's Rights in Development (2010). Currently, through various bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements and associations membership, Vanuatu launches its *Melanesian Voice*. For example, Vanuatu has a voice in the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Melanesian Spearhead Group, individual bi-lateral agreements with Australia and New Zealand and other foreign countries, and multi-lateral agreements with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and through membership (to various United Nations' bodies (Pearson Education, 2000-2010; Chand, 2010; ILO, 2006 & UNDP, 1999).

The New Hebrides' colonial/condominium administration and Christianity undermined Vanuatu's indigenous matrilineal Wantok governance model and its *Melanesian Voice*, when Melanesian countries adopted more Westernised forms of leadership and administration. As Ni-Vanuatu rural dwellers migrated from their indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok governance models and their Wantok kinship network social security systems, people no longer had access to these indigenous social security protection systems (O'Collins, 1998 & ILO, 2006). Westernisation and global influences have been highly instrumental in distorting the

rural inhabitants' views of rural life, considering it as slow-paced, time-consuming, laborious and of limited opportunity compared to the inducement of earning incomes in the urban centres (Rodman et al. 2009).

Narokobi (1983); Rodman et al. (2009); Chung and Hill (2002) attest to Melanesians moving away from creating and grooming indigenous leaders to creating and grooming workers for entry into the cash and the market economy. Solomon Islands journalist, Alfred Sasako writes in the Lack of leadership in Melanesia (2008) reported in the Vanuatu Daily Post that the decrease in Melanesian leadership is because of younger people's non-interest to pursuing training in indigenous traditional leadership roles. He refers to Melanesia as a ship that once had good captains and crew on deck. However, as the captains retired, little effort was made to recruit new leaders to help guide this ship. This is a loss not easily measured but one that has dire consequences beyond those who are extremely vulnerable. ILO (2006) and Chung et al. (2002) highlight the loss to the people of Vanuatu of their traditional forms of governance when young people succumb to global and fast changes in cultural practices due to the narrowing range of economic opportunities in Vanuatu's rural areas enticing them to seek engagement with global Western cultures through music and videos. The Kellogg Foundation (2012) stresses that authentic grassroots leadership will not blossom unless people who are in positions of authority are taking responsibility for any changes they want to see happening in their communities. Grassroots leadership can also become a catalyst for social reform in Vanuatu in terms of combating the dwindling number of indigenous and traditional grassroots leaders for Vanuatu's 'Wantok Melanesian Voice.' Students are being urged to pursue studies in their Wantok Kastom ekonomi and their Melanesian philosophies and indigenous and traditional ways of life (The Vanuatu Daily Post, 2008 & ILO, 2006). The Vanuatu Young People's Project (VPPP) recruits young men and women from various islands and provinces of Vanuatu to educate them in their 'Wantok Melanesian Voice' to participate in personal and community decision-making (The Vanuatu Daily Post, 2009).

2.4 Wantok Governance Models: Chiefs, Big Men, Leaders & Governors

Pastor Reuben Makikon, the former Chairman of the Vanuatu Christian Council in Macdonald-Milne et al. (1981), acknowledges that indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal governance models pre-existed in the New Hebrides, prior to

traders/Christianity and European contact. Each form of governance balanced gendered responsibilities in ways that maintained the survival of all and thus the sustainability of the community. Hereditary or elected chiefs, either women or men, and traditional big men held pastoral responsibilities “to look after those under them in time of tribal war and famine (McLeod, 2007). These leaders held court cases, and made discussion concerning ceremonial activities such as initiations, marriages, planting of new crops, [and] harvesting new yams” (Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981, p. vii). ILO (2006) drew attention to the responsibility of a chief and big man to cater for the needs of his people and act as the guarantor of their social security because the “prestige accorded to [him] depends on how well he responds to the needs of the community” as he is chosen because of his “ability to accumulate and re-distribute wealth [and] services to the community” (pp. 80-81). Chiefly seniority and customary hierarchical grading is gained through public pig killing custom ceremonies (Van Trease, 1987). In these ceremonies, the chiefs kill an identified number of pigs to attain higher chiefly social status and host a feast for the public (Vanuatu Cultural Centre, 2008). More pig killing ceremonies initiated by a male chief or a female chief will mean higher chiefly hierarchical status for them. McLeod (2007) affirms that chiefly inheritance in the matrilineages is embedded in matrilineal-orientations, as chiefs are hereditary, passed through the lineage from one generation to the next.

ILO (2006) reports that dispute resolution within a community and societal setting is the responsibility of the indigenous chiefs, leaders and the traditional big men. Members of a dispute resolution committee must have good working relationships with each other and in their community to successfully resolve disputes. When community members have disputes, the two opposing parties must meet to resolve this dispute. If the matter remains unresolved, the dispute is then taken to the village council, whereby elders and chiefs will summon a meeting at the village traditional meeting house called a “nakamal” (ILO, 2006, p. 78). The *nakamal* or the mini court will have indigenous judges, disputing parties and village members to listen to the recitals. This kind of meeting is transparent as perpetrators are forced publicly to take ownership of their actions and decisions. The presiding village chief has the authority to make rulings and extract appropriate compensation for offences committed within his jurisdiction. ILO (2006) tells the story of a presiding chief who ordered compensation from a young man killed a woman. The chief ordered the young man

and his relatives to pay to the relatives of the deceased woman, ten pigs with circular tusks, as these are extremely expensive prized possessions in Vanuatu. As further punishment, the chief banned the young man from exiting his village and ordered his family to rehabilitate him. When the village chief orders a perpetrator to pay compensation in the form of a “fine”, this must be paid to the victim(s) or their families (ILO, 2006, p. 79). Compensation is a “token of forgiveness for the harm inflicted” to mend the ill feelings, hurt and animosity created and social relations between the two groups of people to agree on a common aim and restore kinship and communal ties (ibid, p. 79). As the ILO reiterates, compensation provides “sustainability of socio-cultural relations as well as guaranteeing future peace and community stability” (ibid, p. 79). These socio-economic compensation exchanges include mats, shell money, pigs, pig’s tusks, food and even land. Compensation in the form of land allocation to the victim(s) and relatives is problematic (as future land-owning units can demand the return of these indigenous lands (ILO, 2006).

Frequent land disputes are common in Vanuatu. As no formal customary land boundary register and maps existed prior to the New Hebridean colonial contact, post-Vanuatu regular land disputes occur. The presiding village chief and his dispute resolution committee may request other village chiefs to help them listen to disputes so a fair, transparent and collective decision is made. All disputing parties assemble to recite their genealogical stories and linkages to the disputed land. Once both parties have presented their stories, the chief or chiefs will deliberate on the evidences and make a public decision to which party will have access to the land. Unresolved village level land disputes are transmitted to the formal judicial system for resolution (ILO, 2006).

The Vanuatu Government recognised the roles of chiefs in their indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok governance models by establishing a state-funded institution known as the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs (MNCC). It is a non-political statutory national body that coordinates the activities and responsibilities of chiefs in the villages, communities and islands. ILO (2006) prescribes that, “Chiefly authority in Vanuatu is embodied in the Vanuatu National Council of Chiefs representing chiefs from 14 island councils” (p. 81). This body supports and oversees the work of chiefs in Vanuatu’s eighty islands and six provinces. Furthermore, the

reason for creating this chiefly body is to integrate the indigenous and traditional chiefly systems which operate in Vanuatu's matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models into the affairs of the modern state. Chiefly representatives from each local council in various islands are included in the composition of the MNCC. Members of this chiefly council are elected every four years on a rotational basis, where provinces choose presidents for this body. Because the Vanuatu Government and the judiciary were unable to make a constructive decision due to the gravity and complexity of a dispute between the two law enforcement agencies, the Vanuatu Mobile Force (armed forces) and the Police Force, the dispute was passed on to the MNCC for resolution (ILO, 2006). The MNCC chiefs resolved the dispute and restored peace and harmony between the two disputing parties; demonstrating that the matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models and its dispute resolution framework still functions well in Vanuatu's rural and urban settings.

2.5 Condominium: Legacies of Espiritu Santo and the New Hebrides

Captain Ferdinand (Fernandez) de Quiros the first known Westerner to reach this region named the land: "Tierra Australis del Espiritu Santo" presuming he had discovered the great southern continent of Australia (ILO, 2006, p. 77). Louis Antoine de Bougainville of France sailed through Vanuatu in 1768 followed by Captain James Cook of England in 1774 (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). It was Cook who named the archipelago, the New Hebrides (Piau-Lynch, 2007). Foreign sandalwood traders together with Christian missionaries sent by the London Missionary Society made contact with Vanuatu in 1839 (Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981). Once the traders depleted the sandal wood, they turned to black birding (kidnapping local people) to provide forced labour for the sugar and cotton plantations set up in Fiji and Northern Australia (Combs, 1995 & Fox, 1958). The consequences of undermining local stability were exacerbated by the zeal of missionaries in civilizing the indigenous populations.

The Christian missionaries worked fervently in the New Hebrides to Christianise the inhabitants, persuading converts to re-align their family structures according to the Biblical doctrine of Ephesians 5:22 "Wives, submit to your husbands, as to the Lord" (p. 4, cf The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). In this fundamental form of Christianity, the man is designated as the head of the family and deemed the sole decision-maker. This

doctrine was easier to impose in patrilineal contexts where male authority (seen oversimplistically by missionaries as vested through property rights) was already somewhat compatible with the missionary view. Woman, it seemed, had no active roles in governance and this notion was carried through to the new form of social, economic, political and domestic organisation (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Women were required merely to submit to their spouses. The change of family structures became the prevailing form of patrilineality and was imposed on New Hebrideans to replace the pre-dominant matrilineal egalitarian framework in Vanuatu (Van Trease, 1987 & Huffer and Molisa, 1999).

As illustrated in Chapter One, France and Britain extended their claim into Vanuatu in 1887 and created the New Hebrides Condominium pact in 1906. The two colonial masters operated as rivals, planning and coordinating activities in opposite directions with short-term considerations and “priority given to engendering local support for one or other of the two powers” with very little effort being made to develop Vanuatu’s infrastructures (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. 6).

It was Vanuatu’s indigenous people’s concern for the loss of alienated customary land that caused the birth of the “Nagriamel” an indigenous customary movement (Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981, p. 48). The term ‘*Nagaria*’ are the leaves from the Nagaria plant worn by female natives of Espiritu Santo as clothing and ‘*Namele*’ are leaves from the Namele tree, as a token to resolve disputes and signify peace. Without land, people cannot grow food, and plants they use for clothing. Therefore, the *Nagriamel* was a customary movement that would restore to the natives of the *New Hebrides* their rights to reclaim their alienated customary land through peaceful negotiations. Huge tracts of indigenous land owned by the *Na Vuhu Sule* (Line Stone) of Matantas were confiscated and registered to CFNH (Vanuatu Land Records Office, 2010). This caused conflicts between the indigenous *Na Vuhu Sule* landowners and the CFNH representatives, resulting in clashes and damages to the CFNH properties/fences. The indigenous land owners erected the *Nagriamel* flag at Matantas Village, *Vemarana* at a location called ‘*Mars*’, overlooking the Matantas River in the Big Bay region. The mounted flag signalled to the colonial rulers and the foreign land alienators, that the Matantas indigenous landowners wanted the return of their alienated customary land. Although the indigenous landowners who destroyed CFNH

properties and fences were incarcerated, their revolt and the raising of the *Nagriamel* flag at Matantas, *Vemarana*, became the foundation for Moli Jimmy Stevens to declare, on 29 May 1979, Espiritu Santo's "confederation" (Macdonald-Milne et al. p. 51). Moli Jimmy Stevens appointed himself as the Chief Minister of this government. After 14 years of imprisonment, Moli Jimmy Moli Stevens was released on a presidential pardon and returned to his village in Fanafo on Espiritu Santo. By then most of his followers had disappeared and he died a few years later. He left the Santo Rebellion legacy in Vanuatu's history books (Beasant, 1984).

Foreign influences into the New Hebrides starting from 1839 fuelled two male hegemonic and power-controlling institutions: Vanuatu's rural patrilineages and Vanuatu's urban patriarchy (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004 & Macdonald-Milne et al, 1981). Vanuatu's urban patriarchy incorporated elements of its colonisers' legacies into its Westminster governance model. The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) argues that state institutions and agencies were established to replace these old colonial structures and "procedures were either replaced or revised to meet the developmental priorities of the new sovereign state" (p. 6). Vanuatu adopted the British Westminster system of legislature for Vanuatu's parliamentary system, while Vanuatu's head of state conformed to the French presidential/head of state model (Lamour, 2000) in contrast to the governor general model operating in many Commonwealth countries. Vanuatu inherited from its colonisers an extremely under-developed, impoverished, structurally unbalanced fragile and narrow economic base. Development provisions were incorporated into the urban centre's formal economic sector with very little development occurring for rural populations as they had no access to economic and infrastructural developments. The non-formal, small holder commercial subsistence economy was "poorly articulated, under-productive, and under-capitalised with few internal linkages" (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. 6). Vanuatu's economic base comprises agricultural products such as copra, cocoa, beef and kava although some islands of Vanuatu had no roads, potable water, electricity and very limited access to regular shipping services.

2.6 Evolution of the Patrilineal Wantok Governance Model

Women assumed chiefly status through pre-arranged public customary ceremonies in both matrilineal and patrilineal societies. The female chiefs' customary ceremonies are

similar to those undertaken by men in these societies. Traditional female chiefs in patrilineal societies marry other patrilineal chiefs within their own societies, to retain their chiefly status (McLeod, 2007). Regardless of residence locations, Ni-Vanuatu citizens may belong to either or both indigenous cultural systems because one of their parents would have originated from these cultural frameworks (Farran, 2002). Rural women under the distinctive indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal lineage descent cultural societal systems do exercise high or limited forms of jurisdiction over community and domestic affairs (ILO, 2006).

Christianity and colonization were responsible for privileging patrilineality and urban patriarchal values of superiority, beliefs, hegemonic and power control over the matrilineal Wantok governance model (Van Trease, 1987 & ILO, 2006). The confluence of religious arguments to subjugate women is evident in post-colonial Vanuatu (Facey, 1981). For example, Christianity prescribes the place and roles of women in I Timothy 2:11: “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission” and in 1 Corinthians 14:34: “Women...are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says” (Biblica Inc, New International Version, 2011, p. 1). Mothers and daughters have no voice, space and land/property rights in patrilineal community affairs as their social and cultural roles are merely to grow their spouses’ patrimony and legacies as lineage and land inheritances are transmitted from fathers to sons (ILO, 2006 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Although patrilineal women’s traditional gender roles are important in patrilineages, “men continue to be seen as the head of the family and women as primary care providers” (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. 42).

When presiding chiefs must retire from their patrilineal pastoral care/leadership/governance roles, they bestow their chiefly titles onto their sons to keep these titles within their hereditary lineage, with this form of hereditary traditional leadership and governance being publicly organised (McLeod, 2007 & Van Trease, 1987). When fathers die, their sons claim ownership of their traditional land(s) and properties while married daughters are forced to move away to their spouses’ social kinship tribes and customary land (Stege et al. 2008). If the new patrilineal hereditary chief has strained dealings and relationship with his mother and unmarried sisters, he

will remove them from his land and property, and deprive them of a secure home and livelihood.

2.7 Claiming ‘Our Land’ Vanuatu

Gaining independence on 30 July 1980, the New Hebrides was renamed ‘*Vanuatu*’ meaning ‘our land’ (ILO, 2006). Modern day Vanuatu is nestled between three Melanesian nation states; to the east of Fiji, to the southwest of New Caledonia, and to the northwest of Solomon Islands (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Vanuatu consists of a group of 83 islands of which 65 are inhabited (Piau-Lynch, 2007). Together these islands form a land mass of 12,189 square kms or 4,707 square miles (Warsal, 2009 & ILO, 2006). There are three urban centres in Vanuatu; two of them were creations of the colonial era, Luganville and Port Vila municipalities, while the Lenakel municipality was created in late 2008 (ibid). Based on Vanuatu’s Decentralization Act of 1994, Vanuatu is divided into six provincial government councils each with its own presidents (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Provincial elections occur every four years. Provincial councils are zone-based starting with:

- Torba Provincial Government Council at the northern tip of Vanuatu, closest to the Solomon Islands, comprising the islands of the Banks/Torres region;
- Sanma Provincial Government Council comprising the islands of Espiritu Santo, Aore, Mavea, Malo and smaller surrounding islands;
- Malampa Provincial Government Council comprising the islands of Malakula, Ambrym, Paama and surrounding islands;
- Shefa Provincial Government Council as the central province comprising the islands of Efate: Ifira, Emau, Lelepa, and Pele and surrounding islands of Tongoa, Epi, Emae, Makira, and Mataso;
- Penama Provincial Government Council comprising the islands of Pentecost, Ambae, Maewo and surrounding islands; and
- Tafea Provincial Government Council located at the most southern tip of Vanuatu comprising the islands of Tanna, Futuna, Erromango and Aneityum.

The composition of Vanuatu’s urban and rural population used to be 20:80. As of 2009, Vanuatu’s population was recorded at 241,935 people (VNSO, 2009). Vanuatu’s rural population in 2004 was 78 percent. However, this reduced by a further 2 percent

in 2009, now sitting at 76 percent with 24 percent being urban dwellers, as outlined in Table 2.2 below (VNSO, 2009 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004):

Table 2.2: Vanuatu’s Population and Demographic Characteristics

Summary of Demographic indicators, Vanuatu: 2009

Indicator	Vanuatu	Urban	Rural
Total population	234,023	57,207	176,816
Males	119,090	29,624	89,466
Females	114,933	27,583	87,350
Average annual population growth rate (%)	2.3	3.6	1.9
Number of private households	47,373	11,609	35,764
Average household size	4.8	4.8	4.8
Number of institutions	204	68	136
Number of children (<15 years)	90,973	18,069	72,904
Youth population (15-24 years)	45,423	13,648	31,775
Population aged 25-59 years	83,821	23,386	60,435
Older population (60 years and older)	13,806	2,104	11,702
Median age	20.5	22.8	19.5
Dependency ratio (15-59)	81	54	92
Population density	19	-	-
Sex ratio	104	107	102
Mean age at first marriage (SMAM)	23.9	24.7	23.6
Males	25.5	26.4	25.0
Females	22.5	23.0	22.2

Source: 2009 National Population and Housing Census, National Statistics Office

Vanuatu is so culturally diverse, holding and speaking between 110 and 118 languages (ILO, 2006, p. 77). Salong (2008) reflects with many languages in operation, Vanuatu people would also have “many mental pictures” of a single object/subject matter (p. 4). Vanuatu has three national languages: French, English and Bislama. All languages are forms of communication used by parliamentarians, government and businesses in Vanuatu (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The medium of communication and instruction in Vanuatu schools and offices are the French and English languages. Schools use both languages with basic or advanced elements of each language being taught in either an English or French school. Bislama was a language created in the mid-1800s by the black-birded Melanesian populations of Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and New Caledonia who worked in Australia’s sugar cane plantations (Combs 1995 & Fox, 1958). Bislama is the lingua franca in Vanuatu also known as the “plantation language” spoken by 95 percent of Vanuatu’s total population (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. 2).

The executive arm of the Vanuatu Government (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004) is based on the island of Efate – centrally located to other islands and provinces in the country. Vanuatu’s legislature consists of 52 members with the executive power being vested in the prime minister and a 13 member council of ministers (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004; ILO, 2006). The prime minister chooses his ministers and has the support of the legislature to instantly dismiss any of his ministers on grounds of grave misconduct. Although the Vanuatu Government’s executive arm is made up of only 12 ministers, changes to ministerial portfolios and ministers occur frequently and suddenly if the prime minister of the day feels threatened by any conflicts within his coalition partners (Morgan, n.d.). The ADB/OECD (2007) Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific – Country Report for Vanuatu declares Vanuatu’s small size cannot support the exorbitant cost of its political and bureaucratic superstructure with a 52-member parliament and an executive government of a Prime Minister and 12 state ministers each with their separate departments.

Vanuatu’s Constitution or ‘Mama Loa’ in print form is drawn from the Westminster model (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The executive government is responsible for directing the activities of the government departments, national administration and for the provision of public goods and services. The government ministers have political advisors, and personnel staff appointed to assist them in their cabinet level decision-making (ILO, 2006 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Vanuatu’s judiciary and the rule of law follows elements of both the British and French administrative governance systems. In Vanuatu’s Supreme Court, the Chief Justice is well-versed in both the French (he was educated in France) and British legal systems. Although Vanuatu has a fair and legal framework to enforce impartiality, there is still a need for an independent judiciary and more protection of human rights including the human rights of marginalised groups, such as Ni-Vanuatu women (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The Vanuatu Government has recognised the need to appoint more judges in the Vanuatu Courts to meet the increasing demands of litigation in Vanuatu.

The two law enforcement agencies in Vanuatu are the Vanuatu Mobile Force (armed forces) and the Vanuatu Police Force. The Vanuatu Police Force has, and continues to receive, capacity building training from bilateral partners like France, Australia and New Zealand (Annandale, 1997). Barcham (2003) and Rawlings (2006) reason that

despite receiving external on-going capacity building training, regular complaints are received by the Ombudsman's Office of the inability and the unwillingness of the Vanuatu Police to prosecute public officials implicated in various offences, as identified by the Ombudsman. Vanuatu's unwillingness to prosecute is also connected to Vanuatu's 'big men' *Wantok* traditional framework whereby voters will continue to turn a blind eye on leaders' corrupt practices and continue to elect them into Parliament (Barcham, 2003 & Rawlings, 2006).

Despite Vanuatu having independence for over 30 years, it is still highly reliant on foreign aid for its infrastructural, economic and developmental projects. The Vanuatu Government continues to seek bilateral assistance from its bilateral partners such as: France, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, China, Taiwan and the United States. Assistance is also provided by the various United Nations and multilateral partners who have established offices in Port Vila. Hughes and Sodhi (2006) argue that the "benefits of high aid flows, and professional and management positions" continue to benefit Vanuatu's urban patriarchy in the urban centres, while Vanuatu's rural population continue to live and operate as subsistence farmers and urban centre dwellers continue to live in shanty dwellings (p. 2). Vanuatu's living standards have increased marginally in the last 25 years and that most of the benefits of high aid flows benefit only minority elites in Port Vila. These Port Vila elites assume lifestyles similar to expatriate residents in Port Vila, who occupied many professional and management positions. Of the 24 percent urban dwellers, many live in extremely squalid conditions. Because of Vanuatu's spiralling debts, the Asian Development Bank recommended that the Vanuatu Government embark on a comprehensive reform programme in 1997. Although the government reduced its work-force through voluntary redundancy and retirements, it was unable to reduce its spiralling expenditure (The Republic of Vanuatu, 1997). Constant complaints by the public through print media: the Vanuatu Daily Post and the Independent newspapers have criticised the government of the day for spending high levels of public funds on overseas travelling expenses. The ADB/OECD (2007) Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific – Country Report for Vanuatu describes the purpose of Pillar 1 of the Vanuatu's Comprehensive Programme (CRP) was to amend the Public Service Act and introduce the Government Act in 1998, separating the roles of the public service and the government and in allocating the Public Services Commission (PSC) with the

task of cleaning the civil service and strengthening its function and integrity. Nevertheless, Vanuatu's 1997 CRP was considered by many Ni-Vanuatu citizens as a waste of tax-payers' money, as it did not assist Vanuatu in reforming itself towards good governance ethics because bribery, corruption and nepotism continued unabated in the public service with Vanuatu being unable to improve its gross domestic product and economic growth (Rawlings, 2006). Vanuatu Government's work-force continues to grow at a higher rate today and unfulfilled service delivery complaints continue to be expressed.

2.8 Evolution of Vanuatu's Urban Patriarchy

Vanuatu's urban patriarchy comprises men who are decision-makers in the state and decision-makers such as employers and senior women in the private employment sector (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Vanuatu's post-independence period from 1980 to 1991, was a period of political stability during the ruler-ship of the first Prime Minister, Father Walter Hadye Lini (Morgan, n.d.). A major political party; the *Vanuaaku Pati* previously known as the *New Hebrides Political Party* dominated the political arena (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Prominent Ni-Vanuatu women who featured in the *Vanuaaku Pati's* creation included the late Grace Mera Molisa, Mildred Sope, and many others (VNCW, 2005). However, the only woman who received an appointment in the post-Vanuatu-independent government was the late Grace Mera Molisa. Although the *Vanuaaku Pati* preaches gender equality, political willingness is non-existent. A few Ni-Vanuatu women such as Isabelle Donald and Leinavao Shem, both rural women from the Epi Island (part of the Shefa Province) have won seats through community support (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). In retrospect, the *Vanuaaku Pati* has mostly paid lip-service to gender equality as In Vanuatu's 2012 general elections; there is no female representation in Vanuatu's parliament. In the past, Vanuatu fared better than Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands in terms of female representation as Papua New Guinea now has 3 female members of parliament and the Solomon Islands has a female member of parliament; while Vanuatu has none.

During Lini's term of governance, he experienced constant political infighting between members of his once-unified political party. The fragmentation of the once-stable political party occurred with loyal members such as Barak Tame Sope, Father

Walter Lini and many others breaking away and forming their own political parties, such as the Melanesian Progressive Party (MPP) and the National United Party (Morgan, n.d.). When Father Walter Hadye Lini was finally ousted as the Prime Minister in 1992, Vanuatu continued to entertain its fair share of political turmoil and turbulences (Lamour, 2000). The rapid turnover of prime ministerial positions and the need for new general elections in Vanuatu have recurred due to constant political horse-trading and votes of no-confidences. Morgan (n.d.) affirms in Vanuatu, political parties negotiate; rescind and then re-negotiate the formation of coalition partners and governments in governing Vanuatu's municipalities, provinces and the executive government. Coalition governments are never stable because of frequent disputes by holders of executive office in disagreeing with the policies of the executive government of the day, forcing the incumbent prime minister to horse-trade to maintain his power. From the May 2007 Luganville Municipal Council election in the SANMA Province, newer political parties, such as the Greens Confederation joined forces with the *Vanuaaku Political Party* to govern the northern town (Morgan, n.d.). ILO (2006) indicates that in Vanuatu, new political parties' form every year, with no political party gaining a majority in national, municipal or provincial government elections. Frequent change and political instability in Vanuatu encourage constant policy changes and also disrupt government services (ibid). This problem has been linked to the general lack of good governance ethics and their application in Vanuatu (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). This impacts on how Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchies deal with Ni-Vanuatu women.

Some of Vanuatu's prominent male decision-makers have been implicated in acts of bribery and corruption. For example, the Vanuatu Daily Post (2008) of Saturday 15 March 2008 issue carried a story captioned, "Another motion of no trust against PM". A motion-of-no-confidence was launched against Ham Lini Vanuaroroa, Father Walter Lini's younger brother, for his involvement in signing a fraudulent document with Dr Betik Albert and his company, the Bedford International Group who promised high financial returns for Vanuatu Government's support (Jones, 2008). Lini was also ousted because he did not swiftly discipline his Minister of Lands, Maxime Carlot Korman, for committing bribery by selling Vanuatu state land (Barcham, 2003).

2.9 Call for Pacific Indigenous Governance Models

Edelman (2003) states that for any social reform to have the required effect, the climate for authentic grassroots leadership must be implemented. Therefore, Vanuatu needs its indigenous and traditional leaders through its Wantok Melanesian Voice to continue to govern community affairs and its subjects (ILO, 2006 & Narokobi, 1981). The hopeful call of the International Indigenous Women's Forum Association for Women's Rights in Development (2010) in the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals – in a statement circulated in September 2010, called on leaders:

To take specific steps during the MDG Review Summit to address the vast inequality and social exclusion faced by indigenous peoples and indigenous women in particular. Acknowledging that United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted on 13 September 2007 by the General Assembly affirms that we, as indigenous peoples, have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising our right to development. Reaffirming that States should, in accordance with international law, take concerted positive steps to ensure respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples on the basis of equality and non-discrimination and recognise the value and diversity of their distinctive identities, cultures and forms of social organization. Recognizing that focusing on the inequalities faced by indigenous peoples still remains as a key challenge to the Millennium Development Goals. In fact, the MDGs do not directly address nor do they mention indigenous peoples, even though they have historically faced social exclusion and marginalization. (p.1)

The United Nations' International Bill of Human Rights (1945) encourages nation states to institute "equal rights and self-determination of [its] peoples" alongside any imported foreign instruments (Kirgis Jr, 1994, p. 304). Karl Marx's political and economic theory (Cranston, 1986) suggest that economic systems in a nation state will determine what kind of political system the country will adopt. In the case of Vanuatu's matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models, the 'Kastom ekonomi' relies on principles of communitarianism, social cohesiveness and reciprocity (ILO, 2006). Therefore, the United Nations' Declaration of Indigenous Rights recognises the importance of indigenous rights such as the MITGM/Wantok governance models and the 'Melanesian Voice' to sustain Vanuatu's rural populations (Maltali et al. 2009 & Narokobi, 1983). The Declaration persuades indigenous people to maintain their indigenous ways of life according to their cultural traditions, and

ultimately transmit indigenous, cultural and traditional knowledge, values and beliefs to their offspring to keep their indigenous mode of life, knowledge, cultures and traditions intact (Van Trease, 1987). ILO (2006) underscores the importance of land ownership and access for Vanuatu indigenous people:

Land, custom and people are inseparably bound together in the Vanuatu context. Land is the source of sustenance, wealth, life and relationship. The collective and flexible nature of land tenure in Vanuatu ensures that everyone has access to land and its resources. This is an important social safety net system which provides for family and kinship sustenance. Today customary owned land acts as an important “fall back” position for those who cannot find formal employment. (p. 80)

2.10 Women’s Situation in Vanuatu

Since the amplification of the influence of patrilineal Wantok governance, rural and urban patrilineal Ni-Vanuatu women have faced significant inequalities (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The lives of patrilineal Ni-Vanuatu women in the rural areas revolve around all patrilineal ritual, customs and practices to uphold their spouses’ values, authority, patrimony and legacies (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004 & Van Trease, 1987). When patrilineal women migrate into the urban centres, men’s hegemonic control and values of superiority continues, and the “stereotype of a woman as a housewife, fully occupied at home with the family and housework while fathers are heads of the household continues to be the dominant perception” (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. 42). Furthermore, Vanuatu’s rural and urban patriarchies and their institutions continued to disregard the roles Ni-Vanuatu matrilineal women played in matrilineal community affairs in various parts of Vanuatu, where matrilineal women have a voice, space and own land/property rights (Maltali et al. 2009).

Randell (2003) highlights urban Ni-Vanuatu women are still responsible for the primary domestic and caring roles in the homes although some of them are economic contributors. Even though some of these women hold higher academic qualifications than male counterparts, their quest for positions of authority are rejected because it is a “male domain” to lead, manage and govern (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. 10). Hence, male employers (including women holding positions of authority acting as gate-keepers), became the instigators of discrimination and oppression to urban Ni-

Vanuatu women. Discrimination and oppression in work-places in Vanuatu is rampant as shown in the period 1997-1998 whereby “80 cases of discrimination” were reported to the Vanuatu Ombudsman’s office; 133 cases of unfair decision/actions; 21 cases of administrative error; 267 cases of general mal-administration; 154 cases of abuse of power; and 48 cases of corruption (ibid, p. 23).

In contrast to Christian principles ordering Ni-Vanuatu women to remain quiet and be submissive to their men, in the period 1977-1980, when the New Hebrideans were fighting for independence, women were called to join their men to struggle for independence (Molisa, 2000a). The demarcation of women and men based on biological factors was not vital in the fight for New Hebridean independence demonstrating that religious and biological confluences and social constructions of gendered roles given to Ni-Vanuatu women did not stop Vanuatu’s rural and urban patriarchies from using women’s productive labour for the independence struggle. Nevertheless, since Vanuatu’s urban patriarchy took over the governance of Vanuatu in 1980, only a few urban Ni-Vanuatu women have acquired positions of authority (Piau-Lynch, 2007). Only two women were able to acquire positions of mayor in 1995-1996 and deputy mayor in 2008 at the Luganville Municipal Council on Espiritu Santo (VNCW, 2005 & Morgan, n.d.).

The paradox is that when women do gain formal sector employment in the urban centres, they “are paid marginal salaries” or if women cannot secure gainful employment, they live in poverty (Randell, 2003, p. 5). Marginalised groups become vulnerable because they lose “income” and it is always the female headed households that are most “vulnerable to poverty” (ILO, 2006, pp. 27 & 34). Hence, large families in Vanuatu may become displaced because they have many children to feed, and must also house relatives from rural areas. It is not uncommon for these households to have “poor nutrition, poor housing and sanitation, higher mortality and ill-health and their children may attend school less” (ibid, p. 35). Families who cannot secure urban centre employment must “rely on the support of extended families to supplement their basic needs” (ibid, p. 27).

2.11 Influence of the United Nations'

The UN appeared on the Vanuatu scene by establishing a regional office in Port Vila in 1985 to early 1990s, called the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)/Pacific Operations Centre (EPOC) (ESCAP, 2008). This regional office employed a range of consultants responsible for consultancy work in various Pacific Island countries; reporting on issues ranging from legal matters, social affairs, and statistics, to harbour and marine development. Because of Vanuatu's excessive cost of living and utility costs, this office relocated to Fiji in 1990.

The UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Dr Noeleen Heyzer, describes the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's aspirations in a speech on 24 October 2008 confirming the UN needed the assistance of its members to create an inclusive and equitable society (UNESCAP, 2008).

Vanuatu adopted various international instruments: the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1995; the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) in 1995; and the Indigenous Peoples' Rights (IPR) in Vanuatu in 1989 (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The United Nations stepped in to offer CEDAW as a mechanism to improve Ni-Vanuatu women's liberation, emancipation and empowerment because of the rampant discrimination, oppression and subjugation, Ni-Vanuatu women received from Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). These international instruments helped to direct Vanuatu's attention towards protecting the rights of children and recognizing that Ni-Vanuatu rural residents must continue to operate their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models, with the knowledge, values and beliefs that identify them as indigenous Ni-Vanuatu citizens. Although, Vanuatu recognises the importance of ratifying global and international laws, such as CEDAW; nevertheless, Piau-Lynch (2007) declares that these "international human rights standards [do not] play a significant role in assisting and promoting women's ability to claim their rights" (p. 5). Vanuatu's urban patriarchy has made mere token effort through enacted interventions to liberate, emancipate and empower urban Ni-Vanuatu women. Women's organisations, like the Vanuatu National Council of Women (VNCW, 2005), have enabled women to have a voice and space to speak up about their discrimination and oppression. For example, Rolengas

Lolo in VNCW (2005) argues that the VNCW “help[s] women come out into the open, to stand up for their rights, and to prove themselves as capable contributors in all areas of development of the country, alongside the men folk” (p. 44). Jenny Ligo in VNCW (2005) also spoke about her role in providing Ni-Vanuatu women with a voice and space through her canoe paddling skills, to escape the oceans of unpredictability. She encourages both men and women to work “as equals to provide for their household in a sustainable environment based on respect for one another” (ibid, p. 86). Although the VNCW acts as a forum for women’s concerns, the advancement of Ni-Vanuatu women continues to be curtailed by Vanuatu’s complex socio-political, cultural, and economic environments. For example, the demise of matrilineages’ framework of justice, equity and egalitarianism, through the entry of patrilineages and Vanuatu’s urban patriarchy in imposing its hegemonic and power control, values of superiority, and beliefs that men are born to lead, manage and govern and that women are created for primary caring roles, continue to curtail women’s advancement in Vanuatu (Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). As such, the United Nations’ stepped in to offer two remedies which are discussed next.

2.11.1 UNs’ remedies: CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects

The UN offers two remedies through the CEDAW-EEO programmes advocating for the liberal feminist ideals of justice, equity and equalitarianism characterised as personal liberty, individual rights, equality of opportunity, extensive freedom of thought and speech, free exchange of ideas, transparent systems of governance and equal employment opportunities to liberate, emancipate and empower Ni-Vanuatu women (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Tuttle (1986) stresses the Western liberal feminist lens advocates for women’s equality of opportunity, underlining the need for better conditions and relief for women. CEDAW strategies aim to empower women based on the now mainstreamed analyses of women’s relegation into the service dimensions of the economy (themselves undervalued and underpaid) and of the unequal treatment based on sex, the receipt of sexual harassment, the unequal investment in women’s skills and contributions and the recognition of their continued entwinement in the primary allocation of responsibility for the young and old and the infirm in the very identity of women in Vanuatu (Piau-Lynch, 2007; Tor & Toka, 2004 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). For another group of women, in recognition of their marginalised status, the United Nations in 1996 collaborated with the Vanuatu

Government, to create the Vanwods Microfinance Incorporation (MFI) in providing emancipation to urban disenfranchised women by encouraging them to own, operate and maintain microfinance businesses (Salong, 2008).

The CEDAW-EEO programmes aimed to facilitate more urban Ni-Vanuatu women into waged or salaried/professional occupations in seeking positions of authority in the public and private employment sectors and to receiving equal consideration and treatment in respect to employment, including recruitment, testing, hiring, equal pay, promotion, discipline, termination and forbids employment discrimination based on a person's race, sex, colour, age, religion, national origin, physical or mental handicap. The microfinance projects aim to enable Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs, through the free market open competition in owning, operating and maintaining microfinance businesses. Entrepreneurship through the women's affiliation to the Vanwods MFI provides them with an alternative means of supporting themselves and their families, when they cannot secure full-time employment. Vanwods MFI Mamas operate flexible working hours through community processes, enabling them to become part of the formal financial global economy. The next chapter, as background to this research study, will identify global and local women's discrimination, oppression and Ni-Vanuatu women's need for meaningful employment.

2.12 Summary

This chapter presents the complex socio-political, cultural and economic contexts in regards to this research study and Vanuatu's background as a Melanesian state and its demographic profile. The importance of land to Vanuatu's rural residents is highlighted in the existence of the indigenous matrilineal Wantok governance model in organizing society and its utilisation of Vanuatu's *Kastom ekonomi*. The roles of chiefs and big men as leaders and governors in the Wantok governance models were also discussed. The entry of the traditional patrilineal Wantok governance models into Vanuatu's waters came from the influence of Christianity and colonization, causing the undermining of matrilineality and subjugating patrilineal women. The Europeans arrived on the scene creating legacies, such as the black-birding trade forcing the establishment of the French and British Naval Commission in 1887 to patrol Vanuatu's waters and the signing of the Condominium-colonial pact in 1906 with Vanuatu's urban patriarchy assuming governance of Vanuatu since 1980 and in

adopting its former colonisers' policies. The amassing of indigenous alienated land from foreign owners caused the establishment of the Nagriamel customary movement that was instrumental in the struggle for the return of alienated indigenous land to its rightful customary owners, leading to Santo's Rebellion and Vanuatu's independence on 30 July 1980. Vanuatu's population and six provinces were also described. Because of the way that Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchies viewed and dealt with women, Ni-Vanuatu women became marginalised. The United Nations stepped in through Vanuatu's accession to various international instruments such as the CEDAW, and CRC by offering two remedies through the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes to assist urban Ni-Vanuatu women secure positions of authority and microfinance for Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs to secure, operate and maintain microfinance businesses. In Chapters Three and Seven, I explain these programmes more fully and in Chapter Five, I explain the analytical framework through which I examine their current impact and potential.

CHAPTER THREE

Discrimination, Oppression and the Marginalisation of Women in Vanuatu

1 Corinthians 14:34: Women...are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says (New International Version.).

3.1 Introduction

In search of further explanation of the poverty and marginalisation of urban women in Vanuatu, the situation of women globally is given a consideration. Similarities and differences between women's oppression globally and their manifestation in Vanuatu are discussed. Under pressure to recognise these disparities and oppressions, the state offered Ni-Vanuatu women a variety of legal and policy instruments designed to encourage their full participation into various formal institutions. These include the United Nations CEDAW inspired EEO programmes and the microfinance project that are central to this research. In this chapter I demonstrate that despite some discernible changes in the circumstances of some Ni Vanuatu women these interventions to date appear to have made insignificant inroads into women's marginalisation and poverty in Vanuatu. This chapter presents a literature review of the acute subjugation and marginalization of urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs in Vanuatu. Research indicates that despite apparent commitments to the ideals of female equality, men continue to hold hegemonic power and control over urban Ni-Vanuatu women who remain relegated to Vanuatu's service industries and low waged occupations as highlighted by Piau-Lynch (2007); Strachan et al.(2007); VNCW (2005); The Republic of Vanuatu (2004); Randell (2003); Molisa (2000a); Huffer and Molisa (1999); Lini (1995); and Molisa (1992). Many women work as domestic servants in Vanuatu's informal employment sector with some of them turning to prostitution. I conclude this chapter with a summary of the themes I have taken from the literature reviews to this point which sit behind the research design I describe in Chapter 4.

3.2 Values of Superiority: Patrilineages/Patriarchal Mind-Sets

Literature pertaining to Vanuatu and Melanesia reviewed in Chapter Two contextualises the organisational arrangement of the region of the Pacific now known as Vanuatu. In this chapter I direct my attention to the ways in which the various epochs of European influence and the eventual independence of Vanuatu culminated

in the specific forms of contemporary subjugation of Ni-Vanuatu women. The literature indicates that this subjugation stems from patrilineal and patriarchal hegemonic power and control, negative attitudes, mind-sets, beliefs about women and values of male superiority over women (Strachan et al. 2007; Piau-Lynch, 2007; VNCW, 2005; Kilavanwa, 2004; Randell, 2003; Huffer & Molisa, 1999; Lini, 1995; Macdonald-Milne et al, 1981; Narokobi, 1980; Van Trease, 1987; & Molisa, 1992). It is the overemphasis and selective adaptation of patriarchal influences embedded in patrilineal societies that contribute to the contemporary marginalization of women in Vanuatu (Piau-Lynch, 2007; Randell, 2003; Huffer & Molisa, 1999 & Van Trease, 1987).

Huffer and Molisa (1999) attest how men, leaders and administrators in Vanuatu encourage men to “talk the language of man as though only man existed” (p. 106). It is the patrilineal system and negative attitude and mind-set that “only man existed” (Huffer & Molisa, 1999, p. 106) that disadvantages patrilineal women. Piau-Lynch (2007) confronts patriarchal attitudes in the “under-representation of women and the effective silencing of women’s inputs and opinions” as a framework for women to experience “deeper social problems” (p. 4). Tor and Toka (2004) describe the exclusion of women from Vanuatu’s important decision-making bodies/discussions, as a strategy to silence them. Women’s personal experiences of discrimination, subjugation and oppression confirm their marginalised position (Piau-Lynch, 2007). Rural and urban patriarchal notions that women are irrational beings, unfit to think for themselves, hold any positions of authority and only suitable for primary caring and nurturing roles exacerbates their marginalization (VNCW, 2005; The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, & Randell, 2003). When women are not recruited into Vanuatu’s constitutional body, they have no voice as decision-makers and no ability to raise concerns about their well-being as Vanuatu’s parliament is governed predominantly by men (Huffer & Molisa, 1999). Getting women into constitutional power is difficult because of deeply embedded rural and urban patriarchal mind-sets and values of superiority (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The trajectory of this history now reverberates in the vulnerable position of women in Vanuatu.

The Christian churches through the particular type of uptake of Biblical rules and regulations prescribing men’s headship over women and the associated gendered roles

ascribing subjugation of women to men are formidable challenges women continue to face in Vanuatu (Randell, 2003; Van Trease, 1987; & Macdonald-Milne et al, 1981). Sela Molisa, (cf Randell, 2003) argues that “missionaries said in the beginning, that women’s place was in the home, which contributed to the poor place of women in Vanuatu’s societies, today” (p. 40). Although religion and colonialism has been blamed for many ills encountered by Ni-Vanuatu women, there are mixed blessings provided by both. For example, the arrival of religion into Vanuatu meant that schools and health centres were established to cater for Ni-Vanuatu people’s basic needs. Religion also played a prominent role in educating people with early leaders such as the late Father Walter Hadye Lini undertaking overseas training in New Zealand before assuming his prime-ministerial role in Vanuatu in 1980 (McDonald-Milne et al. 1981) Nevertheless, men’s negative attitudes, beliefs and values of superiority towards women continued.

Piau-Lynch (2007) speaks about women’s traditional gendered roles as mothers and housewives as being the main contributing factor for “few women [entering] the public domain [of] politics and positions of seniority in both public and private sectors” (p. 3). Despite women efficiently balancing their multiple roles at home and as employees in paid employment, men will continue to regard them as inferior (Huffer & Molisa, 1999; Randell, 2003 & VNCW, 2005). This is also an excuse that the authors and supporters of Vanuatu’s Comprehensive Reform Programme (The Republic of Vanuatu, 1997) made to prevent women from playing an active role in constitutional and corporate governance, and in entrepreneurial activities in Vanuatu. Society, custom and religion are not created by the law of nature, but by Ni-Vanuatu men’s attitudes and values of superiority and it is men who decide that women are socially and culturally inferior to them (ILO, 2006 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Men argue that because women are not capable of making family, community and state decisions they should refrain from holding positions of authority and that only men should seek paid employment (Huffer & Molisa, 1999). When Vanuatu’s rural patrilineages and urban patriarchy relegate women to the domestic sphere, merely fit to undertake primary caring and nurturing roles, it restricts women’s desire and progress towards achieving gender equity and gender equality in positions of authority(Piau-Lynch, 2007 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004).

Molisa (1992) stresses that Ni-Vanuatu men regard women as new arrivals and a novelty to this planet. Men, through the leadership of hereditary chieftains, indigenous traditional leaders and big men allocate women as the “subordinate group” (Kilavanwa, 2004, p. 22). Discrimination in Vanuatu’s rural areas occurs when patrilineages use hegemonic power and control over patrilineal women as well as use violence against them in domestic disputes (Douglas, 2002). These attitudes are reflected in the positions women are granted in formal labour market jobs and how these are controlled.

Discrimination and gate-keeping are global problems that are hard to eradicate because they are impediments that work against the fair treatment of all people. In the urban centres of Vanuatu, this discrimination and gate-keeping is specifically gendered and affects urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal jobs in many ways. Jeannette Bolenga a former Vanuatu Graduate Women’s President experienced such workplace discrimination while working in the Prime Minister’s Office (Randell 2003). Randell reports some of the impediments Ni-Vanuatu women experienced and the strategies they used to counteract them. Nettie Collins, the first female Internet Technician worked in a male-gendered role and environment reports that she worked doubly hard to prove her worth. Yvette Sam appointed as a principal to a high school, had to fight male discrimination to carry out her role. Evelyne Toa and Dorosday Kenneth report their fight against men’s insubordination while managing workers under their care. Rita Bill Naviti, a magistrate describes threats she received from indigenous traditional leaders and chiefs during the early part of her judicial career. Leitangi Solomon a disabled woman in a formal state job faced two sets of impediments. Her status as a woman and her disability caused severe hardships for her. Certain strategies used by these women to combat these impediments included role-models using their personal management skills to educate male and female colleagues in order to gain their respect. Despite the women’s proactive stance, many men continued to ignore them and treated them as novelties. They had to make a stand, work extremely hard in many ways, and manage insubordination, negative behaviour and remarks from people they supervised. Furthermore, these role models also struggled in balancing their roles as women in modern society and the cultural expectations of their traditional patrilineal societies. Although culture is socially beneficial, Randell (2003) argues certain aspects of these cultures inhibit these female

role models. For example, Yvette Sam highlights how men used ‘Kastom’ (cultural prejudices) to dominate and discriminate women. Heather Leo experienced discrimination in her grooming and received negative feedback during kava drinking ceremonies while Mildred Sope and Leisave Jackson described strained relationships with their spouses because they had different cultural practices. These stories clearly affirm the rampant discrimination and oppression that urban Ni-Vanuatu women experienced from both female and male employers, Vanuatu’s rural patrilineages and urban patriarchy, and from senior women in positions of authority (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004 & Randell, 2003 & 2003).

The stressful conditions in formal jobs are worse for women who rely on casual work. Although it is illegal in Vanuatu to employ staff members on a casual basis for more than 12 months, some female workers have worked in temporary positions for 15 years (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Because these female workers were in menial and casual-daily-rated positions, they were denied the 12 weeks of maternity leave on full pay and annual leave entitlements applicable to permanent and full-time employees. In their struggles to earn a livelihood, some urban women resort to sex work. For example, The Republic of Vanuatu speaks of sex work being undertaken “for money” by girls as young as 14, and 17 years of age because no “moral and financial support” were given by their parents because they could not secure gainful employment (ibid, p. 49). Some employers treat their domestic servants as sexual objects and even have sexual encounters with them to the point of impregnation (Kraemer, 2003). The Vanuatu Daily Post of 4 March 2008 reports that because of limited educational capacity and women’s inability to obtain suitable paid employment, prostitution is increasing in Vanuatu. The United States’ Vanuatu Human Rights Report (2008), note the increasing number of women and young girls turning into prostitutes is because of “poverty” (p. 1). The Wan Solwara (2010) special report on a story from the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (FWCC) coordinator, Shamima Ali, explained that a wide range of factors including lack of access to education, generational poverty conditions, lack of access to adequate housing and a lack of viable employment opportunities force people into acts of prostitution. Ultimately, poverty, unemployment and low wages in the region is driving people into prostitution and sex work and that “prostitution becomes a means of survival” (p. 1). In Vanuatu, sex workers use extensive networks known to both local and overseas businessmen,

sea-men and tourists (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The biggest sex procurers are taxi drivers and bus drivers to a lesser degree. Clients include individuals in both government and private sectors who also act as the middle men to facilitate access to sex workers for local and overseas businessmen, consultants to governments and tourists. Even politicians during political negotiations trade women to other political party members to gain their political numbers (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004).

Marc Neil-Jones (the editor and publisher of the Vanuatu Daily Post) and Marilyn Tahī (the Coordinator of the Vanuatu Women's Centre) in a story by Geraldine Coutts published by ABC (2006) reports on prostitution in Vanuatu. The focus of concern was that the growing number of women diverting into sex work will continue to rise in the future because both men and women are unable to secure adequate paid employment. Although reliable statistics on prostitution are difficult to obtain, Jones highlights that a post-journalistic investigation into prostitution in Vanuatu's second largest town, Luganville on Espiritu Santo, confirms that more women are becoming sex workers. Moreover, men are also becoming sex workers because of similar economic duress and the unavailability of paid employment. The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) confirms that male sex workers usually operate individually. As such, Marilyn Tahī stresses because of the increased rural-urban migration were both women and men have become disengaged from their communal, reciprocal matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok kinship network social security systems and their inability to secure paid employment is causing problems for them (Rodman et al. 2009; O'Collins, 1998 & ILO, 2006). The on-going poverty and disenfranchisement of women in Vanuatu are intrinsically entwined in this issue, an issue I now turn to.

3.3 Urban Ni-Vanuatu Women's Poverty and Marginalisation

The Encyclopedia of the Nations for Asia and the Pacific (2011) highlights UNDP's Human Poverty Index (HPI) measurement of country conditions that create intolerable conditions in terms of a population's health status, education level, access to health services and safe water, and malnutrition in children. The ADB (2011) lists Vanuatu as the third poorest country among ADB's Pacific development member countries. The marginalisation of women cannot be resolved without exposing the effects of poverty on women. For example, the UNDP (1999) portrays poverty as having many faces and being much more than just considering whether people have sufficient or

low incomes. The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) explains that poverty is a result of “poor living conditions; inability to get jobs; inability to afford prices of goods, school fees and materials; struggling to provide for family needs; difficulty in accessing health services and worrying about lack of money all the time” (p. 14). The many faces of poverty are linked to aspects of deprivation, such as isolation and vulnerability (O’Collins, 1998). Poverty is a sign of the population’s poor health and education, deprivation in knowledge and communication and their inability to exercise human and political rights. Poverty can cause people to lack dignity confidence, live desperate lives and lack self-respect because they cannot gain access to the basic necessities of life, not because they want to be poor, but because they are poor by circumstances (UNDP, 1999). O’Collins (1998) and Intra migration into urban centres (2008) reported by the Vanuatu Daily Post argue that unplanned settlements in Vanuatu where people with little or no cash income have become common-place for the rural-urban new arrivals and the alienation of these women from their “network of social relationships, preferably kin” makes them feel poor and alienated as well (p. 3).

While Vanuatu does have "subsistence affluence" according to the Encyclopedia of the Nations for Asia and the Pacific (2011) in most areas, the HPI suggests that Vanuatu is still a poor country, with the third lowest HPI in the Pacific, at a level similar to that of many of the poorest African countries (p. 10). The report indicates 50 percent of Vanuatu’s population live below the \$1-per-day poverty line. Because of social, economic and political indicators, women in particular continue to be disadvantaged in the areas of poverty, hunger, and primary education (ADB, 2011). Although education may be viewed as a Western concept in enticing people to look at Western ideals as a beacon of light, it has been a blessing to Ni-Vanuatu people in the sense that the hard work of primary, secondary and tertiary education are acknowledged. Education has enabled me to undertake a doctoral study and write this thesis to challenge the ‘Master’s Voice’ of both male oppression and a neo-colonial capitalism in Vanuatu.

Nevertheless, women continue to be disadvantaged in the areas of gender-equity and gender-equality, maternal health, combating HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases, and environmental sustainability. Poverty levels in Vanuatu may not seem like absolute destitution compared to African and Asian countries, poverty does exist and does affect marginalised groups of urban women because these people are either

infirm, old, or unemployed, having no direct access to land for subsistence farming or resources such as the land and forest, rivers and sea for sustenance collection (ILO, 2006 & O'Collins, 1998). Poverty for urban disenfranchised women will continue to be endemic (ADB, 2011).

Rural-urban migration is a global phenomenon that also affects the rural women of Vanuatu (O'Collins, 1998). Rural women see the urban centres as the centre of development and desire to be part of it, to earn cash and improve their living standards and also to educate their children (Rodman et al. 2009 & Salong, 2008). As women in Vanuatu are removed from their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models and from their socially cohesive Wantok kinship network social security systems, they become deprived of natural resources from the land to sustain and maintain themselves (ILO, 2006). Furthermore, the Republic of Vanuatu (2004) stresses, "women's progress has... been reflective of the lack of support they gain from leaders both men and women" (p. 10). One year after independence, the disenfranchisement of women continued, as Hilda Lini Motarilavao (cf Macdonald-Milne et al, 1981) called for women to "raise their voices, [and] not hide them...[as] the women's role in helping to govern the country is extremely important" (p. 120). Resident aid donors in Vanuatu, such as the French Embassy, Australian and the New Zealand High Commissions, have recognised the marginalization of women in positions of authority in Vanuatu and attempted to rectify this anomaly by incorporating gender-equality criteria into aid funding criteria, for women to be included in rural and urban project committees and for them to have a voice and space, as a pre-requisite for financial assistance to Vanuatu. Of all these interventions; nevertheless, the United Nations has been a steady force in Vanuatu since the mid-1980s.

3.4 United Nations' Anti-Discrimination Legislation

The United Nations established the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) (see Chapter Two). The OECD (2007) highlights the global and local need for Ni-Vanuatu women's inclusion into Vanuatu's positions of authority to fulfil the concept of gender equality. Tor and Toka (2004) describe the marginalization and exclusion of Ni-Vanuatu women in areas of social and economic development, governance and human rights at community and national levels, and

how women are under-represented or where they provided any input and opinions, these were overlooked and silenced. Because of the gendered disparity reviewed in the sections above, and the desperate poverty of many women in contemporary Vanuatu, exacerbated by the new responsibilities women are expected to meet through the intensification of the cash requirements of urban living and the commodification of many community necessities (education, health, insurance for example) and the requirement to survive in a market economy (rather than to live in a rural community), the United Nations (UN) were invited to bring their experiences and influences into Vanuatu.

The Collins English Dictionary (Dictionary.Com, 2011) defines discrimination as the “treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favour of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit: racial and religious intolerance and discrimination” (p. 1). Discrimination is when unfair treatment of persons, racial group and minorities occurs because of ingrained prejudices. The UN offered positive anti-discrimination legislation to Vanuatu through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women – CEDAW aimed at curbing discrimination against the oppression of women and improving their status so that they can make a useful contribution to their country's economic and future direction (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004).

3.4.1 Why do we need the UN?

The UN mandates global development through international instruments and conventions for its member countries to improve the governance of its subjects and to end any forms of violence, promote tolerance and encourage peaceful co-existence, advance infrastructural development, promote and support gender-equity and gender-equality, protect human rights and eliminate poverty (UNESCAP, 2008). Pacific nations signed the Beijing Declaration preceding the 4th United Nations World Conference of Women (cf The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004) calling for the empowerment of all women and incorporating them into positions of authority in their country's decision-making processes:

We are convinced that women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equity in all spheres of society, including participation in the

decision making processes and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace (p. 52).

3.4.1.1 *UN's entry into Vanuatu*

As Vanuatu became a member of the UN, during the leadership of Prime Minister, Hon Maxime Carlot Korman in 1995, the Vanuatu Government was pressured to accede to the CEDAW, which it did on 13 April 1995 without any reservations (ILO, 2006 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). This convention became a mechanism to educate Vanuatu's rural patrilineages and urban patriarchy to scrutinise their dealings and relationship with Ni-Vanuatu women. CEDAW has alerted Ni-Vanuatu men of Ni-Vanuatu women's human rights and fundamental freedoms to access positions of authority and entrepreneurial activities in Vanuatu hoping that Vanuatu would utilise the feminist ideals incorporated in the CEDAW to liberate, emancipate and empower marginalised Ni-Vanuatu amidst this complex backdrop, in part, via two United Nations' remedies: the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects.

3.5. CEDAW Interventions: EEO Programmes and Microfinance Projects

Through the two interventions of CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects, some urban patrilineal Ni-Vanuatu women were encouraged to exit their suppressive patrilineal societies, to seek positions of authority in formal jobs and engage in entrepreneurial activities in informal jobs (VNCW, 2005 & Randell, 2003). Women would also have a voice, space and own land and property in the urban centres (Salong, 2008).

3.5.1 *CEDAW-EEO in Vanuatu*

The first UN mechanism is the CEDAW-EEO as prescribed in Article 11 on Employment. The Vanuatu Government as a state employer including private-sector employers were encouraged to institute equal employment opportunities through implemented-EEO programmes within their organizations to enable urban Ni-Vanuatu women to access positions of authority (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The EEO programmes would offer a platform for women to receive the required role-modelling, coaching and mentoring to professionally train them to become literate, educated and qualified to secure positions of authority within their organizations.

3.5.2 *Microfinance in Vanuatu*

The second UN mechanism is the microfinance projects to assist urban poor Ni-Vanuatu women resident in Port Vila and Luganville (new Vanwods MFI centres have been established on the islands of Malakula and Tanna) for the Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs to own, operate, and maintain, microfinance businesses, as an alternative means to earn incomes. For many disenfranchised urban Ni-Vanuatu women, entry into the market and cash economy or into the Master's Ship is the only means of survival (Honderich, 1995). Paid employment secures the women's labour and pays them meagre incomes (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). The reality for many urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal jobs is that a market-derived income is now the only source of livelihood open to them and for those who depend on them (Rodman et al. 2009 & Salong, 2008). Domestic servant jobs and prostitution have been among the least desirable of these options, but nonetheless are options adopted by some urban Ni-Vanuatu women who cannot secure formal jobs (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004 & Kraemer, 2003). It is in this context that the CEDAW highlighted the need for Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchies to incorporate both rural and urban women into the country's economic development (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). One of the ways the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has participated in this commitment is launching the Millennium Development Goal to eliminate poverty (The Vanuatu Prime Minister's Office, 2010) and Vanwods MFI with the Vanuatu Women's Affairs Department (Winn, 2004). The urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal jobs utilise the concepts of liberal feminist ideologies of personal freedom and social choice to own, operate and maintain microfinance businesses which would liberate, emancipate and empower them working together in the Grameen Bank group philosophy's collective, social and cohesive systems (Salong, 2008 & Tuttle, 1986). James (2006) affirms Vanuatu's society is organised around "groups sometimes referred to as Wantoks". The group whether it is in the extended family, or island origin or province is more important than 'individuals'" and that economic empowerment happens only within a "group context" (ibid, p. 3). The effectiveness of these two UN remedies, are discussed next.

3.5.3 Effectiveness of UN's remedies

The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) describes urban Ni-Vanuatu women's lamentations, "Women feel that their contribution to the economy is under-valued...They also feel excluded from the highest levels of decision-making" (p. 12). Piau-Lynch (2007) challenges the effectiveness of CEDAW to eliminate women's poverty because Vanuatu's rural patrilineages and urban patriarchal mind-sets and old prejudices are still prevalent in imposing gender discrimination to Ni-Vanuatu women. Because of these predominant negative mind-sets, Vanuatu's accession to CEDAW has made insignificant improvements to eliminate discrimination and oppression, and the subjugation and marginalisation of Ni-Vanuatu women. Various authors have written about the complex situation of women in Vanuatu (United Nations Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women 779th and 780th Meetings, 2009; Piau-Lynch, 2007; Strachan et al. 2007; VNCW, 2005; The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004; Randell, 2003; Lamour, 2000; Lini, 2000; Molisa, 2000a, 2000b; Huffer and Molisa, 1999; Bolton, 1999; The Republic of Vanuatu, 1997; Jolly, 1996; Goodin, 1996; Lini, 1995; & Molisa, 1992). Various feminist writers on women's situation in Vanuatu have argued that regardless of how efficient women are in balancing their multiple, economic, domestic, social and political roles in the homes and as employees, in formal and informal jobs, they are constantly considered as inferior to men (Piau-Lynch, 2007; VNCW, 2005; Randell, 2003; Molisa, 2000; Huffer & Molisa, 1999; & Lini, 1995) . Furthermore, various authors (Strachan et al. 2007; The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004; Huffer and Molisa, 1999; United Nations Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women 779th and 780th Meetings, 2009; and Grown et al. 2003) have confirmed the prevalence of gender inequality, evidenced by women's gross under-representation in Vanuatu's positions of authority. The United Nations (2009) report classified Vanuatu as failing to "promote gender equality and the empowerment of women" (United Nations Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women 779th and 780th Meetings, 2009, p. 11). The two remedies offered by the United Nations in the form of the CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects have been partially successful, as Ni-Vanuatu women continue to experience rampant subjugation and marginalization.

Rural women's roles as subsistence farmers and their multiple roles and duties in child bearing, as primary carers and nurturers, household food producers, community nurses

and leaders, educators of children, and family managers are recognised and given value and status in both Wantok governance models (ILO, 2006; VNCW, 2005 & Randell, 2003). Some Chiefs recognise the importance of women as “the backbone of everything that the chiefs do for their family, community, village and the country as a whole” (Randell, 2003, p. 5). Women’s active participation in Vanuatu’s *Kastom ekonomi* enables the survival of their nuclear and extended family members (Westoby, 2010 & Jolly, 1996). Matrilineal women, as explained in Chapter Two, form an important element of the matrilineal Wantok governance model by holding positions of authority in community affairs. In contrast rural patrilineal women hold no voice and space and ownership rights in community affairs (ILO, 2006). With no formal authority in community affairs, patrilineal women are more inclined to seek better living conditions in the urban centres (O’Collins, 1998).

Vanuatu’s independence in 1980 and the retention of capitalism (see Chapter Two) but with a change in the currency of exchange to the Vanuatu Vatu, provided Ni-Vanuatu women with the mind-set that urban centre life paid employment and earned incomes (would improve their well-being (Rodman et al. 2009; ILO, 2006 & O’Collins, 1998). With the limited income-generating opportunities available in the rural areas many matrilineal and patrilineal women exited their rural habitats seeking an income through paid employment to access education and better living standards in Vanuatu’s urban centres (Salong, 2008 & ILO, 2006). Matrilineal and patrilineal women must circumvent Vanuatu’s rural patrilineages and urban patriarchal barriers to obtain formal and informal jobs with most women gaining employment in the service industries or in the informal economy (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). When urban Ni-Vanuatu women are able to secure formal jobs they are relegated into lower clerical and administrative roles (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The OECD (2007) notes Ni-Vanuatu women’s marginalization remains acute. Despite the CEDAW and the Millennium Development Goals liberal feminist espoused values of liberation, emancipation and empowerment, Vanuatu’s rural patrilineages and urban patriarchal mind-sets, attitudes, beliefs, and their dealings and relationship with urban Ni-Vanuatu women are preventing women from holding constitutional and corporate decision-making positions in Vanuatu (Piau-Lynch, 2007). I now turn my attention to the specific contemporary conditions of women in employment in the urban areas

3.6 Urban Employment and Under-Employment

Women were subsequently side-tracked in the rearrangement of Vanuatu in the distribution of positions of authority (Piau-Lynch, 2007 & Molisa, 2000a). Huffer and Molisa (1999) stress urban Ni-Vanuatu women continue to be relegated to the domestic sphere, seen as housewives, or assigned to the service industry and employed as domestic servants (Kramer, 2003). To this day, urban Ni-Vanuatu women continued to face discrimination and oppression in gaining positions of authority and are usually appointed as junior employees with non-decision making roles (Piau-Lynch, 2007 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). These women continued to face glass-ceiling, glass-wall and glass-escalator impediments and sticky-floor barriers in their formal jobs. Twelve years after Vanuatu's accession to CEDAW Ni-Vanuatu women continue to incur rampant discrimination, oppression and subjugation from Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy (ILO, 2006 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). In formal employment, The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) reports:

While there has been some increase in the number of women employees in Government in some areas, in others, such as the Police Force, little has changed....The reality, however, is that it is difficult for women to break the invisible glass ceiling...as [the] reason for few women in top positions. (2004, p. 57)

Urban women must circumvent many obstacles from employers and senior women in positions of authority to secure formal and informal jobs. ILO (2006) stresses “[women] are less likely to be in paid employment, and in the traditional economy tend to have fewer rights of use of customary land than men, and are often not included in decision making” (p. 236). Furthermore, ILO confirms the scarcity of women in positions of authority in both the public and private sector in Vanuatu as “women are significantly under-represented in senior level positions with only 40 of the 368 (9.2%) of management and political leadership positions occupied by women” (ibid, p. 53). In the past 30 years, only five different women (3 rural women, 2 from the island of Epi:Isabelle Donald and Leinavao Shem from Shefa Province, and 1 from the island of Malakula, Eta Rory from Malampa Province; and 2 urban women, Maria Crowby and Hilda Lini Motarilavo) have acquired constitutional seats in Vanuatu's parliament, disclosing that Vanuatu is merely paying lip-service to the quest of gender equality (Piau-Lynch, 2007; ILO, 2006 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The only

female Member of Parliament from 2008-2012 was Eta Rory. Piau-Lynch (2007) acknowledges that the Vanuatu Government's efforts to promote and support gender-equality in Vanuatu has failed dejectedly, as fewer than 3.8 percent women are recruited into Vanuatu's Parliament - the lowest in the world.

Although many urban Ni-Vanuatu women work extremely hard in their formal jobs, The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) stresses the 38 percent of urban Ni-Vanuatu women in state employment incur discrimination and oppression in terms of incomes they earn, because they merely "earn 80 percent of men's salaries" (p. 40). Less income with multiple nuclear and extended family commitments for these women cause severe hardships and it is mostly the urban women and their children who suffer the most when poverty strikes them. ILO (2006) states "the relatively high numbers of female headed households...most vulnerable to poverty... [must rely] on the support of extended families to supplement their basic needs" (p. 27). Sex work is never considered viable work in the rural areas of Vanuatu as the land and forest, rivers and sea with the Wantok kinship network social security system cater for people's well-being needs (The Wan Solwora, 2010; ILO, 2006 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The Vanuatu Government has made superficial efforts to include more women into positions of authority in Vanuatu's constitutional, corporate and economic activities. For example, The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) reported to the UN that in 2000 there was no increase in the appointment of women into positions of authority in the public service based on 9 women (16% female participation) to 56 men and 10 women (17% female participation) to 57 men in 2006. This signals that the Vanuatu Government's efforts in 2006 to promote and support gender equality and equity failed miserably (Piau-Lynch, 2007 & Morgan, n.d.). Morgan (2001) admits that for Vanuatu, there is still no headway into fulfilling its liberal feminist concepts of gender equality, a position highlighted by Tuttle (1986) and recently affirmed by The Global Gender Gap Report (2010). This report, published by the World Economic Forum, highlights Vanuatu's lack of gender equality in economic participation and opportunity for outcomes on salaries, participation levels and access to high-skilled employment; educational attainment for outcomes on basic and higher level education; political empowerment for outcomes on representation in decision-making structures; and health and survival for outcomes on life expectancy and sex ratio. Vanuatu continues to pay lip service to the concept of gender but very little action was undertaken to

include more urban Ni-Vanuatu women into positions of authority in the patrilineal Wantok Governance model and in the Western democratic governance model.

3.7 House-Girls in Our Own Land

Because of the lack of literacy, education and qualifications, Vanuatu's rural women who migrate (into the urban centres find it extremely difficult to secure paid employment to improve their living conditions (Rodman et al. 2009; Chung et al. 2002 & O'Collins, 1998). For matrilineal women, their move into the urban centres is more difficult for them because they now face Vanuatu's rural patrilineages and urban patriarchal negative mind-sets, barriers that were obscure within their matrilineal Wantok governance model (Maltali et al. 2009 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Nevertheless, some of these women do obtain work in the informal employment sector, as domestic servants or haos-gels in Bislama (Crowley, 2003 & Kraemer, 2003). Ni-Vanuatu women become highly vulnerable and exploited in their new areas of residence. Kraemer (2003) speaks of certain ills domestic servants encounter in their domestic servant roles such as verbal, physical and ultimately sexual abuse from their urban centre employers. The burdens of house girls (ibid) lead to cases of entrapment, exploitation and even abuse leading to their mistreatment, rape and sexual abuse. Rodman et al. (2009) draw attention to perilous consequences for contemporary house girls of domestic arrangements that combine servitude and kinship. These kinship domestic employees are overworked and underpaid (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). There are many instances where the domestic servants leave their employment or are terminated by the male employers' spouses because they are carrying the employer's child (Rodman et al. 2009 & Kraemer, 2003). Some of them also incur ostracism from their families for succumbing to the employers' sexual desires. Urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal jobs continue to earn meagre incomes (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). As urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs continued to endure rampant discrimination and oppression leading to their subjugation and marginalization, it was imperative that alternative measures be incorporated to liberate, emancipate and empower them (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). This necessitated a call for the UN to enter Vanuatu waters. The next section will outline UN's commitment to address women's gendered discrimination and oppression in Vanuatu.

3.8 Reclamation of Motherhood, Lineage and Community Survival

Iman, Mama and Sow (1999) describe women's existence prior to the colonial era of European contact in post-colonial Africa. Through African legend, the roles of women and men were celebrated as equal and complementary in good old, harmonious pre-colonial Africa, with the lives of notable, exceptional and heroic women being celebrated, although male critics may view this as a romantic myth. African nation states such as Kenya and Tanzania, document the reclamation of women from Western patriarchal notions of what it means to be a woman and the roles of motherhood for women in these emerging African nations (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Women in Kenya and Tanzania have extended definitions of motherhood beyond biological determinism, embracing the survival of community and culture into these definitions. This is a point in case for women in Vanuatu as well. Maltali et al. (2009) and Van Trease (1987) refer to the survival of communities and matrilineal indigenous and patrilineal traditional cultures, patrimony and legacies and land and lineage transmissions through Ni-Vanuatu women's motherhood roles. Matrilineal women create patrimony and legacies in motherhood for their matrilineal lineages and clans while patrilineal women create patrimony and legacies in motherhood for their spouses (Stege et al. 2008 & ILO, 2006). Ni-Vanuatu women's reproductive and productive roles are important in both societies. Without children, lineages will die (ILO, 2006; The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004; & Van Trease, 1987).

In Africa today, women are absent from positions of authority and depicted as naturally inferior and subordinate to men because of male oppression. Hall and Silliman (2006) speak of the disruption and population decline that occurred in the Pacific because of European contact and that for researchers, the writing of history for some cultures prior to colonisation is a new phenomenon. This is a problem for Vanuatu as well, as inadequate anthropological work is written about the structure and the relationship between men and women in the matrilineal Wantok governance model except for references made by various writers (Maltali et al. 2009; Stege et al. 2008; Huffer & Molisa, 1999; & Van Trease, 1987) that matrilineality practices equalitarian values for both gender. As Huffer and Molisa (1999) correctly portrayed, the effective system of indigenous traditional governance (a dual effort by both men and women) pre-existed in the colonial era and continued to be practiced in Vanuatu's matrilineal society. It is Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchal attitudes and values embedded in

patrilineal societies with overt and covert discriminatory acts imposed on women that clearly portray women to be the inessential and the other (VNCW, 2005; Randell, 2003 & Huffer and Molisa, 1999). Patrilineages' forced subservience of girls is the beginning of women's discrimination and oppression (Lini, 1995).

3.9 Patriarchal Oppression of Women in Post-Colonial Era

Global patriarchal hegemonic power and control through discrimination and oppression imposed on global and local women lead to their marginalization. Amico (1998) states feminist theories and literature have incorporated the term patriarchy in their lexicon as a "trans-historical, cross-cultural political system in which women are subordinated, exploited, and controlled by men" (pp. 452-453). Patriarchy is a universal and unchanging system because it recurs cross-culturally. Women's relegation to the domestic sphere because of their reproductive role is the central site of women's subordination, as their labour is exploited by men who control them in the biological family. Amico reiterates that patriarchy controls women's sexual division of labour on a world-wide basis and that women are exploited and dominated in all societies. In Vanuatu's case, rural patrilineages and urban patriarchy are embedded into Vanuatu's governance of community and state affairs "featuring men as administrators of societies" (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. 5). Men are responsible for imposing rampant discrimination and oppression on urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs leading to their subjugation and marginalization.

Post-colonial feminism highlights that patriarchy dominates women's every-day lives in post-colonial, neo-colonial and colonial contexts. Grewal (1996) explores women's "otherness" or "alterity" through issues of cultural identity, language, nationalism and the position of women in formerly colonised countries (p. 244). Grewal argues that as new nation-states emerged from their former colonies, women continued to experience discrimination because patriarchal values remained entangled in the post-colonial state. Spivak (1988) found this to be evident in post-colonial India as laws favoured men and positions of authority were delegated to them. Msimangi (2000) argues that patriarchal nationalism had selective memory when liberation was achieved; it forgot the input of women that secured independence with them and to restore women to their rightful places. Patriarchal nationalism also affected Vanuatu after France and Britain withdrew from the New Hebrides in mid-1980. Molisa (2001) speaks of

similar circumstances happening for women in Vanuatu as their efforts were ignored while men continued to deny them access to gainful employment and positions of authority in Vanuatu's decision-making processes. Vanuatu's urban patriarchy, in its new governance structure in 1980, took all of the positions of authority except one position that was granted to a woman paying lip service to the concept of gender-equity and gender-equality (VNCW, 2005). The private and public divide continues when women are relegated to domesticated roles while men make a living supporting the industrial activities of the patriarchal society. Calas Smichirch et al. (1993) argue because of the gender discrimination and stereotype, this private divide of domestic service continues and is reproduced in discrimination and oppression when women seek paid employment. For example, they note in *The Fortune Women in Business* (August, 1935) that the recruitment of women into the work-place is to make the surroundings more homely, peaceful and pleasant. With their presence, the women bring their feminine soft skills to domesticate and humanise the work-place.

3.9.1 Women: The second sex, [the inferior] and the other

French feminist writer, Simone de Beauvoir (1952) defines women's predicament, "She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the other" (pp. xv999, xxiii). According to de Beauvoir, discrimination is bred from deeply embedded patriarchal values generated from the subordination of women by virtue of their biological designation as women, and thus being deemed socially, politically, and economically inessential and treated as the "other" (pp. xviii, xxiii). Nevertheless, Tong (1989) reiterates that existentialist feminism argues that it is not the biological differences of men and women but how the society places value on these biological differences that leads women to play the role of the other. Women's labour is exploited although it has been the foundation of societal wealth. Although, globally and locally, women play a key role in the survival of millions of families, having to work longer hours than men, and having a greater range of responsibilities, because of gender differences, women's unpaid work in the homes is seen as of no economic value (Bullock, 1994). In Vanuatu's matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models, women's domestic work is highly valued for the survival of the nuclear and extended family members, kinship and the society (Van Trease, 1987). However, in patrilineages, women's reproductive and productive labour

is exploited because women's roles are merely to create men's patrimonies and legacies (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Furthermore, patrilineal women have no voice, space and ownership rights in community affairs (Huffer & Molisa, 1999 & ILO, 2006).

3.9.2 Social construction of gender-based roles

Larrabee (2000) suggests that women's otherness and the social construction of gender-based roles rests on the society's interpretation of biological differences of "women's" and "men's lives as concretely situated" emphasising concepts like "freedom, interpersonal relations and experience of lived body" (p. 187). A woman, in a man's perception, is inferior and subject to male control.

Bullock (1994) argues that the gender difference of what is considered as men's work and women's work is created socially and culturally through people's perceptions and it is not the law of nature but it is societal perceptions that can change if there is societal will. To corroborate this societal perception, Piau-Lynch (2007) argues women's gendered roles in Vanuatu as mothers and housewives, is the cause for their non-inclusion into positions of authority in organisations, and in the country's political and economic frameworks. Smith (2005) argues that France and Britain, through the condominium-colonisation pact in 1906-1980, also had a part in demarcating the boundaries of the male and female gendered roles in the New Hebrides, prescribing how females should or should not act. Christianity also played a critical role in changing family structures (Randell, 2003 & Van Trease, 1987) by enforcing the man to be the head of the woman and the family, and in allocating gendered roles to them (Jolly, 1996 & Morgan, n.d.).

3.10 Emerging Themes: Discrimination against Women

Women all over the world have been discriminated against, oppressed, subjugated and marginalised in different ways through the political, cultural, social, spiritual and economic constraints associated with their biological identity as females (Coleman, 2005). In many societies, a woman is classified as inferior to men to men (Akao, 2007). There is some controversy as to whether such inferiority existed or in what form for tribal communities prior to colonial involvement and/or recording of such stories by their scribes. Bullock (1994) states in many societies in which the OECD

takes an interest, women are seen as domestic servants with primary caring and nurturing roles. Many urban women are employed in the urban centres as domestic servants in waged occupations or in the service industries or in junior positions in salaried/professional occupations (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004 & Kraemer, 2003). Piau-Lynch (2007) draws attention to Vanuatu's urban patriarchal roles in neglecting to include women into Vanuatu's decision-making processes in issues of "pertinent discussions and decisions on areas of social and economic development, governance and human rights at community and national levels...the under-representation of women and the effective silencing of women's inputs and opinions" (p. 4). Vanuatu's rural patrilineages and urban patriarchy make the excuse that Vanuatu's Christian beliefs, customs and tradition prevent women from participating in Vanuatu's decision-making processes (The Republic of Vanuatu, 1997 & 2004). Bullock (1994) raises awareness for some global women who have resorted to sex work to earn incomes because there are no job opportunities.

Priola (2004) stresses that some organisations are making efforts to combat women's discrimination and marginalisation in positive ways. For example, newly-created universities, in contrast to traditional universities are recruiting more women into positions of authority in conformance with EEO programmes and regulations. Rindfleish (2000) argues that if women desired for work-place barriers to be removed, they need a new path of institutional affirmative action plans in making employers, organisations and people, comply through legislation. Dines (1993) and OECD (2007) reason if women longed to side-step their marginalisation, they must pursue further education and training opportunities, to improve their chances of securing well-paid jobs. In Vanuatu, Huffer and Molisa (1999), Lamour (2000), and Randell (2003) also insist that Ni-Vanuatu women must pursue education to become literate and qualified to access positions of authority. Improving women's participation in positions of authority is perceived by Schein (2007) as a strategy to accord rights, freedoms and opportunities to them. Universally, more and more women are calling for their liberal feminist rights and fundamental freedom for equal employment opportunities in positions of authority (Scott and Marshall, 2005 & Schein, 2007). The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) also documents Vanuatu women's calls for power-sharing in similar contexts. Piau-Lynch (2007) reports female sentiments "More women are speaking out

and calling both Government and society at large to be accountable... taking stands on issues of importance to women and the nation” (p. 5).

Nevertheless, Winn (2004) concedes that despite the acceptance and the compliance with implemented EEO programmes and regulations by certain organizations, only a minority of women are accessing positions of authority. Despite this call, Western literatures (Coleman, 2005; Reynold, 2002 & Blackmore, 2002) continue to speak about women’s affiliations and aspirations for gainful employment and access to positions of authority, while paradoxically highlighting recurring themes of men’s hegemonic power and control over women, the imposition of rampant discrimination, oppression and gender roles stereotypes on them. World-wide, women continue to face discrimination and oppression in today’s contemporary society (Jaggar, 1983). Women undergo many forms of discrimination in their daily lives or in their work places, which range from gender, work-place, employee, age, sexual-orientation, religious, institutional, and racial bias. Discrimination and oppression entails gender and employee discrimination, oppression and gate-keeping barriers such as glass walls, glass ceiling, glass escalator and sticky floor impediments. In Vanuatu, urban Ni-Vanuatu women also encounter many forms of discrimination and oppression (Piau-Lynch, 2007; VNCW, 2005; For example, Salong (2008); The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) and Randell (2003) highlight these for women in formal jobs in waged and salaried/professional occupations, and women in informal jobs in their microfinance businesses. A number of key themes emerge and are discussed below.

3.10.1 Discrimination in women’s professional development

Rural and urban patriarchal discrimination is reproduced through the education of women. Patrilineality in Vanuatu have influenced some parents to choose to educate their male children over any female children because of financial constraints (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). When girls remained in the homes, they continue to be integrated into a cycle of working and remaining in the domestic sphere, thus reducing their capacity to make a meaningful economic contribution to the direction of Vanuatu’s future. Tawaiyole (2006), in the PNG Post Courier of March 2006 reaffirms educational preferences for boys over girls in Papua New Guinea, “Research shows that many parents think that the best returns are through educating sons rather than daughters. These views affect the level of support provided for their children’s access,

participation, retention and completion of education at the different levels” (p. 5). ILO (2006) stresses that because some women in Vanuatu have been unable to attend school, they will have lesser qualifications compared to men and that “rural women have less qualification than urban women” (p. 53).

3.10.2 Women’s relegation to junior and non-decision-making roles

Due to the high cost of living experienced by urban residents many women must leave the domestic sphere and seek paid employment to assist their spouses and families make ends meet (Scott & Marshall, 2005 & Brockbank et al. 1994). Bullock (1994) notes some women are employed as domestic servants, while others are clustered into service industry occupations. They are placed in lower levels of skills, responsibility and pay in these service occupations. Schein (2007) describes how men blame women’s marginalization in the work- place to be a result of women being unable to “cut the mustard [as] they do not have the pre-requisites to become a top executive” (p. 14). Men globally continue to relegate qualified women into junior and non-decision-making jobs because of this perception. Furthermore, Vanuatu’s rural patrilineages’ and urban patriarchy have adopted similar mind-sets when they describe the stereotype of a woman as a housewife (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004; Van Trease, 1987 & Macdonald-Milne et al, 1981). Ni-Vanuatu women are relegated to junior and non-decision-making positions because of the direct opposition and attitudes of men and women in Vanuatu (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Therefore, Ni-Vanuatu women’s inferiority and marginalization arises because of men’s attitudes that women cannot lead, manage and govern others (Strachan et al. 2007; VNCW, 2005; The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004 & Randell, 2003).

3.10.3 Women’s wage discrimination

Hesse-Biber (2007) describes the lower wages indictment for women as, “discrimination against and exploitation of women’s work in wage labour, conceptualised as reasonable because women were first and foremost mothers, not wage workers” (p. 48). Many women around the globe earn lower wages and salaries (Scott & Marshall, 2005). For example, Coleman (2005) reiterates that women earn 20 percent lower than men in the work force. This is also the case in Vanuatu, as Strachan et al. (2007) reveal that Vanuatu female educational workers received lower salaries than men. Although women received lower pay than their male counterparts,

Winkler (1990) stresses that women use their wages to feed and maintain their households while men spend their wages on their personal needs (Bridger et al. 1996 & Einhorn, 1993). Calas et al. (1993) state the reason why women are recruited into paid employment is because they are cheaper than men. Randell (2003) highlights similarities for Vanuatu where most women paid for household expenses while men squandered their money on personal expenses such as kava and alcohol consumption.

3.10.4 Glass-ceiling impediments to women

Globally, women have been excluded from gaining secure forms of employment. For example, work-place discrimination resulting in glass ceiling, glass wall, glass escalator and sticky floor impediments affects many women in many organisations today (Albrecht; Bjorkland & Vroman, 2003 & Mertz, 2003). Still (1994) defines glass ceiling as an obstacle that impedes women from getting access to positions of authority and is a “rigid, flexible or a slippery pole” (p. 3). Bullock (1994) argues that women face glass ceiling impediments in their career paths even though they may receive similar qualifications to a group of male colleagues and at times may be more qualified, experienced and exceptionally capable, than these men. Nevertheless, these men will move up the corporate career ladder within a decade while leaving the women behind them in the same positions. Only a minimal number of women have been able to reach top corporate positions. Albrecht et al. (2003) highlight the existence of a glass ceiling between men and women in the wage gaps in Sweden concluding that since the 1990s, glass ceiling impediments have become more pronounced. Subtle forms of work-place discrimination push women out of male-dominated occupations making the women feel excluded from informal leadership and decision-making networks (Piau-Lynch, 2007). The women experience visible hostility from their male co-workers as a result of these glass-ceiling, glass-walls, and sticky floor impediments. Globally and locally, although women are appropriately educated and qualified, they continue to be relegated to junior and non-decision-making positions. To combat this problem, female managers must work doubly- triply harder in their organisations, before men do recognise and accept them. In Vanuatu, Randell (2003) tells the story of a woman technician role-model who experienced similar obstacles.

Discrimination, oppression and gate-keeping activities are not created solely by employers and urban patriarchy. Globally and locally, senior women have also been stumbling blocks to other women's advancement and empowerment. For example, Calas et al. (1993) and Rindfleish (2000) bring to our attention, the queen bee syndrome, where senior women remain unwilling to assist other aspiring women to gain positions of authority. The queen bee syndrome also affects many role-models and female workers in Vanuatu (VNCW, 2005 & Randell, 2003).

3.10.5 Women's maternity leave career breaks

Globally, employers discriminate against women who interrupt their career paths to create a family, negatively impacting on their chances of promotions (The Emerald Group Publishing Ltd, 2006 & Sasser, 2005). Wentling (2003) signals that patriarchal values embedded throughout society helped to show-case women as less devoted to their careers than men because of these maternity leave breaks. This is most apparent around the family, where women's career paths and chances for promotions are negatively affected when they stop work to raise children (Metz, 2006). Because of negative employer feedback and limited provisions for women's promotions, women may decide not to create a family, so as not to risk their career paths (ibid). In Vanuatu's context, some employers have been found to discriminate against women in employment, especially women who are employed as casual workers, by not granting them full maternity leave entitlements (Piau-Lynch & Tarileo, 1996).

3.11 A Woman's Work is Never Done!

McDowell and Sharp (1999) drew attention to women's experiences of the "double shift/double burden" (p. 255). Once women completed their paid employment; they returned home to continue working in their domesticated jobs. Randell (2003) illustrates similar hardships for women in Vanuatu and concludes that "a woman's work is never done" (p. 39). In this chapter, I reviewed literatures that linked the deteriorating situation for many women of Vanuatu to the disruption of traditional governance brought to the shores of the islands renamed The New Hebrides by the early missionaries, traders and subsequent colonial rulers as documented in Chapter Two. Although Vanuatu's rural patrilineages and urban patriarchy were conditioned to view women as inferior to men, according to Molisa (2000a) they; nevertheless, recruited women to fight alongside them for independence. Men continued to see

domestic work as the role of women and impeded women's equal access to jobs, income and authority. As contemporary attitudes, Chief Noel Mariasua, a former President of the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs, warned women "not to take the [CEDAW] to start thinking highly of themselves and forgetting their place in society" (Mason, 2000 cf The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. 10). I outlined the effects of this legacy through describing the characteristics of documented experiences of discrimination and oppression, leading to women's subjugation and marginalization which have guided women's expressed desires for better access to formal and informal jobs. I described the kinds of jobs they accessed, incomes they earned, and the poverty status of some women. I highlighted how some rural migrants have obtained informal jobs as house girls in their own land. For some women, prostitution appears to be their only option.

The on-going oppression of women has not deterred those with hope vested in the CEDAW-EEO programmes to continue to use this instrument for the transformation of the lives of the women of Vanuatu. A Vanuatu NGO Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 2007) published by the Vanuatu Rural Development and Training Centres, and the Woman Against Crime and the Vanuatu Association of Non-Government Organisations report, the reasons for widespread prostitution in Vanuatu is because of women's "economic burdens" as state interventions to address this problem are inadequate (p. 18). A much more wide reaching agenda is needed. It is from this paradox, the platform of both hope in and the seeming inadequacy of the UN as a positive force for intervention, that I devised my research interests. In the next chapter, I explain my research orientation, my research design and the need to return to the feminist literature (as I do in Chapter 5) in order to gain greater sense of my initial findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

Philosophy, Methodology and the Research Story Told

4.1 Introduction

In Chapters One to Three, the context and characteristics of the lives of women in Vanuatu were set out. Many Ni-Vanuatu women are calling for their fundamental and human rights to participate in positions of authority in Vanuatu's future direction. This call is thwarted by on-going gendered subjugation. Chapter Three reviewed the literatures that identified significant gender-based discrimination resulting in the marginalization and poverty for many of Vanuatu's urban women despite the CEDAW interventions (EEO for women in waged jobs and salaried/professional occupations, and microfinance projects for disenfranchised women in the informal economy). This finding drawn from the literature reviews became the prompt for my decision to ask the women of Vanuatu of their experiences of these two interventions.

I begin this chapter with a review of my attraction to the qualitative methods of enquiry and the need to employ a feminist philosophy and epistemology. I introduce the feminist narrative and story-telling methods. I next outline my research objectives and goals and set out the methods by which I investigate the extent and characteristics of the continued discrimination experienced by women in contemporary Vanuatu. I then outline my research design and methods by specifying the procedures used to identify and invite research participants to participate in this research study. I proceed to explain my over-arching research question and its supplementary questions. I conclude this chapter by listing certain themes I drew from the literatures and from my initial reading of the insights generated from the research conversations. This initial reading prompted a desire to find a means for deeper analysis of the observed inconsistencies and contradictors that were reported within and across the narratives. I undertook such analysis through the research lenses which are explained in more detail in Chapters Five and applied in Chapters Six, Seven and Nine.

4.2 Philosophy and Research Method

The term philosophy is defined by various philosophers to mean, Ashcraft (1998) as "the love of wisdom" (p. 261); The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy (1999) as "the study of the ultimate reality, causes, and principles underlying being and

thinking” (p. 1) and the “supposed body of truths that appear in the writings of the great philosophers, or the truths common to opposed philosophical view-points” (ibid, p. 664) and by The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy (2008) as “the study of the most general and abstract features of the world and categories with which we think” (p. 244). The term philosophy has many aspects and diverse manifestations. It is necessary to know something about philosophy as a background to any type of research. Everyone has a philosophy or a world view of something or a concept of an event or experience. Although people may not realise that they hold a philosophical view, Collier (1994) argues even the un-philosophical person practices unconscious philosophy in the field of science, politics or in their every-day life. All explicit or implicit philosophical methodological positions provide views of truths. Therefore, academic research questions, dissertations, and thesis always employ and assume certain philosophies and theories to frame and explain problems and to ultimately identify suitable solutions to them. Researchers make deep reflections of the philosophical suppositions of any research project by identifying whether any general or fundamental problems exist, so that a critical and systematic approach of rational arguments will be presented (The Encyclopedia.Com, 2011). Furthermore, researchers develop sensitivity towards philosophical issues in order to critically evaluate their research. Therefore, research is deeply influenced by the theory and philosophical framework that underpins it so that legitimate knowledge is derived. Global and local problems are identified and analysed through major fields of philosophy (Ashcraft, 1998). For philosophy to evolve, explicit arguments must be generated.

Philosophical arguments help a researcher to identify any underlying, contentious, assumptions, and to judge the appropriateness of the methods used, as Bell et al. (2005) states “methods are selected because they will provide the data you require to produce a complete piece of research” (p. 114) and to support and confirm the validity of any conclusions (Sapsford & Jupp, 1996). Individual philosophers reports Ashcraft (1998) used language to contribute to a variety of perspectives on questions regarding human beings and their forms of existence, their assumed knowledge, espoused values, forms of reasoning, definition of mind-body-spiritual relationships, and their fabrications. Researchers use logic and critical thinking deductively or inductively in investigating phenomena (Bell, 2005). They inquire with the mind searching for meanings through any discrete events and matter, and extract reasons from these

observances, by demonstrating proof through forms of arguments that will provide truths from the philosophical enquiry (The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy, 2008). For example, in the study of ethics and social philosophy, normative questions are posed to examine the standard of a good life, people's relationships with others, and the governance of communities. In the study of aesthetics Ashcraft (1998) stresses, inquiry is made through arts and creativity, to extract themes of goodness, truthfulness and beauty. Therefore, a philosopher is someone who never gets tired of searching for wisdom. It is the wisdom and knowledge that this researcher uses that appropriately explains global and local problems through a research theory or theories, which he/she uses to propose suitable solutions for them. Philosophers and their philosophies are diverse, as researchers use different glasses/ lens to understand and interpret discrete events and people's behaviours (ibid). Philosophy serves to distill common essential truths from the various Schools of Thoughts.

Ashcraft (1998) states in the past philosophy have predominantly been the work of men because women were thought to be unfit for rational thinking and unable to lead others. For example, Aristotle, Plato and Kant held such views of women's inability for rational thinking and leadership roles (ibid). On the other hand, Schopenhauer (1970) argues that women have weaker reasoning power and mental myopic, as they only see things closest to them. Feminist philosophers critique these male prejudices, challenging classical thinkers, and invaded male-dominated academics to work intentionally to influence the development of philosophy (Hesse-Biber, 2007; Ashcraft, 1998 & Harding, 1987). Ashcraft (1998) provides two characteristics of philosophers; a) they possess basic truths and in their pursuit of wisdom; and b) alert to their limitations of knowing the ultimate reality. Today both men and women are great philosophers, who seek to find knowledge and wisdom to local and global phenomenon.

As this was an exploratory study with limited data on women's discrimination and marginalization in Vanuatu, I was interested in gaging urban Ni-Vanuatu women's way of knowing. I proceeded to collect empirical observations through two methods: i) a focus group discussion with employer and employee representatives; and ii) personal conversational narratives with urban women iii) before identifying a suitable

theoretical and philosophical framework and lenses to analyse, evaluate, interpret and make sense of my empirical field notes.

4.3 Research Methodology

Hesse-Biber and Leckenby (2004) encourage feminist researchers to organise their “research movement towards social change for women” (p. 211). According to Kirsch (1999), the feminist principles of research were developed as “critiques of objective, positivist methods in the social sciences especially in research on women” because feminist scholars demanded more research to be undertaken by women for women “to honour the voices of participants, [and] to create opportunities for reciprocal learning, and most importantly, to empower participants to change the conditions of their lives” (pp. 1, 3). Kirsch (1999) advocates for the benefits of feminist research to provide a commitment to improving the lives of women and eliminating inequalities between the researchers and their participants echoing Friedan’s (1963) call that “we can no longer ignore within women that voice that says I want something more than my husband, my children and my home” (pp. 14, 32). Smith (1987) points to feminist consciousness “that opens up intellectual and emotional space for all women to articulate their relations to one another and the wider society – spaces where the personal transforms into the political” (pp. 2-3). A feminist scholar, such as Smith (1987) intends to deconstruct and eradicate sexist research by correcting biases and adding women into research samples. They ask new questions to bring into the public arena, women’s experiences and perspectives; offer advice not to treat western sex roles as universal; transform innate differences into statistical differences; and demonstrate that difference does not mean inferiority for different groups of people. Some feminist researchers such as, Smith prefers to view and utilise people in research studies as subjects with extensive knowledge rather than passive objects of study. These researchers obtain insights from their observations through interactions and communication with their participants, by listening to their stories as well as undertaking textual discourses, or visual mediums to generate appropriate knowledge. For my research in Vanuatu, my observations have generated insights obtained through a focus group discussion and personal conversational narratives with research participants. Smith (1999) states feminist research challenges power and oppression and contributes to social justice. because of the ways in which feminists have sought to address multiple forms of structural inequality such as race, ethnicity, class,

sexuality, as well as gender. Hesse-Biber and Yaiser (2004) indicates that research work will “translate into full, participatory studies that value local knowledge systems and support collective, community-based solutions to [the] system of inequality and oppression” (p. 141).

Researchers employ either a positivist or interpretive, qualitative research paradigms or at times, a form of triangulation that uses both methods in a research study (Bell, 2005). A qualitative approach is the appropriate type of research methodology to use when the researcher understands very little about an area or main themes of a subject matter. A researcher is guided through the research methodology or a research paradigm of a research study, including the design, the data/field collection methods, methods of analysis; and in how the arguments are presented (Bryman & Bell, 2007). It is through the wisdom and the general principle of the research methodology that the researcher decides on the constraints, dilemmas and the ethical choices of the research study (Dawson, 2009). Qualitative research is the study of social phenomena carried out through naturalistic, interpretive, and critical and multiple methods of inquiry as defined by Marshall and Rossman (2006); an interpretivist form of research highlighted by Bryman and Bell (2007); and based on participants’ subjective interpretations as outlined by Dawson (2009) because it avoids positivist and objective orientations. Maykut and Morehouse, (1994) stipulate researchers must assume a phenomenological position to deeply understand how people interpret events happening in their lives. It is a paradigm that explores attitudes, behaviours, and experiences through either personal interviews or focus group discussions, with the participants providing in-depth opinions about the research questions, or the topic of enquiry (Dawson, 2009). A researcher will collect facts from a research study to investigate the relationships between different sets of facts (Bell, 2005). If the research is to become successful, the researcher must understand the theory or theories that provide the broad explanations of the research subjects’ behaviours and attitudes (Creswell, 2005). The theoretical lens/perspective is the glasses researchers wear to identify the research problem(s) and decide how to position them in the qualitative study. Researchers may tackle the research upfront, investigating it through some personal bias, or through some cultural and historical context, embedded in observations which decide how the results are to be presented. Researchers such as Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that a theoretical framework is vital to amalgamate

and summarise data so only pertinent information is retained to extend the knowledge base of practitioners and researchers.

My research in Vanuatu began as an exploratory qualitative field enquiry that draws on interpretivist orientations of my interlocutors in social research. It involved three groups of participants:

- a. Focus group discussion with employer and employee representatives;
- b. Personal conversational narratives with urban Ni-Vanuatu women in waged jobs and salaried/professional occupations; and
- c. Personal conversational narratives with urban Ni-Vanuatu women participating in informal jobs in the Vanwods Microfinance programme.

I began my field work with a general feminist orientation in mind. My aspirations were to listen to and record the stories of discrimination from my research participants. While there are risks to a broad research brief, the benefit has been that I have been able to gather insights from the women in focus groups through their wide ranging reflections shared in the group. In the one-on-one conversations, more privacy could be assured and issues probed more deeply.

4.4 Feminist Philosophy and Epistemology

Feminist research is recommended because for too long, research has been undertaken by men on men and generalised to the whole population. For example, Dawson (2009) argues “feminist researchers argue...the lives and experiences of women have been ignored or misrepresented” with feminist research emphasising “participative, qualitative inquiry [as] feminist research has provided a valuable alternative framework for researchers who have felt uncomfortable with treating people as research objects” (pp. 18-19). While there are arguments among researchers on whether feminist inquiry is a methodology or epistemology, Dawson (2009) argues feminist enquiry can be both. Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge and its justification, considering where knowledge has originated from, and how we know what we know. Alcoff and Potter (1993) highlight feminist standpoint epistemology is also known as the “theory of knowledge” which is generated by

feminists as a postmodern method of analysing inter-subjective discourses (p. 50). The feminist standpoint theory of knowledge seeks methods to construct effective knowledge which are derived from women's experiences (Harding, 1993). The standpoint theory comes from the social sciences but it strongly supports strong objectivity by incorporating the perspectives of marginalised and oppressed individuals, to create more objective accounts of the world. If researchers used only the traditional methods of research, they would be unable to achieve strong objectivity (Alcoff et al. 1993). Strong objectivity, according to Harding (2004) and Alcoff et al. (1993), takes into account the social desires, interests and values of the people it studies. Groups with more social power take precedence and are validated more than those in marginalised positions (Harding, 2004 & Alcoff et al. 1993). Advice is given to marginalised groups to learn to become bi-cultural and pass into the dominant culture, even though this perspective might not be their own. Alcoff et al. (1993) suggest that feminist methodology has the "starting thought from the lives of marginalised peoples" and "take[s] everyday life as problematic" because it poses critical questions providing whole accounts of a particular problem in a research study (pp. 6 & 50). Drawing on feminist assumptions about the primacy of male interpretive privileges, theorists practicing in this genre maintain that feminist social sciences should be practiced from a woman's, or particular groups of women's, standpoint and experiences. Feminist standpoint theorists like Harding (2004) highlights, in almost all societies analysed by social scientists, women's experiences are different from men's and that women hold a different type of knowledge. Alcoff et al. (1993) argue that in feminist standpoints "women occupy many social locations in a racially and economically stratified society" (p. 105). Although not shared by all standpoint theorists, feminist orientations have positioned women as a subordinated group. This subordinated or subjugated position enables women to see and understand the world in ways that are dissimilar from and challenging to the existing male-biased conventional wisdom (Harding, 1993). One way to elicit women's experiences for closer inspection is through the recording of narratives and stories.

4.5 Feminist Narratives and Story-Telling Method

Jovchlovitch and Nicola (1995) assert the words narrative, narration and narrate have a Latin root, *narrātus*, meaning to give an account or tell the story of an event. Two meanings of the term narrative are given according to Goody (1986) as a spoken or

written text that gives an account of an event or an action or series of events or actions which are chronologically connected, and therefore tell a story or as Toolan (1998) indicate, researchers can learn from activities around them. The hermeneutic studies of the Bible, Talmud, Koran and Mahabharata contain the origins of the narrative analysis (Czarniawska & Sevon, 1996). The narrative approach has become widely used in sociology, anthropology, educational sciences, and in literary theory and organization studies (Cortazzi, 1993 & Czarniawska et al. 1996). Bruner (1996) emphasises an important manner of perceiving and knowing the world is through the narrative strategy where people construct and interpret the world around them. The use of a narrative-constructivist research method is based on the assumption that the complex and rich phenomena of life and experiences are better represented in stories or narratives (Lieblich, Tuvai-Mashiach & Silber, 1998). By studying narratives Grimmett and Mackinnon (1992) indicate a researcher is studying the ways that human beings experience life in this world. There is now a growing interest in the useful contribution of narrative approaches to feminist research. Narratives for management and feminist researchers, is not a new phenomenon, because they have used stories and cases in their research (Johansson & Davies, 2002). In recent trends, researchers consider the narrative approach, conversations and story-telling, as fundamental for knowledge-generation. It is not the same as secondary information which is gathered to provide illustrations and issues to any context. The act of telling and conversations lead to the making of stories. Johansson (2004) stress the two basic components of a narrative include the story and the story teller in an interview platform labelled the story telling arena. Czarniawska (2004) and Bryman and Bell (2007) call the narrative process the “inscription of narrative production” where the nature of the research question in a qualitative research dictates the type of data collection method a researcher will employ. In-depth face-to-face unstructured or structured interviews are the most appropriate means of achieving in-depth information about a particular topic. A semi-structured interview, also known as qualitative interview is when a list of themes or questions is presented by the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Bryman and Bell refer to this as a “general form of an interview schedule” (p. 213). Interview questions can be posed in any order and are more general in nature than in a structured interview (Dawson, 2009 & Wengraf, 2001).

For the gathering of these stories, Feldman, Bell and Berger (2002) argue that a researcher must build a good rapport with an individual, by maintaining and deepening the relationship, so that the researcher can still gain access to them even if the research has ended. My research in Vanuatu uses a constructive paradigm as Guba and Lincoln (1994) stipulate, because realities are presented in the form of “multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based,” depending on the individual persons or groups holding these “constructions” in whatever form and content (p. 110-111). A social construction paradigm enables the researchers to explore what people perceive and how they reconstruct meaning over time, through consensus. This approach is also open to new interpretations as participants become more aware of and are informed about the content and meaning of competing constructions. In this way, the social constructivist approach views the researcher and respondents as co-creating new understandings of various phenomena. Researchers must have good research etiquette with participants by establishing trust in the personal in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews, in maintaining good eye contact, facial expressions and displaying positive body language during the research process (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

The inductive logic of research in any qualitative study is to formulate generalizations, as stipulated by Creswell (2005), to provide theories of past experiences and literatures on a particular problem searching for broad patterns, generalisations and theories from the research themes; analysing the field notes to form theories and categories through posing open-ended questions to the participants and recording their responses in the field notes; gathering/summarizing the information from the interviews and observations; and analysing, evaluating and interpreting them before writing up the research findings. The interpretivist method searches for disguised contradictions hidden in ideology and provides open spaces for previously silenced voices (Cohen et al. 2000).

In my research study, I employed semi-structured interviews, because I intend to investigate the personal experiences of urban Ni-Vanuatu women in their formal and informal jobs. The set of questions posed needed to be identical for all research participants in order for me to make comparisons when analysing the field notes. In my study, a semi-structured interview schedule was circulated to the research

participants serving as memory boosters and helping them to recall specific events and their lived experiences before the interview. My research field notes were analysed for their historical, narrative, and thematic contents. The research includes participants who originate from both the matrilineages and patrilineages who are thereby largely silenced (Huffer & Molisa, 1999 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). It is an appropriate opportunity for the patrilineal women to have a voice and space and to speak of their personal experiences in their formal and informal jobs and their dealings and relationship with patrilineal men.

4.6 Research Participants' Selection Procedures

Creswell (2005) argues that “purposeful selection of participants represents a key decision point in a qualitative study” (p.118). Spradley (1980) and Taylor and Bogdan (1998) suggest that researchers must choose participants that they do not personally know. However, in a small country like Vanuatu, it is impossible for the researcher and participants not to be acquainted with each other. In my administrator/managerial capacity, I have been in contact with some of my research participants. Most of the research participants who attended the focus group discussion were women (99.99% women; and 0.1% male). Taylor et al. (1998) argue that a “criterion sampling” (p. 118) is necessary. I, therefore, selected participants based on their affiliations as waged and salaried/professional employees in the formal sector and as microfinance business owners and operators in the informal sector.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) outline respondents must set aside time to have conversations with the researcher with minimum difficulties, and be able to talk about their lived experiences. I selected my participants because they will have no hesitation in openly conversing with me (Creswell, 2005). I am also wary that if participants are less articulate and shy, my field notes will be less extensive. Research participants for my study were recruited voluntarily. Although over 60 research participants in the formal employment sector were invited, only 36 of urban Ni-Vanuatu women participated. Some research participants recommended the names of additional prospective participants which I contacted, invited and included as part of my study. Hussey and Hussey (1985) refer to this kind of referral as “snowball sampling” (p. 145). According to Bryman and Bell (2007), the number of participants a research study incorporates will depend on the nature of the research questions and the type of

information the researcher is seeking. Eisenhardt (1989) recommends that researchers should study at least a minimum of 4-10 cases if they intended to bring out ideal patterns of behaviour and experiences from the research field notes, although there is no fixed number of cases for a research study. In my research in Vanuatu, I undertook a focus group discussion with 20 employer and employee representatives and 75 personal conversational narratives with urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs, which provided me with a rich set of empirical observations for thematic analysis.

4.7 Research Objectives

The objectives of my research in Vanuatu include:

- a. To show-case Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchal dealings and relationship with urban Ni-Vanuatu women;
- b. To investigate urban Ni-Vanuatu women's experiences of discrimination and oppression;
- c. To identify the mechanisms which promote and support discrimination and oppression in Vanuatu;
- d. To identify the affiliations, aspirations and attitudes of the urban Ni-Vanuatu women;
- e. To identify the complexities urban Ni-Vanuatu women face in the market and in the cash economy;
- f. To show-case the advantages of Ni-Vanuatu women remaining in their matrilineal and patrilineal *Wantok* governance models;
- g. To offer strategies to the Vanuatu Government and policy makers to assist in keeping Ni-Vanuatu women actively involved in their indigenous traditional frameworks; and
- h. To identify whether the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects have addressed the well-being needs of Ni-Vanuatu women.

4.8 Statement of Purpose

My overall research commitment is to examine the contribution of interventions promising enhanced well-being and empowerment for Ni-Vanuatu women. The purpose of this research study is to explore the effectiveness of CEDAW-EEO

programmes implemented for the urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal jobs in securing positions of authority. I also aim to explore the effectiveness of microfinance projects on urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal jobs and their dealings and relationship with the Vanwods MFI executive, the Vanwods MFI women leaders and members of the socially-affiliated clubs, and with Vanuatu's urban patriarchy in the ownership, operation and maintenance of their microfinance businesses. Furthermore, I anticipate exploring the impacts of indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal cultural norms and urban patriarchal mind-sets, on the promotion or oppression of urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs.

4.9 Research Goals

My research goal is to firstly, analyse, evaluate and interpret the findings of the focus group discussion with employer and employee representatives and personal conversational narratives with urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs to ascertain whether state and private sector organisations are recognizing, coordinating and facilitating the inclusion of women into their organisational decision-making processes and whether the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes is enhancing gender-equity and gender-equality in these organisation. Secondly, I wish to ascertain whether the urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal jobs' are experiencing any forms of discrimination and oppression in their formal jobs and to ascertain whether the urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal jobs' are experiencing any forms of discrimination and oppression from Vanuatu's urban patriarchy, other Vanwods MFI women leaders, members and business operators in their informal jobs; and identify the challenges the urban Ni-Vanuatu women are facing in their daily lives, places of employment/places of business while meeting their personal and their families' living standards. Thirdly, I wish to identify the women's well-being desires and to offer appropriate strategies to Vanuatu's stakeholders for adoption to improve the liberation, emancipation and empowerment of urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs.

4.10 Research Questions

The purpose of the principal research question is to assist me in critically analysing the urban Ni-Vanuatu women's attitudes, opinions and experiences in the acquisition of

their formal and informal jobs and whether their well-being needs have been met. Therefore, the fundamental research question for this study is:

To what extent, do the implementation of the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women's EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance businesses address the well-being needs of Ni-Vanuatu women?

4.10.1 Supplementary research questions

The supplementary research questions I have used are to guide me towards the enquiries that would meet the general objectives of my investigation and these objectives are:

- a) How and to what extent do women aspire for advancement and equality in constitutional power, corporate governance and economic activities in Vanuatu?
- b) What challenges do women face in contributing to improving the living standards of the people of Vanuatu?
- c) In what ways would the women like to see their value enhanced?
- d) What evidence demonstrates that glass ceilings/walls/cliffs/sticky floor problems documented in the international organisational literatures also affect women in Vanuatu in their (aspirations for inclusion in) governance, senior management and entrepreneurial activities?
- e) Do family configurations, societal norms and traditional lineage systems encourage or discourage Ni-Vanuatu women to aspire for positions of authority and entrepreneurial activities in the formal contexts?
- f) What actions or measures of social and ethical responsibility and moral obligation should the Vanuatu Government and policy bodies take to enhance the advancement and equality of women into constitutional power, corporate governance and entrepreneurial activities in Vanuatu?

4.11 Stages of Research Study

There were three stages in the research study:

Stage 1: Investigate through the focus group discussion with employer and employee representatives of their organisational experiences in implementing CEDAW-EEO programmes in their work programmes

and accord gender-equity, gender-equality, and empower female workers in their organisations.

Stage 2: Investigate, through the personal conversational narratives with the urban Ni-Vanuatu women in waged jobs and salaried and professional occupations, their opinions, attitudes and experiences and dealings and relationships with their employers (including senior women in positions of authority) in their formal jobs.

Stage 3: Investigate, through the personal conversational narratives with the urban Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs, their opinions, attitudes and experiences and their dealings and relationship with the Vanwods MFI executive, and women leaders in their socially-affiliated Vanwods MFI clubs in their informal jobs.

4.12 Research Contribution

This research study aims to make research contributions in several ways. It intends to contribute to the scholarly literature on the social and employment contexts of urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs; and to extend the development of theories on the ethics of care for Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchies including employers, leadership, management, ethical values and career development and business management for these women. It will offer findings on the effectiveness of the two United Nations' remedies, on the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes for urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal jobs to secure positions of authority and microfinance projects for the urban Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs to own, operate and maintain their microfinance businesses in their informal jobs in enhancing their well-being needs. Finally, it will contribute towards the academic literature on research methods through the documentation of a transformative research process when urban Ni-Vanuatu women reflect on suitable actions for change and to gain a deeper understanding of their desires to contribute to Vanuatu's future direction.

Ontology is the study of beings in a world view. Ni-Vanuatu women are part of Vanuatu's population. They are bearers of lineages, patrimony and legacies whether this is to their own lineages or the lineages of their spouses. In terms of an ontological assumption, women in Big Bay communities are lineage bearers. It makes them

different beings than women from patrilineages. 77% of these women live in rural areas governed by the matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models (WGM).while 23% of them live in urban areas.

Epistemology is the study of knowledge and understanding as a world view. For an epistemological assumption, Big Bay Ni-Vanuatu women's voices have been raised about the rampant discrimination and oppression they faced post-Vanuatu independence through the writings of various authors such as Lini (1995), VNCW (2005), Randall (2003), The Republic of Vanuatu, (2004), and Molisa (1987, 1992, 2000a & 2000b).

Cosmology is the study of a bigger universe which includes the impacts of science and spirituality. A cosmological assumption of Big Bay women is that they are responsible for the caring and nurturing of Vanuatu's human population. They are also responsible for gardening, cooking and the nourishment of their families and visitors and have a vested cosmological interest in the well-being of people they care and nurture as well as the family's spiritual needs of worshipping God.

Axiology is the study of ethics and aesthetics, what is good and bad behaviour such as social conduct and beauty and harmony in the universe. An axiological assumption of Big Bay women is that they know and accept that they are valuable in their matrilineal societies and continue to work in harmony with Vanuatu's Kastomekonomi through their reproductive and productive labour. These women are responsible for the transmission of lineages, patrimonies and legacies through their procreative responsibilities.

4.13 Field-Notes Collection &Methods: Demographic Questionnaires

Bryman and Bell (2007) state open interviewing, also known as semi-structured interviews, is a stimulus for "eliciting culture-specific cognitions" (p. 15). In my research study, I provided the participants with a set of semi-structured questions for these conversations. Although in-depth semi-structured interview is a good method of collecting substantial data and deep histories, it creates more work for the researcher in having to transcribe extensive field notes that become the mechanism for thematic analysis, evaluation and interpretations. I had 75 interviews plus a half day focus

group discussion, needing many months of transcriptions of the field notes from my empirical observations. Samples of my introductory letter, Participant's Information Sheets (PIS) 2009 for all groups of women; demographic questionnaires and the conversational guides are attached as Appendices A-G. These were distributed to the research participants in the focus group discussion, as well as to urban Ni-Vanuatu women in waged jobs and salaried/professional occupations, plus the Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs.

4.13.1 Focus group discussion

Dawson (2009) notes that focus groups are also called “discussion groups” or “group interviews” (p. 29), with Bryman and Bell (2007) affirming a focus group comprises of several participants including the moderator/facilitator. The emphasis of a focus group discussion field notes collection method is the ability for more than one participant to discuss and focus on a specific defined topic. Dawson (2009) describes a moderator's role is to introduce the topic, “ask specific questions, control digressions and stop break-away conversations” (p. 29). The focus is on group interaction and the joint construction of meanings for defined topics. Merton, Fiske and Kendall (cf Bryman & Bell, 2007) note that a focus group “interview” or “discussion” is devised by referring to interviews that utilised predominantly “open questions” (p. 213) to ask respondents questions about a specific situation/event relevant to them and of interest to the researcher. Bryman and Bell (2007) describe a “focus group” as similar to a focused interview, but where the respondents are discussing specific issues in groups rather than individually, allowing the “voices of marginalised groups of women to surface” (p. 524). The advantage of organizing a focus group discussion is to gather together many talented people, who can openly discuss focused topics, on the premise that more heads and accumulated knowledge is better than one person's knowledge. Bryman and Bell (2007) argue that a focus group is less artificial than many other methods, because it encourages group interactions and that feminist researchers prefer to utilise it to avoid “de-contextualization” when studying an individual within a social context or viewing “the self as relational or as socially constructed” (p. 523). Gubrium and Holstein (2002) argue that the focus group technique is non-exploitative and does not create a power relationship between the researcher and the participants, and it is suitable when participants cannot articulate knowledge about a particular subject matter. By listening to others speak about their opinions, attitudes and lived

experiences, participants are able to self-reflect and also provide their own stories. The researcher is only the moderator and facilitator, as it is the participants that control the discussions on the floor. Dawson (2009) lists the benefits of a focus group discussion as:

- a) The ability to receive an assortment of information in one meeting;
- b) Researcher bias is reduced because participants are able to ask questions to each other;
- c) Participants are able to listen to others speak about their personal experiences, and then to self-reflect and also tell their stories;
- d) Participants are able to interact with each other without fear of inhibitions especially if they know other members of the group;
- e) The group effect becomes useful in providing a wide range of views and resources in the field notes analysis; and
- f) Participant's interaction is a useful mechanism for analysis.

4.13.2 Invitations to focus group research participants

A focus group discussion was organised for my research in Vanuatu with public and private sector employer representatives to consider the two United Nations' remedies of implemented CEDAW-EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects; and to ascertain how these organizations were conforming to the concept of gender-equity, gender-equality and empowerment in their organizations. Participants assembled on 25 March 2010 from 0900-1300hrs to participate in this focus group discussion and present their organizations' reports on their CEDAW-EEO programmes. The 2008 Vanuatu Telephone Directory was used to identify state and public sector participants for the focus group discussion. A list was drawn up and forwarded to the Vanuatu Department of Women's Affairs who coordinated with the Vanuatu Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare to fund the event. The former Vanuatu Minister of Justice and Social Welfare, Hon. Bakoa Kaltongga, sent out invitation letters and dispatched this with an introductory letter from me (see Appendix A) and a Participant's Information Sheet 2009 (see Appendix B) to 66 state and private sector organizations in Vanuatu. Only 20 organizations participated. The low turnout occurred because the wife of a prominent Member of Parliament passed away on the same day of the focus group discussion.

4.13.3 Focus group discussion: Demographic details and conversational guide

An introductory letter and a PIS 2009 (Appendixes A-B) were distributed to the focus group participants.

4.13.4 CEDAW discussion themes for the focus group discussion

Themes that originated from the CEDAW doctrine served as the guiding points for the discussions, as outlined below:

- Article 1: Discrimination: any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex to impair, nullify recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women;
- Article 5: Women's empowerment;
- Article 10: Women's participation in education and training;
- Article 11: Women's employment;
- Article 13: Women's participation in economic and social life; and
- Women's role-modelling and mentorship programme and mind-set changes;

In closely aligning the focus group discussion to the CEDAW liberal feminist agenda, I was able to discern what my interlocutors perceived as the successes and constraints of CEDAW. It also enabled me to turn to the radical literatures such as the post-colonial subaltern voice and find some useful insights there. Hence the crafting of the Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice was my original contribution to recommending solutions for these women. Although the above points can be linked to the notion of a 'paradox', I argue that paradoxes can be a useful point of departure for further critical analysis and changes which have been defined in my thesis under Chapter 7 and 9.

4.14 In-Depth Semi-Structured Face-to-Face Interviews

Morse and Field (1995) describe how in qualitative research, there are various field notes collection techniques to choose from, and that interviewing is the most common approach. In this regard, Mason (2000) stresses that researchers must not employ the interviewing method just because it is widely used in other studies. There are different types of interviews, unstructured interviews which Dawson (2009) calls "life histories" (p. 27) and semi-structured interviews where the same type of questions are asked to all participants, to enable comparisons and contrasting of responses in the

field notes. Structured interviews are used mainly in market research. Probing deeply to gain specific information on a particular subject matter from several participants is done through in-depth face-to-face semi-structured interview. This type of interview is also known as personal conversations, narratives, or '*storian*' (Crowley, 2003) in Vanuatu. Gubrium and Holstein (2002) argue that in-depth face-to-face interview technique is the most suitable approach when participants are unable to articulate knowledge about a particular subject matter. In my research methods data collection approach, I selected semi-structured interviews or stories because I was attempting to achieve a "holistic understanding of the interviewees' point of view or situation" in their formal and informal jobs (Dawson, 2009, p. 27). Secondly, I decided on a semi-structured interview because I wanted to ask all the participants "specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in other interviews" (ibid, p. 28). Therefore, in-depth face-to-face interviews was also appropriate for my feminist exploratory research study because I was investigating participants' emotions by prompting them to share their opinions, attitudes, personal feelings and experiences of discrimination and oppression in their formal and informal jobs, through recalling specific events/experiences, sustained in their past and current career paths or in their business operations.

According to Gubrium and Holstein (2002), the technique of in-depth face-to-face interview is relevant and permits flexibility when participants provide information concerning their personal lives (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), and self or lived experiences, values and decisions, occupational beliefs, cultural understanding of highly complex perspectives such as discrimination. In-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews were also useful for the formulated research questions contained in my research study, as this technique allowed me to build trust with the participants and clarify any confusions or issues they have, before embarking on the actual personal conversations.) Bryman and Bell (2007) argue another advantage of the in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews, is the increased trustworthiness of the study as the participants are able to express opinions and experiences in their own words. Jakobsen (2000) highlights any bias occurring from pre-made questionnaires is reduced during these personal conversations.

Holstein and Gubrium (1995) and Kvale (2007) argue that a researcher's formulated research questions will decide the type of interview to be used as well as the manner in which the interview will be processed. Researchers must carefully ponder the type of information they wish to obtain from the participants through an interview. Furthermore, researchers must reflect on the context of the information required as well as master the skills needed to conduct the personal conversations. Therefore, the research questions should be designed in such a way as to enable participants to talk freely about their lived experiences. There is a fundamental reason for using personal in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews, as some participants are unable to provide personal information in a group setting. For this reason, I chose two types of field notes data collection methods: a focus group discussion for people who are comfortable speaking in the public arena with no inhibitions, and personal conversational narratives for the less-brave-and-timid participants, who prefer telling their stories in seclusion.

Personal conversations can take a considerable amount of the researcher's time. As such, my interview questions are designed in such a way as to enable the participants to share their personal life experiences of discrimination and oppression and affiliations and aspirations in their formal and informal jobs, as well as enable me to identify strategies to advance the status of Ni-Vanuatu women.

It is important to follow what Gubrium and Holstein (2002) suggest in terms of the researcher's conduct in putting the respondents at ease during the interview process. Kvale (2007) points out that "the interviewer must establish an atmosphere in which the subject feels safe enough to talk freely about [their] experiences or feelings" (p.125). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and Taylor et al. (1998) direct researchers to establish trust and good interpersonal relationships with the respondents during the interviews. Developing trust with respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2007) is a slow, incremental, and emotional process and these relationships can change very quickly. The aim of good interpersonal relationships is to enable the respondents to become collaborative partners in the research study. The design of my interview questions were prepared to allow trusting relationships with the researcher and my interlocutors by comfortably entrusting their personal experiences to me. These experiences would then generate rich field notes for my research study. Before researchers embark on the

interview process, they should provide the participant with the opportunity to ask the first question(s) as an ice-breaker and to clear the air (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002). This will also make participants feel at ease before and during the interview process. I used this advice on my participants and asked them: ‘Before I ask any questions, I would like to know if you would like to ask me any question(s) about this research.’ The clearing of the atmosphere was an opportunity to help me establish good interpersonal relationships and trust with my participants, making them feel at ease before the formal interviews proceeded.

Although Palmer (1993) maintains that a skilful interviewer must be in control of the conversations, Kvale (2007) argues a researcher must listen attentively, have good eye contacts and show interest to the interlocutor, understanding and have deep respect for what the respondents are saying. In Vanuatu, constant eye contact will be inappropriate for some participants, so I must employ a tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures that are conducive, as well as relaxing to them, if I cannot keep constant eye contact because of cultural inhibitions. In establishing trust and making the respondents feel at ease, I also paid attention to when it is appropriate and inappropriate to interrupt and ask clarifying questions. Some clarifying questions which I used were: In what way? Can you give me an example? What has happened to make you say that? What has/has not been done? When did it last happen? When was this? What do you mean by...? What is your thinking on this? How do you feel about that? Is there more to this? What have you done about it so far? What are you considering? Have you any other ideas? I’m not sure I know what you mean, can you explain...?

Kvale (2007) stresses a researcher must permit the respondents to finish their thoughts and what they are saying at the pace they are comfortable with. As Henderson (2002) points out, “respondents need the space of silence to look in the file drawers of the mind” (p. 1) with questions about the present being easier for them to answer than questions related to past events. The participants also need silence to feel sufficiently comfortable to tell or continue telling incidents of their lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

4.14.1 *Storian: Methods of field notes collection techniques*

An indigenous method of data collection is through using *Storian* (Crowley, 2003) or “*Talanoa*” in Fijian (Otsuka, 2005, p. 3) translated into English as stories, conversations (Vaiioletti, 2003) or sharing emotions (Dupuis & Neale, 1998) with two parties through semi-structured face-to-face conversations. The Bislama term *storian* means personal conversational narratives, conversations or story-telling. *Storian* has always existed in Vanuatu’s cultural context, as stories and personal conversational narratives have been used for thousands of years to transmit culture, tradition, genealogy and land ownership rights from one generation to the next (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). As Vanuatu has over 110 languages with many different islands, cultures and traditions and being a Ni-Vanuatu female researcher, I am conscious of the need to approach sensitive social and cultural issues, such as the topic of discrimination and oppression, with diligence and care (Piau-Lynch, 2007 & Salong, 2008). Discussing patrilineal and patriarchal oppression is a culturally sensitive topic in Vanuatu, as men are the heads of their families; communities; villages; societies, as well as men are decision-makers in urban governance making state decisions. As I was asking the urban Ni-Vanuatu women to be recalling and relaying specific events of personal discrimination and oppression they faced in their daily lives and marginalization in their work places, the anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of these participants and their stories must be safe-guarded. None of the personal conversational narratives were disseminated to unauthorised parties during or after the research process. I was also aware that some of my research participants from the informal sector have little educational background. I recorded their stories also for accurate transcriptions; and, as a researcher, I respected their opinions and protected their privacy and confidentiality during and after the research study. The women’s input is valuable for my research study. In-depth semi-structured conversational narratives were undertaken with thirty six urban Ni-Vanuatu women in waged jobs and salaried professional occupations and thirty nine urban Vanwods Microfinance Incorporation (MFI) ‘Mamas’ in Bislama meaning mothers is another term that the Vanwods MFI executive and members used to describe these women entrepreneurs (Salong, 2008, p. 1).. Out of the thirty-nine interviews, four interviews were carried out with Mamas on Santo and thirty-five interviews were undertaken with Mamas in Port Vila. The interviews were carried out from October 2009 to May 2010. My

transcribed field notes for both categories of conversational narratives yielded over 200 pages of written text.

4.14.2 Personal conversational narratives and themes

The personal conversational narratives identified the urban Ni-Vanuatu women's personal experiences in their formal and informal jobs, whether culture had influenced their employment/business affiliations and aspirations, or whether they had experienced any forms of discrimination and oppression from Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy in accessing their jobs. The conversations also highlighted the women's personal experiences of gate-keeping impediments, glass ceiling, glass walls and sticky floor impediments, employer discrimination in professional development and training opportunities, access to positions of authority and organizational briefing and guidance/coaches and mentors for new recruits and the business environment relevant to the ownership, operation and maintenance of their microfinance business, the earning of appropriate incomes to help both groups of women to meet their multiple nuclear and extended family commitments and enhance their well-being needs.

4.14.3 Women in formal jobs: Conversational guide & demographics

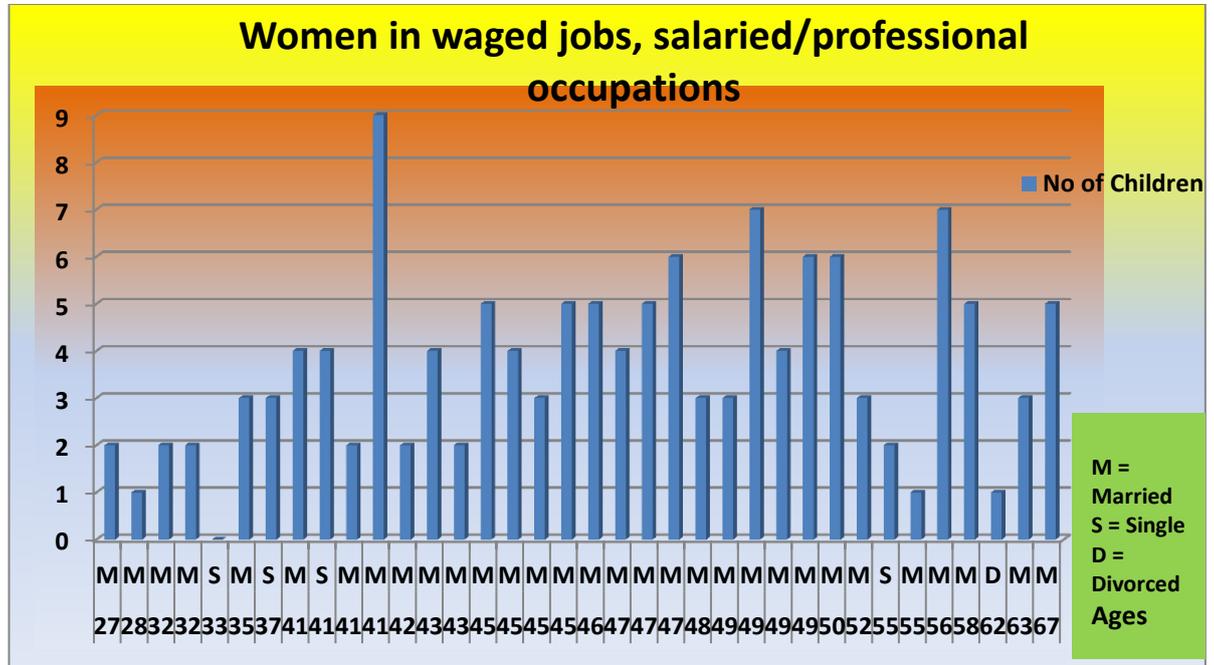
Through the process of self-reflection the participants recalled their lived experiences before the individual in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews began (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). An advance set of research questions and a conversational guide were produced (see Appendix F Sections A & B) were sent to 60 research participants in formal jobs soliciting their demographic details and responses to the participant's age, lineage, educational background, marital status, number of children, nuclear and extended family responsibilities, spouse's employment, household weekly earnings and expenses, apportioning of household expenses, and records of previous employment.

4.14.4 Women in formal jobs: Participants' contact & consent forms

For my 75 personal conversational interviews, I arranged dates and times convenient to the participants and met them at the pre-arranged locations which were safe and secluded for their personal safety. Thirty-six research participants in formal jobs agreed to participate in this research study and signed consent forms before the

personal conversational narratives were undertaken. A sample of the consent form is attached as Appendix E.

Figure 4.1: Personal Conversational Narratives with Women in Formal Jobs



Details of the women’s ages, number of children, marital status, lineages, whether they were responsible for extended family obligations, the number of years they were in the work-force and the number of years it took them to work from junior positions to positions of authority are covered in Table 4.2 below: Women in waged occupations; and salaried/professional occupations below:

The youngest woman was 27 years and the oldest was 67 years. Four women were single and one was divorced, the remaining 31 women were married. The highest number of children one woman had was 9. Twenty women came from patrilineages and 16 from matrilineages’ lineage descent societies. All of the women, except for one, had both nuclear and extended family obligations. Table 4.2 shows that many of the women had to work many years before achieving their decision-making positions. The longest time one woman worked to achieve a decision-making position was 31 years. The shortest was zero, showing that some women achieved decision-making positions directly on recruitment. One woman had been in the work-force for 47 years

and is still working because her children/grandchildren were still attending school. The shortest time in the work force for one of the research participant is three years.

Table 4.2: Demographic Details for Women in Formal Jobs

Women in Waged, Salaried/Professional Occupations						
Age	Marital Status	# of Children	Extend Family?	Lineage	# of years in W/Force	Junior to DM Job
27	M	2	Yes	Mat	3	3
28	M	1	Yes	Pat	10	0
32	M	2	Yes	Pat	9	0
32	M	2	Yes	Pat	8	5
33	S	0	Yes	Mat	5	0
35	M	3	Yes	Mat	10	4
37	S	3	Yes	Pat	20	12
41	M	4	Yes	Mat	20	4
41	S	4	Yes	Mat	15	0
41	M	2	Yes	Mat	20	3
41	M	9	Yes	Pat	25	16
42	M	2	Yes	Pat	25	20
43	M	4	Yes	Pat	20	10
43	M	2	Yes	Mat	20	16
45	M	5	Yes	Pat	28	10
45	M	4	Yes	Pat	26	10
45	M	3	Yes	Pat	21	0
45	M	5	Yes	Pat	30	7
46	M	5	Yes	Mat	31	8
47	M	4	Yes	Pat	18	5
47	M	5	Yes	Mat	30	6
47	M	6	Yes	Pat	26	0
48	M	3	Yes	Mat	31	25
49	M	3	Yes	Pat	13	6
49	M	7	Yes	Mat	33	6

49	M	4	Yes	Mat	25	20
49	M	6	Yes	Mat	25	4
50	M	6	Yes	Mat	47	10
52	M	3	Yes	Pat	35	3
55	S	2	yes	Pat	37	31
55	M	1	Yes	Pat	23	3
56	M	7	Yes	Mat	30	2
58	M	5	Yes	Mat	32	12
62	D	1	Yes	Pat	37	10
63	M	3	Yes	Pat	35	5
67	M	5	No	Pat	20	1

4.14.5. Women in informal jobs: Conversational Guide & Demographics

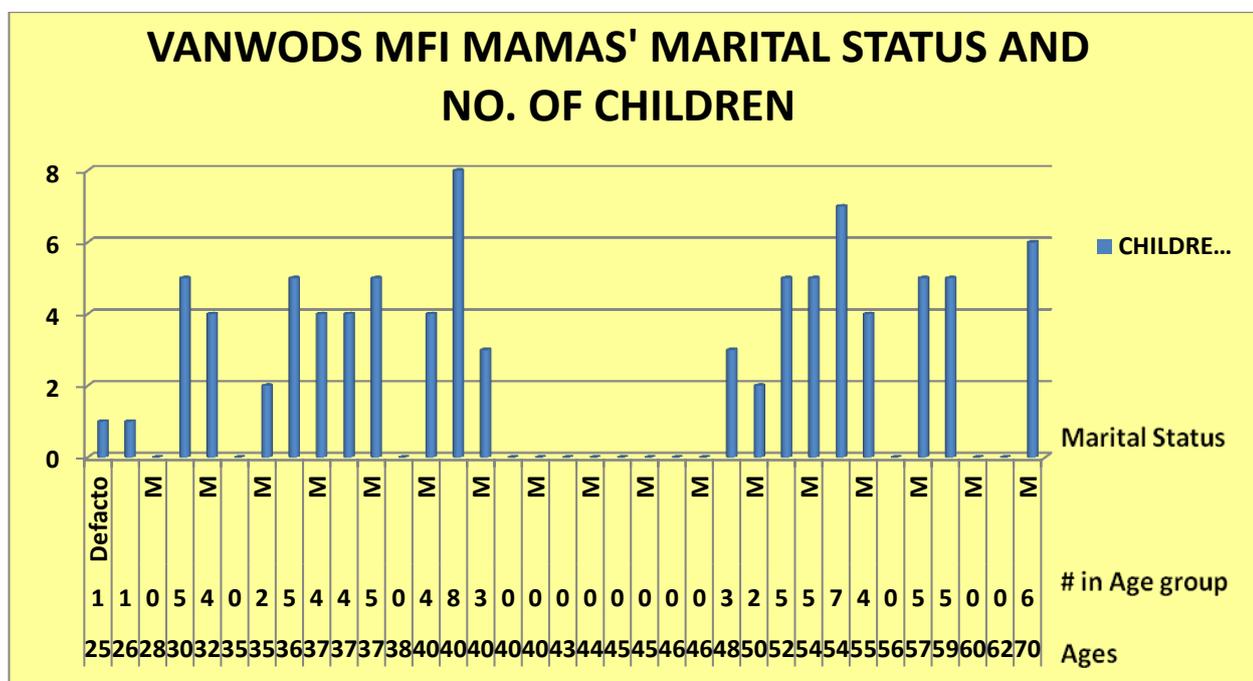
A copy of the PIS 2009 marked as Appendix D was designed for the Vanwods MFI microfinance women entrepreneurs and sent to a list of 60 Vanwods Mamas. The list of Vanwods MFI Mamas was provided by the executive of the Vanwods MFI. A set of demographic questions (see Appendix F Parts A & B) was also distributed. The demographic details solicited responses to the participants' age, lineage, educational background, marital status, number of children, nuclear and extended family responsibilities, spouse's employment, household weekly earnings and expenses, apportioning of household expenses, and previous employment. The biographical information collected from these personal conversational narratives were limited because the personal conversational narratives were carried out in a group setting, during the Vanwods MFI socially-affiliated clubs' weekly business meetings and also due to participants' basic education. Nevertheless, some of the women did provide their ages, marital status and the number of children they bore. For the urban Ni-Vanuatu women aged between 40-46 years, the number of children listed against them is marked as unknown, as this information was not provided to me.

4.14.6 Women in informal jobs: Participants' contact and consent forms

Personal conversational narratives were carried out with 39 Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs who assembled at various locations for their Vanwods MFI weekly business meetings. Although sixty participants were invited, only 39 Mamas

participated in this research study. Verbal consent was given by the Vanwods MFI Mamas to participate in the research study.

Figure 4.3: Vanwods MFI Mamas' Marital Status and # of Children



4.15 Limitations of the Research Study

Design limitations for this exploratory study also included the use of a limited amount of collected rich empirical observations in writing this thesis. There were also weaknesses in deciding how to analyse the rich data and get interlocutors' comments consistently conveyed into a point, counterpoint and standpoint format. Furthermore, it was difficult to get stories from some of the interlocutors because of the sensitivity of the research study and the interlocutors' availability from their formal and informal jobs. The field notes for the Vanwods MFI Mamas were not extensive because of the women's basic educational capacity and the limited time available after the interlocutors' group meeting to undertake detailed interviews with them. Limitations also included an attempt to incorporate the perspectives of different groups of research participants such as the employer and employee representatives in the focus group discussion and personal conversational narratives with urban Ni-Vanuatu women in waged jobs and in salaried/professional occupations in formal jobs; and urban Ni-Vanuatu Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs in informal jobs. As the field

notes for this exploratory study is extremely rich, all pertinent issues cannot be covered in the research thesis. As the islands and provinces of Vanuatu are widely dispersed, it was not possible to carry out research into Vanuatu's rural areas to identify in-depth cultural and social norms that affect patrilineal and matrilineal mind-sets concerning the social and cultural roles of women and any discrimination and oppression that these rural women faced in their rural habitats. The field notes were obtained from urban Ni-Vanuatu women, thus limiting generalizations of the findings to rural women who are still living in their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models. Two urban Ni-Vanuatu in waged jobs and in salaried/professional occupations are close family members, my younger sister and my eldest daughter, while most of the other research participants are urban Ni-Vanuatu women I knew during my line of work as an administrator/manager in Vanuatu.

4.16 Thematic Analysis and Interpretation of Vanuatu Field Observations

Dawson (2009) states data/field notes analysed by themes is called thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is highly inductive because the themes that emerge from the data are not imposed by the researcher. However, interpretation is researcher driven. Dawson argues that thematic and comparative analysis are often used in the same project as the researcher moves backwards and forward through the transcripts, memos, notes and the literature review in identifying important themes. In my re-reading of theory and field-notes, I found myself needing to return to the literature several times. I have demonstrated this process in the perhaps unconventional lay-out of my chapters. I specifically represent this to-ing and fro-ing in my layout in the return to the feminist literature in order to find more diverse interpretations of the themes, the liberal dominance in the literature, and the fit of these with many of the stories told (Chapter Five). I demonstrate this return to the literature again, (in Chapter Eight) as I found the need to develop a more fine-grained analyses of the communal values expressed by my participants – despite the seeming consistencies with the liberal views of many stories told.

Vanuatu is a small jurisdiction of interlinked communities and complex family networks. As transforming women's discrimination and oppression involves exposing patriarchal oppression, hegemonic and power control, there are risks for women in speaking out. The research participants must remain anonymous and their safety

during interviews was addressed by the choice of venue and the decisions about who could be present. In this regard, snippets of their stories are not overtly identified and de-contextualised, in case any knitting together of codes could inadvertently identify a woman, a family, or an organisation. As all conversations were fully transcribed and electronically stored, the position of these quotes in my records, if necessary, can be easily located using modern word-search computer processes. This process raises issues of validity and trustworthiness of the potential of personal bias in the attribution of information and the drawing of conclusions.

4.17 Validity and Trustworthiness

The validity of a research study is concerned with the integrity of any conclusions generated from the research in terms of specific criteria such as measurement validity, face validity, concurrent validity, internal validity, external validity and ecological validity (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Measurement validity relates to the defined concept of the proposed research so, in this case, whether the United Nations' remedies of the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects have addressed the well-being needs of urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs. Bryman and Bell outline face validity is achieved if the indicator correctly reflects the concern in question; therefore, for my research in Vanuatu, whether the urban women in formal and informal jobs have improved their well-being needs. Concurrent validity occurs when people's opinions, attitudes and personal experiences differ in their perceptions of the defined and known concepts (ibid). In Vanuatu's research context, there was concurrent validity instead of face validity, as the conflicting responses from the urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs confirmed that their access to formal and informal jobs gave them access to incomes but simultaneously created complex hierarchical Master/slave relationships for them in their formal and informal jobs (see Chapters Seven to Nine). Internal validity is obtained whereby a causal relationship can be shown to occur between two or more variables and they are sound and robust through the personal conversational narratives. As this study is a qualitative research, the subjective views of the research participants were obtained and no causal explanations were provided to confirm the internal validity of this research study. External validity is when the results of a study can be generalised beyond the specific research context in which it was conducted (ibid). In my research study, the experiences of the urban Ni-Vanuatu women can be

generalised to other Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs. However, it cannot be generalised to rural indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal inhabitants as the study only covered urban women. Finally, ecological validity is whether social science findings are applicable to people's everyday lives in their natural settings (ibid). For my research in Vanuatu, ecological validity is evident through the urban Ni-Vanuatu women's personal stories of complex hierarchical Master/slave relationships (see Chapters Seven & Nine) as they moved out of their indigenous and traditional *Wantok* governance systems to seek formal and informal jobs.

Bryman and Bell (2007) describe trustworthiness as a "set of criteria advocated by some writers for assessing the quality of qualitative research" (p. 533). The four criteria of trustworthiness include "credibility" which is equivalent to internal validity; "transferability" which is equivalent to external validity; "dependability" which is equivalent to reliability; and "confirm-ability" which is equivalent to objectivity (ibid, p. 411). For a research study to be trustworthy, the researcher must disclose any conflict of interest. For example, if the researcher obtained field notes/information from a company where his/her father is the director of the company, or any other information that the audience needs to be aware of when digesting the findings of the research study. For my research in Vanuatu, I disclosed that two of my interlocutors are my close family members, both of them holding positions of authority in formal jobs. They also relayed important opinions, attitudes and personal experiences in their formal jobs for this research study. I also disclosed that most of the other research participants were known to me in my former employment as administrator/manager as Vanuatu is a very small island nation, I would have encountered these participants in my line of work. Furthermore, the researcher must also conduct respondent or member validation; by giving the participants a "true account" of his or her findings so that interview notes corroboration is achieved; by presenting an account of each participant's interview notes to them for their corroboration, as well as providing feedback for his/her findings to the group of people or organizations involved in the research study (Bryman & Bell, 2007, pp. 411-412). The focus group discussion and personal interviews were recorded and transcribed to give a true account of the urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs' stories. The research findings for this

thesis will be presented to my research participants, on my return to Vanuatu in the latter part of 2013.

The in-depth semi-structured personal conversational narratives provided urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal jobs' personal experiences of discrimination, oppression, any other daily obstacles they faced, their affiliations and aspirations and access to positions of authority in their places of employment, their multiple nuclear and extended family commitments and whether they wished to become role-models, mentors and coaches to new female recruits (Wengraf, 2001 & Dawson, 2009). Urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal jobs spoke of their personal experiences of microfinance business ownership, operation and maintenance, their Vanwods MFI weekly personal savings and loan repayments, their affiliations based on the concept of the Grameen Bank Foundation group philosophy collective/peer back-up group, their customer base, and their confidence as women entrepreneurs, whether they improved their living standards, their future business ambitions, any future products and services they aimed to offer, any business training they wished to embark on, and whether they wanted to role-model, coach and mentor other urban women.

In my research on Vanuatu, validity and trustworthiness were achieved through the creation of appropriate concluding statements (Bryman & Bell, 2007). This meets the criterion of measuring the well-being needs of urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal jobs in identifying whether discrimination, oppression and women's marginalization exist in its truest form. This research has face validity because it is measuring women's well-being needs based on the personal conversational narratives and comparing and contrasting these stories to other participants' stories (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Wengraf, 2001 & Dawson, 2009). The research contains concurrent validity as the findings differ in the opinions, attitudes and personal experiences of the urban Ni-Vanuatu women and the United Nations' remedies on the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects in meeting the women's well-being needs. This research also encourages external validity in that the results of the study can be generalised to other urban women in formal and informal jobs (ibid). It contains ecological validity in that the findings can be generalised to matrilineal and patrilineal women's every day and natural social settings in contemporary Vanuatu.

4.18 Waikato Management School Ethical Approval

The University of Waikato's Code of Ethics were applied in this research insisting that researchers imposed and undertook safeguards to protect their participants' identities. Reiss & Frisch (1959) specifies that the single most likely source of harm to participants in enquiries of social nature is the disclosure of their private/personal information. An ethics application was submitted to the Waikato Management School and ethical approval was obtained.

4.19 The Story So far

Embedded in the aspirations of CEDAW are the ideals of justice, equity and egalitarianism (characterised as personal liberty, individual rights, equality of opportunity, extensive freedom of thought and speech, free exchange of ideas, transparent systems of governance and equal employment opportunities. It advocates for the rights of Ni-Vanuatu women, as these women, like their global sisters, are also facing discrimination and oppression. They experience unequal gender treatment, sexual harassment, unequal investment in and the recognition of their skills and contributions and because of women's relegation into the service dimensions of the economy (themselves undervalued and underpaid). The United Nations offered Vanuatu two strategies to rectify the marginalization of Ni-Vanuatu women described in Chapter Three. One takes the form of the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes believed to be an effective means to stop the discrimination against women and to liberate, emancipate and empower them. The second is the establishment of Microfinance projects. The example in this research comes from the Vanwods microfinance project through which women are assisted to own and operate small businesses.

4.19.1 CEDAW-EEO and employer narratives

When the United Nations arrived in Vanuatu in 1985, it recognised that Ni-Vanuatu women's discrimination and oppression were rampant in Vanuatu. The United Nations applied pressure to the Vanuatu Government, as a member of the United Nations, to accede CEDAW in 1995 to address the marginalization of Ni-Vanuatu women. The implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes is a mechanism for state and private sector employers to incorporate intra-organizational role-modelling, mentoring, and coaching programmes or send their employees to external role-modelling programmes

that would mentor, role-model and coach them to improve and upgrade their employees' skills, self-confidence and to improve urban women's capability to secure positions of authority in their (public and private sector jobs). The EEO programme also delivers urban Ni-Vanuatu women with a promise of equal consideration and treatment in all aspects of employment, including recruitment, testing, hiring, equal pay, promotion, discipline, and termination. Employers must not impose any kind of discrimination to their employees based on race, sex, colour, age, religion, national origin, physical or mental handicap (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The focus group discussion with employer and employee representatives was the strategy to identify the types of incentives state and private sector employers' utilised in their organizations.

State and private-sector employers in Vanuatu are required by CEDAW to adhere to and promote EEO programmes within their organizations. Participants who attended the focus group discussion on 25 March 2010 expressed feminist universal equality strategies that matched CEDAW's Article 7 on empowerment, Article 10 on education and training, Article 11 on employment, Article 13 on women's participation in economic and social life, and offered additional interventions such as women's role-modelling and mentorship programmes and mind-set changes, gender-balanced policies, domestic and public gender sensitization and humility and open-mindedness attitudes to assist Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy (including employers and senior women in positions of authority) to improve their dealings and relationships with their Ni-Vanuatu female employees. They requested employers to offer more education, training, role-modelling, mentoring, and coaching to female employees to improve their employability for access into positions of authority in their formal jobs.

4.19.2 Women in formal jobs: Salaried/professional & waged occupations

The personal conversational narratives derived from a variety of the 36 urban Ni-Vanuatu women in waged occupations and salaried/professional occupations and from a variety of the 39 Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs. Initial reading of these narratives clearly indicated that these women achieved a series of advantages arising from their engagement in the market economy. The women reported being able to make personal choices to obtain formal or informal jobs, earn incomes to meet their nuclear and extended family commitments, receive professional

development and training and educate their children, earn the respect of their spouses and families, meet their urban centre financial obligations, and became senior managers or business owners and decision-makers in their own rights (holding a voice and space in the public sphere that was not available for patrilineal women in patrilineages). The urban Ni-Vanuatu women's stories of advantages asserted feminist ideals and achievements of empowerment, education and training, employment, participation in economic and social life, role-modelling, mentoring and coaching and mind-set changes, gender-balanced policies, domestic gender sensitization, public gender sensitization and humility and open-mindedness.

4.19.3 Women in informal jobs: Microfinance projects as liberal strategies

In 1996, as one of the UN's Millennium Development Goals to eradicate poverty for disenfranchised urban Ni-Vanuatu women, the United Nations' Development Programme in collaboration with the Vanuatu Department of Women's Affairs established the Women in Development Scheme (WODS) renamed as the Vanwods Microfinance Incorporation (ILO, 2006). The aim of this microfinance project is to assist marginalised urban women access finance to own, operate and maintain microfinance businesses as an alternative means of earning incomes. The Vanwods MFI members also known as Mamas saw this business opportunity as the panacea for improved living conditions (Salong, 2008). Salong stresses that when urban Ni-Vanuatu women became Vanwods MFI members; they practiced collectivism through the Grameen Bank group philosophy and the Vanwods MFI motto: "United we stand". Furthermore, he articulates enthusiastically how Mamas harnessed capitalist means in "sustainable cohesive social and bridging social capital" to improve their lives, their living standards and educate their children (ibid, p. 28). Urban Ni-Vanuatu women saw microfinance projects as the opportunity for them to benefit from this strategy and participate in Vanuatu's urban hub of economic growth and development (Rodman et al. 2009).

Insights from these three stages of my research were examined in the light of the themes that emerged from my literature reviews and my understanding of the CEDAW aspirations. These themes are:

Theme 1: Women's empowerment,

Theme 2: Women's participation in education and training,

Theme 3: Women's employment,

Theme 4: Women's participation in economic and social life,

Theme 5: Women's role-modelling and mentorship programmes and mind-set changes;

Theme 6: Gender-balanced policies;

Theme 7: Domestic gender-sensitization;

Theme 8: Public gender-sensitization; and

Theme 9: Humility and open-minded values.

An initial reading of my field-notes and my reflections on the literature reviews to this point in my research study indicated some very strong consistencies within and among the narratives of the participants and these themes. However, there were also some thought provoking inconsistencies and apparent contradictions both within and across the stories told. What became of interest, as I tackled an initial organisation of the field notes under the themes, was the way in which some of the responses of the participants at times seemed a very neat fit with the themes themselves and the orientation from which they were generated. At other times; however, I was alerted to the need for a much more complex response to the narratives. It was for this reason that I needed to return to the feminist literatures, to explore more closely the diversity of feminist thought. I do so in the next chapter as a necessary detour to explain, at the end of that chapter, how I came to craft the Point/Counterpoint Framework (Chapter Six and Seven), by which my analysis is arranged.

4.20 Summary

I commenced this chapter by explaining why I chose a qualitative research methodology and the data collection methods I employed because of a feminist philosophy and epistemological orientation that my research generated. I decided on a focus group discussion with 20 employer and employee representatives and feminist narrative and story-telling method with 75 participants in formal and informal jobs because this was an exploratory study and being a subjective enquiry, I wanted to gauge the perceptions of my interlocutors on the success of the UN's CEDAW EEO-programme and microfinance project in empowering women in formal authority and as economic contributors. My research objectives and goals were outlined to investigate the extent and characteristics of the continued discrimination that women

in Vanuatu were experiencing. I concluded this chapter by listing various feminist themes that I drew from the literature and from my initial reading of the insights generated from the research conversations. In the next chapter, I return to the literatures to find a means for deeper analysis of the seeming inconsistencies and contradictors that were reported within and across some of the narratives. This re-review is done with a view to craft a framing for an analysis that will illuminate the complexity of these narratives and their fit or otherwise with the feminist orientations of the early literature reviews presented in Chapters One and Two.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Return to the (Feminist) Literatures

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Four concluded with a list of themes I had drawn from the literatures reviewed in Chapter Three and from the orientation of the CEDAW-EEO programme. I noted there that in my first round of analysis I observed some seemingly easy fit between these themes both in terms of the subject matter that was raised in the initial literature about women in Vanuatu, in the CEDAW orientation, and in terms of the expression of the issues as conversed with my participants. However, I also noted some interesting inconsistencies and contradictions both among the participants' stories and within specific stories told by a particular woman. To account for the complexity now before me, I realised I needed a more sophisticated set of lenses for the analysis of these themes. This realisation had me return to the feminist literatures to understand the diversity to be found there more profoundly. In this chapter I review feminist philosophy. Out of the diversity of perspectives found there I have chosen two contrasting perspective as analytical lenses: i) the liberal feminist perspective and ii) a more radical feminist orientation. To benefit from strengths of these perspectives and to account in some ways for their limitations, particular with regard to their relevance to the diverse experiences of Ni-Vanuatu women, I desired a third perspective that would allow for a specific focus on the situation of Vanuatu and on which, as a feminist woman indigenous to Vanuatu, I could then take my stand. This Chapter reviews the strands of the literatures I found compelling and from which I then crafted my point, counterpoint, standpoint framing to attend to the themes in a more complex manner.

5.2 Feminist Philosophy and Theory

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy (1999) stipulates feminist philosophy to be discussions that recognise women's experiences as unique. The starting point of a feminist orientation is the belief that in many societies a political relationship exists between the sexes. Most typically the man is considered to be supreme with the woman being subjected to him (Heywood, 2000). The different treatment of women and men is attributed by some theorists to biological sex. Such differences, purported to be grounded in biology by some, in culture by others, and in economics by yet

others, have been used to justify women as primarily responsible for domestic stability and child care.

Sprague and Zimmerman (1993) posit that men create layers of sexist, racist, homophobic and colonial oppressions. Spatial demarcations between home, body, and the community or about marriage, gender violence, and race and class oppression, are part of the power relationships between men and women (Hesse-Biber, 2004). According to Kirsch (1999) and de Beauvoir (1952) women are treated as the other, inessential and the second sex. Some feminists focus on patriarchy, the cumulative investment of authority and power in men, as the cause of women's oppression and exploitation because they are subjected to male rule. Fragmentations as well as the issues of race, empire, imperialism, colonialism in nation states demonstrate the domination and subordination of women (Hesse-Biber et al. 2004). Smith (1994) for example, highlights class relations and the exploitation of women's reproductive and productive labour, as examples of hegemonic control by men. Thus objectified, De Beauvoir (cf Hesse-Biber et al. 2004) stipulates women are regarded as both domestic and sexual objects. Acts of violence and rape are among the forms of patriarchal hegemonic control over women (Smith, 1984). Jacobs (1987) and Hesse-Biber et al.(2004) argue women experience many forms of oppression often as the direct outcomes of the cumulative effects of slavery, colonization, and on-going systemic discrimination.

Some feminists take the position that women must be treated the same as (or equally with) men. Others disagree that women should be treated the same as men (Heywood, 2000). Here, the difference in objectives is a question of what is deemed appropriate or fair. Both perspectives emphasise that society constructs and imposes the notion of gender on males and females. In this regard, a number of feminists view gender as a political construct used to identify activities that are feminine belonging to women (but devalued) and masculine belonging to men (and their value inflated). This disagreement is most visible in the allocation of responsibilities for home, family and income generation. As domestic and child care has been ascribed to women, and as women are increasingly held responsible also to earn incomes for family security, the value attributed to these spheres and the authority, influence and well-being generated from them, come under greater scrutiny. To date, as noted by Allen et al. (1998) this

has thus far resulted in a double burden for women, a burden manifested as their second shift and their double day of work.

Feminist philosophers' demand that philosophy be grounded in lived experiences of all human beings and must not be generated only from privileged males who have presided over Western traditions. Feminist thinkers including both men and women create feminist philosophies based on the experiences of women. Philosophical and theoretical knowledge written by men for women however, will not solve women's oppression and subjugation, or will acknowledge women's way of knowing (Belenky et al. 1986). Feminist philosophies are essential to highlight women's oppression and subjugation (Harding, 2004), as well as underpinning the search for women's liberation, emancipation and empowerment (Harding, 2004 & Tuttle, 1986). Feminist philosophy is thus not only an academic tool to research gender issues but as Heywood (2000) describes "feminism [is] a political movement and an ideology that aims to advance the social role of women" (p. 48). Feminist enquiry uncovers men's power relationship with women and proffers knowledge from women's personal experiences (Hesse-Biber et al. 2004). Feminist philosophy, therefore, informs research, and specifically recognises and uses women's experiences to seek and acquire wisdom on any local and global phenomena.

Harding and Hintikka (1983) prescribe the work of feminist philosophers as two-fold: a) they deconstruct projects by critiquing abstract individualism; and b) reconstruct projects by developing philosophical positions based on the experiences of women. Furthermore, Belenky et al. (1986) labels women's knowledge as women's ways of knowing, while Gilligan (1982) contends that women's knowledge is most appropriately known through the voices of women. Women bring a special perspective to research called the "feminist standpoint perspective" argue Stanley and Wise (1993, p. 33). They caution researchers; however, to be mindful of the diversity to be found in it. Ashcraft (1998) also reminds us that women's experiences are not universal and that no two women may have the same experiences. Women of colour, of different generations and with different sexual orientations may all have different experiences, perspectives and aspirations. Many women experience triple subjugation based on class, race and gender oppressions (Chow, 1984). Inequalities across race, culture, sexuality, class and nationality create tensions for women (Hesse-Biber et al. 2004).

Feminist philosophers, writing from a variety of perspectives, are unanimous however in challenging several areas of traditional philosophy and in a) encouraging the serious consideration of “women’s interests, identities, and issues”; and in their urge to b) “recognise that women’s ways of being, thinking, and doing is as valuable as those of men” (ibid, p. 304).

5.3 Feminist Movements and their Theories

Feminism is not a research design but a way of life and perspective for women. It involves theory and analysis that highlight the differences between men’s and women’s lives. Feminist theory is “a mode of thinking, a set of beliefs that influence our ideas as to why women are in a subordinate position to that of men” and “how to resolve this inequality” (Ashcraft, 1998, p. 2). Hesse-Biber et al. (2004) speak about feminist scholarship theorising on the politics of various borders, critiquing the notions of universal patriarchy and global sisterhood, while Delmar (1986) (cf Beasley, 1999) states feminist movements are organised by individuals or collective action directed towards “women’s liberation” aiming to achieve political and social change (p. 90). Through sisterhood, a feminist concept used to denote feminist activism in the 20th century, feminist movements organise themselves for collective action (Tong, 1998). Therefore, it is difficult to define the terms, feminism and feminist theory, as different strands of feminism will have different views on what feminism is all about (Hesse-Biber et al. 2004). Nevertheless, Griffiths (1995) defines four categorisations of feminist movements and theories as: a) liberal, b) radical, c) cultural, and d) essentialist. As one feminist movement and theory evolved, it was critiqued with newer forms of feminist movements and theories appearing (Ashcraft, 1998). Feminist theories are thus multiple and hard to define (Harding, 2004). However, based on feminist movements that arrived on the world scene one after the other, we are able to categorise feminist movements and theories according to their philosophies. Various feminist groups are calling for the radical, even revolutionary, restructuring of a woman’s personal, domestic and family life (Heywood, 2000 & Gamble, 1999).

Three generalised feminist positions, liberal, socialist and radical feminism, have been critiqued for being overly Western in their orientations and not adequately analysing the multiple complexities of women’s lives. In contrast, other feminists believe that

women should be valued because of their primary caring and nurturing roles for raising children and that these roles should be seen as equally important to women who are strong, independent and performing the roles of the breadwinner in the family (Ashcraft, 1998).

Various feminist movements and theories confirm the notion that there is no unique female identity (Gamble, 1999). Sterba (cf Patai, 2008) argue that a common ground does unite all the different feminist movements and theories, because they are all committed “to fairness and equality” (p. 448). The articulation of such concerns can be demonstrated in three waves of feminist theorising I describe below.

5.3.1 First-wave feminism and theory

The first-wave feminist movement and theory is also known as the liberal feminist movement (Tuttle, 1986). It was generated as a response to the more widely established liberal values that had taken root in 18th century Europe and was exported wherever European colonists had influence. Women, in this era were not benefitting from the purported commitment to universal equality and participation in social, cultural, political or economic spheres. In a first-wave-of-feminist response to their marginalisation, women endorsed the values of individual freedom and formal equality – but argued these must be accessible to both men and women in “public and political life” (Heywood, 2000, p. 49). Liberal feminism according to Mary Wollstonecraft (cf Hesse-Biber et al. 2004), stipulates if women are offered education, social and economic opportunities like men, they will become completely human (Harding, 2004; Ashcraft, 1998 & Tuttle, 1986). Liberal theory holds that men and women are equal, and that women should receive the same rights as men. Liberal feminists commit to exposing and redressing any demonstrable inequality. However, there are contentions as to what being equal to men means, or what the same rights involve. Some feminists believe that when we call for equality, we are identifying that men and women are similar and that any determined sexual differences are minimal and socially constructed, rather than biological facts (Ashcraft, 1998). Liberal feminism is criticised because it is a movement created by men for women. It is a paradox because it is patriarchy that causes women’s oppression and subjugation, implying that women are irrational and simultaneously stipulating that they have equal rights and status as

men. Consistent with the prevalence of liberal ideas being amplified in the contemporary context, these liberal feminist ideals are also stipulated by CEDAW.

5.3.2 Second-wave feminism and theories

Second-wave feminist movements included radical feminism and socialist Marxist feminist movements and theories (Ashcraft, 1998 & Harding, 2004). These movements and theories critiqued the patriarchal assumptions embedded in the liberal feminist movement and its theory. The radical feminism movement offered “a breathtakingly audacious understanding of relations between the sexes in history” (Alexander, 1984, p. 124). Jaggard and Rothenberg (1994) stress women’s subordination in society is the root form of human oppression whereby “patriarchy” or the “systematic domination of men in society” (p. 121) creates discrimination and oppression and other forms of human oppression and exploitation for women. Radical feminists highlight that “male oppression has primacy over all other oppressions” (ibid, p. 182). They advocate that women are oppressed and exploited based on their sex (Ashcraft, 1998). Based on the work of Shulamite Firestone and Kate Millet (cf Ashcraft, 1998), sexual divisions are created by a male-dominated intellectual world, as most feminist movements saw patriarchy as the instigator of social formations and social relations between the sexes. The creed of radical feminism is that “women are oppressed as women and that their oppressors are men” (Andermahr et al. 1994, p. 182). In this view, the whole gender order in which people, things and behaviour are classified in terms of the distinction between masculine and feminine is socially constructed, and has no basis in the natural differences of the sexes.

Radical feminism, in a variety of forms pursues a philosophical strategy to fight against women’s discrimination and oppression. Common to this genre is the rejection of knowledge that is produced by patriarchal elites. It insists that “women’s oppression was fundamental, widespread and the deepest oppression” (Hesse-Biber et al. 2004, p. 234). Radicals target capitalism and its structures as another means of undermining, oppressing and subjugating women (Gamble, 1999). They aim to annihilate “sex-roles” wherever these are found, be that in the home, work place or throughout institutions in society (Andermahr, 1994, p. 182). They emphasise the personal as political by arguing that women will always be disadvantaged unless the task of reproduction is shared with men. Radical feminism offers more social opportunities

for women through interventions within the spheres of reproduction, sexuality and cultural representations to change women's domestic and private lives aiming to eliminate sexual inequality by introducing an androgynous culture to replace the male culture by eradicating the fixed roles that women and men play in the production and reproduction process (Gamble, 1999). They call for the use of contraception, sterilisation, abortion and artificial insemination to assist women in eliminating the biological or traditional roles of motherhood, and to eliminate power-domination relationships that are based on reproduction (Ashcraft, 1998). Radical feminists advocate for the construction of shelters for battered women, rape crisis centres and create childcare facilities as ways to respond to women's immediate needs at the local level always emphasizing that it is important for women to improve themselves and achieve individual achievement (Tuttle, 1986). Furthermore, instead of patriarchal subordination through marriage which is deemed to be oppressive and outmoded, an alternative solution, is for people to live together as partners/roommates in either a sexual (homosexual or heterosexual) or even a non-sexual manner (Gamble, 1999 & Ashcraft, 1996). The radical feminist movement aimed to remove hierarchical relationships between men and women or between women and other women through women-run/centred groups (Gamble, 1999).

An offshoot of radical feminism is the focus on culture as a means for allocation and imposition of gendered arrangements. Cultural feminist movement and theory (Gamble, 1999) attests that women are different from men because they are viewed as more emotional and spiritual beings tied more closely to the earth and seek cultural expressions accordingly. Be the explanation for gendered difference rooted in beliefs biology, economics, culture, or spirituality, much radical feminism generates a theory based on some form of essentialism. Essentialism is the belief that there are natural and innate differences between men and women (Gamble, 1999). Differences are fixed and natural and how these differences are manifest is their concern. Where these differences disadvantage women, their commitment is to bring change.

While the early (first wave) liberal and socialist feminist movements work towards social reform for women within the existing patriarchal systems, essentialist and radical feminist movements, desire their movements to be separated, from any existing patriarchal systems (Ashcraft, 1998; & Gamble, 1999).

5.3.3 Third wave feminism and theories

As the first and second-wave feminist movements and theories did not meet the needs of certain groups of women, more comprehensive and successive movements and theories were created to compensate for any deficiencies (Hesse-Biber, 2007 & Heywood, 2000). Third-wave feminist movement comprise of post-colonial subaltern studies, transnational and women of colour feminism, black feminism, eco-feminism and psycho-analytical feminism and newer feminist movements such as post-modernism, and post-structuralism (Harding, 2004; Hesse-Biber et al. 2004 & Ashcraft, 1998). Post-modernism is a diverse and opposing discourse because it incorporates only a few women in its written projects, and contains the absence of sexual differences in its dialogue (Gamble, 1999). Post-modernism evolved as a rejection by feminists to all the universal theories and ideas, urging its proponents to rewrite the patriarchal script aimed at disrupting the traditional boundaries between the elite and the popular culture, theory and practice, art and life, and the dominant and the marginal (Lyotard 1993, cf Gamble, 1999). Post-structuralist feminist theories considers texts as bounded in the systems of power legitimising the subject of representations as shown in the work of two theorists, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Feminism is argued as inherently post-structural in its orientation because it challenges the dominant patriarchal ideology to transform the social system (Gamble, 1999). Lather (1991) reasons that post-modernism and post-structuralism are terms used interchangeably in the United States, to signal a crisis of confidence in Western conceptual systems and the need to use other forms of thinking to inform their research enquiry into the experiences of women.

Researchers who use critical, post-modern and post-structural theoretical frameworks do raise questions of power, emancipation; freedom and agency in their research work (Davies & Harre, 2000). Critical theorists, in their work to achieve emancipation and individual freedom as a necessary and permanent possibility, suggest that the only way to do this is by overturning hierarchical relations of power, with freedom from oppression as their ultimate goal (cf Smith, 1984). They employ critique to uncover problems and to rectify these, showing that what is taken for granted, should no longer hold the dominant status. In a related genre, the Black Feminist movement and theory reflects the interests and standpoints of African American women's historical and

collective experiences of triple oppression in their overall experiences of subjugation and discrimination because of their race, class and gender (Alcoff et al. 1993 & Hesse-Biber et al. 2004). Black women mobilised themselves against the myriads of discriminatory practices and subjugation in their daily working lives (Hesse-Biber et al. 2004). It is the black women's resistance and social movements in the United States and in other parts of the world that reflected on the struggles of these women, who collectively voiced and organised themselves against encountered discrimination. Black Americans generated a black protest because they did not accept the subordinate positions imposed on them by the larger white society (Morris, 1984). Sometimes these protests were overt through slave revolts and at other times they were covert through black spiritual or defiant glances. Black protest or black feminism is "the process of self-conscious struggle that empowers women and men to actualise a humanist vision of community" (Collins, 1989, pp. 109-110). Transnational feminist studies concentrate on researching the lives and voices of marginalised subjects in various places "rather than on the general processes of economic globalisation" (Nagar, 2000, p. 116). Transnational feminists are encouraging researchers to use reflective knowledge as a research method providing multiple realities, which are not fixed but ever changing, and can only come about through dialogical practice of sharing with others (Hesse-Biber et al. 2004).

In the light of the diverse feminist orientations discussed above, and the implications of research orientation as political choices, my research study incorporates the phenomena of the politics of gender, gender equality, imperialism and colonisation, politics of power, patriarchy, hegemony, equal rights, liberation, emancipation and empowerment. The variety of compelling theories and the implications of their allied remedies invite greater attention to transparency of the theoretical orientation. To this end, I next review the two orientations I employ in Chapters Six and Seven respectively where I apply these as research lenses to the themes listed at the end of Chapter Four.

5.4 My Research Lenses

Feminist research methodology involves theories of gender relations and exposes all methods of social research as political. My research orientation is thus also a political choice. From the review of the literatures above, I chose two major orientations i) a

liberal feminist perspective and ii) an adaptation of the subaltern studies to craft the lenses through which I would analyse the themes I listed at the bottom of Chapter Four. I describe them more fully below.

5.4.1 Liberal feminist lens

The central values of liberalism are individualism, rationalism, freedom, justice and toleration (Tuttle, 1986). Liberal feminists argue that human beings are, first and foremost, individuals gifted with reason. From the liberal perspective, Heywood (2000) explains that individuals are “born equal” (p. 60) calling for equal moral worth, formal equality and equal opportunities. Humm (1989) stipulates liberal feminism is the “theory of individual freedom for women” (p. 118) and is one of the main streams of feminist political and social theory. Liberal feminism argues for individual achievement, the freedom from the restrictions of imposed and constraining sex roles. It is a political ideology that endeavours to accomplish a person’s pursuit of freedom and to produce a society that satisfies individual interests and meets people’s well-being needs through formal and informal jobs (Tuttle, 1986; & Heywood, 2000). The demand for liberty, equality and fraternity must be accorded to women as well as men. As feminists are concerned with ending women’s discrimination, they already have the relevant tools to argue that no person has the right to rule over another person through changes in legislation, advocacy and educative work (Jaggar et al.1994 & Tuttle, 1986). Women should be granted equal opportunities with men and that sexual differences should not matter at all, except when it involves the provision of maternity benefit pay-outs. Liberal feminists use various strategies through legal and legislative actions such as lobbying, class-action and individual legal suits; working within the political system and building coalitions to have women’s issues incorporated into all areas; also influencing public opinion through education and the media, eliminating sex-role stereotypes and presenting more varied and positive images of women (Heywood, 2000). Liberal feminist ideals are entwined with the concept that freedom is to be attained in a liberal market economy, a form of economic arrangement based on the principle of meritocracy where women are promised incomes based on their levels of talent and their willingness to work. A society that is liberal is characterised by multiplicity and pluralism and is structured politically around the twin values of consent and constitutionalism, which are combined to form the structures of liberal

democracy (Humm, 1989). Contemporary liberal feminists advocate for women's rights in terms of welfare needs, universal education, and health services.

Liberal feminist ideals prescribe that men and women are born equal and have rational reasoning to make personal choices and pursue their individual freedom. Liberal democratic values are used to improve formal and informal jobs and eliminate women's marginalization in emphasizing the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Aspects of liberal feminist ideals are justice, equity, egalitarianism, personal liberty, individualised rights, equality of opportunity, extensive freedom of thought and speech, free exchange of ideas, transparent systems of governance and equal employment opportunities. An initial re-reading of my early literature reviews and field notes suggested that these ideas are well embedded in the doctrine of CEDAW inspired EEO programmes, in microfinance projects and many of the stories told by my participants. There seemed a very strong 'fit' in these story-lines.

Various researchers have highlighted various weaknesses associated with the liberal feminist theory: a) it is a theory that originated from patriarchal analysis of the individual and has many offshoots each with a slightly different ideological philosophy of its own (Hesse-Biber et al. 2004); and b) it emphasises that women have similarities to men as the basis for women's emancipation (Jaggar et al. 1994). My initial reading of my field notes; however, also alerted me to some significant misfits altering me to gaps, limitations or vulnerabilities in the liberal theories. This was the impetus to take up the potential explanatory power of a more critical and radical feminist orientations. I have selected strands from the radical genres to gain an insight into the potential of post-colonial feminist theories and their kin with subaltern studies. It is to these I now turn.

5.4.2 Post-colonial feminist movements: The Subaltern Voice

The post-colonial feminist movement was an outcome of liberal and radical feminist movements and theories' and their inability to correctly analyse oppression in their doctrines (Gamble, 1999). Post-modernism and post-colonialism movements and theories emphasise that men, women and gender, are socially constructed by society (Ashcraft, 1998). Moreover, everyone's personal experiences and the knowledge of men, women and gender are unique in each situation. The post-colonial subaltern

movement and theory provides marginalised women with a voice to speak about their oppression (ibid). In adapting a post-colonial subaltern voice/lens to my research study, I was able to provide my research participants with a voice and space to speak about their discrimination and oppression in Vanuatu (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011).

Hutcheon (1994) attests a useful distinction between the respective aims and agendas of post-modernism and post-structuralism while both challenged the “unified humanist subject” (p. 216), post-colonialism on the other hand, offers feminist researchers, with the tool to critique any aspects of people living under colonial rule (Andermahr et al. 1994). Sunder et al. (2000) stress a post-colonial feminist position is often referred to, as the subaltern voice or perspective through “scattered hegemonies” (p. 66) imposed through patriarchies, nations, states, empires, political economy and neo-colonialism. For example, post-colonial feminists employ historical and dialectical approaches to understand the imbrications of gender, nation, class, caste, race, culture and sexualities in different historical contexts of women’s lives.

The term subaltern is the voice used to redress the effects of imperialism and colonialism on non-Western cultural groups (Ashcraft, 1998). Meanings of subalternity include an original Gramscian term to mean “the subordinated consciousness or subjectivity of non-elite social groups” (Andermahr et al. 1994, p. 216); and secondly it deals with the way the “subaltern woman is already positioned, constructed or spoken for as” lacking credibility, absent, silent or erased in a variety of discourse” (Spivak, 1998, p. 216). Guha (1991) states the topic of subalternity is developed in the South Asian journal historiography. Other post-colonial theorists have diverse views on the notion of subalternity but all share according to McWilliams (1991) an attempt to, “weave the complex structures put in place by colonialist rule...revealing the complex interactions of [the] coloniser and colonised...[and] to discuss how subjects are constituted now that the colonial powers no longer have overt political control” (pp. 102-103).

Post-colonial political theorists and writers, including McNicholas and Humphries (2007), Mehta, (2000), Spivak (1988), Trinh (1991) and Mohanty (1991a, 1991b, 1999, 2003), bring to our attention the representations of multiple voices and multiple

ways of knowing. The Indian post-colonial theorist, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (cf Gamble, 1999) claims that when sections of societies cooperate with the colonial authorities, they gain an identity within the coloniser's view of the world. However, the subaltern subject remains outside on the periphery, being constructed as half in and half out, of the colonial paradigm. Furthermore, bell hooks (cf Alcoff et al. 1993) postulates that "understanding marginality as position and place of resistance is crucial for oppressed, exploited, colonised people" (p. 84) and that in choosing the margin, the marginalised group is creating a space of radical openness. This is more so for women who are more marginalised, when Spivak highlights that "if in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history, and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadows" (Alcoff et al. 1993, p. 323).

New Zealand post-colonial authors McNicholas and Humphries. (2007) offer the use of the subaltern voice through empirical research conversations with Maori women accountants, as a mechanism to articulate the discourse of subalternity, "a language game with similarities to that of marginality in its emancipatory intent – but with some unique features" (p. 3). The subaltern voice calls for radical institutional transformation supporting the ideals and values of human emancipation and environmental well-being and that this voice not only communicates, but also confronts the system in very deep ways. It is resistant to assimilation into a liberal view of the world.

Through the post-colonial subaltern voice and lens, identification of the economic elite (interested parties and ruling minds hidden under the veil of economic pragmatics) which influence global governance, a common theme in every-day speech, concerning the effects and the reach of the global economy - whereby the well-being of all is dependent on it (Thomas et al. 2011). Post-colonialism is the theory to explore the experiences of people who are subjected to Western colonisations. Through the post-colonial subaltern voice and lens, criticism is employed to uncover problems and rectify the neo-colonial relations of power and economic structures of domination and subordination shaped by the gender politics of inequality, difference and resistance. The post-colonial subaltern voice identifies that men and women and gender are socially constructed by society which is also the case in point for urban Ni-Vanuatu women. It is a lens that enables a researcher to critique aspects of people living under

colonial rule and through the subaltern voice identifies scattered hegemonies caused by patriarchies, nations, states, empires, the political economy and neo-colonisation. The subaltern voice, is the voice to redress the effects of imperialism, and colonialism on non-Western cultural groups through historical and dialectical approaches to understand the nuances of gender, nation, class, caste, race, culture and sexualities and providing the subaltern or the marginalised (meaning oppressed, exploited, and colonised people) to provide a place of resistance through radical openness to speak out about their oppression.

5.5 Feminist Relevance for Ni Vanuatu Women

A closer inspection of the feminist literatures brought deepened explanations for the situation of women in Vanuatu. Here patrilineages and urban patriarchy control the formal decision-making processes. Patriarchal discrimination and oppression affects many urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs (Huffer & Molisa, 1999). The social construction of gendered roles is now enforced through Vanuatu's patrilineal Wantok governance model and by Vanuatu's urban patriarchy when men relegate women into the domestic sphere and assign them the stereotype of "a housewife with few rights" (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p. vi; ILO, 2006 & Van Trease, 1987). When urban Ni-Vanuatu women secure paid employment, they "occupy the poorer paid and least influential positions" (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004, p.vi). In Vanuatu's patrilineages, patrilineal women have no voice and space and ownership "rights" in community affairs (ILO, 2006, p. 78). Men exploit women's reproductive and productive labour as discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Patrilineal women receive triple subjugation in this regard from their societies (Chow, 1984 & ILO, 2006). In the event of the death of a woman's spouse, or a patrilineal woman being divorced, she cannot claim any rights to her husband's property and his children (ILO, 2006). She must return to reside with her mother's kin (Van Trease, 1987). In Vanuatu, domestic violence is increasing because a man presumes that in paying a bride price for a woman's hand in marriage, it gives him ownership rights over her and that he can beat her up during domestic disputes (Mason, 2000 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Women in Vanuatu and globally are depicted as both desirable sexual beings and domestic servants. Through images of sunshine, white sandy beaches, and clear blue sea and the sky, Ni-Vanuatu women wearing sarongs with frangipanis in their ears, are depicted as sexual objects (The Republic of Vanuatu,

2004). The reality for many women is to work endlessly to meet their ascribed responsibilities. In Vanuatu's democratic governance, Ni-Vanuatu men's hegemonic and power control is manifested through their ignorance and refusal to grant urban Ni-Vanuatu women with positions of authority (Piau-Lynch, 2007 & Huffer and Molisa, 1999) in constitutional and corporate governance (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Divisions of inequalities are also evident for patrilineal women in Vanuatu (ILO, 2006 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The complexity of these theories and their apparent pertinence to the situation of women in Vanuatu suggests that various feminist philosophical lenses are useful to explore and combat men's patriarchal oppression and to provide suitable solutions to them.

My emphasis is on the strands of philosophy that seek responsiveness to complexity sometimes put aside for overly simplified theoretically driven problem identification and solution orientation. Women's experiences are complex and fluid, as is in the case of urban Ni-Vanuatu women's experiences. Their observations reflect this complexity and sometimes contradictory or inconsistent reactions in their stories. Using several lenses for my interpretation of their reported experiences, allows me more sensitive integration of some of these seemingly contrasting perspectives in their stories. Patrilineal and matrilineal women in Vanuatu will have different experiences of men's dealings and relationship with them (Maltali et al. 2009; Stege et al. 2008 & Van Trease, 1987). Moreover, as there is no single feminist position available to capture the complexity of issues experienced by women, it is for this reason, researchers draw upon various feminist theories to challenge the basic assumptions about women's nature and their place in this world (Ashcraft, 1998). As an indigenous female researcher investigating subjective perspectives and experiences of women in Vanuatu, I have selected two distinct theoretical framings generated from existing feminist philosophy to explore the contemporary experiences of Ni Vanuatu women, and to investigate urban women's desires for gainful employment, and also to understand their dealings and relationship with Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy. From the consideration of these two forms of analysis presented in Chapters Six and Seven respectively, I present my 'standpoint' on the themes – an interpretation made through my Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice to be presented in Chapter Nine. I explain this 'point', 'counterpoint' framing below.

5.6 Life for Ni-Vanuatu Women: A Point, Counterpoint, & Standpoint

My initial observations covered more fully in Chapter Four noted the already documented rampant gender discrimination experienced by Ni Vanuatu women and the call to transform this situation (as reviewed in Chapter Three). This suggested a feminist orientation to the interpretation of my observations. I soon found that existing feminist theories, while useful to some extent, did not give me the complexity needed for the diverse and the sometimes seemingly contradictory reports I recorded in my field notes. Given the complex and fluid experiences observed in the personal conversational narratives of the urban women, I chose two feminist positions to help me analyze empirical observations. It is for this reason that I came to be drawn to a framing that allowed me to represent the differing positions and still form an integrated response. I crafted a point/counterpoint/standpoint framing described below.

5.6.1 Forms of argument: Point, counterpoint & standpoint

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel from Germany and Aldous Leonard Huxley from England are credited for the creation of the influential conception of speculative logic (also known as the point or thesis), dialectic arguments (counterpoint or anti-thesis) and the standpoint theory (synthesis) position (Baker & James, 2000; Heywood, 2000). Hegel (1740-1831) in 1804 used speculative logic and dialectic arguments in his work on the Master/Slave dialectic to combat the social institution of slavery (Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy, 2008). Roymann (1999) stresses “Hegel was the first to view history – indeed, all of existence – as a dialectical process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, through which two contradictory forces are resolved in a higher, more rational state” (p. 141). Aldous Leonard Huxley (1894-1963) was a leader of modern thought who used visual communication through the dialectic process in his novel *Brave New World* by taking ideas and exploring them to extract interesting phenomena through the viewpoints of various characters in his work (Murray, 2002 & Baker et al. 2000a & 2000b). Through a dialectic process, Huxley exposes the dehumanizing aspects of scientific progress. Researchers such as Patai (2008); and Baker et al. (2000a & 2000b) have published work using some forms of dialectic logic, through the point and counterpoint contrasts.

To begin to interpret Vanuatu’s complex socio-political cultural, and economic environments as explained in (Chapters One to Three), several points of concern

underpin my research study, involving politics of gender, gender equality, imperialism and colonisation, politics of power, matrilineality, patrilineality, patriarchy, hegemony, equal rights, and notions of liberation, emancipation and empowerment (ILO, 2006 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). A single explanatory theory would not be sufficient. I have chosen an application of a liberal feminist perspective to be presented as the point, in Chapter Six (Heywood, 2000 & Tuttle, 1986). I provide an adaptation of the post-colonial subaltern voice/lens as the counterpoint, presented in Chapter Seven (Humphries & McNicholas, 2009; & Sunder et al. 2000). I integrate these insights through a standpoint position that I have crafted from my Matrilineal Wantok feminist orientation in Chapter Nine to now investigate more fully the two United Nations' strategies offered to urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011; & Harding, 2004). My research employs a "theory generation" methodology which is assessed in Chapter Ten (Bell, 2005, p. 101).

5.7 Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed the complex field of feminist philosophy and summarised first, second and third-wave feminist movements and their theories to provide me with an overview of their rationale. This review assisted me in deciding the most appropriate theoretical framework and theories needed for my research study. I laid out the reasons for employing a feminist philosophical and a theoretical framework for my research study and the lenses through a liberal feminist point, a post-colonial subaltern voice and lens as the counterpoint of these liberal feminist ideals as precursors to the articulation of my matrilineal Wantok feminist standpoint I offer in Chapter Nine. In the next chapter I analyse, evaluate, interpret and present arguments from my empirical observation methods of a focus group discussion with employer and employee representatives, and personal conversational narratives with urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs through the 'point' framing highlighting the liberal feminist ideals that are evident from the urban women's stories.

CHAPTER SIX

The Themes: Point - Prevailing And Progressing Liberalism

The only way forward for women in a largely pre-literate society is for those who have been upwardly mobile to help others (Grace Mera Molisa, cf O'Callaghan, 1987, p. 2).

6.1 Introduction

The list of themes I presented at the end of Chapter Four was intended a framework for me to arrange my field notes and analysis. I noted there; however, that my initial reflections on my field-notes drew my attention to some apparent inconsistencies and contradictions within and between the reported experiences in the women's stories. This observation prompted a return to the feminist literature (reviewed in Chapter Five) to gain a more nuanced understanding of various feminist orientations. From this position I came to craft the point/counterpoint/standpoint frame for my analysis as I outlined at the end of that chapter. In this chapter, I apply the first part of this re-framing as the 'point'. The 'point' is distilled from the liberal feminist orientation that seems to be dominant in the literature reviewed in Chapter Three and in the ethos of the CEDAW. This liberal orientation is also reflected in many of the ways the women who participated in my research spoke of their experiences. I therefore provide a short introduction to the ideal(s) of liberal feminism. I then analyse, evaluate, and interpret the themes listed at the end of Chapter Four through the liberal feminist lens of justice, equity and egalitarianism. I demonstrate the seemingly good fit between the orientation of the early literature reviews, the UN's interventions, and the stories told by my participants by way of illustrative quotations. I conclude this chapter with a reflection on the remedies to inequality and marginalization of women from this perspective.

6.2 The libera(lisa)tion of Women: Liberalism and Liberal Feminism

Liberalism theorises the ideals of justice, equity, and egalitarian values in terms of personal liberty, individual rights, equality of opportunity, extensive freedom of thought and speech, free exchange of ideas, transparent systems of governance, freedom of choice, limitations on the power of governments, prevailing rule of law, and a mixed market economy (Tuttle, 1986). Gallagher and Robinson (1953) stipulate

the free market is the positive and productive means of “enhancing individual freedom” by regulating the “interaction of individuals, to civilise, and to encourage peace” so that a country’s “long-term goal [of] economic growth” is achieved thus increasing the country’s “national income” and sustainably improving the well-being needs of all of its people through better standards of living (pp. 8-10).

Key concepts of liberals relevant to this research are the notions of individual freedom, competitive individualism, and meritocracy. The assumption is, that on a level playing field, these ideals can be made manifest. Unequal outcomes are seen as the fair out-workings of markets. Liberal feminism is a branch of this form of liberalism that focuses on women’s issues and well-being within such a framing. Many liberal feminist values reverberate through the discussion about women in the literature reviewed in Chapters One-Three and Five. In Vanuatu, such early feminists drew attention to the cumulative disruption to the traditional forms of Wantok governance by the colonial rulers and the subsequent leaders of the Republic significantly breaking down indigenous forms of community cohesiveness and social security arrangements (Huffer & Molisa, 1999). The rural-urban migration of many women has manifested in marginalization and poverty for many. When the United Nations offered CEDAW to Vanuatu, it seemed a valuable means to encourage the reflection by all leaders from Vanuatu’s patrilineages and urban patriarchy, to inspire them to transform their dealings and relationship with Ni-Vanuatu women. These leaders were encouraged to adopt its mechanisms in Vanuatu’s legal system in order to improve equality between men and women. Liberally conceived notions of women’s fundamental human rights, as well as the worth and dignity of the human person, including the human rights of Ni-Vanuatu men and women were to be upheld. The CEDAW was seen as a way for all persons, organizations and enterprises to abolish any discriminatory laws to ensure the effective protection of Ni-Vanuatu women against discrimination and oppression. These were and are attractive aspirations that reverberate through the debates to this very day. They are generated from and framed in a set of liberal values that have deep reaching appeal. This chapter demonstrates the appeal of these liberal ideals and their effects by integrating the general (feminist) aspirations for justice reviewed in the earlier chapters with insights drawn from the narratives of the participants as ‘the point’ – a liberal feminist analyses of the themes listed at the close of Chapter Four.

6.3 The Themes: A Liberal Perspective

In previous chapters, I explained the prevalence of liberal feminist interpretations of women's experiences the world over and I noted my initial reflection of the extent to which these have also become embedded in the interpretation of the lives of women in Vanuatu – by policy makers, gate-keepers, advocates, and the women themselves. In the next section I demonstrate this liberal articulation in the voices of women participants. Their voices are made visible in snippets of conversations grouped together as illustrations – as word pictures. I have de-contextualised and not visibly linked the snippets to a specific woman for issues of privacy and security in a community that is small and interwoven.

6.3.1 Theme One: Women's Empowerment

i. Women in formal jobs: Women's empowerment

Liberal feminist positions, articulated in the CEDAW interventions examined in this research, posit that urban Ni-Vanuatu women will achieve empowerment if their societies or their work-places offer them opportunities for engagement and promotion. Urban women are encouraged to seek personal liberty, extensive freedom of thought and speech, to assert their individualised rights, and to make social choices that are deemed to lead to their access of formal jobs. Such women should pursue professional training and development to become literate, educated and qualified. This is promised to improve their self-confidence and enable them to seek positions of authority. According to a liberal economic theory, their competition for and achievement in jobs will provide them with access to jobs in the formal labour market and their rewards will be fair incomes that will save them from the poverty not far from view. Many of my participants reported experiences that would support the veracity of this much generalised liberal ideal expressed as Theme One:

I was given a junior position but because I was able to face challenges and resolved issues. My Director saw that I was capable and promoted me to the position of (name of title) in my Department.

Male managers are now listening to me when I have something to say in management meetings. I proved that I was capable of doing a good job and they appreciated my capacity and working relations with them became

easier...I went straight to a decision-making role after I graduated with (name of qualification).

I did a lot of in-house training...I am a multi-skilled person and I can do many jobs.

I found my [former] superior as excellent....He listened and empowered staff to participate in decision-making without the need for direct supervision. He supported me and gave me the assistance I needed to do my job properly.

These snippets of conversation are drawn from the stories of both patrilineal and matrilineal women who attained employment and persevered in their jobs. They reported that they experienced empowerment in and through their jobs. They report a sense of liberation, emancipation and empowerment. Some report extensive freedom of thought and speech and free exchange of ideas in their jobs. Some said they were recognised as knowledgeable and trustworthy. These women demonstrated their industriousness through multi-tasking. They attributed much of their success to the professional training and development they had received. Some reported that through their managers' proactive interventions, they received professional training and development or on-the-job training, organizational mentors, coaches and role-models to help them attain the required skills and improve their self-confidence and gain access to positions of authority. They attributed their success to hard work and training, rewarded by promotion to positions of authority that once were male-domains. These reported experiences that epitomise the liberal vision.

Not all women reported such positive outcomes. Stories are told that demonstrate that some women had to face jealousy, mistreatment and gate-keeping impediments from both men and women. Some women reported curtailed opportunities when they were removed from official visits or their travel allowances were reduced as part of their employers' mistreatment.

Jealousies came from male (position holders) who think that women cannot work as well as they do.

Men mistreated me when I was working for the (name of organisation)...I faced many obstacles along the way...some men did not recognise the work I was doing.

On occasions, I would be removed from official visits especially if (my employer) thought that the state could influence my mind-set. A further form of discrimination I received was when my travel allowances were reduced forcing me to travel with very little money.

I had to really work hard to resolve the opposition from the senior women and men who were in power who thought that they could [force me] to...do things that were unethical.

If the organisation is led mostly by males, it is going to be difficult for women to acquire decision-making roles...Because my supervisor is a man, it is so hard for him to understand me and how I do my work.

The experiences illustrated in the snippets of stories above shows that some women have found the path less straightforward, but the path itself (through greater commitment to CEDAW-EEO) seems to offer the solutions. Where diminished opportunity can be clearly linked to discriminatory behaviour, EEO strategies can be called on. There are countless examples of policies and programmes available to address such discrimination for women in paid employment in jurisdictions that have committed to Western liberal ideals.

ii. Women in informal jobs: Women's empowerment

From a liberal perspective, empowerment is generated by access to income generated through access to markets. For those women who saw the opportunities offered to own and operate their own businesses through the encouragement and financial support of the Vanwods Microfinance Incorporation project, many such ideals appear to be realised. The experiences that living standards can be raised, respect can be gained, and that families can be cared for through market ventures, even by women with few literacy skills, is reported by many interlocutors:

When I initiated the Vanwods MFI project, a lot of people laughed at me including the (name of department). I recalled the men telling me: “What can you do with women who cannot read and write?”...It is possible for women to save small amounts [of money] each week which builds up to improve their living standards.

Previously, my spouse did not respect me at all but now he recognises my potential. So I am so grateful to the Vanwods MFI...The Vanwods MFI helps us to make weekly savings which will add up to help us in the future. Every week we have to make pledged savings of 200 Vatu. I find the Vanwods MFI very helpful.

I have to care for my extended family members in (name of island) and for my spouse’s family in (name of island). I have five children, and I have 5 brothers and 5 sisters. What I am running is a family store. When my extended family needs financial assistance I help them and when my spouse’s family needs help, I also help them. So my store is really a family store.

Some of the children I support and maintain at home are now working so my efforts have paid off.

Through the Vanwods MFI awareness I have seen the benefits of joining the scheme as it helped me to access loans to start and maintain my business, pay for my children’s school fees and make other improvements in my home.

I see that Vanwods MFI has helped so many women so we need to extend their services to other rural women.

I do not need further training from Vanwods MFI as I have attended some courses already, but I just need to be strict with my business funds.

The urban Ni-Vanuatu in informal jobs reported experiences of greater personal liberty and empowerment to make personal choices to own/operate and maintain microfinance businesses. Even women with basic education reported success as

microfinance entrepreneurs and gained greater control of their lives. Through their personal savings, they were able to improve their living standards. For some of the Mamas, access to microfinance projects did provide them with increased self-confidence, earned incomes, and the respect of their spouses and their families. The women's informal jobs enabled them to make personal decisions and social choices to earn incomes that catered for their nuclear and extended family commitments. Through microfinance loans, women became microfinance entrepreneurs, earning incomes to educate their children and to also improve their homes. The women felt satisfied and empowered to see extended family members they supported, progress to securing formal and informal jobs. Other women spoke about receiving Vanwods MFI training that benefitted them and were astutely aware that they should continue to be vigilant with their business funds.

As with the women in formal jobs, not all the women in this group reported their participation in Vanwods as fully empowering:

We women have [too] much responsibility. We look after our own extended family members as well as our spouse's family. I help a lot of my other family members who stay with us, especially ones who come for schooling here and I have to [support and] maintain them also.

Funds we receive from our small businesses must cater for both the nuclear and extended family members' needs. We receive requests from our extended family members in the islands for financial assistance, so we have to send money to them as well. There is so much demand placed on the limited funds we make from our small businesses.

The stresses of meeting payments, of inadequate training, of greater family demands were also expressed and given closer attention below. For those women engaged in formal and in informal economic activities, liberal values are offered to and reported by a number of participants as the means to empowerment and emancipation. For those who have not experienced this, or in a limited or contradictory way, the remedy is to engage more with liberal remedies – as will be demonstrated in the discussion of

Themes 2-9 below. In the next eight sections, I take a closer look at the constituent ideas that comprise this more general theme.

6.3.2 Theme Two: Gender Sensitivity in Education and Training

i. Women in formal jobs: Gender sensitivity in education and training

Attention to women's unequal representation in employment generates much focus on education and training as a means for them to become literate, educated, and qualified as a pre-requisite to acquiring formal jobs. Education is posited as a necessary dimension of empowerment and a means by which to understand and pursue individual rights, to aspire to personal liberty and freedom of choice, to leave their rural communities seek formal jobs and to excel in them (Burke et al. 1994 & Noe, 1988). Such women can then be encouraged to gain positions of authority and earn incomes to meet their nuclear and extended family commitments. Educated women, it is implied, will carry these liberal feminist ideals as a legacy and pass them on to their female children. Educated parents, through their respect for personal liberty, encouragement of wider social choices, and pursuit of equality of opportunity, will recognise the individual rights of their female children by investing in their education. Carried into the employment context, organizations will be gender-sensitive in dealings and relationship with staff which will revolve around their rights as (female) employees. They will understand that professional training and development is necessary to upgrade a worker's skills in gender sensitive ways. Professional development and training improves women's leadership roles and helps them to think critically. For many participants, this was so:

My current organisation is a gender sensitive one and beliefs in women and human rights. So annually there is a training budget for the staff. My organisation paid for my Bachelor's training.

I believe that education contributes effectively to a woman's leadership role. Without education, I wouldn't be able to think the way I am doing today. I was able to be educated to a level that I can see life critically and decisions I make are critical decisions in line with my spiritual principles as well...With better education, women will be able to make better decisions for the women of this nation.

I recommend further tertiary education...University studies and extra training equips us to be confident...When I acquired a qualification I felt confident that I could also become a decision-maker.

Gender sensitivity and respect for human rights, trust in female leadership, and investment in education and training is clearly valued by these women.

Urban women nevertheless also reported experiences that confirmed the difficulty of accessing professional training and development from their employers although this is a pre-requisite for them to secure well-paid jobs:

Education and position wise, more women are needed in directorship positions, managerial positions, medical fields, pilots and other educational fields statistics should be equal for both men and women, but this is not happening right now.

Insufficient training is provided in the work-place to promote female employees to succeed and develop into a higher level... Trained and experienced women continue to face challenges to obtain education and training in various organisations.

I got negative feedback that there is no office provision to release me [for tertiary studies]. I had to go to higher places to seek the approval...If I had not gone to higher authorities, the response would be an automatic "No"!

I was studying through the distance flexible learning in (name of country). My supervisor...called my husband and counselled me to stop studying as I was pregnant.

Education and training is seen as both the explanation for success and as a remedy for reported difficulties. Lack of access to opportunities may be attributed to lack of institutional resources or to prejudices of managers. These inhibitors have liberal solutions. Resources must be found, prejudices must be transformed. Both are remedies possible within a liberal analysis, aspiration, and faith.

ii. Women in informal jobs: Gender sensitivity in education and training

The value of education and training reported by the women in formal jobs was echoed by women in the informal sector, but here the conversations were note-worthy more by the reported relative absence or inadequacy of training opportunities:

A lot of women are not well educated. Because it is hard to find formal employment...the only thing we can do is run our own individual businesses...making a contribution towards our family maintenance.

We just need to attend more courses so that we can manage ourselves and improve our business capacity. In my view I impress management as fundamental.

I recommend that the Vanwods MFI run some more courses to help us. Others need to learn to be strict with their business funds.

[I recommend] some gratis training for Vanwods MFI Mamas to improve their financial literacy and business skills training to Vanwods MFI Mamas.

Urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal jobs aspire to personal liberty offered through greater financial independence. They can see the benefits of participating in education and training through which to improve their managerial skills, self-confidence, business capacity, and to become stricter with their business funds. Improved financial literacy and business skills training is essential to their success. This segment of snippets reports the expressed need for more professional training and development to improve the women's business capacity. Because Vanwods MFI have been reported as helping a lot of women, a call is made for its services to be extended to other areas of Vanuatu.

6.3.3 Theme Three: Women's Employment

i. Women in formal jobs: Women's employment

The liberal feminist rhetoric claims that the enhancement of individual freedom for women is for them to make social choices in life. This is a value shared by many women world-wide. Urban Ni-Vanuatu women are no different in this regard. Some of

these urban women are calling on employers to appoint qualified, capable and ethical women into decision-making positions in formal jobs because literate, educated and qualified women will perform their jobs in a more professional manner in their positions of authority of authority:

The state and employers need to appoint qualified, capable and ethical women into decision-making positions. If they are adequately educated, they will be able to do their jobs in a professional manner.

When we had a female director, she gave all staff members whether males or females the same opportunities.

I coordinated other women and they were also involved in their individual roles...If women are given decision-making roles, they will manage their staff members well and ensure that the office operates efficiently.

With my limited knowledge but with sheer determination and effort, I became a great women leader and improved my career path. Yes I have been here 26 years and I continue to enjoy my work every day.

My first employment was washing dishes in the kitchen... I had a good employer who trained me...He sent me to Australia for a 6 month's course on hotel and catering...Before my employer returned overseas...he found me a new job and I am earning good money from my current job. I learned a lot from my current work place...I manage the office and supervise other staff....I do not dream of leaving my job as I enjoy it very much.

I will go one hundred miles to manage the social and economic well-being of my family. I will always find a way to find money to help others in need. It is in built within us women as we are always helping others.

Gender-conscious women in paid employment are valuable agents for the progression of egalitarian ideals expressed in their dealings with staff members under their direction. Women in senior jobs worked very hard and reported using their managerial

skills to manage other staff members. They believed that through sheer determination, they were able to improve their career paths. Through access to professional training and development, they were able to improve their leadership skills and their capacity in the work-force by moving from menial and junior non decision-making jobs, to positions of authority. These women expressed that their roles to care for their extended and nuclear family commitments were fundamental and that their efforts not only benefitted them-selves but also the well-being of their colleagues and their families as well – as the CEDAW-EEO promises would happen.

6.3.4 Theme Four: Women’s Participation in Economic and Social Life

i. Women in formal jobs: Women’s employment

Liberal feminist supports the idea that all women are entitled to full participation in economic and social life. The prevailing assumption is that it is participation in economic life that justly determines social status. This illustrates the deeply held belief in the principle of meritocracy.

I made history to become the first woman to hold the (name of title) to the (name of state employer) which were previously occupied by men so I am proud and I believe that other women can do so too if they have the ambition and determination in life to work hard.

ii. Women in informal jobs: Women’s employment

Liberal feminist support for the concept of universal equality prescribes urban Ni-Vanuatu women who cannot secure formal jobs should not be prevented from full participation in economic and social life. These aspirations is made available to them through personal choices to own; operate and maintain microfinance businesses by which they can earn incomes and meet their urban centre financial obligations; educate their children, and provide them with better living conditions and to eradicate their poverty. For many, this was reported to be the case:

I find the Vanwods MFI as helping me so much...Now that I am running my business I manage my own business and am the decision-maker.

Our membership to the Vanwods MFI has lifted up our status...Our spouses are now seeing that we have improved our living conditions and they see us as successful entrepreneurs.

Vanwods MFI arrived in Santo in 2008...It helps Mamas to ensure that they work hard to save funds for their future. Vanwods MFI is the only organisation that helps us poor women to become successful entrepreneurs. My husband, me and my children we all make savings to the Vanwods MFI every week.

I spend money on acquiring raw material for my business and also paying for utility and other costs.

We have to make regular savings to the Vanwods MFI scheme as well as it forces Mamas to work hard and save funds for their future.

A lot of women are not very educated... the only thing we can do is run our own individual businesses that help us to also make a contribution towards our family's maintenance.

I am no longer employed in the formal employment sector but I run my own business...Some of us never had formal employment so when we joined Vanwods MFI it has helped to improve our lives.

I no longer concentrate on planting gardens only but am running a successful business as well...It is encouraging for me to operate my business as my husband sees the positive impact that I make to the household, as we share 50% of all costs.

I was making savings through the (name of club) and when my son was accepted to do secondary school at (name of school), I withdrew my funds and paid for his school fees so this is how my husband saw the benefits of saving for the future. My husband is now also a member of the Vanwods MFI.

The (name of club) and the Vanwods MFI is already encouraging women to work hard together so it is possible for other women to set a common goal and work towards it....we should see a common theme so that we all women with different cultures, values and beliefs can work together. The churches and Vanwods MFI are already bringing women together.

For women who have only very basic education, microfinance businesses are the only means for them to earn incomes and also help secure informal jobs than merely operating as subsistence farmers. For many participants, this was so. The urban women expressed that through their microfinance business ownership; operation and maintenance, they were able to improve their social and economic status and become decision-makers in their own rights. The women received recognition from their spouses as successful entrepreneurs and through their business income were able to improve their living conditions. The Vanwods MFI in Santo granted women personal liberty and social choices to become entrepreneurs. Through hard work they were able to make personal savings. Some women were able to recruit other family members to become Vanwods MFI members. The Vanwods MFI weekly savings requirement forces the women to work harder and not rely on their spouses for assistance. Some women made savings that went towards their children's secondary school costs. Vanwods MFI Mamas have demonstrated that it is possible through solidarity to work together and collectively for a common goal purpose.

6.3.5. Theme Five: Women's Role-modelling and Mentorship Programmes and Mind-Set Changes

i. Women in formal and informal jobs Role-modelling and mentorship programmes

Liberal feminists advocate for role-modelling programmes that provide literacy, education and qualification to women to secure formal jobs. Burke et al. (1994); Noe (1988) and McCall, Lombardo and Morrison (1988) highlight the benefits women get if they are enrolled in role-modelling programmes. Many of the women in my study expressed a need for role-modelling programmes within their organizations to provide them with ethical values, leadership and management training and equip them to perform better in their formal jobs and also improve their business functions

In the future we need to set up a role-modelling and mentorship programme that will teach management, leadership and ethical values to potential future leaders as we need to provide this kind of training to people who have never undergone any tertiary training to become better decision-makers.

We need to change men's mentality that women are incapable. Once men have changed their mentality, it will be easier for women to occupy roles in constitutional and corporate governance and economic activities.

My grandfather was a big chief even though I am a patrilineal woman, I could stand up and give my views and also participate in decision-making in my community. I am what I am today because my society did not stop me from seeking a leadership role. Also through my educational endeavours I have become confident in expressing my views.

My biggest influence was my father who was a hands-on experienced teacher. He encouraged me to improve my educational capacity. Women need to really research into their customs to see what their traditional society offers in terms of women's empowerment and advancement.

Women are excellent managers at home so it would take the same concept to managing organisations/businesses when they become decision-makers. We must provide awareness to recognise women's potential to manage and govern with men.

The positive experiences reported by many women would support the call by McCall et al. (1984) and Noe (1988) who have long recommend mentoring and career development programmes to upgrade women's skills. Burke and McKeen (1994) stipulate that organizations designing jobs with development value and development relationships and incorporate mentors and sponsors are able to advance women's career paths. Their experiences would vindicate the call by Huffer and Molisa (1999) for more Ni-Vanuatu women to embark on professional training and development so that they can improve their chances of securing positions of authority and participate in Vanuatu's future direction.

I now turn my attention to strategies that were offered by participants who attended the focus group discussion with employer representatives. They conveyed strong beliefs that an application of liberal feminist strategies would improve the status of Ni-Vanuatu women. The illustrative examples for themes six to nine are taken from the field notes recorded from the focus group discussions.

6.3.6 Theme Six: Gender-Balanced Policies

From the focus group discussion with employer representatives, participants deliberated on their understanding of organisational CEDAW-EEO programmes and initiatives and offered strategies they believed would address women's marginalised status in Vanuatu. Many of these recommendations have a close alignment with the ideals and policies offered, which are embedded in the liberal feminist rhetoric of justice, equity and egalitarianism.

A call is made, for example, to the Public Service Commission to review and strengthen its gender-balanced initiatives. Secondly, interlocutors agreed, all employer-instituted strategies and policies need to be non-discriminatory to ensure liberal feminist ideals are achieved. Thirdly, a work-place monitoring, evaluation and investigation compliance check needs to be undertaken to monitor gender-balanced activities in both state and private sectors:

The Public Service Commission (PSC) must become proactive to create an office to reform its strategies and policies and apply changes to the private sector as well.

All employers must develop, incorporate and implement non-discriminatory strategies and policies to provide EEO programmes to both male and female workers for gender balanced recruitment and women's empowerment in all levels of society including organisational, community, local, provincial and national governance involvement.

The Vanuatu Labour Department must impose on the PSC, private sector, NGOs and civil society, including international organisations operating in Vanuatu, a work-place monitoring, evaluation and investigation compliance

check to examine and monitor their gender-balance activities in terms of human rights and gender compliance.

6.3.7 Theme Seven: Domestic Gender-Sensitisation

The liberal feminist rhetoric prescribes that when both genders are gender-equality conscious, they can assume their personal freedom, make social choices, and undertake extensive freedom of thought and expression and free exchange of ideas with no impediments. For example, for gender sensitisation to become a reality in Vanuatu, the Vanuatu Government and other stakeholders in Vanuatu including resident aid donors' must collaborate to fund on-going nation-wide advocacy programmes to provide educative and advocacy awareness to educate and influence parents to play an important role in educating their children on liberal feminist ideals within their homes. When parents impress the ideals of justice, equity and egalitarian values to their male children and these children understand the equal status of both genders, they will treat their sisters with dignity and respect and reduce the current trend of discrimination and oppression. The domestic gender sensitisation of boys and girls will lead into their adult life and into their marriages as men will treat their spouses with dignity and respect. When parents invest in the education of their children, they will return to support their families:

The Vanuatu Government, NGOs and civil society must encourage all parents to start education in the family; this is where mind-set changes will take place...to reduce the current trend of discrimination and oppression to women in Vanuatu.

Parents should start teaching their children from the homes. Showing male children that their sisters also have equal rights like them.

Education at home is important so that children can respect that women also have a place in society and have equal rights as men and can be decision-makers too. I recommend further education for both men and women so that they can improve their living conditions. When a parent invests in the education of both genders, the children will return and help their parents regardless of whether they are boys or girls.

6.3.8 Theme Eight: Public Gender-Sensitisation

Another intervention proposed by the participants of the focus group discussion is for public gender-sensitisation, which aligns to the liberal feminist rhetoric of extensive freedom of thought and speech, free exchange of ideas, the prevailing rule of law and having transparent systems of governments. For example, through this public gender-sensitisation programme, citizens of Vanuatu could receive education, coaching and role-modelling programmes to encourage them to change their mind-sets, beliefs and attitudes of superiority over women. A total mind-set change is needed for Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy. The Vanuatu Government and donors' resident in Vanuatu need to collaborate and fund gender community awareness training for rural and urban citizens to publically educate and gender-sensitise Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy to recognise women's worth, value and their potential and include them into positions of authority. Male champions need to be recruited for these educative and advocacy programmes so they can listen to and educate grass-roots people and to provide advice to the state to help them in their governance roles:

The Vanuatu Government, NGOs and civil society must undertake more public awareness programmes to sensitise both men and women to recognise the need to include more women into decision-making roles as well as in constitutional governance.

The wealth of the nation depends on the health of the nation...The state needs to find people who are not politically motivated but who have clear goals and objectives so that they can listen to grassroots people and others to provide advice to the government to help them in their governance role. The state needs to listen to women's voices to govern Vanuatu appropriately.

6.3.9 Theme Nine: Humility and Open-Mindedness

Another intervention made is for the adoption of humility to propel Vanuatu citizens to recognise the capacity of Ni-Vanuatu women. For example, when Vanuatu citizens have humility, they will respect the liberal feminist rhetoric of extensive freedom of thought and speech, free exchange of ideas, the prevailing rule of law and transparent systems of governance. Men will recognise that women need a voice and space in community affairs and national governance and also have rights to own land and

property through their personal liberty and freedom of choice. Men will also respect when women are leading, managing and governing with them. A call is made for all citizens of Vanuatu to hold an open-mind, as they are urged to take the time through extensive freedom of thought and speech and free exchange of ideas, to listen to the perspectives of others', and to investigate and learn from the transparent systems of governance through matrilineages' framework and accord women with justice, equity and equalitarian values and respect. The Vanuatu Government, NGOs, and civil society must encourage workers to hold values of humility, become willing to learn from others and recognise that they are servants to others, and must always be willing to listen to others and to remain neutral at all times:

We should use the matrilineal model as this concept permits women to also have a place in decision-making and apply it to other areas of life in Vanuatu. If we can encourage patriarchy and people operating in patrilineages, that it is vitally important to include women in decision-making roles, then this will improve the status of women in Vanuatu.

The Vanuatu Government, NGOs and civil society must encourage workers to become humble and willing to teach and learn from others; to recognise that they are servants to the people regardless of their culture, age, and qualification; to take the time to listen to others (become a good listener and not someone that judges); to remain neutral at all times (and do not take sides); to become decisive persons with visions; and to live and walk the talk (lead the way and help others to work towards achieving their goals).

The highlighted focus group and personal conversational narratives clearly demonstrated the affiliations and aspiration needs of liberal feminist ideals of justice, equity and egalitarian values embedded in the participants' stories they desired from Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy. Nevertheless, in analysing, evaluating and interpreting the empirical field notes, although these urban women do gain benefits from their various mixed market-economical activities, yet I discerned a whole series of conversations that counterpoint these women's affiliations and aspirations needs, which I will turn to in Chapter Seven.

6.4 Summary

This chapter is headed '*Prevailing and progressing liberalism*'. The point of this title was to explore how the very expression of the concerns and their remedies in the liberal voice also embeds this very orientation ever more. The theory and philosophy of liberalism and liberal feminism is embedded in the participants' languages from both the focus group discussion and the urban Ni-Vanuatu women's personal conversational narratives. This chapter analysed, evaluated, interpreted and presented arguments, as the 'Point' by using a liberal feminist approach to which urban Ni-Vanuatu women appear to take courage and within which they report to finding such opportunities as they describe. The liberal feminist rhetoric of justice, equity and egalitarian values of personal liberty, individual rights, equality of opportunity, extensive freedom of thought and speech, free exchange of ideas, transparent systems of governance and equal employment opportunities reverberated through the conversations of the participants. These experiences reported by participants in both the formal and informal sectors support the liberal ideal that a better educated woman is better for Vanuatu, particularly as conceived in liberal economic terms. A recommendation for professional training and development and university education is made to improve a woman's self-confidence and their decision-making roles. To be eligible for such training requires access to basic education. The Republic of Vanuatu (2004) reports that Vanuatu citizens have recognised the importance of educating female children as almost half of primary school intakes are girls. What was of deep interest to me, however, were comments within and across conversations that appeared inconsistent or even contradictory to this prevailing consistency with a liberal feminist response by the women participants to their situation. My return to the feminist literatures in Chapter Five provided me more radical perspectives through which to consider these. In the next chapter I present segments of conversations interpreted through the post-colonial subaltern voice and lens as a 'counterpoint' that draws a differing light on the liberal feminist ideals.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Themes: A Radical ‘Counterpoint’

7.1 Introduction

Through the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes in 1995 and Microfinance projects in 1996, the Vanuatu Government and private sector employers promised to redress the discrimination and the marginalisation of women in Vanuatu. My starting point to this research was my observation that while some women were to be found in jobs, and microfinance projects had been well established, the overall situation for women in Vanuatu seemed little improved over the years. There seemed to be insignificant accomplishment to show-case that these interventions, now in place for over a decade and a half, have liberated, emancipated and empowered Ni-Vanuatu women from the discrimination and oppression described in Chapter Three. To this day, urban women in Vanuatu are not receiving equal consideration and treatment in paid employment and access to life sustaining income generating projects are not reaching all women. I was puzzled by the general sense of progress expressed by some of the participants but the lack of material advancement on the whole. While in Chapter Six I was able to demonstrate some very close fits between the analyses of the authors reviewed in Chapter Three, the orientation of the CEDAW and the experiences of a number of women, the stories that did not fit so well drew my greater attention. I noticed that even those women who report gaining benefit from the interventions and opportunities brought by CEDAW, these, they reported, often came with significant cost. My interlocutors’ personal stories contained in this chapter clearly demonstrate the rampant discrimination and oppression they experienced from the hands of Vanuatu’s urban patriarchy (including employers and senior female gate-keepers) in preventing them from ascending the career ladder in terms of recruitment, equal pay, and promotions. Urban women’s marginalised status remains acute because Vanuatu’s urban patriarchal mind-sets predominantly prevent women from leading and managing others in public and private sector jobs.

In this Chapter, I revisit these themes listed at the bottom of Chapter Four from a more radical feminist perspective. I begin this chapter with an explanation of the adaptation of the radical feminist readings undertaken in Chapter Five from which I crafted ‘the Subaltern Voice’ as the voice for the ‘counterpoint’ with which to analyse the

interventions devised to enhance the well-being and security of women in Vanuatu and their dependents. I begin the chapter with an explanation of my adaptation of radical interpretations of women's lives as the Subaltern Voice. I then apply this voice to various aspects to the themes, demonstrating the way these themes are experienced by participants in this research through a sample of illustrative extracts from their stories.

7.2 Adapting Radical Feminist Insights: A Subaltern Voice

The return to the literatures in Chapter Five provided an opportunity to review more radical interpretations of the lives of women than were visible in the literatures about women in Vanuatu reviewed in Chapter Three. I came to see that much of that literature reiterated and promulgated a liberal feminist notion of women's emancipation. This orientation was also evident in many of the stories participants told. However, it was the 'misfits' in the stories that invited a more radical review. To contrast these stories with those told with the prevailing liberal orientations illustrated in Chapter Six, I crafted an amalgam of more radical versions as a subaltern response to liberal aspirations, interpretations of experiences, and remedies to persistent inhibitions and on-going marginalisation of women in Vanuatu.

Characteristic of radical feminist ideals are: i) the drive to search for 'root causes' for oppressions variously expressed as biological, cultural, spiritual, and economic; ii) a view of liberal feminism as a limited response to women's marginalisation and exclusion – as at best access to the purported benefits of liberalism (in the form of capitalist markets). This view, as posited is limited in the ways that other critics of capitalism see this system of competitive individualism as based on suspect notions of meritocracy.

Key analytical concepts in the tool-box of more radical analyst are notions of 'false consciousness', 'hegemonic control', and various forms of explanations based on the primacy of patriarchy served by capitalist economic direction or vice-versa. Such radical analysts expose and challenge the embedded idea that 'biology equals destiny' and thus that the socially imposed responsibilities of all 'care-for-others' should be attributed to women's capacity to bear babies. False consciousness is an idea from more radical theories that suggests people hold views that are not fully realistic. Such views might have been actively established by those who would benefit from a

population holding these views. Such a situation could be considered as a version of hegemonic control: In the context of this thesis whether patriarchal determinism, economic determinism, or biological determinism can serve as a guide to deeper investigation is posited as a worthy line of enquiry. As an example of economic determinism, for example, Karl Marx (cf Lacey, 1996) in his *Das Capital* argues that as peasant economies become more industrialised and technologies more mechanised, there is higher scope for the Master (the global economy as explained by Honderich (1995) through the owners of capital also known as the bourgeoisie to exploit the labour of the proletariat (Cates, 2011). Marx also argues that a country's "economic base" determines its "infrastructure and superstructure" (ibid, p. 696). In Vanuatu's matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models, the '*Wantok Kastom ekonomi*' is the socio-political structure that drives the community governance forms of communalism, social cohesiveness and reciprocity (Westoby, 2010; ILO, 2006 & Jolly, 1996). A cash economy is not mandatory for rural inhabitants to survive in their *Wantok Kastom ekonomi* because it is garden produce, resources collected from the land and forest, rivers and sea which sustains inhabitants of these societies, where sharing and caring is the standard. Rural inhabitants also offer their labour and services to help other members of the society because they will receive help when their time of need arrives (delayed reciprocity) as there is no need to pay for people's labour and services.

However, Vanuatu's urban centres operate according to capitalistic pursuits offered through formal and informal jobs and earned incomes. With earned incomes, workers are promised that they will be able to improve their living conditions, obtain better housing, educate their children and meet their nuclear and extended family commitments. The lucrative viewpoint of earned incomes and urban life have influenced a substantial number of indigenous rural inhabitants of the matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models to migrate into the urban centres seeking formal and informal jobs in the free market economy (Rodman et al. 2009; Chung et al. 2002 & O'Collins, 1998). Patrilineal women who receive less recognition and privilege from their patrilineal Wantok governance model as men exploit their reproductive and productive labour merely to grow their patrimony and legacy are more inclined to leave their suppressive societies to seek liberation, emancipation and empowerment in the urban centres (ILO, 2006 & Van Trease, 1987). Once these

patrilineal women are in urban residence, they have provisions to secure a voice and space (governance rights), and land and property rights through their paid employment and earned incomes (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004).

Nevertheless, neither life in the indigenous patrilineal Wantok governance model nor in the urban contexts for both matrilineal and patrilineal women is deemed easy for the interlocutors who are engaged with me in this research. Emancipation and its various synonyms attract both supportive and critical attention. The quest for liberation, emancipation and empowerment that accompanies liberal democratisation and market orientations is well underway in Vanuatu and is attractive to many Ni-Vanuatu women (Rodman et al. 2009 & Chung & Hill, 2002). A post-colonial subaltern voice and lens helps to identify the contradictions that are embedded in my interlocutors' stories, which may indicate systemic forces are at play, rather than the vagaries of individuals' commitments.

7.3 The Themes: A Subaltern Voice

Nowhere in the world, not even in the most deeply entrenched democratic societies has the pattern of women's marginalisation and impoverishment been fully transformed through access to formal jobs have granted women with justice, equity and egalitarianism through personal liberty, individual rights, equality of opportunity, extensive freedom of thought and speech, free exchange of ideas, transparent systems of governance and equal employment opportunities through EEO.

Liberal democracy is unable to grant these women liberation, emancipation and empowerment, if this is to be measured in the equal access to employment opportunities and outcomes with men and/or with the expatriate population because it has some way to go on its own merits. The aspirations for justice, gender-equity and gender-equality in the Master's Ship has nowhere yet proven robust for all urban Ni-Vanuatu women (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). The implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes' very aspirations appears flawed. Since the enactment of CEDAW in 1995, only a handful of women before and after its implementation have gained positions of authority in corporate and constitutional governance (see Chapters One to Chapters Three). Snippets of conversation outlined below are provided to

illustrate how, in various ways, the articulation of the emancipatory aspirations of liberals are not met. They are arranged in the themes listed at the end of Chapter Four.

Critics of capitalism argue that capitalistic premises are oppressive and do not deliver just outcomes for all people. Their work includes the exposing of forms of exploitation and marginalisation. For these critics, these are systemic outcomes, responsibility for which cannot be laid at the feet of those marginalised. Women, in various categories, experience this marginalisation in a number of ways. In Chapter Seven, Theme 7.3.1, I illustrate this as a general principle. In my analyses of the themes below, I examine the constituent themes from a radical feminist perspective, showing significant differences in experiences, in possible interpretations of these experiences and in the proffered remedies when the stories are viewed from this radical perspective.

7.3.1 Theme One: Women's Empowerment

The stories of a number of women as depicted in Chapter Six, Theme 6.3, 1 confirmed that for them the liberal aspirations to empowerment were being experienced. This way of life was reported as rewarding. Benefits flowed through to their families. Not all women; however, experienced such empowerment. For many 'patriarchy' was a powerful force working against their emancipation. Men, these women reported, did not want to be managed by women:

It is to do with Vanuatu's patriarchal mind-set that women are not supposed to lead and head departments.

I also encountered problems with men mistreating me when I was working for the (name of organisation) and not wanting to receive orders from me. Only men are in the leadership and senior positions in our office... Women are not given the opportunity to become decision-makers as men occupy the decision-making positions and are the managers/directors/chief executive officers in these settings.

But it is not only men who opposed the career aspirations of these participants:

It is the women who were senior workers at the (name of organisation) who opposed me the most...Women are very jealous if other women are moving up the career ladder. Women are ardent rivals when it comes to applying for positions

Women leaders also have been obstacles in my life in recent times, when they were jealous of the good efforts/work/job that I did.

I also face discrimination from [women] because some women thought that I did not know what I was doing. They were saying that I was wasting my time working for a women's organisation.

Institutional power is not only maintained by men. These reported obstacles, in principle, from a liberal perspective, can be ameliorated by sound employment policies and robust EEO programmes. While my research did not investigate to what extent participants' performance warranted the criticism of their managers, the participants themselves felt they were being badly judged. Radical feminists posit that the fundamental organisational power lies with patriarchy. In this form, men and women will support the power of men over women. Women who are willing to support this order, or at least not be seen to challenge it, may be privileged, and may participate in the exclusion of other women – preserving a delicate balance for themselves within the arrangements as they are. The privileging of some women in a system that will (by definition) never include all women, and may reward women who do not challenge the system, from a radical feminist view embeds patriarchy – an anathema to the empowerment ideas of the liberals, the CEDAW and the rule of law.

7.3.2 Theme Two: Gender Sensitivity in Education and Training

i. Women in formal jobs: Gender sensitivity in education and training

According to liberal feminist ideals, for the work-place to function smoothly, literate, educated and qualified personnel are needed. Nevertheless, very few urban Ni-Vanuatu women were accessing positions of authority or even receiving professional training and development because employers had the upper hand and refused to provide these privileges to them to improve their self-confidence and work capacity. The structure of domination and subordination from Vanuatu's urban patriarchy is

shown through the hegemonic power and control that employers held over urban women, confirming the rampant discrimination and oppression they encountered in their need for professional training and development. Although provisions for sabbatical leave existed, some employers did not release women for tertiary studies. Some women had to seek approval from higher authorities. A supervisor curtailed the human rights of a trainee by ordering her to stop studying because she was pregnant:

My former employer did not allow me to continue with education because he did not want me to obtain a qualification that is higher than his. So he influenced the writing of a new staff individual contract which restricted me and others from acquiring further training at the local university.

I asked for sabbatical or educational leave to come to (name of country) and do my (name of qualification). My Director staunchly told me in 2000 that I would not be allowed to go unless I resigned from my job.

I got negative feedback that there is no office provision to release me [for tertiary studies]. I had to go to higher places to seek the approval...If I had not gone to higher authorities, the response would be an automatic “No”!

I was studying through the distance flexible learning in (name of country). My supervisor...called my husband and counselled me to stop studying as I was pregnant

These reported costs, from a liberal perspective can be ameliorated by employers' change of attitudes, mind-sets, and beliefs as stipulated in Theme 9 and through employers' recognition of gender sensitivity for women in education and training. From a more radical perspective, unless men undertake a total mind-set reformation process, their values of superiority will continue to privilege men in a system that will (by definition) never include women – remain problematic from a radical feminist point of view.

Although more women are needed in positions of authority, Vanuatu's urban patriarchy is not granting women equal employment opportunities and gender-equity

and gender-equality provisions. The gender politics of inequality is overt for many urban women. Even when urban Ni-Vanuatu women needed professional training and development to improve their capacity in their formal jobs, employers (including senior female gatekeepers) through domination prevented them from accessing these opportunities:

Insufficient training is provided in the work-place to promote female employees to succeed and develop into a higher level... Trained and experienced women continue to face challenges to obtain education and training in various organisations.

Education and position wise, more women are needed in directorship positions, managerial positions, medical fields, pilots and other educational fields statistics should be equal for both men and women, but this is not happening right now.

From a liberal feminist perspective, employers' must change their negative patrilineal and patriarchal mind-sets and negative attitudes to recognise the importance of women in their society. From a radical perspective, men must undergo a total reformation process that becomes more gender-sensitive towards women as partners, co-employees, co-managers in their work-places and societies.

7.3.3 Theme Three: Women's Employment: Women in Formal Jobs

i. Women in formal jobs: Corruption and non-conducive work cultures

Some urban Ni-Vanuatu women speak of experiencing corruption from male employers and senior female gate-keepers through terminations in their formal jobs. Other women would experience corruption through prevention of overseas trips or reducing their travel allowances. Some other women encountered non-conducive work cultures when they were forced to commit unethical acts. Because of male values of superiority and the belief that it is only men who should lead, manage and govern others, urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal jobs are disempowered through constant micro-management:

[My sacking] was through the intervention of two powerful women (name of women) who worked at the (name of organisation). They approached the Prime Minister asking him to intervene and sack me...I found out later that their refusal to provide [me with] the grants acquittal was because these grants were misappropriated and not provided to the rural recipients they were intended for but spent on the operations of their organisation.

On occasions, I would be removed from official visits especially if (my employer) thought that the state could influence my mind-set. A further form of discrimination I received was when my travel allowances were reduced forcing me to travel with very little money.

I had to really work hard to resolve the opposition from the senior women and men who were in power who thought that they could [force me] to...do things that were unethical.

So now I have to consult him before I carry out any work...There are so many things that I would like to improve and also many things to be corrected like improving the training section, the service delivery and mentoring and role-modelling services but when I try and embark on these activities, I get negative responses like: 'Oh!, we have tried this already and it did not work', so it is hard for me

Through a liberal feminist perspective, men's attitudes, beliefs and mind-sets need total reformation for them to become gender-sensitive and facilitate the entry of women into positions of authority. From a radical perspective, granting some women empowerment and emancipation will mean that not all women in the work-force can benefit from this provision.

ii. Women in formal jobs: Rivalries by non-promoted long-term employees

Employers in the organisations have a responsibility to provide healthy working environments. The women's stories indicate breach of confidentiality occurring when employees spy on salary records and use this information to oppress women. Non-promoted long-term employees employed overt or covert sabotages of these women in

their careers as senior managers, making snickering and bickering comments against them and also undermining the capacity of university graduates. Because of the diversity of the work-force, employee rivalries, different mind-sets, values and beliefs occur for many urban Ni-Vanuatu women. This is more so when men and women come from patrilineages' where women are subjugated and oppressed. Patrilineal men and women bring these negative values, beliefs and mind-sets into the work-force and impose them on the urban Ni-Vanuatu women who seek positions of authority:

One of the workers spied on the company salary slips and saw how much I was earning as (name of position) so the staff members were so angry with me...I found out that one of the male workers was extremely jealous of me and he was instigating the discrimination against me. This guy told me that he did not want to listen to me because I was a woman.

I faced obstacles during a staff meeting when other male and female workers raised their concerns that I had recently joined the (name of organisation) and received promotion while some of them were working for over ten years and had to wait very long to get promoted.

Both men and women saw me entering my new decision-making job and were snickering behind my back saying 'Look this woman has just finished from university and won't be able to manage this department.'

However, in my first job I faced obstacles from both men and women.

These reported costs, from a liberal perspective can be ameliorated by men's change of mind-sets and attitudes. From a more radical perspective, privileging some women will not mean extending the same privileges to all women of Vanuatu.

iii. Women in formal jobs: Gate-keeping activities by senior women

Grace Mera Molisa (cf O'Callaghan, 1987) states, "The only way forward for women in a largely pre-literate society is for those who have been upwardly mobile to help others" (p. 2). Molisa is making a call to upwardly mobile women, women who have the literacy and competency, to help marginalised groups of women in Vanuatu. As most of these marginalised women only have basic education, it is necessary for

literate women to help them in their struggles to make a better life for themselves and their families. In these stories we catch a glimpse of discrimination and oppression encountered by urban Ni-Vanuatu women when older women jealously guard their positions of authority and refuse to pass institutional knowledge to new female recruits to role-model, coach and mentor them. As more women aspired for positions of authority, they experienced rampant discrimination and oppression from other women in the organisation as well as jealousy and envy from these women. It was women in positions of authority that opposed aspiring women the most by erecting barriers for them. As urban women secured positions of authority, other women would discriminate and oppress them by making negative comments that they did not know what they were doing:

We face problems with older women who are reluctant to share their institutional knowledge and experiences because they have worked so hard to get to their perch and remain unwilling to teach, train and support the younger ones to replace them.

I found that when I was in the (name of organisation) the more I moved up; the women were very unhelpful. The women were gate-keepers and they were jealous and envious of my career progression.

A lot of women are jealous and envious of the progress of other women...It is not discrimination from men but jealousy and envy from other women.

It is the women who were senior workers at the (name of organisation) who opposed me the most...Women are very jealous if other women are moving up the career ladder. Women are ardent rivals when it comes to applying for positions.

Women leaders also have been obstacles in my life in recent times, when they were jealous of the good efforts/work/job that I did.

I also face discrimination from [women] because some women thought that I did not know what I was doing. They were saying that I was wasting my time working for a women's organisation.

These reported costs, again from a liberal perspective can be ameliorated by men and women's change of mind-sets, attitudes and belief systems. Again from a more radical perspective, only a few women will benefit from the EEO and microfinance programmes while many other women will be disenfranchised.

iv. Women in formal jobs: Power struggles

In these stories, we learn of men's dealings and relationship with urban Ni-Vanuatu women and of men's power and domination over women. Urban Ni-Vanuatu women earmarked to obtain positions of authority encountered gate-keeping and power struggles from male employees who subverted their career paths. Furthermore, when men held positions of authority, women are prevented from gaining positions of authority:

I was earmarked to take over from an [expatriate consultant] but I was working with this pastor (position holder) [who] he was fighting me tooth and nail because he wanted the position so badly.

Only men are in the leadership and senior positions in our office... Women are not given the opportunity to become decision-makers as men occupy the decision-making positions and are the managers/directors/chief executive officers in these settings.

A change of men's mind-sets, attitudes and belief systems is needed from a liberal feminist perspective while giving some women positions of authority will mean some women missing out from this opportunity from a radical feminist perspective.

v. Women in formal jobs: Staff turnover

Many urban Ni-Vanuatu women continued to experience progressive discrimination and oppression in their senior managerial roles. Because of these obstacles, some women have chosen to exit their work-place seeking better working conditions in

other organisations or ultimately leaving Vanuatu for greener pastures overseas. Emancipation for these women came by leaving the oppressive hierarchical relations of power in their work places. As more women depart, this causes a brain drain not only for the organisations concerned, if they had invested in the women's career paths, but also for Vanuatu as a whole, when Ni-Vanuatu citizens move overseas to find work. Some urban women speak of having difficulties meeting the job requirements because they were short-staffed, which creates stress and hardships for them with some women having to work harder for their country regardless of receiving discrimination and oppression:

Women continue to face challenges and the only option for them is leaving their work-places thus causing extensive brain drain and loss of talents for the organisation and Vanuatu as a whole.

I find it very difficult with my job because I do not have anyone to help me (we are short-staffed and I am doing the job of six people) so I am jumping from one job to the next. I am always pressured because I am doing everything and sometimes I fight with my boss and he has to leave me alone to get the job done.

I had to work harder to show my capacity...But I was able to overcome them and continued to work hard...But I kept saying to my fellow-workers that I am doing this work not to please [male employers] but for my country.

Men's attitudes, mind-sets and values of superiority will continue unless a total patrilineal and patriarchal reformation of mind-set is undertaken and women's place and values are recognised through EEO programmes or microfinance projects. Furthermore, granting a few women with positions of authority will disadvantage other women according to the radical feminist ideals.

7.3.4 Theme Four: Women's Participation in Economic and Social Life

i. Women in informal jobs: Women's employment

This theme was not divided into waged women and Mamas. The situation was the same for both groups. If matrilineal and patrilineal urban Ni-Vanuatu women want to be successful in their positions of authority and microfinance businesses, there is little time for anything else. The women who took part in my research reported that they took more responsibility for the care of their nuclear and extended family commitments than their spouses. This was not only in relation to the work involved, but also in terms of meeting house-hold expenses. For the Mamas, generating income from their enterprises needs to cater for loan repayments and compulsory savings before family responsibilities can be met. Mamas must struggle to meet the conditions of their loans and to make a surplus beyond this to support their families, especially women who are single parents. Some men had personal liberty and social choices to spend their money on their personal wants and extended family commitments that connects them to the communal systems from which they too derive their identity voice and authority. The women must spend their incomes on their nuclear and extended family commitments.

Women are more responsible than men with working and earning money in the formal employment sector.

I told my husband that our roles should be reversed because I worry more about maintaining the family then he does [as he] does not do things for the welfare of our family.

I am not worried that I do not have a partner because as a woman, I would still have to struggle to look after my families and to put food on the table.

My husband is free to look after his extended family commitments and I concentrate on our nuclear family commitments. Sometimes I do help his family members...I have cared for some of my nieces and kept them under my roof for many years.

At 5.00am I am already up, and by 7.30am I am already at work. Thank God my youngest sister cares for my children and takes them to school. I finish work between 6.30-7.00pm and then return home. I sort things out at home and then sleep at about 1200 midnight or 1.00am in the morning. I get very little sleep but my system is used to it.

From a liberal feminist perspective, when women work harder, the more incomes they will earn. This is a statement of faith, and for some, it is reported to have been a sound faith. This has not been the case for all women who believe this concept. If it can be shown that the 'playing field' was not equal, EEO remedies must be intensified. If no discrimination or marginalisation can be discerned, the women themselves must be to blame. One would look for the ways in which these women did not commit themselves. All these issues can also be addressed from a radical perspective. As well as looking for root causes of such discrimination, they propose an added insight into the economic dynamics of liberalism as a competitive system. It is a system that generates exclusion and seeks exploitable opportunities. Various diversity programmes are merely a changing about of the deckchairs that will eventually slide off the ship under the constant pressure of 'efficiency gains'.

ii. Women in formal and informal jobs: Multiple nuclear and extended family obligations

The only way to make ends meet is for urban Ni-Vanuatu women to work harder in their formal and informal jobs. Here, the women describe the inadequate incomes they receive or, as Thomas and Humphries (2010 & 2011) argue, '*meagre breadcrumbs from the Master's Table*,' that must be divided between their multiple nuclear and extended family commitments. One business woman spoke of meeting family support and maintenance expenses with a ratio of 80:20 from her and her spouse. On many occasions, it is the urban Ni-Vanuatu women who earn meagre incomes, that must meet most of their multiple nuclear and extended family obligations in both the urban centres as well as in the rural areas. Women became very strong and resilient because they do not rely on their spouses for assistance, with some spouses spending millions of Vatu on their extended family commitments and their cultural obligations. Ninety percent of the women are breadwinners:

Most men spend 90-95% of their salaries on kava and alcohol drinking and their other personal needs and worry very little about family [support and] maintenance...My husband makes only a small contribution...The majority of expenses is paid from my business earnings...so the ratio would be 80:20.

I have to care for my extended family members in (name of island) and for my spouse's family in (name of island). I have five children...five brothers and five sisters...When my extended family needs financial assistance, I help them and when my spouse's family needs help, I help them also...We women have [too] much responsibility. We look after our own extended family members as well as our spouse's family. I help a lot of my other family members who stay with us, especially ones who come for schooling here and I have to [support and] maintain them also.

Funds we receive from our small businesses must cater for both the nuclear and extended family members' needs. We receive requests from our extended family members in the islands for financial assistance, so we have to send money to them as well. There is so much demand placed on the limited funds we make from our small businesses.

I am a self-reliant woman. My husband was a (name of position) when we met and I was alone for most of the time he was away on (official business). It forced me to learn to drive a car and care for our children. My husband spent his money as he wished as I had no say on what he did with his money. Because he was not around for most of the time, I had to find a job to support myself and my children.

My husband is a high chief from (name of area) and he has the potential of becoming a bigger chief in the future. He has his family ties and customary obligations to attend to. I know that my husband spends millions of Vatu on his family and cultural obligations.

Ninety percent of the women are bread winners and take full responsibility for their families...It is the women who ensure that there is money to pay for school fees and food and contribute to the financial welfare of the family.

If a man only had 500 Vatu (NZ\$7.00) left in his wallet, he will hide the money for his kava drink ...and will not give it to his wife for the children's breakfast, so here mothers are more responsible because they will do their utmost to ensure that the family has sustenance to last them for that day.

While for many women, the income generated from their jobs or businesses was barely sufficient, it was firstly directed at the needs of their families and, at times, to support the wider community responsibilities of their own lineages or that of their spouses. The same could not be said for their perceptions of their spouses' priorities.

iii. Women in formal and informal jobs: Non-reciprocal social exchange systems

In the stories told by my interlocutors, regardless of whether they were salaried women or Mamas, inequality between women and men occurs because the urban women must meet both their nuclear and extended family commitments from their meagre incomes. In Vanuatu's traditional economy, reciprocation is practiced in community affairs. The rural habitat is less complex because there is no need for direct competition for formal and informal jobs. A caring and sharing attitude prevails among women and between women and men. The urban Ni-Vanuatu women are faced with a non-reciprocal social exchange system when they still have to distribute their 'meagre breadcrumbs' to their nuclear and extended family obligations (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). However, the assistance women provide to their kin and extended family members is no longer in assistance-in-kind or labour-in-kind through *Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi* but through cash, with no expectation for reciprocity. Urban life revolves around the cash economy and many women find it difficult to meet the needs of their families. Extended family members may also come to live with urban women who must then meet the maintenance costs for them as well.

As well as the pressures on their incomes to meet the livelihood needs and those of their dependents in the urban areas, the women must continue to support their siblings in the rural areas as well:

Living in town is not easy as, if the parents do not earn sufficient funds, it is not easy to cater for the needs of the family...I meet my nuclear and extended family obligations so sometimes it is a juggle to make ends meet with the limited money I make from my business.

In the village, you go to the garden and harvest food and you do not have to worry about expenses you need to pay for every day. I do have family members who come and stay with my family and we have to worry about looking after them as well plus my nuclear family commitments. I also need to send money to my parents in the village every now and then.

One of my cousin brothers lives with me and is studying in Port Vila...My youngest sister also lives with me. I also look after [20-30] extended family members who go and come from New Zealand [spending] about three weeks to three months with me [every quarter]. I provide them with accommodation, food and clerical assistance for their visas.

I take care of my parents and send them funds every fortnight. I also have a sister who is widowed and has four children. I take care of her children although most of them have finished schooling and now working, I am still responsible for them. I send food every fortnight to another sister. One of my sons has completed his tertiary education and is a lawyer working for the (name of organisation) in (name of island). At times I have so many family members in my home that my youngest son has to move out of his room to join me in my bed-room.

The 'double burden' placed on women who are required to earn incomes and still remain the primary caregivers for a large group of people is recognised by both liberal and radical feminists. They differ, however, in their views as to where the root causes are and thus what the remedies would be. Liberal feminists are more likely to promote

market driven solutions, such as (market-provided) care for children and the elderly while the radical feminists would attribute inequality to patriarchal control of opportunities.

iv. Women in informal jobs: Complexities of informal jobs

Access to informal jobs imposes high levels of stress and complexity on urban Ni-Vanuatu women. The Vanwods MFI social clubs and the executive body socially control any potential entrepreneurs by closely scrutinizing them through weekly meeting attendances and in the pledging of their personal savings. If potential entrepreneurs do not religiously attend weekly meetings and make regular weekly personal savings, their chances of becoming and remaining as Vanwods MFI members are limited. Some urban women in informal jobs have to wake up really early in the morning to commence their business activities, because many urban women have very little education, they can only make a living by owning and operating microfinance businesses. Some women who are solo parents must work two jobs to make ends meet to support their family obligations. Because the urban women in informal jobs are working hard all day, a few of them experience oppression from their spouses when they return home:

We do not... accept any kind of women but only women who are honest and reputable...We need women who are responsible and honest. Some women do not turn up to weekly meetings to pay their loans and make savings. When they do not turn up, other members have to meet the shortfall so it becomes hard on us because not every woman is responsible.

I wake up at 3.00am in the morning to make Kato Eight (sweet buns) [and] I [also] sell cigarettes.

A lot of women are not well educated. Because it is hard to find formal employment...the only thing we can do is run our own individual businesses... making a contribution towards our family maintenance.

I am a solo parent and have a job as a house keeper to ensure that I have enough funds to meet my Vanwods MFI loan repayments. I sell cooked food at a kava bar/nakamal to sustain myself and my family [as] I find it is not easy to run this business without external employment.

Some spouses get angry when Mamas are away from the home for long periods of time running their businesses

From a liberal perspective becoming a microfinance business entrepreneur removes urban women from their poverty as women are able to earn incomes and sustain themselves. However, from a radical perspective, strict surveillance, social control from one group of persons on another group of persons shows that unequal power relationships exist. It is the dominant group who will have the upper hand to discriminate and oppress and make life complex for the subordinate group. Mamas who do not conform to the rules of the Master's Ship will be removed from their social clubs and from Vanwods MFI executive membership, with no prospect of returning unless they have repaid all their debts plus the accrued interest and re-installed their creditworthiness reputation (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011).

v. *Women in informal jobs: Unfair business practices*

Vanwods MFI Mamas own and operate microfinance businesses with very little provision to earn much income because they are serving low-income earners. These stories speak of non-uniform power relationships, relations of power and economic structures of domination and the politics of gender inequality for the urban women. Vanuatu's urban patriarchy discriminates against and oppresses the Mamas by imposing high business licence fees on them, even though they are microfinance entrepreneurs. A call is made for Vanwods MFI to seek exemption for business licence fees for its members:

A major impediment for my business is my kava licence fee which is 34,000 Vatu (NZ\$500) each year. I find that this is so high and is something that deters people from operating kava businesses because they have to pay very high business licence fees.

Vanwods MFI should seek an exemption for its members not to pay business licence fees [such] as 34,000 Vatu per annum [it] is a lot of money for a poor woman to [afford].

Although women secured informal jobs and were able to earn incomes to support them-selves and their nuclear and extended family members, from a radical perspective, access to paid employment creates severe hardships for them because they must work extremely hard to continue to survive in the market economy.

Participants of the focus group discussion suggested improvements to address the marginalization of Ni-Vanuatu women and also the incorporation of gender-balanced policies, domestic and public gender-sensitisation and values of humility and open-mindedness. Politics of gender inequality and relationships of power and economic structures of domination and subordination occurred in these stories as well.

7.3.5 Theme Five: Women's Role-Modelling and Mentorship Programmes and Mind-Set Changes

i. Women in formal and informal jobs: Women's role-modelling needs

Although role-modelling, mentorship and coaching needs are liberal feminists ideals through literacy, education and qualification to professionally train and develop urban Ni-Vanuatu women to improve their self-confidence and successfully operate their formal and informal jobs; many employers (including senior female gatekeepers) do not wish to grant this opportunity to their employees, with some employees being thrown into teaching roles with no coaching given to them. Some senior women who held positions of authority refused to role-model, coach and mentor new female recruits and transmit their institutional knowledge. Some urban women did not receive any form of organizational coaching and mentoring or guidance in their senior managerial roles. With sheer determination, urban women who did not receive any on-the-job training, listened and learned from others and also used tertiary education to become literate, educated and qualified to perform their roles:

We throw people into decision-making roles but we do not give them appropriate training, so how do we expect them to adhere to good governance? More women need to undergo further studies...When I was

appointed in 2004, there was training taking place in this very classroom. I was not mentored or role-modelled. As soon as I entered the room, I was asked by the (name of position holder) to come in the front and start teaching the (students). Only after undertaking instruction work for four years, I went to (name of country) in (date) to attend further training.

I worked with older women in the organisation and these women find it very hard to share their institutional knowledge with me so I had to struggle a lot on my own.

I am very independent and I have no one to guide me and the only people I can rely on are my staff members. I have board members but they are very busy people and every time I send them emails, they never respond, so I run the office as best as I can and how I think is right to do so.

No on-the-job training and my sheer determination to learn, read and listen to others helped me to obtain my decision-making job as well as pursue tertiary studies. I started a new unit and I did not know anything about (name of role). I experienced a lot of challenges and was able to resolve them as I went along. I did not have a formal role-model to mentor or role-model me in the organisation or in my work.

From a liberal perspective, women who undergo role-modelling, mentoring and coaching programmes fare better in their jobs. However, from a radical perspective, many women are not benefitting from any sort of role-modelling, mentoring and coaching programmes that will improve their skills and knowledge and employability because employers and female gate-keepers remain reluctant to provide this privilege to them.

7.3.6 Theme Six: Gender-Balanced Policies

i. Women in formal and informal jobs: Vanuatu's gender-balanced policies

For liberation, emancipation and empowerment to occur and benefit urban women, men's hierarchical relationships of power must be overturned so that freedom from

oppression is achieved. Current emancipation strategies offered by the state are non-conducive as it encourages people to remain in their comfort-zones without working very hard. Promotions are given to urban Ni-Vanuatu women based on longevity of service. A call is made for the state to implement strategies to accord promotions to employees based on merit and their capacity, and good performances. Nevertheless, it is apparent that male decision-makers are inclined to approve professional training and development to men while side-stepping female employees:

The problem with the Public Service Commission is that when people work for the state for many years, they become seniors and receive promotion, not on merit, but based on their long-term service.

Promotions should be given based on capacity and merit...My organisation encourages training but because the decision-makers are males and they tend to favour and send men out for the majority of training.

Liberal feminist ideals advocate for gender-balanced strategies that will benefit women in paid employment. However, based on radical feminist perspectives, men's attitudes, mind-sets and values of superiority must undergo a total reformation for women to benefit from paid employment. From my interlocutors' stories, women are benefitting insignificantly from their formal and informal jobs because of men's negative mind-sets, attitudes and values of superiority.

7.3.7 Theme Seven: Domestic Gender-Sensitisation in Vanuatu

i. Women in formal & informal jobs: Domestic gender-sensitisation

It will take the strongest determination and will-power for male decision-makers in patrilineal societies to make the needed changes in their mind-sets, attitudes and values to improve their dealings and relationships with Ni-Vanuatu women. The difficulty of changing mind-sets and attitudes overnight is expressed in the following proverb: *'It is hard to teach an old dog a new trick; however, it is easier to teach a puppy new tricks.'* Therefore justice, equity and egalitarian training must start from the homes. Oppressive hierarchical relationships of power must be overturned so that freedom from oppression is achieved. Nevertheless, patrilineal parental willingness to embark

on gender sensitisation remains to be seen. Strategies can be recommended, but it is up to the parents of these patrilineal societies to identify how they can improve justice, equity and egalitarianism for Ni-Vanuatu patrilineal women. A call is made to Vanuatu parents to provide egalitarian values at home, assigning chores to both males and females so that the children learn that genders have the same rights. The manner in which children are brought up will have an impact on children practicing and valuing egalitarianism. For example, men will recognise that women have the same human rights as them and that all Vanuatu citizens should work towards a common goal in championing women's interest:

Women need to treat children the same way. Boys and girls must do house chores. Because parents treated children the same way, then the children realised that everyone has equal rights. Values need to be drummed to everyone regardless of their gender.

It depends on men and women's upbringing in the homes. So we need to start training our children properly so that they respect and provide the opportunity to women. We should leave cultural values aside and we women should work towards a common goal. We should train our young people to champion women's issues and to permit good governance to prevail...so that the advancement and empowerment of women can improve in the future.

7.3.8 Theme Eight: Public Gender-Sensitisation in Vanuatu

i. Women in formal and informal jobs: Public gender-sensitisation

As progressive rural-urban migration occurs, there will be shortage village members in the matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models to participate in communal and reciprocal work and in their *Wantok 'Kastom ekonomi'* (Westoby, 2010; O'Collins, 1998 & Jolly, 1996). Attention is drawn to the loss of indigenous traditional values which cannot be easily measured by Western standards. For example, ILO (2006) signals the loss of Vanuatu's traditional forms of governance when young people move out of rural habitats and divert their attention into new mind-sets because "Global western culture... through videos and music... and the greater individualism and materialism promoted by the schools and economy" (p. 35) is perceived as more

lucrative than living the idyllic and cultural life with narrow economic opportunities. The loss of human talents from rural habitats does not only cover the loss of women, but the total loss of the people of Vanuatu, because the women's indigenous traditional values and the voices of their indigenous traditional wisdom bearers are extinguished through the inheritance and layers of colonial influence.

Oppressive hierarchical relationships of power need to be over-turned. The willingness of the Vanuatu Government and aid donors' resident in Vanuatu is needed for this intervention to take place so that justice, equity and egalitarian values will be granted to Ni-Vanuatu women. There are both advantages and disadvantages to improvements in Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchal dealings and relationship with Ni-Vanuatu women, if mechanisms are not put into place to provide income-generation activities or economic benefits into the rural areas. If Vanuatu's public and private sector workplaces become too attractive, more rural women will also want to be a part of Vanuatu's economic hub, growth and development thus leaving their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models. A call for the improvement of gender-equality was made and men need to be incorporated into future gender-equality training:

Gender equality can be improved, but we have to preach more of gender equality, get men to undergo gender training and awareness and make them have respect for women.

Liberal feminist ideals advocate for public gender-sensitization programmes that will benefit women in paid employment. However, based on a radical perspective, Vanuatu male citizens' must undergo a total mind-set reformation before they can become gender-sensitised.

ii. Women in formal and informal jobs: Constitutional marginalisation

These stories indicate relationships of power, domination and subordination between groups of women as well as Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy. In rural life, overt scenarios of competition and rivalry remain uncommon. Rural women are less divisive because communalism and social cohesiveness are predominant characteristics of rural life. However, for urban women in formal jobs, they must compete with other women for jobs and positions of authority, setting the foundation

for infighting to occur between groups of women. Furthermore, competition creates strive, envy, jealousy, infighting and divisiveness. Women's envy, jealousy, divisiveness and infighting were obstacles that prevent them from working together for their collective well-being and in gaining positions of authority in constitutional power:

In the political arena, the reason why many women cannot succeed in constitutional power is not because men are against them but because women are fighting against women. It is not discrimination from men but jealousy and envy from other women.

Women's access to constitutional and corporate governance is part of liberal feminist ideologies for women to secure paid employment. However, women's infighting and men's attitudes, mind-sets and beliefs must be eliminated to emancipate and empower women in Vanuatu.

7.3.9 Theme Nine: Humility and Open-Mindedness & Values in Vanuatu

i. Women in formal and informal jobs: Humility and open-mindedness

Snippets taken from the conversations with my participants indicate there is a great need for a mind-shift among both women and men in Vanuatu. Liberation, emancipation and women's empowerment will only be achieved through men's humility and open-minded attitudes. If Vanuatu patrilineal citizens are willing to adopt humility as a value in their lives, they will accord women with honour, respect and recognition and share power with them in positions of authority and also grant them microfinance business ownership. Men's relations of power and economic structures of domination and subordination shapes gender inequality when they continue to retain power for themselves, as is the case in point, in Vanuatu. Negative patrilineal and patriarchal hegemonic and power control and the current oppressive mind-sets are obstacles that need to be eliminated, if this intervention is to become a reality. Nation-wide educative and advocacy work needs to be undertaken for Ni-Vanuatu citizens to become more aware of improving women's participation in Vanuatu's future direction. Strategies to incorporate income generation projects in the rural centres will make urban centre life less enticing for rural inhabitants. Again, if work-places become too lenient, many more rural residents will also want to become part of Vanuatu's

economic hub and growth, thus causing congestion in the urban centre facilities, and causing the demise of their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models. Domestic and public gender sensitization and the adoption of humility and open-minded attitudes will enable employers and senior female gate-keepers, Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy to reform their negative and oppressive attitudes and mind-sets. Both men and women must inspect themselves by becoming humble, listening to others and working collaboratively. Gender-inequality and relations of power and economic structures of domination occur in these conversations. To keep their male superiority, hegemonic control and negative power over Ni-Vanuatu women as secondary citizens in patrilineages and employees in the work-force, Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy continued to impose discrimination and oppression on women. Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy recognises the importance of women's social roles in community affairs but they continued to impose discrimination and oppression on them, claiming that it is men's role to lead and head departments. Men did not want to receive orders from women, Employers, superiors and fellow-workers refused to listen to female workers or use tactics of interruptions to stop them from making useful suggestions for the improvement of the work-force:

Men and women must be willing to improve themselves, be humble and listen to others and above all must work together.

It is to do with Vanuatu's patriarchal mind-set that women are not supposed to lead and head departments.

I also encountered problems with men mistreating me when I was working for the (name of organisation) and not wanting to receive orders from me.

My superiors and fellow workers were men who did not want to listen to us subordinates or are always interrupting us when we are speaking or when we are trying to make suggestions for improvement in our work-place.

Jealousies came from male (position holders) who think that women cannot work as well as they do.

If the organisation is led mostly by males, it is going to be difficult for women to acquire decision-making roles...Because my supervisor is a man, it is so hard for him to understand me and how I do my work.

Men mistreated me when I was working for the (name of organisation)...I faced many obstacles along the way...some men did not recognise the work I was doing.

The differences between the mentalities exhibited by rural and urban men are evident as rural citizens with basic education are more inclined to be receptive and are gifted with a call for urban citizens to learn from them:

People in the islands are very receptive. Even though they are not highly educated as we are but they are very talented and we should sit down and learn from them...Even though a person may be highly educated but if his/her attitude is improper, then they are a waste of time. If you want to become a leader, then you must be a servant to others... [and] do not expect people to treat you like a king. A leader should not expect people to bow down to them but they should be the ones working for the good of the people.

Liberal feminist ideals advocate for proper mind-sets, attitudes, values and beliefs that will enable women to secure positions of authority. Nevertheless, from a radical perspective, men's and women's attitudes remain the stumbling block in this regard.

For liberation, emancipation and empowerment to occur, hierarchical relationships of power must be overturned so that freedom from oppression is achieved. Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy need a total mind-set and attitude reformation, if they wish to improve in their dealings and relationship with Ni-Vanuatu women because the hegemonic and power control they have over women can be overturned. For example, in some patrilineal societies, men also helped with the primary caring and nurturing roles of the family when the mothers were menstruating. When it came to domestic duties, men washed their own clothes and cooked their meals, as there was

never an insistence that this was women's work. In the urban context, patrilineal men helped their spouses with domestic chores. There is provision for men to share governance and leadership with women in patrilineal societies, as the stories indicate. Whenever a man does not bear sons, he can allocate the guardianship of his patrimony and legacy to his daughter. She will maintain his property until she bears him a grandson, who will assume this oversight responsibility. Some patrilineal spouses continued to stifle their wives' personal freedom, individual rights and social choices. The spouses' restrictive patrilineal lineages prevented their wives from participating in community affairs and some women's marriages ended because of the constant fights between the husband and wife. Clash of cultures occurred when matrilineal women are married into patrilineages because endless disagreements and non-cooperation occurred because the wives are forced to listen to their husbands because this is the norm, Senior patrilineal women, who have been suppressed in their patrilineal Wantok governance model, find it easier to erect barriers for other urban Ni-Vanuatu women in their quest to move up the career path:

In my [patrilineal] society, when women have their menstruation, it is their rest period, so they take time off while the men assume the kitchen and cooking roles to feed the children and the family...When the husband and wife showered, they washed their own mats. During hierarchical customary grading, the men cooked their own meals and did not expect the women to do this for them...Everyone was self-sufficient and did not rely on women to do the house work...My society has reverence for women. If there is no male child, the women take over responsibility for caring of the land and then bring over a husband who will stay with them and help them look after the land until they are able to rear a male child to assume the oversight.

Because Vanuatu holds strong patrilineal orientation...I feel that it reverts to people's attitudes, mind-sets and how they view and value women. Women originating from the matrilineal lineage descent cultural society find it easier to talk, lead and express their views, but women from the patrilineal lineage descent society are very much subjugated...It was because I was constantly fighting against my husband's patrilineal lineage

descent cultural society and its traditions that destroyed our marriage in the end .

I am married to a [patrilineal] man and I found it extremely hard to work well and agree with many things as we had conflicting traditions. My spouse's lineage did not accept women speaking out and becoming a leader. I broke many of my husband's cultural laws many times when insisting that women also had rights. I insisted that without women, the men would not be born into this world. I therefore faced a lot of obstacles fighting against the injustices of his patrilineal lineage traditions to promote women's empowerment.

As a woman, you had to listen to your husband, and all the men would support him. So [on one occasion] my boss transferred me to another section of the department because my husband did not like me being in that job.

Even in the work-force, although we have women in senior decision-making positions, a lot of them are not gender sensitised...This world is even harder when it comes to changing men's mind-sets...So [female gatekeepers] thought that all women should be inferior and should not be moving up the career ladder and that decision-making is the role of men. I believe that the women are not exposed to other cultures, races and other ways of living and perhaps originate from the patrilineal lineage descent society supporting the notion that women are inferior and not to become decision-makers.

From a liberal feminist perspective, access to paid employment will benefit women. However, from a radical perspective, men and women's mind-sets, attitudes and beliefs have created more impediments for women to access positions of authority and that according some women with positions of authority will disenfranchise other women.

Because of the discrimination and oppression that urban matrilineal women faced in their formal and informal jobs, participants of the focus group discussion have recommended strategies such as the benchmarking of the indigenous matrilineal framework as a mechanism to reduce the discrimination against and oppression of women and address their marginalisation in Vanuatu. A call was made for Vanuatu's patriarchy to consider the matrilineal indigenous Wantok governance model which promotes, liberates, emancipates and empowers Ni-Vanuatu women with decision-making roles in community affairs. The egalitarian values children received from their parents were the foundation for these children to practice values of gender-equity, gender-equality and egalitarian values. Matrilineal urban women in informal jobs do not wait to receive social welfare, which is non-existent in Vanuatu, but are proactive to work harder to earn incomes to meet their urban centre obligations:

We must advocate for [the matrilineal] cultural system to Vanuatu's patriarchy and show-case how one of our indigenous Wantok governance model is already promoting and including women into the decision-making process [to] adopt and improve women's ...empowerment in Vanuatu's urban governance.

I come from the matrilineal lineage. My parents treated me and my brothers the same and we knew that girls also had equal rights. When my parents had something important to discuss, we assembled as a family and each family member was given the opportunity to air their concerns. Because of my matrilineal lineage background, I became the leader I am today.

Coming from a matrilineal lineage descent cultural society...meant that I cannot sit around being happy with my situation so I must run a small business to help sustain and maintain my household...My matrilineal lineage descent cultural society helps me to become successful in starting and managing my own business...my husband recognises my capacity of doing something useful in my life.

From a liberal feminist ideology, access to paid employment will grant women with emancipation and empowerment. Nevertheless, from a radical perspective, it is necessary for men and women to adopt strategies of justice, equity and egalitarianism practiced by matrilineages' that have accorded formal authority to its matrilineal women.

7.4 From the Subaltern Voice: Emancipation Strategies

For liberation, emancipation and empowerment to occur, men's hierarchical relationships of power must be overturned so that freedom from oppression is achieved. However, emancipation strategies undertaken by the state are non-conducive as it encourages people to remain in their comfort-zones without working very hard. Promotions are given to urban Ni-Vanuatu women based on longevity of service:

The problem with the Public Service Commission is that when people work for the state for many years, they become seniors and receive promotion, not on merit, but based on their long-term service.

A call is made for the state to implement strategies to accord promotion to employees based on their capacity, merit and good performances because male decision-makers are inclined to approve professional training and development to men:

Promotions should be given based on capacity and merit... My organisation encourages training but because the decision-makers are males, they tend to favour and send men out for the majority of training.

7.5 Summary

In Chapter Six I demonstrated the prevalence of the expression of neo-liberal values and I demonstrated how, by their very engagement with these values, these liberal principles become ever more deeply embedded in the ways Ni Vanuatu women are responding to their circumstances. From a more radical perspective explored in this chapter, this very engagement with the aspirations of a liberal EEO agenda, risks the assimilation of the women into the prevailing liberalism that is unlikely to deliver in its promise of universal inclusion and sustainable livelihoods if this liberal theory serves capitalism above all else.

This research provides the views of urban Ni-Vanuatu women who seek sustainable livelihoods and employment for thriving communities and justice. In examining the promises and risks of greater engagement with The Master in Vanuatu, and the Pacific more generally, or wherever the Master's hegemonic embrace has tightened its grip on the most vulnerable people in His reach, many examples of vulnerability and distress can be found (Honderich, 1995; Thomas and Humphries, 2010 & 2011 & Humphries, 2007). The connections between these life experiences and systemic weakness are no longer expressed only by radical organisational analysts (cf Stiglitz, 2002; Maxton, 2011 & Branson, 2011). The interpretations in this chapter and in Chapter Nine highlight that removing matrilineal women from their rural matrilineal indigenous governance models, not only undermines their female authority and their capacity to influence and make a useful contribution in their matrilineal Wantok governance model's community affairs but also undermines and side-tracks their concentration, hard work and assets into other projects and priorities which are incompatible with their indigenous traditional communal solidarity, customary wealth and values (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011).

The field research leaves me with mixed evidences and emotions. There is both hope and despair from the women's stories. Both women in salaried/professional occupations and Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs must work extremely harder in their paid jobs incurring discrimination and oppression from Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy. For Vanwods *Mamas*, although there is evidence of them earning incomes and investing in their children's education, I tend to agree with Salong (2008) that these educational sacrifices come at great cost as they commit to "blood, sweat and tears" (p. 28) to maintain and sustain their businesses and make ends meet. I critically reflected on whether the purported emancipation for the women and future generations through the Master's neo-liberalisation marathon is really guaranteed (Harvey, 2006). From a liberal feminist's response, the focus of village and family arrangements may be adjusted for the women to become available giving attention to their needs of education, training, and job advancements, and so on – all of which are then alleged to result in the women's immersion in capitalism. Urban Ni-Vanuatu women seek capitalism to be liberated, emancipated and empowered from

their indigenous matrilineal and patrilineal idyllic, slow-paced and restrictive Wantok governance models.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Considering Alternatives to Liberalism: The Solidarity Economy

8.1 Introduction

Chapter Six drew attention to the prevalence of Western liberal feminist orientations in many of the experiences reported by my interlocutors. I noted too how consistent these were with the literatures about women in Vanuatu, and the orientation of the CEDAW. However, I also noted some interesting contradictory views. This prompted me to re-visit the feminist literatures to help understand these contradictions and what these might contribute to the depth of this research. As a result, I crafted the point/counterpoint/standpoint framing. In Chapters Six and Seven, I revisited the research themes listed at the end of Chapter Three. In Chapter Six, this was done through the liberal feminist perspective and in Chapter Seven; I demonstrated the insights that could be gained when using a more radical lens to examine these themes. Chapter Six illustrated some of the benefits participants reported they had gained through the programmes devised for their greater integration into the Vanuatu economy. While noting the women's appreciation of these benefits, I was also mindful of the contradictions and inconsistencies that I had found within and across their stories. The nature of these contradictions and inconsistencies left me with some significant concerns about the intensification of Western liberal ideals with the liberal feminist agenda – an infiltration of ideals not always in keeping with many of the more traditional values held by my research participants. I heard much about the value of community and care for the group and of the unique aspects of being members of lineages that are fundamental to identity. It is for this reason I crafted my standpoint in a 'Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice'. My use of this voice is demonstrated in Chapter Nine. However, to explain the need for this voice, in this chapter I review the literatures again in order to more fully understand the influence of Western notions of development on the Wantok values for Ni-Vanuatu. I set about to research alternative modes of development, particularly those that are generated from a more collectivist orientation. Of these, the 'Solidarity Economy' is reviewed as one that has compatibility with my Matrilineal Wantok Feminist ideals and one that already contain some global traction. In this chapter, therefore, I present literature reviews of various economic models, such as the free market economy/capitalism/neo-liberalism, peasantology, Vanuatu's '*Kastom ekonomi*', Igbo indigenous economic model, social

economy and finally the solidarity economy. I undertake a critical analysis of each of these economic models and discuss their assumptions, proponents, implicit and explicit ethics, and the challenges each of them presents.

8.2 Free Market Economy, also Known as Capitalism or Neo-Liberalism

Karl Henrich Marx (cf Cates, 2011) argues that a country's economic system decides the alignment of a country's socio-political and cultural system. Allard et al. (2009) stipulate an economy bridges the needs of human beings and their societies and facilitates the link between the natural and social resources to meet human needs and comforts. The dominant approaches of the production and distribution in a country is facilitated through an economy. There are two types of economy: formal and informal. The formal economy, also known as the formal employment sector, is where waged and salaried/professional occupations take place. According to ILO (2006), the formal economy is where "the more administratively visible part of the economy and society, namely the public and private corporate sectors [which also] comprises enterprises and the professional self-employed that have been accorded legal status and are regarded as legal entities" (p. 12). The informal economy, or the informal employment sector, is where people make a living through various activities, and, according to ILO includes domestic services or running income-generating activities:

The term informal economy refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are, in law or in practice, not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. Workers in the informal economy include own-account workers in survival-type activities, such as street vendors, shoe-shiners, garbage collectors and scrap and rag-pickers, paid domestic workers, employed by households; home workers and workers in sweatshops who are disguised wage workers in production chains; and the self-employed in micro-enterprises operating on their own or with contributing family workers or sometimes apprentices/employees. (ibid, p. 14)

Shanin (1986) announces the informal economy should not be viewed as the political economy of the margins rather it gives a person the opportunity to decide and master his/her own destiny. As such, polarised societies in the Third World can use the informal economy as a means of survival, whereby other societies can learn as much from the poor, as the poor can learn from them. This is also the case in point for

Vanuatu. Urban Ni-Vanuatu women are able to operate microfinance businesses in the informal economy (ILO, 2006) as an alternative means to earn incomes for their survival (ILO, 2006 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004).

The Britannica Academic Edition (2011) states an economic model has a number of characteristics as it is defined as “the arrangement or mode of operation of something [or] the structure or conditions of economic life in a country, area, or period, [or] an economic system” (p. 1). Neamtan (2002) takes it one step further by explaining that it operates a political economy which is the “study of how, a country, the public’s household is managed or governed, taking into account both political and economic factors” (p. 1). Neamtan further defines economy as “the concrete production of goods or of services by business or enterprise that contributes to a net increase in collective wealth” (p.1). A nation state’s economic base is determined through a diverse set of tools and methods offered through the fields of economics, political science and sociology, closely linked to the country’s political economy prescribing the relationship between individuals and their society, and between markets and the state (Allard et al. 2009). For the rural inhabitants of the New Hebrides, the matrilineal Wantok Kastom ekonomi had met the sustenance and economic needs of its rural inhabitants, prior to the arrival of explorers from 1605-1774, traders and missionaries in 1839, and the two condominium-colonisers, France and Britain in 1887 and from 1906-1980 (ILO, 2006; The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004; Van Trease, 1987 & Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981). Rural inhabitants cultivate subsistence agriculture to maintain themselves and other members of their communities with any excess resources, through bartering with other communities and villagers (ILO, 2006). In the establishment of the New Hebrides condominium-colonial rule by France and Britain from 1906-1980, the colonisers established capitalism and used their currencies, the French francs and the British pounds and shillings, for economic exchanges and trading. When Vanuatu’s urban patriarchy took over the governance of Vanuatu on 30 July 1980, they retained the capitalist economic system, but changed the currency into the Vanuatu Vatu (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004).

Mair and Miller (1991) stipulate two eighteenth century Scottish enlightenment philosophers, David Hume (1711-1776) and Adam Smith (1723-1790) are credited with creating the foundations of modern economics. Adam Smith in his work, *An*

Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of the Nations (1776) (cf Mill and Backhouse, 1997) defines a country's classical economy as the "economic growth concerns, the doctrine that saving creates its own demands, emphasising distribution of income between social classes as major determinants of savings, and a cost-based theory of value" (p. xii). Allard et al. (2009) highlight economic liberalism was theorised by Adam Smith when he was rebelling against mercantilism and the state for hoarding silver and gold. Furthermore, Smith desired economic liberalism by liberating the market from excessive government interventions so open-market competition can play a major role in deciding the allocation and distribution of goods and services.

Paul Hawken's provocative national bestseller *The Ecology of Commerce: A Declaration of Sustainability* (1994) was branded by the San Francisco Chronicle as the "author of growing a business and the next economy writing with a daring, urgent vision of a kind of 21st century Canaan that Hawken yet believes we can reach" (cover page). Hawken gathers global supporters who are conscious about safe-guarding the planet and not merely creating profits. Hawken's detractors include global people who are merely interested in acquiring profits and have no conscience to protect the environment. Reviews published in favour of Hawken's book signal that he provides a truly deeply disturbing, yet hopeful and practical analysis of visionary businesses, for any kind of environmentally-conscious person. Hawken argues that only when businesses are environmentally conscious and make considerable efforts to safeguard the environment, they will prosper and achieve a healthy planet. He argues that to create an enduring society, we need an economic system where each and every act, is inherently sustainable and restorative. He therefore, reiterates that the business community needs to integrate economic, biological and human systems into its portfolios, to create a sustainable economic system.

Allard et al. (2009) stress the existing free market/capitalism/neo-liberal economic model is branded as the "First System of the Economy" (p. 40) because businesses which operate under this economic model aim to generate profits. He states, social enterprise is grouped under the "Third System of the Economy" (p. 40) because businesses in this model are self-help, reciprocal and social purpose organisations, not to amass profits, but designed to meet people's social needs. Therefore, the two

economic models known as the social economy and the solidarity economy are alternative economic models also grouped as the “Third System of the Economy” (ibid, p. 40). Vanuatu’s *Wantok Kastom ekonomi* can also be grouped in the Third System of the Economy because this economic model is a self-help model (where all members of the society are responsible for subsistence gardening, and gathering resources from the land, forest, rivers and seas), reciprocal (because all members of the society have an obligation to help each other with labour, food and resources, are shared to its members) with a social purpose because it is a solidarity economic model that meets the personal needs of the community. The matrilineal *Wantok Kastom ekonomi* has sustained Vanuatu’s rural inhabitants for centuries prior to the arrival of the Christian-and-colonially-introduced patrilineal *Wantok* governance model (Van Trease, 1987; Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981). The patrilineal *Wantok Kastom ekonomik* model operates similarly to the matrilineal *Wantok Kastom ekonomi* except that the personal and social needs of the men within the societies are upheld in this economic model (Van Trease, 1987).

Because of the extreme hardship that the capitalist’s social enterprise under the Vanwods MFI is creating for the urban poor Ni-Vanuatu women, there is a need to search for an alternative economic model to offer to Vanuatu to organise and meet the needs of the rural inhabitants and the urban poor women (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). The Vanwods MFI operates under the solidarity provisions of the Grameen Bank group philosophy (Salong, 2008). Nevertheless, the Vanwods MFI social enterprise is creating extreme hardships for the urban poor Ni-Vanuatu women, who make a living owning, operating and maintaining microfinance businesses. An alternative economic model is needed to replace capitalism in the rural areas and become the new bridge to function along-side the pre-existing matrilineal and patrilineal *Wantok* governance model’s Vanuatu *Kastom ekonomi*, while simultaneously encouraging solidarity, communalism and social cohesiveness. It can also be offered to replace the existing burden-some capitalistic social enterprise model that the Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs currently utilise to own, operate and manage microfinance businesses in Vanuatu’s urban centres.

It was a sixteenth century European ideology that created the capitalist trade and exchange principles that are increasingly being practiced worldwide. Capitalism, according to Allard et al. (2009) exhibits market driven trading and focuses on a private/profit-oriented goals. Capitalism is an economic system with three specific characteristics: aiming to collect more capital; ii) assigns markets; and iii) has a private and public sphere (Heilbroner & Milberg, 1995). Schweickart (1996) and The Britannica Online (2008) stress it is a community-producing society with the mainstream population participating in the means of production by selling their labour power to the owners of the means of production to amass wealth. Owners of capital are also known as the bourgeoisie or the global elite (Cates, 2011 & Allard et al. 2009). Capitalism is synonymous with three terms: the free-market model; the free-market economy or neo-liberalism. Allard et al. (2009) stipulate neo-liberalism comes from the phrase, “new liberalism” (p. 23) meaning interventions created to eliminate all barriers leading towards a free market mechanism. Neo-liberalism is a strategy to eliminate all barriers in the work of the free market, “The market is king. Prices and quantities determine how people exchange goods and services. Government is seen as an impediment to the market. Letting the free market reign means removing government protections and scaling back government as much as possible” (ibid, p. 23). Honderich (1995) and The Britannica Online (2008) highlight the free market is the ‘*Master*’ controlling the production and supply of goods and services as well as determining prices and the quantities of goods to be exchanged. Capitalism focuses on factors of production. Over the years, evolution has transformed the market from what it used to be in the early periods, where local places in the exchange of products or services were responsible for production and income distribution, to global integration. For example, Allard et al. (2009); Gwynne, Klak and Shaw (2003) and Schweickart (1996) argue the principal characteristics of capitalism is to expand globally searching for markets, raw materials involving land, labour and capital and cheap labour, and in the process, destroying any pre-existing economies along its way with the ultimate aim of producing goods and services, which are then distributed in line with the economic law of demand and supply to human beings, societies and countries. Schweickart (1996) reiterates that the free-market economy has two distinct functions: it distributes existing goods and resources; and it determines the course and the rate of future development. Only businesses which are competitive and strong will survive the free market-place which has no empathy for weak and poor businesses. Allard et al. (2009)

highlight the free market-place assures the continued existence of a few “global elite” (p. 26) comprising very rich companies and a few powerful countries, who become richer at the expense of the weaker and poorer businesses.

According to the proponents of neo-liberal capitalism, for commerce and exchange to function smoothly, there must be no impediments to the free-market economy (Hawken, 1994). Profits or excesses obtained from the production as over-consumption are utilised to increase productive capacity and create more mass products, rather than investing in non-productive and non-economical enterprises. Hawken stresses capitalism has not altered since the first coin was exchanged for corn, as the power and impact of corporate capitalism has increased so dramatically that it has dwarfed all forms of international power. There is no empire like capitalism working through modern global corporations to access borders, cultures, and governments in search of markets, sales, assets and profits. Capitalism has delivered its goods in quantities that were unimaginable two generations ago. Nevertheless, there are positive aspects of capitalism as outlined by Michael Nowak (cf Hawken, 1994) paying homage to democratic capitalism, which have provided human beings with more human choices to transform the prospects of human life and lengthening a person’s life span, and encouraging people to find ways of removing themselves from poverty and famine. For example, a sick person who has access to money can seek medical assistance that will provide him/her with medical treatment which will either transform or lengthen his/her life.

Schweickart (1996) states capitalism is a socio-economic system with three characteristics: the means of production is privately owned by individuals or by corporations; the fundamental purpose of capitalism is to produce goods and services to sell on the free market and that this free market is a system whereby prices are determined by the supply and demand of goods; and a person’s labour power is a commodity because a large percentage of the work-force sells their labour to owners of capital who provide them with tools, raw materials, and a place to work. Therefore, a capitalist society comprises all three sets of establishments: personal possessions; a liberated market-place; and income through employment. Capitalism’s primary purpose is to maximise returns for its shareholders (Allard et al. 2009). Mair et al. (1991) stipulate the capitalist’s role is to keep accumulating more capital. Capitalists

use their money to buy physical capital and labour power which are then combined to produce a commodity (Mair et al. 1991). In the past one hundred years, capitalism has swept across the world, discovering, mining, extracting, and processing extensive stored wealth and resources (Hawken, 1994). This flood of economic activity has enriched capital cities, ruling families, powerful governments and corporate elites. Capitalists employ workers in the production process to produce commodities with profits, or surplus value obtained by selling these commodities to competitive markets. The aim of capitalists is to find cheaper ways of production, by lowering their prices if necessary, to gain a competitive advantage (Mair et al. 1991). A profit is obtained when the capitalist's total cost of production, including wages, is less than the revenue received from the market exchange.

The two classes in capitalism are a dominant class incorporating the capitalists or bourgeoisie who offer their wealth or money holdings and control the material means of production; the other is a working class or the proletariat who have no autonomous participation in the means of production but have to sell their labour power to the bourgeoisie for a living (Cates, 2011). The economic model of capitalism holds two theoretical compound systematic strands involving the “theory of capitalist exploitation”, and the “theory of the contradictory laws of motion of capitalism” (Mair et al. 1991, p. 243). Hawken (1994) announces one hundred years ago, industrial cities experienced large amounts of grime with no sunshine through permanent palls of smoke causing diseases to its citizens, as workers toiled and died from inhumane and exploitative conditions. The Industrial Revolution produced enormous industrial processes of waste and destruction, including social and environmental damages. Hawken (1994) concedes that it is deceitful for capitalist proponents to appeal to the sanctity of the free market proving that current business practices are sound and positive when there are numerous ecological tragedies. Allard et al. (2009) highlight additional challenges capitalism provides by seeking stronger returns on investment in:

emphasizing short-term gains, even if they mean postponing or sacrificing improvements in the productive capacity of the company or sector; keeping wages and benefits at the lowest possible levels; managing by intimidation, undermining employee initiative, and discouraging the exercise of employee rights; ignoring the needs and concerns of others apart from the most powerful (and short-sighted) shareholders, investors, and/or managers (p. 37).

Capitalism's vicious progression has many consequences as it continues to speed up the extermination of many animal species, deteriorating human health, providing anxiety and suffering to workers of today, while also causing the loss of oxygen, water and forests (Allard et al. 2009). Because the market-place is inherently political questions arise as to whether the dominant power-relationships and political processes within the market framework give human beings choices and values, or if a universal framework of human values and sense of solidarity drives the power relations within the market (ibid). Exchanges between human beings across their societies, countries, and through the globalised economy, is controlled by a group of people or the ruling class who hold power (Gwynne et al. 2003) and use their positions to protect their marketplace values (Cates, 2011; The Britannica Online, 2008 & Schweickart, 1996). They employ the proletariat and control them into obeisance and submission by paying them exploitative wages for their gruelling labour of value creation (Knitter & Muzaffar, 2002). Although it is the workers who create value in the production of commodities, they are excluded from any of its economic surpluses. This exploitation causes a class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in general (Mair & Miller, 1991). Not only the workers but the weak and poor businesses are powerless to resist the control of the ruling rich elite and capitalism's exploitation. Because power is given to a few elites it has damaged communities and diminished people's chances to achieve a better life (Allard et al. 2009). Neo-liberalism is, therefore, unsustainable environmentally, politically, socially and economically because the few elites who control it are merely interested in fulfilling the needs of their corporations but do not fulfil human needs. Capitalism has never been able to fully liberate, emancipate and empower its subjects. Hawken (1994) reaffirms capitalistic businesses continue to destroy natural systems on this planet. Furthermore, given the current corporate practices of exploiting natural resources and amassing wealth, wild-life reserves, wilderness, and indigenous cultures cannot endure. Capitalist investment excludes potential players who discriminate actual players in favour of the wealthy (Schweickart, 1996). Hawken (1994) highlights rather than distributing the wealth of the present, human-kind is stealing the wealth of the future to enrich a society which seems; nonetheless, deeply troubled concerning its good fortune. Capitalism's ills and effects on people who are immersed in this economic model is depicted by Shanin (1986) as a "strata of plebeian survivors – a mixture of increasingly mobile, half-employed slum-dwellers, part-farmers, lumpen-traders, or pimps – another extra-

capitalist pattern of social and economic existence under capitalism and/or third-worldish types of state economy” (p. 10). Capitalist economies fail the contemporary global society, including state economies, for the unlimited advancement and general welfare security, as was preached by nineteenth century theories of progress. Under all economic systems, some urban Ni-Vanuatu women with no prospects of acquiring formal jobs have had to resort to sex work as outlined in Chapter Three. The many challenges that capitalism causes are that there is less health insurance coverage as health care becomes more expensive for the family; there is less resources to obtain food; a spouse is forced to obtain work because the partner cannot secure employment; jobs are difficult to secure with more people becoming unemployed; people receive lower wages which ultimately leads to “increased frustration and insecurity” according to Allard et al. (2009, p. 26); a dominant commercial culture which involves access to all resources by admonishing that social inequities should be resolved through development, invention, high finance, and growth - with growth as its fundamental goal; the creation of a class division in the economy with different dealings in the means of production; an inherent exploitation as free, competitive capitalism exploits the working class involving a relationship of power and social relationships according to Karl Marx’s labour value theory (cf Mair and Miller, 1991); are blamed for many ills in the world today because businesses and organisations are solely interested in the maximization of profits and pay little attention to the equal distribution of resources to all citizens and the welfare of its workers, as it encourages a Darwinian system where the “survival of the fittest” according to Allard et al. (2009, p. 23) strategy (The Britannica Online, 2008). Neamtan (2002) highlights the negative impacts of neo-liberalism, for example, the Enron scandal; the economic crisis in Argentina and those recently in Italy, Spain and Greece. These examples demonstrate the growing inequality between rich and poorer nations, including the rich and poorer populations within these nation states. Capitalism omits social concepts that apply to human beings, such as equality, solidarity and the community. Albert Einstein (cf Schweickart, 1996) argues capitalism’s profit motive is responsible for the insecurity of gathering and utilizing capital which eventually leads to severe depressions, and based on unrelenting competition, leads to severe wastage of labour and finally cripples people’s social consciousness. The reason to operate businesses, as Hawken (1994) elucidates, is not merely to make money but to cater for the well-being of human-kind “through service, a creative invention and ethical philosophy” and

“making money is, on its own terms, totally meaningless” (p. 1). The pursuit of profits through the production of market commodities contrasts with the values of rural communities who are committed to collective well-being. It is to such economies I now turn my attention by a review of ‘peasantology’ – the study of the lives of rural people who live through the cultivation of the land.

8.3 Peasantology

The Britannica Academic Edition (2011) defines the Peasantological economic model to be, “any member of a class of persons who till the soil as small landowners or as agricultural labourers” (p.1). Members of a family are bound together to grow sustenance that sustains and maintains them. Subsistence farming exist the world over, including large parts of sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific as a farming method whereby all of the crops are cultivated and livestock reared to maintain the farmer’s family (The Britannica Academic Edition, 2011). Very little surplus is accumulated and that in pre-industrial agriculture, people globally have practiced traditional subsistence farming. Farming is carried out from site to site, allowing time for the old farming sites to fallow and recover from the previous crops.

The Britannica Academic Edition (2011) affirms the peasant economy is an economic model operating on simple technology with the division of labour undertaken through age and gender and via the basic unit of production originating from the family and the household. Peasants can come from one family unit or a group of family units who are working together in solidarity (Allard et al. 2009). Fafchamps (1992) argues through shared interest and solidarity, peasants are able to group together forming mutual insurance networks, working in solidarity and with ethical values such as “the right to subsistence and the principle of reciprocity” (p. 147).

The main characteristic of Peasantology is its self-sufficiency. Although peasant families consume the majority of their production, any surplus production is sold to the markets (The Britannica Academic Edition, 2011). In comparison to capitalism, there is no need to mass produce because the total production of a family is not greater than what is needed to maintain the family so productivity per worker and yields per unit of land, is low. Fafchamps (1992) argues the solidarity form of mutual insurance provides peasants with the ability to help another person in times of need whereby the

person is not expected to return the favour in equivalent terms, but simply recognises their responsibility to help others who may need help in the future. This is referred to as “delayed reciprocity” (ibid, p. 148).

Shanin (1986), touted as the father of Peasantology, explains that even if people are landless and asset-less, they can still survive. This is also the case in Vanuatu, where, despite rural citizens living without the \$2 per day economic criteria, based on subsistence affluence, rural inhabitants still survive (ILO, 2006). This is in contrast to conventional economics which asserts that people without land and assets and no means of earning an income will die of hunger. Peasants have a way of life that is diametrically opposite to how people in industrial societies live. Although these peasants may not have a full-time job, pension, steady place to work or a regular income, they continue to survive. Peasant families held various occupations, ranging from farming to selling in the markets to undertaking odd jobs and handicrafts, aimed at survival rather than profit maximization. Labour is used within the family enterprises, or shared out to other members of the village. Earning a wage is not a prerequisite for peasant economies. The values of Southeast Asian Peasantology delayed reciprocity are practiced by Vanuatu’s matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance model’s kinship social network system and through the *Kastom ekonomi* whereby assistance is provided to the members of the society in resource sharing and labour assistance, on the assumption that the person who receives the help will help others in the future (Westoby, 2010; Jolly, 1996 & Fafchamps, 1992).

The Britannica Academic Edition (2011) alerts us as society industrialises classes of people known as peasants are disappearing. Increased mechanization produces more goods and services and this changes the way farming is done. Smaller farming plots have been consolidated into larger farming plots with the increased immigration of rural workers into cities engaging in other types of industrial employment thus causing the disappearance of the Peasantological economic model. It is capitalism through the industrial revolution which has diverted the attention of rural inhabitants away from their subsistence small-scale agricultural economy (Cates, 2011). Woodall (2005) stresses rural British inhabitants were also affected as the industrial revolution enticed rural peasants to move into the urban centres to obtain work in the factories.

8.4 Vanuatu's Wantok Governance Models' Kastom Ekonomi

Jolly (1996) argues that the Bislama word *Kastom* is loosely translated to mean tradition, and can also refer to the acceptable customary ways of doing things. According to Rousseau (2004) *Kastom* exists in the present and is an ever-changing phenomenon seen as a virtue rather than a hindrance to Vanuatu. Rousseau stresses *Kastom* is the categorisation and objectification of specific practices and the whole “interlocking network of knowledge and practices denoted by culture within Vanuatu and that *Kastom* represents assertions of indigeneity” (pp. 2 & 24). It is the small holder farming units with families and households that till the land for subsistence agriculture (The Britannica Academic Edition, 2011). This type of subsistence farming is practiced in the Pacific, especially in Melanesian countries like Vanuatu. Jolly (1996), Van Trease (1987) and Huffer and Molisa (1999) refer to family units and the members of the community participating in the creation of gardens, sustaining and maintaining the family, as well as other members of the society, through Vanuatu's matrilineal and patrilineal *Wantok Kastom ekonomi* also known as the indigenous economy (Westoby, 2010; Jolly, 1996 & Van Trease, 1987) because it supports the traditional collective well-being of pluralism and shared affiliation through kinship, communal relationships in the community. It seeks a common purpose through human oneness, sharing resources, labour, and time for the well-being of other village members, reciprocating persons who helped other people in times of need, redistributing resources, *Kastom* wealth within the community and holding strong economic principles in both the matrilineal and patrilineal societies. Indigenous forms of sociality on Vanuatu's *Kastom ekonomi* is based on groups of people who live in a common domain based on affiliations of relationship, kinship and place operating subsistence agriculture or small holder farming and breeding animals for the purpose of sustenance and bartering (ibid). Jolly (1996) stresses Vanuatu's *Kastom ekonomi* is small-scaled subsistence agriculture which is similar to the Peasantological economic model, except it encompasses more than just one family unit. It harnesses groups of people in the same community to work together through shared labour to cultivate gardens, grow sufficient food and collect resources, hunt and fish to share with both the nuclear and extended family members (Maltali et al. 2009 & Van Trease, 1987). Vanuatu's *Kastom ekonomikal* gardens comprise not more than a few acres, with primitive farming technology that provide low yields. Simple tools such as knives, files, axes, spades, and shovels are used to clear land for cultivation through the slash-

and-burn method. Vanuatu's *Kastom ekonomi* was promoted as a country-wide annual event for two consecutive years in 2008-2010 because of the non-sustainable directions of capitalism in Vanuatu (Westoby, 2010). Vanuatu continues to recognise the importance of its *Kastom ekonomi* which has sustained its rural inhabitants for thousands of years.

In Rousseau's *Discourse of Inequality* (cf Cranston 1986) he argues, "there is a clear promise that a certain type of civil society can restore to men, even in the modern world, the freedom, happiness, and authenticity [with] which the human race in general has lost in the course of its evolution" (p. 79). Rousseau argues that in communism/romanticism the "natural man enjoys repose and freedom" (ibid, p. 79). Rousseau referred to urban centre life as hectic and pretentious, arguing that:

The social man, on the contrary, is always active, always busy, always playing a part, sometimes bowing to greater men whom he hates, or to richer men, whom he scorns, always ready to do anything for honours, power, and reputation, and yet never having enough...lives always outside himself; he knows how to live only in the opinion of others and it is, so to speak, from their judgements alone that he derives the sense of his own existence. (ibid, p. 79)

Rousseau emphasises the benefits of romanticism as, "The [natural man] lives within himself" (Cranston, 1986, p. 79). Life in Vanuatu's *Kastom ekonomi* is non-hectic and non-pretentious compared to life in Vanuatu's urban centres. Nevertheless, because of the appeal of earning incomes from formal and informal jobs, mass rural-urban migration into the urban centres has occurred with a deviation from Vanuatu's *Kastom economic model* enticing many people to leave their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models in search for formal and informal jobs. These rural women hope to earn incomes to improve their living conditions (Rodman et al. 2009; Salong, 2008; Chung et al. 2002 & O'Collins, 1998).

8.4.1 Assumptions of Vanuatu's *Kastom ekonomi*

Vanuatu's matrilineal and patrilineal societies uphold a relational indigenous traditional economic model also known as the Wantok kinship social network system (ILO, 2006). For Vanuatu's indigenous matrilineal societies, land is inalienable and is not a saleable commodity because it is owned by the kinship group for future

generations. Land is seen as the mother to people's survival (Jolly, 1996 & Huffer and Molisa, 1999). Land is protected for future matrilineal generations (Maltali et al. 2009 & Van Trease, 1987). For traditional patrilineal societies, it is easier for them to sell land because land ownership is confined to a father and son(s) relationship. A comparison of land sales and leases published in *Foreign land leases* (2012) by the World Bank for the Justice for the Poor in Vanuatu shows 10 percent of land on Espiritu Santo and 44 percent of land on Efate and offshore islands being leased out to both local and foreign lease holders.

8.4.2 Advocates for Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi

Vanuatu's *Kastom ekonomi* has sustained its rural inhabitants for thousands of years (Van Trease, 1987). This economic model encourages hard work as most of the required labour is undertaken with simple tools and little mechanization. All members of the society (unlike capitalism where the owners of capital expect the proletariat to obey orders and do all the hard work) must till the soil, collect and hunt resources from the forest and land, and fish in the rivers and seas to obtain resources for sustenance (Westoby, 2010 & Jolly, 1996). Surplus crops are shared with next-of-kin, extended family members and other members of the society including visitors, or occasionally, bartered with surrounding communities and villages (ILO, 2006; Huffer and Molisa, 1999 & Van Trease, 1987).

8.4.3 Implicit ethics of Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi

Although the *Kastom* economy and communal, indigenous, and traditional rural way of life is idyllic, slow-paced and consumes a large proportion of manual labour, the resources from the land and forest, rivers and sea have sustained 76 percent of Vanuatu's rural populations for thousands of years (VNSO, 2009 & Jolly, 1996). Vandana Shiva (cf Schweickart 1996) highlights that women are regarded as agricultural experts, modelling agriculture according to nature's methods of renewability. Shiva teaches that when people go against nature's processes, they are not only destroying the environment but are also responsible for the economic destruction of the rural poor people. Therefore, *Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi* provides purposeful work to rural residents because they do not cultivate crops to amass profits at the bidding of another person but are working for the collective good of the society (Jolly, 1996 & Schweickart, 1996). In this regard, the opposite of meaningful work in

Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi is receiving orders from a bourgeoisie, and working to earn a profit for the owners of capital. In *Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi*, all members of the society must work hard because they have a responsibility to share their garden produce and their resources with other members of the society. Therefore, this kind of economic model does not encourage laziness.

8.4.4 Challenges of Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi

Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi in comparison to capitalism which uses mechanization and produces in mass is defined as restrictive (Westoby, 2010 & Jolly, 1996). Simple technology and many hours of manual labour are needed therefore, restricting mass production and the creation of larger farm holdings as advocated by capitalists via the industrial revolution (Van Trease, 1987). Rural residents are continuously working their gardens to grow enough food to feed the nuclear and extended family members, any other members of the society including visitors (ILO, 2006). Food is grown and animals reared for use during customary ceremonies. Bartering of surplus food and animals is encouraged but profit is not the fundamental aim of Vanuatu's *Kastom ekonomi* except for the purpose of communalism, reciprocity and social cohesiveness (Westoby, 2010; ILO, 2006 & Jolly, 1996).

As urban centres were created, agricultural production became specialised with mechanization taking the fore, and commercial farming replacing subsistence agriculture (The Britannica Academic Edition, 2011). Farmers produced not only for their sustenance and maintenance, but surplus crops for trading. Although mechanization and mass-production is still not a major problem in Vanuatu's rural centres, it is the progressive migration of rural inhabitants into the urban centres to seek formal and informal jobs that poses a problem for the survival of *Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi* (Rodman et al. 2009; Chung et al. 2002; Jolly, 1996 & O'Collins, 1998). An alternative indigenous economic models used by various African countries is known as the Igbo indigenous economic model with its effectiveness, is discussed next.

8.5 Definition of the Igbo Indigenous Economic Model

Many pre-colonial African communities operated under the ruler-ship of kings, queens, and chiefs were excluded from a decentralised political system, favoured

greater community participation especially by kinship groups, local associations of women's groups and its citizens in general, in matters of religion, social events, economic production, and decision-making (Knitter & Muzaffar 2002). The Igbo indigenous economic model is matriarchal in nature, meaning that women have a great influence in power control, sustaining and operating within this economic model. This indigenous system emphasises traditional pluralism, shared kinship, community, and human oneness. The Igbo traditional matriarchal system operates a fair and transparent economic system (Knitter et al. 2002). When listening to Igbo's oral traditions, a person will glean the rich narratives of "sharing, reciprocity, redistribution, and community – strong economic principles of the relational matriarchal model of African traditional religions" (p. 28).

8.5.1 Assumptions of the Igbo indigenous economic model

The Igbo relational matriarchal model is an economic model preventing gluttony based on the cultural values and moral consciousness of "Umunne" of which "the children of one mother are bound in the spirit of common motherhood" (Knitter et al. 2002, p. 32). This type of economic model strengthens the solidarity of clans, villages, and nations. Furthermore, matriarchy and the spirit of common motherhood encourages the forging of relationships of love and trust by those "who believe in the equality and sanctity of eating out of one pot" (ibid, p. 33). Sharing and caring is fundamental in the Igbo indigenous economic model and also in *Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi* as members of the community are obliged to share their resources with other members of the society (Westoby, 2010; ILO, 2006 & Jolly, 1996).

8.5.2 Advocates for the Igbo indigenous economic model

Economic exchange is not the only way in which matriarchy has shaped Igbo society (Knitter et al. 2002). The Igbo traditions, and those of many societies in South Africa, contain rich information on rites of passage, especially initiation rituals. Initiation schools were created by the traditional women's association for girls, to teach women moral virtues and aesthetic ideals for responsible citizenship. Females were taught to assume their roles in food production and marketing. This kind of education helped females to recognise their responsibilities within their indigenous traditional societies and to adopt alternative ethics such as preventing women from idolizing war and blood

and the valour of killing. In Igbo society's socialization for citizenship, religion is never separated from economic, legal, social, or environmental ethics (ibid).

8.5.3 Implicit ethics of the Igbo indigenous economic model

The pre-colonial South African Igbo societies operated on kinship morality stipulating appropriate conduct amongst relatives and through social rules recognising land as un-exchangeable wealth. Pre-colonial Igbo societies were not capitalist in nature. For example, in the economic and religious practices of Igbo traditions, land maps carried the names and symbols of dead forebears and ancestors as land was not an exchangeable commodity within the sphere of the markets, because land is inalienable. The power of lineages and village elders in Igbo societies is evident through the control, accumulation and distribution of social goods such as land and cattle, and women through bride price. South African Igbo women continue with some of their relational matriarchal indigenous traditions into the postcolonial societies, using their resources and wealth to generate communal well-being for their families and communities, in contrast to Igbo men who keep their resources and wealth for their self-aggrandisement (Knitter et al. 2002).

8.5.4 Challenges of the Igbo indigenous economic model

Through colonisation and the corruption of the ruling patriarchal class in collaboration with the greed of the lineage elders in a totalitarian state, the Igbo indigenous relational matriarchal economic model disintegrated. Igbo women continue to fight money, men, the state and – these days – the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to “preserve the social character of the market place, which is the Igbo woman's second home” (Knitter et al. 2002, p. 24). Colonization disintegrated the traditional cultural rules of exchange and the values of the South African Igbo societies. When the colonial governments of South African communities introduced the cash economy, newer forms of exchanges, including capitalism, were created, empowering the Igbo men to serve their personal interest and amass riches. The cash economy changed the customary ways of trading through bartering, reciprocal exchanges, and discourages the minimal use of cumbersome mediums of exchange such as beads, cowrie shells, salt and iron rods. The newer market principles gave the Igbo natives the impetus to adopt modern market principles that drastically altered previously differentiated exchange categories, reducing their once indigenous

traditional values of bartering and exchanges to almost everything having a cash market value. Even women now carried a market value, marrying with a designated “bride price” (ibid, p. 25). The colonial government, through tax impositions, forced the Igbo natives to divert their attention from their indigenous traditional economic model into the cash and the cash-crop economy, encouraging labour migration into the urban centres, and land alienation through the sale of customary land. When the Igbo natives adopted a competitive and fragmented culture (the matriarchal relational traditional rules of exchange, values and its processes subsided, leading to the dominance of the ruling patriarchal elite’s capitalistic development path. The next two sections will highlight two economic models which operate in various countries, the social economy and the solidarity economy whose ethical values are diverse to capitalism (Allard et al. 2009).

8.6 Social Economy

Allard et al. (2009) argue the Second System of the Economy is called the public service/planned provision because it is a planned economy involving non-trading but with a main focus on providing service delivery to a country’s population. Mair et al. (1991) stipulate the social economy occupies the societal space between the public and private sectors in the “Third System of the Economy” as highlighted by Allard et al.(2009, pp. 30, 40). Therefore, the social economy includes the “voluntary sector, a range of associations, the family economy” because they encourage the concept of self-help, reciprocity, and the achievement of any social purpose through these organisations and associations (ibid, p. 29). As Neamtan (2002) stresses it is a means of practising common values to serve its members and the communities with users and workers making democratic decisions because it is not part of any state activities.

8.6.1 Assumptions of the Social economy

In contrast to capitalism where there is a class of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat the social economy is run democratically by workers and citizens to make it more equitable and less exploitative. Allard et al. (2009) attest the social economy is an alternative economic framework also known as the “socio-economic-cultural development strategies, activities and structures ranging from the small and local to the large and global” (p. 29) being offered to nation states. It is an economic

framework people have insisted on having because of its “thoughtful, energetic, and broad-based societal action” (ibid, p. 29).

8.6.2 Advocates for the Social economy

George Bernard Shaw (cf Schweickart, 1996) argues that under socialism people are not allowed to become poor. Different categories of people, such as reformists and radicals, will see the social economy through different lens. The social economy is the only system where social goals are the primary focus of the development equation and is a more responsive way of dealing with people’s social needs than the current centralised welfare state, which is becoming a new source of employment and enterprise in empowering socially excluded groups to improve and combine their skills training and capacity building (Allard et al. 2009). The operation of the public sector focuses on the “redistribution of wealth and the provision of public goods for the purpose of promoting the economic principle of equality” (ibid, p. 31). The social economy holds values such as citizens becoming responsible for their own problems and finding self-help solutions, helping others through a mutual and social purpose. The social economy is a new economic model in high demand by “cooperatives, credit unions, non-profit and volunteer organizations, charities and foundations, service associations, community enterprises, and social enterprises” who want a better economic system that is considerate, vigorous and with multinational societal action and economic principals of “reciprocity” aiming for “human bonding or solidarity” (ibid, p. 31).

The benefits of the social economy are compatible with *Vanuatu’s Kastom ekonomi* and Igbo’s matriarchal economic model because it encourages and responds to the societies’ need for ownership of resources in opposition to market globalisation (Westoby, 2010; Neamtan, 2002; Knitter et al. 2002 & Jolly, 1996). Because the focus of the social economy is for communal well-being, it contradicts the principles of capitalism advocating for profit maximisation for the bourgeoisie. Reformists view the social economy as a means to secure resources to support marginalised constituents while radicals see it as a means of transformation and a construction site to build strategies, tools, and institutions that challenges neo-liberal hegemony in the market-place and within the state (Allard et al. 2009).

8.6.3 *Implicit ethics of the Social economy*

The social economy pre-existed in Canada for hundreds of years (Neamtan, 2002). In the nineteenth century, workers movements and the creation of cooperatives and mutual movements emerged. The social economy is not part of the public economy as it is autonomous, encompassing enterprises and organisations where capital and the means of production are created for the collective advantage. The social economy according to Allard et al. (2009) uses market mechanisms to achieve overt social objectives. It also includes collectively owned-for-profit enterprises whose surpluses are shared to its members and does not incorporate any state or private businesses of any kind. Furthermore, Allard et al. argue social economy organisations must develop into successful agents to create societal space where solidarity can grow. Mair et al. (1991) notes that ownership and control over the means of production is given to the workers themselves and are not controlled by capitalists or the state. Allard et al. (2009) describe the social economy as having positive elements:

becoming more innovative in production; reinvesting in equipment and in their work-force; improving the educational institutions producing the next generation of workers; ensuring state and labour supporting the sustainability and growth of manufacturing companies; creating genuine social partnership of labour, business, community, and government; encouraging partner participation in the design and implementation of all initiatives; supporting development that is economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable (p. 34).

8.6.4 *Challenges of the Social economy*

Collective advantage is the principle of the social economy (Neamtan, 2002). When the social economy occupies a large portion of the market-place, it can force other private businesses operating according to capitalistic principles to conform, follow suit and adopt its principles, which in turn goes against the free-market's capitalist principles of profit maximisation. The needs of the bourgeoisie will be ignored as the profits generated from the social economy are derived for the collective well-being of the society. The Vanwods MFI *Mamas* uses the social economic model (Salong, 2008 & ILO, 2006). The structure of the social enterprise project is not entirely conducive to providing for the collective interest of all the *Mamas*, as these women are working individually under the Grameen Bank group philosophy, to earn sufficient incomes to meet their personal urban centre obligations and are obligated to pay high interest fees

of 20% for any loans taken which must be refunded within a 20 week period. An alternative economic model is needed to cater for the well-being of these urban poor Ni-Vanuatu women. This economic model must become the middle ground which must be compatible with the women's pre-existing indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal *Wantok Kastom ekonomi* and the existing capitalistic economic model (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004 & Jolly, 1996). Nevertheless, this new economic model must not aim for profit-maximisation orientations but value ethics and the welfare of both the poor and weak in its composition. The solidarity economic model will be discussed next.

8.7 Solidarity Economy

Neamtan (2002) argues that because of the dominance of neo-liberalistic values, the challenge for proponents of the solidarity economy is to create a foundation which recognises and values solidarity as an alternative economic model. Allard et al. (2009), in the *Solidarity economy: Building Alternatives for People and Planet*, provided a report on the 2007 US Social Forum conference calling participants not only to network between themselves but to also create the provision for constructing relationships, with a two way learning process of learning from other people's experiences, identifying and analysing problems that communities faced, as well as returning with lessons and inspiration from others. The Social Forum (cf Allard et al. 2009) highlighted that people needed another model of social and economic organization, calling for people to assemble and decide on the type of economic model they needed, and finding ways to achieve this. The solidarity economy is viewed by some as an economy of hope (Allard et al. 2009). The solidarity economy is placed in the intersections of all three economic models: the "First System of the Economy" where the free market/capitalism/neo-liberalism is placed, the "Second System of the Economy" where the public service planned provision sits and the "Third System of the Economy" where the two, the social economic model and the solidarity economic model are situated (Allard et al. 2009, pp. 30, 40). The solidarity economy contains the principles and values of justice, inclusion, balance, diversity, ecological sustainability and financial viability as it recognises "humankind, both the individual and the social being, not only as creators and producers of economic wealth but as co-owners of material wealth, co-users of natural resources, and co-responsible for the conservation of nature" (ibid, p. 4). Harvey (2010) stresses in criticising the negative effects of neo-

liberal values of individualism, competition, and profits, the solidarity economy is an economic system that recognises and values community, health, solidarity, equality, sustainability and democracy. Therefore, the solidarity economy focuses instead on “community economic development, economic democracy, worker ownerships, cooperative economy, fair trade, sustainable community development, and [the] social economy” (Allard et al. 2009, p. 28). It integrates the principles of solidarity, mutualism, and cooperation and upholds equity in all dimensions of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, and gender. Furthermore, it concentrates on the social well-being as fundamental over profits and the rules of the market. It adopts sustainability, social and economic democracy, and pluralism, allowing different forms of solidarity economic projects to operate in different contexts, and is continuously open to changes as it is being driven from the bottom up approach.

8.7.1 Assumptions of the Solidarity economy

Allard et al. (2009) affirm the term solidarity is associated with human beings coming together with a shared sense of destiny, dignity and responsibility. Mutual empathy, mutual support and working together for the greater common good are the basic tenets of any solidarity projects. Looking beyond an individual’s selfish needs to the needs of other people, the societies and countries is fundamental. Allard et al. (2009) highlight the solidarity economy is an alternative economic model offered around the globe insisting on an “orientation of self-help, to reciprocity, and to realizing social purpose through various types of organisations and associations” (p. 29). Furthermore, the solidarity economy challenges the “First and Second System of the Economy” in coaxing all actors to work in partnership between the two economic systems incorporating reciprocity into the social fabric of the communities (ibid, pp. 30, 40). It supports organisational leadership based on the ideology, main philosophy and objectives of the Third System of the Economy to cater for strategic thinking and engagement in enterprise and organisations.

8.7.2 Advocates for the Solidarity economy

The solidarity economy represents unprecedented demands for thoughtful, energetic and broad-based societal actions (Allard et al. 2009). For an alternative market economy to become successful, it must first cater to the needs of its people, providing them with personal and social choices and human values through the sense of

solidarity with ethics being at its very core, making the solidarity economy framework humane. Adam Smith (cf Mair & Miller, 1991) and Karl Henrich Marx (cf Cates, 2010) were looking for a viable economy that was built on strong ethical grounds. Because the capitalistic/neo-liberal market-place did not contain an ethics component, this economy became a force for dehumanisation, commodification, violence and war although Gwynne et al. (2003) argue that Karl Marx deplored the negative impacts of capitalism in the capitalist West, because the colonial world saw “capitalism as the only means whereby the latter could progress towards socialism” (p. 52). The solidarity economy helps human beings to become more careful and to protect their environment and to sustainably thrive with it in any business opportunity (Allard et al. 2009 & Hawken, 1994).

The solidarity economic concept was created because of the need for an alternative market economy criticising the extractive economic paradigm of neo-liberalism in establishing an alternative vision of an ethical economy. In searching for an alternative economic model, the solidarity economy is seen as promoting an “ethical normative framework” requiring people to provide their learned experiences in various entrepreneurial and business practices based on the principles of solidarity with the economic principal of the social economy being “reciprocity” and that the aim of reciprocity is “human bonding or solidarity” (Allard et al. 2009, p. 31). Solidarity includes a “wide spectrum of collective actions coming from civil society, based on various forms of solidarity” to include ethical businesses and ethical consumption activities (ibid, p. 5).

Promoting the sustainability of human beings and their environment is the core value of the solidarity economy. Such a system caters for the needs of the weak and the poor. Allard et al. (2009) argue the aim of the solidarity economy is reciprocity and human bonding, “reciprocity puts all labour, citizens and consumers in control of capital” (p. 31). People who operate solidarity economy projects are environmentally conscious. Additionally, owning these enterprises would mean exerting their utmost in ensuring the well-being and sustainability of their businesses. Schweickart (1996) argues with overwhelming empirical evidence for worker participation in management and profit sharing, because it has a positive influence in enhancing productivity. Worker-run enterprises are predominantly more productive than other economic

models. In forty three separate studies, David Levine and Laura Tyson (cf Schweickart, 1996) concluded that “participation usually leads to small, short-run improvements in performance, and sometimes leads to significant long-lasting improvements...There is almost never a negative effect” (ibid, p. 100). Furthermore, participation enhances productivity when combined with “profit sharing”, “guaranteed long-range employment”, “relatively narrow wage differentials”, and “guaranteed worker rights, such as dismissal only for just causes” (ibid, p. 100). Solidarity economic democracy enterprises are seen to be more favourable to the well-being of its participants than other economic models.

8.7.3 Implicit ethics of the Solidarity economy

The solidarity economy is a global movement (Allard et al. 2009). Although the solidarity economy may be virtually unknown in some parts of the world, it has existed in Canada for hundreds of years with this economic model being closely connected to the Social Forum movement’s motto, “Another World is Possible” (p. 2) its principles strongly oppose neo-liberalism and upholds commitment to non-violence (Neamtan, 2002). Allard et al. (2009) highlight the principles of the solidarity economy to be:

Respect for Human Rights, the practices of real democracy, participatory democracy, peaceful relations, in equality and solidarity, among people, ethnicities, genders and peoples, and [condemning] all forms of domination and all subjection of one person by another. (p. 2)

The solidarity economic model provides legitimacy to the terrain of engagement for social economic practitioners as it challenges the claim that the social purpose and reciprocity are not manifested within the private and public economic sectors. The advantage of the solidarity economy is that it encourages interaction and collaboration between the First and Second Systems of the Economy to enlarge the space within which reciprocity can be re-woven into the fabric of the community (Allard et al. 2009, pp. 30, 40). The solidarity economy is a multiplicity of practices and does not uphold a unified theory. It is carried in various forms and in all continents. It entails different forms of enterprises and organisations that people utilise to create their own means of work and to access quality goods and services, in the dynamics of reciprocity and solidarity, linked to the collective interest (Allard et al. 2009). Schweickart (1996)

argues that cooperatives (a form of solidarity economy) have a higher productivity and profitability rate compared to capitalist firms and that, because of personal and collective incentives, they become more productive. The solidarity economy exemplifies the realization that alternative economies already exist and persons as creative and skilled people “have already created different kinds of economic relationships in the very belly of the capitalistic system” (Allard et al. 2009, p. 7). Furthermore, the solidarity economy does not need to operate through the cash economy because it has its own forms of wealth and value and does not prioritise competition and profit-making, as human needs and relationships are at the core of this economic model. The solidarity economy is an economy of cooperation, equality, diversity and self-determination. Some unique features of the solidarity economy include its multi-dimensional values, its opposition to racism, embracing of feminist and ecological ideals, incorporation pro-worker values and practices that have both local and global aspects (Allard et al. 2009). For the solidarity economy to become successful, it needs social movements to create and advocate for its establishment and values. Michael Albert describes his own solidarity economy organizing project as “An alliance which gets its gender definition from the feminist movement, gets its anti-racist definition from the movements around race, gets its labor definition from the labor movement, and gets its ecology from the ecological movements” (cf Allard et al. 2009, p. 11). Activists in various social movements are drawn to the solidarity economic model because they contemplate addressing the structural and economic roots of inequality rampant in analysing the neo-liberalistic ideals and practices in their work and campaigns. The solidarity economy encourages action and elevates the importance of leadership where enterprises and organisations are rooted in the values, principles, and goals animating the Third System of the Economy (Allard et al. 2009). Furthermore, the solidarity economy commits its actors to progress their key aims and principles into both the private and public economic sectors so connections are built reinforcing access across old divides, so whole new spheres open up for strategic thinking and engagement. Allard et al. argue innovations for new economic models are “responses to the consequences of the exclusion and oppression by the wealthy and powerful” (ibid, p. 38). The principle aims of the solidarity economy is to build cooperative economies; mobilise its citizens; reciprocally share resources; and organise workers to defend their interests against unregulated capitalists. Furthermore, the solidarity economy is a better economic model providing a meta-framework

mapping out the economic terrain of the twenty-first century because it practices the economic principle of reciprocity rigorously, creatively and broadly, and is a classless economy. Schweickart (1996) stresses collective organisations thrive better and longer than capitalist industries because of the benefits of worker participation and ownership, as well as the benefits of the solidarity economy being shared equally to members of the solidarity economy projects.

Social justice circles, in proposing to humanise economic globalization have suggested the concept of fair trade to make it work for families and workers across the globe (Allard et al. 2009). A primary progressive alternative to the existing hegemony of capitalism is fair trade because trade is needed as long as the playing field is uniform – by creating uniformity, global standards around worker rights and the environment, establishing fair base prices, and ensuring profits accrue to producers and not just corporate intermediaries. Corrina Steward (cf Allard et al. 2009) argues local economies are oriented towards meeting the external needs of the market as opposed to people's local needs because people feed the market first and then themselves later. Environmental wastefulness occurs when resources and goods are shipped around the world, as history shows through trade, resources and wealth trades from the poor to the rich worldwide.

Rawls (cf Schweickart 1996) states it is an error to believe a just society must achieve a high material standard of life. What workers really desire is meaningful work in free association with others. The relationship between workers is based on the framework of a just basic institution because the acquisition of great wealth is not fundamental to the solidarity economy concept. Allard et al. (2009) describe how the solidarity economy incorporates the following positive elements:

becoming more innovative in production; reinvest[ing] in equipment and in the work-force; improving educational institutions producing the next generation of workers; ensuring government and labour supports the sustainability and growth of manufacturing companies; encourag[ing] genuine social partnership of labour, business, community, and government; encourag[ing] participation of partners in the design and implementation of all initiatives; promot[ing] development which is economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable (p. 34).

The solidarity economy is classified as a “High Road” (Allard et al. 2009, p. 36) economic model because it incorporates a strong return on investment. Innovation is at the heart of the solidarity economy (ibid) foundation, creating new niches and markets, incorporating values to existing products, making investments in research and development, enlarging the market share, and improving the efficiency of the productive process and the productivity of employees. Allard et al. (2009) lists the positive elements of the solidarity economy to include:

being smarter and investing in innovation in the more competitive environment; making a commitment to the continual enhancement of employees’ skills; being more efficient and cutting waste; holding a long-term vision and commitment; providing strong material incentives for high performance, as well as providing decent wages, benefits and security; promoting useful partnerships with stakeholders in the firm, in the sector, and in the community; upholding transparency, being straightforward, and fair. (p. 26)

The solidarity economy should not only be seen as a tactic but a critical source and fountain of force and standpoint, compelling humankind to think and shift away from the “pedantic and the pedestrian” and coerce human beings to act out of a “deeper, moral consciousness” for their businesses and the environment and for the communal well-being (Allard et al. 2009, p. 40). The solidarity economy is able to infuse “energy, creativity and organizing capacity” into any projects, enterprise, organizations.

8.7.4 Challenges of the Solidarity economy

Schweickart (1996) cautions it is erroneous to suggest work-place democracy or the solidarity economy is a miracle therapy, because it is not always possible for efficiency gains to be made, and for all cooperatives to succeed. Human beings succumb to old work-place hierarchies prevalent in capitalism, instead of seeing work as non-hierarchical throughout workers’ work life and because of the degree of differences of power leading workers to diverse incomes, the work-place no longer cares about the well-being of those who consume the goods and services they produce, but are more anxious about accumulating wealth to benefit the owners of the solidarity projects (Allard et al. 2009). Solidarity economic enterprises and organisations still have to work within the free market model which causes them to become anti-social

through competition. If enterprises and organisations are not competing, they cannot survive. Furthermore, if they are not competing in the market, they must reduce their costs, which would then cut back on welfare features, such as the establishment of day centre centres, and worker cooperatives that is required. Furthermore, educated persons who are good natured with proper training, at times may feel entirely content to make business decisions that would harm others and not themselves in their solidarity economic business dealings. The solidarity economy must address the old divisions of labour and the old market practices inherent in capitalistic enterprises, before it can innovate, take better action and make better choices for its workers and owners. Economic democracy is dependent on people's consciousness, values and priorities (Allard et al. 2009). It is possible through economic democracy to have a society that is racist-free but racism or consumerism are not obliterated by the principles of democracy; which are two capitalistic ideologies that are prevalent. If people wish to consume more, they will continue to destroy their environment. Therefore, a strong environmental movement is needed for ecological sanity to be maintained in any nation state. Schweickart (1996) notes with capitalism, owners of capital and management have control but in the solidarity economy, the workers will. Disputes may arise among the workers who wish to use a set of production tools while others may choose other instruments. The people endowed with managerial positions of authority may feel hampered by these democratic constraints, as workers own these solidarity economic projects and these enterprises cannot impose needed organizational changes without the consent of all its workers. The owners of capital and management in the capitalist system bear the financial risks of their businesses, but all the workers are accountable for the organisation's financial risks in the solidarity economy.

8.7.5 Building a Solidarity framework & economic model

The solidarity economic framework does not follow conventional project models where the model is developed, debated and then split into 400 different factions following any disputes about minute details (Allard et al. 2009). Rather it is a dialogue bringing people together to find a common ground where they can organise themselves and build social movements. Although detailed debates still exist in the process of project formulation, they happen in the context of a social movement, which everyone can share in, because it is built through people's creativity, and

collective problem-solving. Allard et al. (2009) propose the core values of a solidarity economy project include “stewardship and environment sustainability; cooperation; shared well-being (with an emphasis on the importance of diversity); equality; exploring and promoting non-monetary and non-traditional forms of wealth; democracy and participation” (p. 98). Building a solidarity economic project entails more than just simply identifying shared values because it involves the process of organising, taking action around these shared values thus building a shared story of economic possibility. It is the people’s common values that form the basis for new relationships between diverse groups and actors.

8.8 Summary

This chapter contained a critical review of the elements of the free-market economy/capitalism/neo-liberalism economic model and contrasts this economic model with other economic models such as Peasantology, Vanuatu’s matrilineal and patrilineal *Wantok Kastom ekonomi*, the Igbo indigenous economic model, the social, and the solidarity economic models. Each of these economic models was discussed with their assumptions, proponents, implicit ethics, and their challenges. It is with these ideas in mind that I reflect on the observations of the seemingly natural and general fit between the CEDAW projects implemented in Vanuatu and the reported experiences of a good many of interlocutors in this research as demonstrated in Chapter Six. However, Chapter Seven demonstrates how various seeming inconsistencies and contradictions also evident in their reports invited me to re-think the very neo-liberal agenda these projects are based on. The combined insights of my work to this point allowed me to strengthen the elements of what I call my Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice – a voice in which I craft my standpoint on the themes in detail in Chapter Nine as outlined at the end of Chapter Four.

CHAPTER NINE

Standpoint: A Matrilineal Wantok Feminist [Research] Voice

The sooner national leaders, who are men, realise that our women are our most valuable asset and therefore should be educated and treated right, the sooner we can begin to move in the direction of creating the kind of Vanuatu society that future generations can look back on and thank us for (WAWG President Jeannette Bolenga, p. 5, cf Randell, 2002).

9.1 Introduction

In Chapter Six and Seven, I addressed the issues of concern in this research through the lenses of liberal and radical feminist ideals. These lenses provide insightful tools for the re-examining of the women's narratives. Examined critically, the liberal view appears to hold much hope and yet, the evidence would suggest that 'the rising tide does NOT lift all boats (equally). More critical orientated theorists might generate their analyses from an assumption of patriarchal, economic, or biological determined views. Such assumptions taken uncritically cannot provide an adequate explanation, any more than a liberal interpretation alone is able to provide. The creation of my Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice was introduced in Chapter Five as a way to express insights into the lives of Ni-Vanuatu women that would allow for the consideration of the strengths and risks of liberal ideals and the power and the practical frustrations of a more critical analyses to be drawn together in a voice that honours first and foremost my matrilineal authority. In this chapter I draw together the threads of my analysis to this point in my considerations, to 'take my stand'. I begin this chapter by reversing the emphasis of the stories of and for emancipation as promised through Western liberalism (see Chapter Six) to redress the attendant risk of the further weakening of the social security of the Wantok system in relation to the enhancement of the well-being of women. I then explain more fully how this reversal of emphasis adds strength to my MWFV. I proceed to demonstrate the use of this voice in my analyses of the themes listed at the end of Chapter Four, examined in Chapter Six from a liberal feminist perspective and in Chapter Seven from a more radical feminist orientation. By the end of Chapter Seven, in examining the contradictory statements of my research participants, I posit that urbanism offers Ni-Vanuatu women alternative lifestyles and ways of existence that are providing the

types of aspirations offered in a liberal paradigm for some. Many women struggle just to survive. Regardless, the very success or struggle to participate in this Western liberal form of organisation may also be alienating them from an indigenous and traditional way of life that has in and of it many of the ‘social security for all’ aspired to. Drawing on the alternatives to Western Liberal Capitalism (explored in Chapter Eight and on my Wantok values, I now revisit the Themes in my MWFV.

9.2 Articulating My Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice (MWFV)

My Matrilineal Wantok Feminist analysis is presented as both a voice and a space for disenfranchised women with which and from which to “speak out” as advocated for by Hilda Lini Motarilavao (Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981). As a ‘voice’ it calls on Vanuatu’s patrilineages and urban patriarchy to recognise the importance of women whether they are matrilineal or patrilineal women and accord them with reverence, dignity and respect. My Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice articulates that without women, men and societies would discontinue. In Vanuatu, matrilineal women create patrimonies, and legacies for their matrilineal kinships while patrilineal women create patrimonies and legacies for their spouses’ patrilineal kinships. Regardless of the particular kinship systems, women are the backbone of Vanuatu’s society. Women are mothers, partners, spouses, bearers of patrimonies and legacies, nurses, gardeners, teachers, health workers, and food providers. The MWFV is a voice that speaks about the characteristics and strengths of being an indigenous woman of Vanuatu. It is a voice that speaks in favour of women. The Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice recognises that indigenous customs, traditions, socio-political organisation and the *Wantok Kastom ekonomi*, knowledge, values, beliefs, standards, conservation and disaster preparedness strategies need both women and men to serve and fulfil the needs of indigenous and traditional societies in Vanuatu while also engaging with the wider world in ways that are life enhancing for all Ni-Vanuatu people.

9.2.1 Matrilineal authority

My *Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice* demonstrates that despite the overlay of patriarchy in the contemporary governance of Vanuatu, matrilineal women continue to receive due reverence, dignity and respect from their rural matrilineal societies. For example, the late Grace Mera Molisa, of matrilineality was the first woman post-independence in 1980 to be given a position of authority in the new Vanuatu

Government; while Hilda Lini Motarilavao, also of matrilineality held positions of authority as a member of parliament in 1987 and 1995 and served as the Minister of Health for two terms (VNCW, 2005 & The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). She also acquired a position of authority in a regional office in Fiji around 2000-2001. Jeannette Bolenga the sister of Hilda Lini Motarilavao, held positions of authority as the principal electoral officer in the Vanuatu Government in the 1990's prior to accepting a regional position of authority at the University of the South Pacific (Randell, 2002). Today, matrilineal women lead, manage and govern in community affairs with their matrilineal hereditary chiefs, big-men and community leaders. I also carry out management, leadership, and governance roles as a *Na Vuhu Sule* leader and decision-maker in Matantas Village on Espiritu Santo. Hilda Lini Motarilavao has embarked one step further by advocating for and educating female and male students in the *Wantok Kastom ekonomi* through the *Melanesian Institute of Philosophy* advocating for the invigoration of indigenous values, knowledge, beliefs, mind-sets, attitudes and peaceful co-existence on the island of Pentecost (ILO, 2006).

9.2.2 Wantok values of collective responsibility

Wantok values are best described in the languages of the people who cherish these values. Loosely described in English, and overly generalised in order to contrast them with the general values of Western liberalism, they might be said to be:

- ✓ Collective concern for collective well-being;
- ✓ Specific responsibilities – some of which are gender specific;
- ✓ A prioritising of social security over individual rights'
- ✓ A specific balancing of individual flourishing and entitlement as a precondition for community flourishing and stability.

These values are exemplified in the progressive practices of the *Wantok kinship social network assistance* by urban matrilineal hosts who support Big Bay matrilineal members who transit Port Vila to and from seasonal work in Australia and New Zealand. *Wantok* values prescribe that urban residents must provide accommodation, and feed these rural members. When the urban hosts return to their villages, these rural residents will reciprocate and provide the hospitality they need. Many of these seasonal workers use their incomes to pay for school fees or to improve housing in their villages. In Tavunamalo, there are cases of workers who have returned home and

invested in housing or assisted in community water tanks or toilet facilities (Thomas, 2010). Seen from the MFWV, there is reciprocity when either group meets in the urban centres or in the rural centres. However, viewed from the subaltern perspective, these workers impose extreme pressures on the urban residents because they are already living in heavy debt with the meagre incomes they are earning with them needing to locate additional funds to meet their Wantok kinship network social security commitments. In the case of Big Bay, my *Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice* served as an advocacy, educative and influential voice that persuaded *Na Vuhu Sule* matrilineal figure-heads, big-men and leaders and the *Na Vuhu Sule* societal clan members to recognise the importance of retaining their Matantas indigenous land in its pristine state as a conservation area (Maturin, 1993).

9.2.3 *Matrilineal Wantok Feminist response to women's marginalisation*

I now articulate my response to the unsettling of gender balance and authority in communities that were once self-governing, sustainable and autonomous and the marginalisation and impoverishment of urban Ni-Vanuatu women. In this chapter, I use my *Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice* to provide standpoint positions on the liberal feminist ideals covered in Chapters Six and the post-colonial subaltern consternation covered in Chapter Seven. This is a voice that endorses and amplifies the voice of matrilineal women, a voice that re-claims and supports the authority of women in pre-colonised patrilineages but in a contemporary articulation. It is a voice that tackles the complex situation in urban areas where all Wantok systems are undermined, where the liberal promises are not being met, and where rural areas are being further undermined by the necessary striving of so many to attempt to secure for themselves and their immediate kin the income needed for the basic services of a cash economy; food, housing, transport, education for the children and health care. It is in this voice I now revisit the themes examined in Chapter Six for the consistency and contradictions with Western liberal ideal(s) reported by the interlocutors, and in Chapter Seven for the challenges the reported narratives bring to the prevailing liberal ideas. Here I draw to the surface, my response to the themes, when firmly rooted in my *Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Voice* and position.

9.3 The Themes: A Matrilineal Wantok Feminist Standpoint

In Chapter Six, I provided snippets of urban women's reported experiences demonstrating how some urban Ni-Vanuatu women under the liberal feminist ideals of achieved paid employment secured promotions, and felt empowered. Many self-employed Mamas involved in this research also reported achieving financial gain, generating an increased ability to pay for the necessities of life, and were asserting their voice in family and in the community. They too reported a sense of empowerment. From a liberal perspective, these successes vindicate the validity of the liberal vision. Of those who were successful in these terms; however, some reported their situations were not achieved without significant hardship or set-backs. Some reported on-going sexual prejudices and stressful pressures on their family responsibilities. Where examples indicate experiences to the contrary of the liberal vision, liberal feminists rely on their remedy, EEO, to address the issues with a view to a vindication and intensification of their liberal ideals.

In Chapter Seven, under the same themes, I revisited some narratives and provided additional snippets of the women's personal experiences that illustrate a more radical interpretation of the stories told. Access to positions of authority came at great cost for many. In Chapter Seven, as a 'counterpoint' to the liberal vision, those contradictions and costs are given an interpretation that questions the liberal remedy of 'more of the same' intensified will remedy the marginalisation and poverty for all women in Vanuatu. Their toolkit of ideas includes ideas of 'false consciousness and hegemony generated from fundamental assumptions about patriarchal, economic or biological determinism. Such more radical analyses caution women against the uncritical assimilation into the Master's House. In my analysis below, I revisit the themes again, this time taking my standpoint on each theme expressed in my MWFV.

9.3.1 Theme One: Women's Empowerment

i. Women in formal jobs: Women's empowerment

Initial evidences would suggest that some women are finding opportunities in jobs, are achieving promotions, and feel empowered as a consequence. An allied assumption is that if this is possible for these women, it is possible for all women. A liberal orientation to the narratives presented in Chapter Six would support this interpretation of women's experiences in Vanuatu. Any persistent discrimination, in this line of

reasoning, can be remedied through the intensification of EEO strategies. A more radical analysis of the narratives would read the evidences somewhat more problematically. Job success, from a more radical perspective, may be viewed in terms of the achievement of the levels of assimilation of women into the House of the Master, an assimilation that is unlikely to provide security and well-being for all for the duration of their lives. With Wantok values and community well-being in mind, both positions provide limited insight and perhaps confusing remedies for the women of Vanuatu if empowerment and well-being are reconsidered from a Wantok perspective. In response to questions about their sense of empowerment, many of the women told stories of success in their paid jobs:

I was given a junior position but because I was able to face challenges and resolved issues. My Director saw that I was capable and promoted me to the position of (name of title) in my Department.

Male managers are now listening to me when I have something to say in management meetings. I proved that I was capable of doing a good job and they appreciated my capacity and working relations with them became easier...I went straight to a decision-making role after I graduated with (name of qualification).

I made history to become the first woman to hold the (name of title) to the (name of state employer) which were previously occupied by men so I am proud and I believe that other women can do so too if they have the ambition and determination in life to work hard.

I did a lot of in-house training...I am a multi-skilled person and I can do many jobs.

I find it very difficult with my job because I do not have anyone to help me (we are short-staffed and I am doing the job of six people) so I am jumping from one job to the next. I am always pressured because I am doing everything and sometimes I fight with my boss and he has to leave me alone to get the job done.

At 5.00am I am already up, and by 7.30am I am already at work. Thank God my youngest sister cares for my children and takes them to school. I finish work between 6.30-7.00pm and then return home. I sort things out at home and then sleep at about 1200 midnight or 1.00am in the morning. I get very little sleep but my system is used to it.

By the very focus on the achievement of jobs, the celebration of promotions within The Master's Ship, the stories tell not only of the women's success according to liberal feminist ideals. From a more radical perspective, they demonstrate how deeply embedded the values and the faith in Western meritocracy are displayed. Regardless of the success of these women; however, only a few of these urban Ni-Vanuatu women have been able to achieve such success. Many other urban women continue to suffer progressive discrimination and oppression. Poverty has remained endemic. In the context of waged women, this poverty is perhaps marginally alleviated by their incomes – but this is an income that comes with many new costs attached. Some of these costs are the costs of holding down a job; transport, child care, appropriate clothing and so on. However, there is a less visible cost to the greater engagement with liberal ideals about the value and justice generated from competitive individualism – the central concept underpinning the faith in meritocracy. Wantok values are community values. Empowerment, from a Wantok world view is quite a different notion. To have power is viewed as the power (capacity) to share and care, and to be generous and humble, to be hospitable, and community-focussed. These are difficult ideals to uphold in the Western liberal employment context based on competitive individualism where the promotion and defence of one's own position is seen as a career skill – even if this means the neglect or deflection of the consequence of this value set on the lives of others.

ii. Women in informal jobs: Women's empowerment

Just as the women in paid employment report both empowerment and vulnerability in their quest for survival, the Mamas also reported mixed experiences with running microfinance businesses. When matrilineal women are single mothers, the burden of earning income and putting food on the table in the urban centres is extremely stressful for them:

I am not worried that I do not have a partner because as a woman, I would still have to struggle to look after my families and to put food on the table.

Access to incomes does not necessarily mean power and empowerment for these women. The lives of women are riddled with complexities. They wake up early to go to work and retire to bed late at night just to earn sufficient incomes to support themselves and their families. If there was no Wantok social security network assistance to secure care for those who depend on them, the lives of these women would be even more complex and stressful. How long can these women last in their formal jobs if they become exhausted and burnt-out from over-work and sleep deprivation? If these women fall off the Master's Ship, there is no one available (as they are single parents or single business entities) to rescue them and bring them to safety. Access to incomes is not enduring and will unlikely sustain them into their old age. Their faith in the market as emancipator, from a radical perspective, might be an example of false consciousness. By comparison their Wantok kinship network social security framework, particularly in its matrilineal form, may be a wiser focus of attention. Although critics may argue that women in formal and informal jobs are saving a percentage of their salaries/wages/incomes into the VNPF to cater for their retirement, the retirement package they get at the end of their working life, considering inflation and the cost of urban life, is unlikely to comfortably sustain them and their families over the long haul. The risk of non-sustainability is exacerbated if they become physically incapacitated or lose their job at any point. Even more concerning is the risk of being left with outstanding loans for Mamas that cannot sustain their enterprises profitably. If empowerment of all Ni-Vanuatu women is the intention of the CEDAW, the current remedies offered by the UN would be fruitfully revisited in a MWFV,

9.3.2 Theme Two: Gender Sensitivity in Education and Training

i. Women in formal jobs: Gender sensitivity in education and training

Education and training was credited with significant beneficial influence on the achievement of both salaried and entrepreneurial women. For some, training was seen as important, but not adequate or accessible. A few organisations were gender-sensitive and did set aside funds to cater for their employees' professional training and

development as highlighted in Chapter Six in Theme 6.3.2. However, from the snippets displayed in Chapter Seven, not all employers invested in their employees' professional training and development:

Education and position wise, more women are needed in directorship positions, managerial positions, medical fields, pilots and other educational fields statistics should be equal for both men and women, but this is not happening right now.

Insufficient training is provided in the work-place to promote female employees to succeed and develop into a higher level... Trained and experienced women continue to face challenges to obtain education and training in various organizations.

From a liberal perspective, access to training and education is a key to EEO. Observations of exclusions to such training and education can be met with relevant EEO remedies. From a more radical analysis, liberal remedies merely strengthen the guide-ropes/framing of the Master's Ship.

To take a look through the lens of a MWF position, Western education and training brings certain disadvantages to the matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models by creating new identities such as the 'urban elites' and segregates once cohesive communities and cultures (Chung et al. 2002). The urban matrilineal women, like their patrilineal sisters, also seek further education as a means, to secure positions of authority and adequate pay in order to improve their livelihoods, acquire better housing, educate their children and make a useful contribution to Vanuatu's future direction. However, such education disengages matrilineal and patrilineal women from their indigenous and traditional Wantok governance models. Professional training and development can also become a stepping-stone for the literate, educated and qualified families to consider their status as superior to illiterate rural families, and a mechanism for qualified matrilineal and patrilineal women to discriminate against and oppress their less-educated rural sisters. Ni-Vanuatu women who migrated into the urban centres are role-modelling other rural women to follow in their footsteps. Furthermore, the call for professional training and development only focuses on the women

becoming literate, educated and qualified to perform their formal jobs to suit the Western capitalist system. The preference for Westernised notions of education over indigenous and traditional ways of life and knowledge means these women can no longer retain association with their indigenous and traditional societies. The women are not immersed into their indigenous and traditional Wantok governance models. A call was made to Ni-Vanuatu youths to learn from the Melanesian Institute of Philosophy and become re-integrated and re-immersed into their indigenous and traditional Wantok governance models (Lack of leadership, 2008 & ILO, 2006). Organisational professional training and development must recognise the 'bi-cultural obligations' of urban Ni-Vanuatu women and for this training to focus on both Western literacy and the Wantok socio-political and cultural values. The roles of the Wantok governance models is to direct its members to lead and direct their own subsistence, gathering, hunting and social work to meet their communal values – rather than being 'subjected to' market engagement. On the topic of willingness and lack of professional training and development, this is the result of patrilineal and patriarchal attitudes, mind-sets and values of superiority. If women received higher education, they may become more qualified than male counterparts. Abuses of forced resignations or terminations when women seek professional training and development are classic examples of men's non-liberation, non-emancipation and non-empowerment techniques practiced on Ni-Vanuatu women. Loss of talents and brain drain occurred within these organizations as Vanuatu lost qualified staff members as they departed from these organizations and from Vanuatu.

ii. Women in informal jobs: Gender sensitivity in education and training

Women in informal jobs also require education to assist them with their business ventures:

We just need to attend more courses so that we can manage ourselves and improve our business capacity. In my view I impress management as fundamental.

[I recommend] some gratis training for Vanwods MFI Mamas to improve their financial literacy and business skills training to Vanwods MFI Mamas.

In these snippets, training is fundamental to assist women improve in their market ventures. However, it remains to be seen whether Vanwods MFI will take on this suggestion and make it their responsibility to provide complimentary training to all Vanwods MFI Mamas so that they too can become literate, educated and qualified to manage their microfinance businesses. As highlighted in Theme 9.3.2 i), any business training provided by Vanwods MFI or any other stakeholders needs to be ‘bi-cultural’ to improve women’s access into the markets as well as educate and immerse these women into their Wantok governance social and cultural values.

9.3.3 Theme Three: Women’s Employment

i. Women in formal jobs: Women’s employment

While employment is widely perceived by participants as the means to their empowerment, as this was revisited in my MWFV in Theme One, the conditions of their employment also draw attention to the extent to which Western liberal values or the Wantok values are to be prioritised in the context of formal employment or in the case of the Mamas, in their informal market activities. Snippets of the women’s stories were embedded with complex relationships between patriarchal values and their employment outcomes:

I was earmarked to take over from an [expatriate consultant] but I was working with this pastor (position holder) [who] he was fighting me tooth and nail because he wanted the position so badly.

Only men are in the leadership and senior positions in our office...Women are not given the opportunity to become decision-makers as men occupy the decision-making positions and are the managers/directors/chief executive officers in these settings.

Spouses of some urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal jobs have recognised the benefits of their wives’ seeking further education, to grant them better employment opportunities. However, Themes that were highlighted included the complexity of obtaining promotion, work ethics, patriarchal attitudes, mind-sets, corruption, and rivalries between those who were promoted and those who were not, as well as between the women themselves. The women’s experiences were full of incidences of

gate-keeping, power struggles, dis-unity and marginalisation. These work experiences also brought challenges to the women's ability to balance their home and Wantok obligations, which developed into non-reciprocal relationships. These themes, however, were not discrete events, but often interwoven into a complex tapestry of discrimination and oppression. Attaining formal jobs produces negative side-effects for urban Ni-Vanuatu women as they acquire a new set of responsibilities which are incompatible with their indigenous and traditional obligations. When urban Ni-Vanuatu women are not in the homes, they must commercialise the caring and nurturing of elderly and infirm family members to unpaid and paid providers. The welfare and well-being of these family members remains in the hands of external parties, who may not show the needed love, dignity and respect to the people under their care. For example, in accepting unpaid help from family members or paid help from house-girls, the urban women transform their parental or domestic tasks into jobs for others bringing with it ever deepening questions about the commercialisation of parenting and domestic work – further locking Vanuatu into the trajectory of global organisation of human lives that must revolve around the formation of employment (Kraemer, 2003). Urban Ni-Vanuatu women have to meet multiple nuclear and extended family obligations and non-reciprocal social exchanges for their extended family members and next-of-kin from their already dwindling funds.

9.3.4 Theme Four: Women's Participation in Economic and Social Life

i. Women in informal jobs: Women's employment

Snippets from the urban women's experiences show the complexities of their market pursuits. Based on the global dynamics of desired commodities for the enhancement of global capital being harnessed, mined or harvested, the *Mamas'* fate is being shaped by national governments, economic development, banks, international financial institutions and the United Nations, national and international NGOs and other civil society actors such as WWF, Oxfam as well as the plethora of professionals (technocratic or otherwise) who actively construct and reconfigure their imperialising reality – in this case demonstrated in their seeming diminished concern for the complex commitment of Ni-Vanuatu women.

While both liberal and racial feminists recognised the 'double burden' placed on women who are required to earn incomes and still remain the primary caregivers for a

large group of people, they differ in their views as to where the root causes are and thus what the remedies would be. Liberal feminists are more likely to promote market-driven solutions, such as (market-provided) care for children and the elderly. Radical feminists may call for the fundamental reshaping of power bases – be they derived from biological attributions or, economic and political arrangements. The women in this research recognised the tensions and were more cognisant of the Wantok responsibilities that were also vested in them. Urban women aim to attain better housing and modern appliances, live a better life with electricity and potable water and to meet their financial obligations:

I told my husband that our roles should be reversed because I worry more about maintaining the family than he does [as he] does not do things for the welfare of our family.

I am not worried that I do not have a partner because as a woman, I would still have to struggle to look after my families and to put food on the table.

My husband is free to look after his extended family commitments and I concentrate on our nuclear family commitments. Sometimes I do help his family members...I have cared for some of my nieces and kept them under my roof for many years.

Matrilineal women in informal jobs are assertive because of the leadership, and managerial skills they obtained from community affairs, they take proactive actions to improve their lives in the urban centres. Seeking equal employment opportunity through the market mechanism in their microfinance businesses forces the women to make many sacrifices. Although, the Mamas speak positively of earning incomes to improve their living standards and to educate their children, there is no empirical evidence to confirm that all of the Mamas have successfully educated all of their children from their meagre breadcrumbs (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011 & Salong, 2008). If a Mama faces financial constraints to educate all of her six children, she must make a social choice on which of these children will receive education. There is empirical evidence from Papua New Guinea that patrilineal values influence parents to invest in the education of their sons rather than on their daughters (Taiyawole,

2006). Many of Vanuatu's less educated individuals will acquire lower-paid, domestic and gardener jobs including seasonal work in New Zealand and Australia, thus continuing the cycle of working for the Master's Ship (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). Literate, educated and qualified children carry a better chance of securing decent formal and informal sector jobs. The Mamas continue to sacrifice their life, health, wealth and well-being, to make a living to maintain their nuclear and extended family obligations.

I told my husband that our roles should be reversed because I worry more about maintaining the family than he does [as he] does not do things for the welfare of our family.

I am not worried that I do not have a partner because as a woman, I would still have to struggle to look after my families and to put food on the table.

My husband is free to look after his extended family commitments and I concentrate on our nuclear family commitments. Sometimes I do help his family members...I have cared for some of my nieces and kept them under my roof for many years.

With 'meagre breadcrumbs' which depicts [inadequate sustenance and never enough to resources to sustainably satisfy a person] the Mamas must meet their urban centre living expenses and are living in progressive debt (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). The balancing of income generating activities with the responsibilities invested in them is a challenge for women the world over. Liberal feminists acknowledge this balancing as a tension and for more radical analysts, they call this women's double burden. For indigenous women not only does the pressure consist of finding, keeping and excelling in their paid work while also maintaining responsibilities for home, family, community, the frail and disabled, there is also the implied commitment to maintaining the *Wantok* indigenous world views. Access to and concentration in informal jobs creates a mechanism for urban Ni-Vanuatu women to abandon their *Wantok* kinship social security network and cultural values. For the women of Vanuatu, their village and their matrilineal or patrilineal *Wantok* governance models may be a very long distance to access as this access may be financially prohibitive

based on the restrictive incomes they are earning. Table 9.1 shows the comparison of a Mama's weekly earnings, savings and loan repayments with their financial weekly and monthly obligations for educational and living costs.

Table 9.1: Vanwods Mama's Earnings & Expenditures

Particulars	VT Cost @ ER 68.00	NZ\$ Value	Disbursements in Vatu & NZ\$
Weekly Calculations	25,000-35,000 Vat	\$368-\$515	Paid every trimester as a lump sum cost
Vanuatu state primary education per trimester			
Vanuatu secondary school costs per trimester	35,000-50,000 Vat	\$515-\$735	Paid every trimester as a lump sum cost
Mama's Average Earnings per week	5,000 Vatu	\$74	200 Vatu (NZ\$2.90) as weekly savings & spends 1,200 Vatu (NZ\$17.60) on loan repayments & left with 3,600 Vatu (NZ\$53) for food, water, utility and educational costs
Monthly Expenses Earnings of 3,600 Vatu each week (NZ\$53)	Times 4 weeks = 14,400 Vatu	\$212	Incurs monthly electricity bill of 3,000 Vatu (NZ\$44) each month, her net balance would be 11,400 Vatu (NZ\$167)
Food costs per month	10,000 Vatu R/balance 1,400 Vatu		To meet trimester education & water costs.

As a Mama must pay trimester primary and secondary school fees in a lump sum, she has inadequate money left from her weekly earnings to contribute to this expenditure and must progressively borrow finances each trimester/year from the Vanwods MFI, the Vanuatu National Provident Fund or other financial institutions to meet her children's educational costs. Personal/educational loans means higher interest fees and progressive weekly and monthly financial obligations to cover these debts. The Mamas continuously serve the Master's Ship leading to a life-time of debt, servitude and obeisance (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011).

Furthermore for urban women in informal jobs, they bestow their caring and nurturing roles to new alliances. Some children become socially attached to these haos-gels referring to them as their '*mothers*' (Kraemer, 2003). Mamas have an additional stressful situation dealing with unruly children and the loss of love and control over their children. Spouses' roles may also change if they are expected to help with the primary caring and nurturing roles and domestic chores because their wives are minding their microfinance businesses. Only open-minded spouses will provide domestic help, while others will leave these chores for the *Mamas* to complete on their return home each night, even if the *Mamas* are extremely tired. This brings us to critically ask whether employing haos-gels is not another ploy of encouraging matrilineal and patrilineal women to exit their *Wantok* governance models and shoving them into neo-liberalised goals (Rodman et al. 2009 & Kraemer, 2003). The haos-gels like the Mamas will also be earning '*meagre breadcrumbs*' for a living (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011 & Kraemer, 2003). Furthermore, if the haos-gels reside with their employers, they will be expected to work longer hours generating symptomatic unequal relations between these workers and their employers. Both the Mamas and their haos-gels are working double burdens, confirming the notion that the Master's Ship forces both parties to become overworked and underpaid in the cash and market economy (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). This analysis leads to a reflection on whether it is physically, psychologically and sexually safe for these haos-gels to be readily available 24/7 to the beckoning of their female and male employers (Kraemer, 2003). How more emancipating and sustainable can the pursuit of the cash and the market economy be for the physical, psychological and spiritual safety of these domestic workers?

Through the Master's handmaidens of liberal democracy and the markets, serving the few financial elites at the expense of the many, the Master's Ship prescribes rules and conventions, manners and protocols, rewards and punishment combined to retain urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal jobs in progressive debt, strict servitude and obeisance; thus progressively and hegemonically and tightly embracing the Mamas into its disciplined, restrictive and congested fold (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011 & Rodman et al. 2009). No consideration and empathy is granted to these Mamas to seek help from their Vanwods MFI networks to continue to support and fulfil their weekly obligations. The sole interest for the Vanwods MFI executive and

women leaders (chieftains) is for the *Mamas* to progressively earn weekly revenue and fulfil their weekly obligations. Because of the Vanwods MFI executive and social clubs' social control over these *Mamas*, Vanwods MFI has prided itself in a 98 per cent loans repayment success record. When a *Mama* recants on her Vanwods' weekly financial obligation, she is removed from her social affiliated clubs and the Vanwods MFI's executive membership until such time as she is able to secure income from elsewhere to repay all her debts, including accumulated monthly interest, and improve her creditworthiness rating. In my interpretations of the *Mamas*' stories through the post-colonial subaltern voice, I stated in Chapter Seven that when a *Mama* reneges on her weekly obligations, other Vanwods MFI *Mamas* within her socially-affiliated-Grameen-Bank groups are required to step in and pay off her debts. The creation of Vanwods MFI social clubs through a radical feminist perspective is a mechanism for women to assemble and work away from the control of patriarchal influences for their communal well-being. However, in the Vanwods MFI context underpinned by liberal economic logic, the *Mamas* must work for themselves which creates competition leading to quite divisive social relations between the *Mamas* as expressed by having to kick the women out when they are not fulfilling their weekly obligations.

The *Mamas* face unfair business practices from Vanuatu's urban patriarchy. They are charged the same business licence fees as higher income-generating companies. As the *Mamas* are busy sustaining their microfinance businesses (through complex hierarchical master/slave relationships); they remain disengaged from their *Wantok* governance models (Van Trease, 1987). They no longer practice and maintain their indigenous traditional ways of life to keep their societies socially cohesive (ILO, 2006; Huffer & Molisa, 1999 & Van Trease, 1987). The urban women disregard their communitarianism and reciprocal obligations in their matrilineal and patrilineal *Wantok* governance models (because of their indebtedness to the Master's Ship for more income. The *Mama*'s continuous servitude to the Master's Ship earns them '*meagre breadcrumbs*' from the Master's Table even though this process is painful (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011).

The Master's Ship employs crafty tactics to seduce and retain the *Mamas* (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011 & Rodman et al. 2009). For the *Mamas* to meet their urban centre obligations, they must progressively and endlessly toil to keep their businesses

sustainable. As generations of these *Mamas* and their children no longer renew ties with their indigenous and traditional communities, they become a lost generation. They will have no custom stories to tell their grandchildren of what indigenous and traditional life entails and will have no need to transmit indigenous and traditional knowledge to their younger generations.

This critical analysis clearly argues against pushing urban women into the grips of capitalism and its desired monetary commodity, as it is extremely burden-some for urban Ni-Vanuatu women. If the *Mamas* did not disengage themselves from their idyllic, slow-paced indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok governance models, where they have personal freedom and social choices to choose how to carry out their daily activities and share their indigenous wealth and resources with other societal members, they would lead a less stressful life and still have access to their Wantok kinship social security network for support. The *Mamas* become socially dysfunctional, deflecting their spiritual and physical energies, focus and efforts from their indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok kinship social network and cultural obligations and diverting this attention into the Master's Ship in Vanuatu's fast-paced globalised setting (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011).

9.3.5 Theme Five: Women's Role-modelling and Mentorship Programmes and Mind-Set Changes in Vanuatu

i. Women in informal jobs: Women's role-modelling and mentorship

Although role-modelling, mentorship and coaching programmes are necessary to provide literacy, education and qualify candidates for formal and informal jobs; many employers as well as the state do not provide these opportunities to upgrade their employees' skills. To address urban women's marginalization, a call for role-modelling, mentoring and coaching programmes as well as men's mind-set and reformation calls were made as indicated in the snippets below:

We throw people into decision-making roles but we do not give them appropriate training, so how do we expect them to adhere to good governance? More women need to undergo further studies...When I was appointed in 2004, there was training taking place in this very classroom. I was not mentored or role-modelled. As soon as I entered the room, I was asked

by the (name of position holder) to come in the front and start teaching the (students). Only after undertaking instruction work for four years, I went to (name of country) in (date) to attend further training.

Matrilineal women, who hold formal authority within their indigenous matrilineal Wantok governance model, face problems from urban patriarchy reaching out for positions of authority and microfinance business ownership and operation in the urban centres. Unlike their patrilineal sisters who are already exposed to men's negative mind-sets, attitudes, beliefs and values of superiority, they must quickly learn to circumvent the discrimination and oppression they received from Vanuatu's urban patriarchy to protect them-selves and still secure formal and informal jobs. Many of the urban Ni-Vanuatu women fulfil responsibilities in their formal jobs with little organizational role-modelling, mentoring and coaching assistance. While patrilineal men recognise the importance of patrilineal women in the private spheres of reproduction, production, and community life, there are deep-rooted oppressive practices that transcend into the urban centres at the very heart of public life. If Vanuatu is concerned about women's liberation, emancipation and empowerment, then patrilineages and urban patriarchy pose a major threat to achieving gender-equity and gender-equality, not only for patrilineal women, but for matrilineal women also, who must endure discrimination and oppression once they arrive in the urban centres. Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy's values of male supremacy affect their dealings and relationship with Ni-Vanuatu women. Furthermore, this male supremacy is displayed through political parties' who appear to lack the will to incorporate more women into constitutional power. Although international conventions and instruments with local strategies and policies are enacted, these interventions do not appear to reduce women's discrimination and oppression, their subjugation and marginalisation in Vanuatu. Even though Vanuatu acceded to CEDAW in 1995; statistics pre-and-post-CEDAW demonstrates that men have yet to relinquish their dominant power-holding positions in Vanuatu's society. Urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs continued to experience discrimination and oppression in their pursuit for positions of authority, similarly with *Mamas* accessing microfinance business ownership.

A role-modelling, coaching and mentoring programme is needed to educate less literate grass-roots Ni-Vanuatu women to understand their rights for social justice. Educating women will teach them of their individual rights and liberal feminist ideals available to them but also provide them with the mechanism and determination to fight against any discrimination, oppression and subjugation in their lives. It will also give them the literacy, education, qualifications, knowledge and skills to seek formal and informal sector jobs.

Nevertheless, there are also disadvantages when role-modelling, coaching and mentoring programmes merely provide professional training and development that concentrates on the cash and market economy. Any form of training must be 'bi-cultural' to immerse its participants in their *Wantok* governance models. When rural matrilineal women are living in their matrilineal *Wantok* governance model or are living in the urban centres but continue to retain ties with their *Wantok* governance model, they will continue to retain and transmit institutional and indigenous traditional wisdom, knowledge, custom folk-lore, behaviours, attitudes, mind-sets, values and beliefs to their off-springs. They also participate in community affairs, care for and nurture their children and elderly citizens, and assist other community members with their cultural, traditional and humanitarian obligations.

Urban women continue to fight amongst themselves for positions of authority in women's organisations such as the Vanuatu National Council of Women (VNCW, 2005). This issue means that women's energies are wasted on secular concerns. While the suggestion that role-modelling, coaching and mentoring; and further education (a point discussed earlier) is required to equip women with the skills and capabilities to take on senior roles in a more professional way, this approach does not address the disparate and shared experiences of discrimination and oppression that have been highlighted in this research. Nor does it address the lived experiences of the realities of urban life over rural life, uncovered so far. Yet, through education, such a grass-roots movement might be generated, if education has the focus of developing awareness for women's shared and distinct experiences of systemic oppression and discrimination. Such an education might enhance the likelihood of Ni-Vanuatu women to collectively demand that their well-being needs are addressed and that their voices are included into the affairs of community governance.

9.3.6 Theme Six: Gender-Balanced Policies in Vanuatu

i. Women in formal and informal jobs: Gender-balanced policies

Snippets from the women's experiences show that Vanuatu state and private organizations are not embracing gender-balanced policies and emancipation strategies although CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects actively encourage these:

Promotions should be given based on capacity and merit...My organisation encourages training but because the decision-makers are males and they tend to favour and send men out for the majority of training.

State and private sector emancipation strategies and gender-balanced policies have not improved urban Ni-Vanuatu women's situation since the accession of CEDAW. Prior to and post-CEDAW, only a handful of women have acquired positions of authority. To address women's marginalization in Vanuatu's society, will require a significant change in men's attitudes and mind-sets, and reformation of any socio-political and economic contexts to one that has community well-being at the heart of governance considerations. Furthermore, CEDAW with its liberal feminist ideals of individual rights, personal liberty and social choices have imposed a framework that is contrary to the matrilineal *Wantok* governance model of communitarianism, social cohesiveness and reciprocity. The concern here is that as matrilineal women develop, learn and adopt the values embedded in liberal notions of individualism, that is becoming further assimilated within the capitalist political economy, they may become further disenfranchised from their *Wantok* kinship network systems and obligations and no longer uphold the values that enhances community and social cohesiveness, values that require the reciprocal sharing of wealth with family, including families remaining in their rural settings. Because incomes are difficult to access, material wealth will be withheld from extended family needs and diverted to the nuclear family interest. In the matrilineal rural setting, gender-balanced policies of justice, equity and egalitarianism is maintained which needs to be incorporated into the urban contexts if Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy is sincere about addressing women's marginalization. This must also be incorporated into patrilineal rural contexts if

patrilineal decision-makers are serious about granting liberation, emancipation and empowerment to patrilineal women.

9.3.7 Theme Seven: Domestic Gender-Sensitization in Vanuatu

i. Women in formal and informal jobs: Domestic gender-sensitization

Snippets of conversations call for domestic gender-sensitization in Vanuatu:

Women need to treat children the same way. Boys and girls must do house chores. Because parents treated children the same way, then the children realised that everyone has equal rights. Values need to be drummed to everyone to everyone regardless of their gender.

It depends on men and women's upbringing in the homes. So we need to start training our children properly so that they respect and provide the opportunity to women. We should leave cultural values aside and we women should work towards a common goal. We should train our young people to champion women's issues and to permit good governance prevail...so that the advancement and empowerment of women can improve in the future.

Domestic gender sensitization is the responsibility of all Ni-Vanuatu citizens and not just matrilineal societies. Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchies need to recognise that domestic gender sensitization training must start from parents in the homes, which will have an multiplier effect expanding from the private into the public sphere and then into a person's adult life and marriage. Parents must teach gender-balanced literacy, knowledge and wisdom and practices so that both male and female children are gender-sensitised. The end result would be that Vanuatu's rural and urban societies become more egalitarian in their dealings and relationship with all persons in the society. In the matrilineal rural context, domestic gender-sensitization is already a social norm. Matrilineal parents educate their children through lived experiences and *storian*. Genealogy, land inheritances, indigenous, cultural and social knowledge, local medicine, folklore, values, beliefs are passed from the older generations to the new generations through *storian*.

9.3.8 Theme Eight: Public Gender-Sensitization in Vanuatu

i. Women in formal and informal jobs: Public gender-sensitization

A call for public gender-sensitization to address women's marginalization is discussed next:

Gender equality can be improved, but we have to preach more of gender equality, get men to undergo gender training and awareness and make them have respect for women.

In the political arena, the reason why many women cannot succeed in constitutional power is not because men are against them but because women are fighting against women. It is not discrimination from men but jealousy and envy from other women.

People in the islands are very receptive. Even though they are not highly educated as we are but they are very talented and we should sit down and learn from them...Even though a person may be highly educated but if his/her attitude is improper, then they are a waste of time. If you want to become a leader, then you must be a servant to others... [and] do not expect people to treat you like a king. A leader should not expect people to bow down to them but they should be the ones working for the good of the people.

Vanuatu's Western democratic governance model advocates for gender-equality through CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects. Nevertheless, matrilineality and its *Wantok* governance model does recognise, value and empower women, through its concepts of justice, equity and egalitarian values in according them with a voice and space in community affairs. For Vanuatu stakeholders to pay homage to the liberal feminist concepts of justice, equity and egalitarianism, and better emancipation strategies, a call is made for all citizens to embrace public gender-sensitization strategies. There must be a feedback loop to ensure that domestic gender-sensitization policy are complied with and also monitored for its effectiveness. A call is made for urban women to learn from their rural sisters and to work with one another for their community's common good.

9.3.9 Theme Nine: Humility and Open-Mindedness & Values in Vanuatu

i. *Women in formal and informal jobs: Humility and open-mindedness*

A call for humility and open-mindedness is made to address women's marginalisation:

Because Vanuatu holds strong patrilineal orientation...I feel that it reverts to people's attitudes, mind-sets and how they view and value women. Women originating from the matrilineal lineage descent cultural society find it easier to talk, lead and express their views, but women from the patrilineal lineage descent society are very much subjugated...It was because I was constantly fighting against my husband's patrilineal lineage descent cultural society and its traditions that destroyed our marriage in the end .

Men and women must be willing to improve themselves, be humble and listen to others and above all must work together.

Patrilineal and patriarchal men's attitudes, mind-sets, beliefs and values of superiority remain a stumbling block to women's liberation, emancipation and empowerment. Men must be willing to reform them-selves if women are to gain equal status with men. If men recognise that their acts of discrimination and oppression are suppressing Ni-Vanuatu women, they may be willing to take steps to make changes to their behaviours and attitudes.

The UN's remedies through the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects plus enacted local state strategies and policies have not improved urban Ni-Vanuatu women's advancement. Regardless of whether urban women elect for formal or informal jobs; my research concludes that gender-equity and gender-equality practices are elusive in patrilineages and Vanuatu's contemporary context. Is the involvement of the United Nations' and various NGOS in achieving a greater integration of Vanuatu into the global economy to be read as the work of a midwife facilitating the inevitable birth of a new Vanuatu in which the indigenous people will thrive? Or are these agents of change better seen as handmaidens to the Global Master destroying all ways of being that counter the market logic currently killing people and the planet?

Certain practices that occur in Vanuatu's patrilineages and in contemporary Vanuatu increase or have no effect in reducing discrimination and oppression against Ni-Vanuatu women. There are immense advantages for patrilineality to grant justice, gender-equity and gender-equality to patrilineal women, and eliminate practices that subjugate them. Patrilineal men must recognise the value and worth of their women, by granting them with positions of authority in community affairs and in the public sphere. Furthermore, patrilineality can learn from the matrilineal gender-equity and gender-equality framework, to ascertain how this indigenous system values, upholds and shares power with women in community affairs and how if patrilineal and patriarchal men remain humble and open-minded, they can also use the same concept to treat their patrilineal and matrilineal women with reverence, dignity and respect.

Habermas (cf Powell & Moody 2003) reiterates that human beings must optimistically consider and reconcile their most urgent questions with persistence. Opportunities to improve women's livelihoods for urban Ni-Vanuatu women and their dependents remain intricate, susceptible, ambiguous and unsteady. For Ni-Vanuatu women to benefit from the liberal feminist ideals of justice, equity and egalitarianism, nationwide interventions need to be incorporated, complied with and monitored. Western and newer versions of sustainable liberation, emancipation and empowerment will remain unachievable in Vanuatu unless matrilineal indigenous traditional sustainable gender-equity and gender-equality forms are discussed, maintained, benchmarked, and utilised. Without dismissing the benefits of CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects to urban women; an alternative voice is highlighted here, that is, the sustainable voice of matrilineality which incorporates women into positions of authority in community affairs. From my Matrilineal *Wantok* Feminist Standpoint Position, I reiterate the advantages of the matrilineal *Wantok* governance and kinship model as a process for enhancing the well-being of all Ni-Vanuatu, in both urban and rural settings. To this end, I argue that there is an urgency to recognise the importance of retaining links with the indigenous matrilineal *Wantok* governance model and its kinship network social systems. By re-valuing matrilineal wisdom and knowledge, patrimony and legacies, lineage and land and property inheritances, folk-lore, and cultural values, it may offset the undermining and the demise of Vanuatu's indigenous cultural governance framework. However, this is not enough, education and advocacy

for transformation of social relationships will also be required if women are to achieve equitable outcomes in Vanuatu.

Relevant Vanuatu stakeholders have a role in assuming ownership of this educative and advocacy work; recruiting male champions as the forerunners of this programme will be required if we are to reach out to Vanuatu's patrilineal societies. This will also require the commitment of women steeped in traditional Vanuatu knowledge, values, beliefs and women who are literate, educated and qualified to participate with the male champions. The advocacy work will benchmark for patrilineages the positive features of the matrilineal Wantok governance model and its practices of justice, equity and egalitarian values and in highlighting the positive aspects of matrilineages' in recognizing and valuing women in Vanuatu's society. Part of this project must also include educating Ni-Vanuatu about the realities of living in urban settings. Perhaps such an educative approach may encourage rural inhabitants to remain in their indigenous traditional manner of life with less complexity to their well-being needs. Although the Western education system may be blamed for changing the focus and attention of rural inhabitants and in encouraging them to move into urban areas, and at the same time, away from their indigenous traditional lifestyle, knowledge and ways of being, it can also become a positive catalyst for change. For example, there are educated matrilineal urban women who are educating Ni-Vanuatu citizens to consider alternative and beneficial ways of returning to their matrilineal and Wantok governance models and their values, and to consider the benefits of remaining in their rural settings, which, in many ways, are arguably less stressful and more environmentally friendly and sustainable to the health and well-being of its citizens. Furthermore, through education, I as a matrilineal woman have been able to use this opportunity to embark on this doctoral research study and write a thesis that has given a voice and space to both matrilineal and patrilineal women in Vanuatu.

9.4 What is at Risk? Matrilineality and Power-Sharing with Women

Matrilineality with its embedded provisions of justice, equity and egalitarianism has existed for four thousand years as a system to organise human beings in Vanuatu (Maltali et al. 2009; Huffer & Molisa, 1999 & Van Trease, 1987). The adoption of Christian and colonial values has undermined this indigenous socio-political

governance model in Vanuatu and the wider Melanesian nations (Randell, 2003; Macdonald-Milne et al. 1981 & Narokobi, 1980).

Yet, the urban matrilineal women in this research reported holding a deep sense of responsibility for the Wantok authority within their *Wantok* matrilineal *governance system*. Overall, however, the urban Ni-Vanuatu women in this study reported a mixed response from their men-folk. The long-term sustainability of the matrilineal *Wantok* governance model and its kinship network social security systems and the formal authority of women in matrilineages' remains problematic. Where, in the global context, have the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects assured a desirable gender dynamics in the governance of human affairs? Matrilineality and its *Wantok* kinship network social security system will only survive if urban matrilineal women continue to fulfil their roles and obligations to their community and uphold their matrilineal values, cultures, folk-lore, wisdom and knowledge through active links and participation in their indigenous and traditional customs. If the matrilineal urban Ni-Vanuatu women are too busy in their formal and informal jobs, and no longer hold ties to keep in regular contact with their rural communities, the undermining and demise of the matrilineal *Wantok* governance model will become a reality. Like Chung et al. (2002), my findings show not only these urban women, but their children will also become a lost generation, as this research shows, that very few urban women are gaining the material benefits promised to them from formal and informal jobs.

I conclude this section by highlighting that the urban Ni-Vanuatu women's pursuit of paid employment through the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects remain inadequate to provide the means to achieve the ultimate thriving of all Ni-Vanuatu women and in particular the flourishing of all people and their environment in this region as long as the patrilineal and patriarchal systems evident in Vanuatu continue unrestrained. Vanuatu has been influenced by Western, global and international pressures where incomes, processed food, electronic household gadgets, technological apparatus have become attractive to rural inhabitants. Many rural people exit their indigenous and traditional *Wantok* governance models in the hope that they will gain formal and informal jobs that will provide them with adequate incomes to improve their living standards and to educate

their children. This false sense of profitability for the cash economy will continue to influence Vanuatu's rural and urban populations.

Could an investment in the Solidarity Economy bring greater security to Ni-Vanuatu women – or is this another deflection of the women's attention away from their indigenous and traditional values while the Master continues in his voracious way?) Nevertheless, as a means to continue to encourage rural inhabitants who are still living in their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models to remain in them, the 'Solidarity Economy' (see Chapter Eight) is offered as an alternative socio-political economic model to organise Vanuatu's rural and urban societies (Neamtan, 2002). This model has been used by indigenous communities in other regions of the world to harness the benefits and minimise the risks of capitalism. It has the potential of improving Ni-Vanuatu women's status, especially Vanwods MFI *Mamas* who currently work long hours in their informal jobs. The Solidarity Economy has values of communalism, social cohesiveness and reciprocity similar to the values of Vanuatu's indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal *Wantok Kastom ekonomi* (Westoby, 2010 & Jolly, 1996). As such, Vanuatu's stakeholders must devise solidarity economy projects for the rural areas of Vanuatu also to keep its rural inhabitants actively engaged in these projects and not desire to leave their rural habitats. Participants of solidarity economy projects are equal partners and the benefits of these projects will be shared equally to the members concerned.

9.5 Overall Matrilineal Feminist Wantok Standpoint

The analysis, evaluation, interpretation and arguments presented in Chapters Six and Seven and my '*Standpoint Positions*' and discussions in this chapter carry implications for Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy, policy makers and employers in Vanuatu, to scrutinise their dealings and relationship with urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs. Through gaining access to paid formal and informal work, urban matrilineal and patrilineal Ni-Vanuatu women reported changing dynamics within their urban nuclear family structures. Some of these women became the sole bread-winner for their nuclear and extended families. Although these women were able to earn the respect of their spouses and their families, this study has highlighted complex hierarchical master/slave relationships between them and Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy (Kohn, 2005 & Honderich, 1995). They

experienced many impediments and obstacles from the urban patriarchal elite in accessing positions of authority, and in owning, operating and maintaining microfinance businesses. They also experienced difficulties to earn adequate incomes and meet their nuclear and extended family obligations. Because some spouses of these urban women were unemployed, role reversals occurred in women's primary caring and nurturing responsibilities. For urban women who are committed to making a success of their formal and informal jobs, they must commercialise their primary caring and nurturing roles to house-girls, if unpaid assistance is unavailable. Many of these working mothers experienced that they no longer have the time, energy and endurance to manage their households on their return home from paid employment. Furthermore, the urban Ni-Vanuatu women's ability to benefit from paid employment was hampered by gendered divisions of labour in the formal sector, work life balances, Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy (including employers and female gatekeepers) and their dealings and relationship with employees in the work-force, and discriminatory practices applied to them in accessing education and training.

It is patrilineal women, who benefit the most by exiting their oppressive patrilineal *Wantok* governance model; as they reported feelings of liberation, emancipation and empowerment as a result of successfully gaining positions of authority or owning, operating and maintaining microfinance businesses. These women earned incomes that provided for their urban centre obligations as well as enable them to purchase land/property, a privilege denied to them in their rural setting. Patrilineal women also took advantage of the education opportunities offered to them to become literate and gain qualifications. This enabled them to secure formal jobs. Nevertheless, they, like their matrilineal sisters, still experienced severe discrimination and oppression from employers and senior women who imposed barriers to thwart their desires to access positions of authority in formal jobs. Nevertheless, matrilineal women, on the other hand, fared badly when migrating into the urban centres. They had not experienced patriarchal values of superiority, attitudes and mind-sets while living in their indigenous settings. They too had to work very hard and quickly to circumvent impediments to access positions of authority. Matrilineal women in informal jobs demonstrated their proactive approach to seeking microfinance business ownership and to make a living to support them and their families.

As both matrilineal and patrilineal urban Ni-Vanuatu women were too busy in their formal and informal jobs and in their urban centre obligations, they no longer recognised the need to keep in regular contact with their *Wantok* governance models and their kinship network social security systems. For matrilineal women especially, where patrimony and legacies and lineage and land and property ownership and transmission is passed from the mothers to children, rural-urban migration posed a risk for them because their children were no longer immersed into matrilineal indigenous manner of living and indigenous ties, as urban life underpinned by Western influences had dominated their matrilineal family's mind-sets, attitudes and consumed much of their time, focus and energy. For the urban matrilineal Ni-Vanuatu women, their formal authority as co-leaders, co-managers, co-governors in community affairs, was undermined because these women no longer lived in their rural habitats and in their indigenous way of life. If matrilineal women had remained in their matrilineal *Wantok* governance model, they would still retain their individual rights, personal freedom, equality of opportunities and social choices to decide when to embark on their rural activities, and reserve sufficient time and resources to help other members of their communities. Based on this study, rural matrilineal women face less stressful and complex lives compared to their urban matrilineal sisters who are pursuing the market and cash economy.

The Solidarity economy appears to offer a viable alternative socio-political economic framework to organise Vanuatu's society (Neamtam, 2002). Within this model, projects have the aim of fulfilling the collective well-being needs of Vanuatu's rural inhabitants, as well as those of urban women, and in particular, women working in informal jobs. Solidarity economy projects established in the rural areas may help keep rural inhabitants actively engaged in these settings so that there is less desire for them to move into the urban centres.

9.6 Summary

In this Chapter, I presented my 'standpoint' as 'the space between', a place formed from and enriched with the analyses of the Themes that were discussed in detail in Chapter Six and Seven, enriched with my re-reading of the feminist literatures and the literatures that offer economic reasoning that counters the representation of the globalisation of a (liberal) capitalist market orientation as the only possible way to

organise humanity. Western liberal aspirations are endemic in much policy advice and direction. Much of it is focused on the ‘promises of markets’ to bring emancipation. Such orientation to ‘the market’ as the remedy to poverty and marginalisation were embedded in much of my interlocutors’ narratives in both the focus group discussions with employer and employee representatives and in the urban Ni-Vanuatu women’s personal conversations as evidenced in Chapter Six. However, the stories that alerted me to experiences and concerns that seemed to suggest there was more to the story and this seeming ‘good fit’ are stories that demonstrate deep flaws in the theory of (market) liberalism. These stories also spoke of continued commitment to collective values, and expressed courageous commitment, among interlocutors’ to meet their many obligations, despite the inadequacy of the incomes generated from the market for all that they now needed to finance – from food, transport and rent to school fees and health care. In this Chapter, various insights were collated and offered as a response to the Themes enriched by the women’s stories and my re-reading of the literatures and in the sounding of my MWFV.

Nation-wide interventions, such as the adoption of values of humility and open-mindedness were offered as ways to improve gendered relationships in Vanuatu. I also drew attention to the need for greater domestic and public gender-sensitisation programmes, and the implementation of a nation-wide role-modelling, coaching and mentoring programme to educate grass-roots and urban women in leadership, management and ethical values which will serve them in their formal and informal jobs. Communicative action and advocacy work is recommended to educate rural inhabitants of the benefits of remaining in their indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok kinship governance models and to avoid the complex hierarchical master/slave relationships prevalent in the urban centres. The value of the Solidarity Economy as an alternative socio-political and economic frame to organise rural inhabitants and urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal jobs aimed at the harnessing of the women of Vanuatu into the capitalist global economy was considered.

The next Chapter answers the fundamental research question for this research study and will respond to all supplementary research questions and conclude this study by highlighting urban Ni-Vanuatu women’s affiliation and aspirational needs and whether the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and the establishment of

microfinance projects have actually improved the well-being of urban Ni-Vanuatu women. It will also identify the pains of complex hierarchical master/slave relationships that these urban Ni-Vanuatu women are experiencing to earn adequate incomes to meet their business and family obligations.

CHAPTER TEN

Where to From Here? Aspirations, Affiliations & Way Forward for Women of Vanuatu

In Vanuatu's traditional economy and culture, when people bring you pigs, mats and so forth, you receive the goods but you are also required to [return the gifting]. The 'Kastom Ekonomi' is a transparent governance system...I have to say that women in rural societies and in traditional governance have better and recognisable roles than today [as] they have their place, respect and dignity in the society (Anonymous Interlocutor).

10.1 Introduction

The attractiveness of feminist ideals as a way to address the incremental marginalisation of women through the history of colonisation to governance of contemporary Vanuatu was drawn from the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and Three. From those reviews, I was able to distil a list of themes I presented at the end of Chapter Four and which I intended to use to integrate my theoretical understanding and my field-notes. In the initial reading of my field-notes; however, I observed stories that seemed to point to contradictory or inconsistent experiences of the CEDAW-EEO and microfinance project interventions within and across some of the narratives of the interlocutors in this research. This observation led me back to a re-review of the feminist literatures from which I then crafted a 'point', 'counterpoint' and 'standpoint' framing to guide my analyses of these themes. The 'point', an analysis of the themes through a liberal feminist lens, allowed me to demonstrate the close fit between the aspirations of the feminist authors reviewed through the Western liberal orientation of the United Nations and of the CEDAW in particular, and of many of the stories told by the women in my research. The stories that did not fit so well or seemed to challenge this liberal orientation became the focus of my 'counterpoint' presented in Chapter Seven. This re-look at the narratives through this critical lens also brought a different hue to the stories of optimism discussed in Chapter Six. The insights generated through my examination of the counterpoint urged me back to the literatures about the breadth, depth and reach of Western liberal ideas and their transmutation into the version that prevails in Vanuatu today: freedom for capital(ism) for which many

women pay a high price – whether they participate or are marginalised. As this form of capitalism intensifies the world over, accompanying patterns of poverty and alienation are witnessed everywhere (cf Maxton, 2011 & Branson, 2011). In Chapter 8, I reviewed literatures about alternative economic arrangements and their ethics and impacts. These alternatives express values more in line with *Wantok* notions of social security.

The articulation and amplification of my Matrilineal *Wantok* Feminist Voice as ‘standpoint’ provides an indigenous, traditional, cultural, social, and historical perspective of the concepts of contemporary patriarchal attitudes - mind-sets that endorse the belief in the superiority and in the fusion of colonial amended patrilineality and Western patriarchy. This fusion is a distressing mix in the dealing of contemporary patriarchy with patrilineal women. It is a challenge to matrilineal frameworks of justice, equity and egalitarianism. I have compared and contrasted the effectiveness of the Western liberal feminist rhetoric of justice, equity and egalitarianism through the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects with the types of social security available to women through the *Wantok* system of governance. A comparison of these different systems of social organisations and governance have brought me to a position where I can examine the extent to which these systems of governance are progressively working towards eliminating discrimination and oppression, or bringing liberation, emancipation and empowerment to the women of Vanuatu. This study takes place in my wider concern about the endemic poverty and insecurity that makes the lives of so many Ni-Vanuatu women so difficult.

In Chapter Nine I used a Matrilineal *Wantok* Feminist [research] Voice as ‘standpoint’ to explore the ‘space between’ the ideas generated from the two different analyses presented in Chapters Six and Seven. From reflection on these interpretations, my subsequent critical review of globalisation (in Chapter Eight), and my experiences as a Ni-Vanuatu woman, I now bring my ‘standpoint’ to the reflection on this research as a whole. My standpoints have implications for Vanuatu’s stakeholders such as Vanuatu’s patrilineages’ and urban patriarchy, policy makers, employers and citizens of Vanuatu, to scrutinise their dealings and relationship with Ni-Vanuatu women. It has implications for foreign advisors and aid organisations, educators, and mentors.

Most importantly, it has implications for the women of Vanuatu as they must choose the path that they believe will enhance their lives and those of their dependents.

I begin this Chapter by drawing together the discussions of the two primary means of well-being offered to Ni Vanuatu women: matrilineal and patrilineal *Wantok* systems of governance and the capitalist market. However, in keeping with my MWFV, I reverse the relative emphasis given these systems in the literatures and the 'general taken for granted' wisdom of most stakeholders. I then revisit the United Nations interventions and in particular the two programmes under study in this thesis therefore CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects to address Ni-Vanuatu women's marginalization in Vanuatu. I next discuss the outcome of communal life compared to urbanism.

10.2 The Challenges of Urbanism and the Benefits of Communal Life: A Story Reversed

Community life in traditional Vanuatu entails a framework that provides residents with communal rights, personal freedom and a range of social choices in deciding how to organise their daily work and fulfil their daily needs. People are less time-management-conscious within a slow-paced environment, sometimes referred to as 'island' or 'Vanuatu time'. People meet their basic survival needs through manual labour. They fetch drinking, cooking and cleaning water from the rivers, creeks and streams, and firewood from the forest. They wash clothes in the rivers and sea, and prepare plots of land for new gardens. They weed and nurse their crops to maturity. They harvest food from the gardens. They gather resources and hunt from the land and forest. They fish in the rivers and sea. All these activities are done for mutual sustenance or in the preparation for communal feasts that bond communities. An advantage of community life is the time available to elders of matrilineages to transmit indigenous traditional knowledge to younger matrilineal generations through everyday lived experiences and through '*storian*' (Crowley, 2003). These *storian* convey genealogical records, create patrimonies and legacies from the older matrilineal to the new matrilineal generations.

Many rural migrants have come to see rural life as restrictive and un-innovative (O'Collins, 1998). There is indeed little opportunity for income generation. Earning

cash in the urban centres and having modern facilities is now regarded by many as emancipation from the time-consuming routines and rigors of indigenous traditional rural life (Rodman et al. 2009 & ILO, 2006). With little opportunity to earn incomes in the rural areas, rural residents cannot buy processed food such as rice, tin-fish, sugar, salt, flour and soap. Conflicting responses to the urban Ni-Vanuatu women's desires for access to urban life, jobs, cash, technological innovations and electronic gadgets and the opportunities to meet these women's affiliation and aspirational needs in a democratic society is the reason why many rural residents move into the urban centres (O'Collins, 1998). Western influences infiltrate the rural areas, influencing rural citizens, pressuring them to desire the possession of processed food and technological innovations and electronic household gadgets, as more prestigious than accumulating indigenous and traditional wealth and social capital. The reality for many is that in both formal and informal jobs, the wherewithal for a secure livelihood is difficult to achieve. This difficulty is shared with many women around the world where neo-liberal market economies are offered as the means to emancipation from rural lives deemed archaic and oppressive.

While there is no 'going back' to some romanticised notion of the past, a past with its own shadow sides, my interests is focussed on how the situation as it now is, can be addressed. The enhancement of the lives of women in Vanuatu is unlikely to come about without a commitment to radical changes to the current commitment to market dominance, to the extent to which civil society supports this domination, and to the organisation and governance of rural communities as the centre of values and identity, and the locus of social security.

In his *Discourse of Inequality*, Rousseau (cf Cranston, 1986) states "there is a clear promise that a certain type of civil society can restore to men, even in the modern world, the freedom, happiness, and authenticity which the human race in general has lost in the course of its evolution" (p. 79). Rousseau argues that in romanticism or communalism the "natural man enjoys repose and freedom" (ibid, p. 79). Indeed, in their rural habitats, even today Ni-Vanuatu women face less complex hierarchical master/slave relationships than they do in urban situations. In their own communities, in principle, they are free to pursue their communal activities at leisure with no interference. When rural women leave their indigenous matrilineal and traditional

patrilineal *Wantok* communities to find their futures in the urban areas, this move creates conflicting pressures for them. The social and economic dynamics for many urban women reflected by Rousseau's observations: the "social [woman], on the contrary, is always active, always busy, always playing a part, sometimes bowing to greater men whom [she] hates, or to richer men, whom [she] scorns, always ready to do anything for honours, power, and reputation, and yet never having enough" (ibid, p. 79). Rousseau highlights the perils of urban centre life and the pursuit of capitalism where the Master controls the proletariat and workers must submit to employers and owners of capital, to undertake all sorts of activities for the recognition, honour, power and reputation that urbanism provides (Cates, 2011; Kohn, 2005 & Honderich, 1995). Both liberal and radical feminists articulate this as 'double duty' also framed as the 'double burden' now placed on urban women as they must meet their family and domestic commitments and also compete in the markets for incomes to purchase the means to nurture their families through whatever the channels the markets allows.

In contrast to communal rural life, an urban Ni-Vanuatu woman's time in a formal job is spent pleasing employers and satisfying customers' needs. Once in such paid employment, some of these women are able to earn sufficient incomes and attain better living conditions and housing with these benefits expanding into their families and communities. However, even for these 'successful women' their busy schedules and their on-going struggles with patrilineages and urban patriarchy, makes little time for rest periods and inadequate time to spend with their families. For urban matrilineal women, the disruption and challenges they face in their formal and informal jobs have consequences for their continued participation in village governance and their indigenous traditional authority.

Regardless of the statistical evidence that market context may be highly exploitative, for the participants in my research, success on the markets is important and for many seen as achievable. I posit that this Western promise is like two huge fish scales placed on the eyes of Ni-Vanuatu women. They cannot uncover the entrapment that the seductive Master's Ship is placing before them (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). The women's optimism might be read as a type of false consciousness that serves The Master's hegemonic grip, as discussed in Chapter Seven. Once these urban women are entrapped in the grip and tentacles of the Master's hegemonic embrace, the

fish scales will remain intact as they cannot truly reflect on their marginalised, inhumane and unjustified situation (Rodman et al. 2009; Kohn, 2005 & Honderich, 1995). The ability to earn incomes (Thomas and Humphries, 2010 & 2011) in formal and informal jobs and to live a better life in the urban centres, may also be re-thought as brainwashing rural women, distracting them from their traditional canoes in their indigenous matrilineal and patrilineal *Wantok* governance models and their *Wantok* kinship network social security systems and embark on the rolling and swaying Master's Ship (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). They may be better depicted as riding the tempestuous and churning sea of the Western capitalist market economy (Rodman et al. 2009). Like women around the world, The Ni-Vanuatu urban women must grasp firmly onto the shaky and precarious ladder to mount to [promised] safety onto the ship's deck (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). As they struggle to keep their grip on the shaky and precarious ladder, many fall off into the churning sea below and progressively try to unwind themselves from the clutch and tentacles of the chains of capitalist anchors and guide boats. The Master's tools through rules and procedures depicted as a giant octopus with tentacles that reach far and wide, lies silently beside the Master's Ship to snatch these women, press them back onto the ladders and when aboard, keep them in progressive captivity (Thomas & Humphries, 2010, 2011 & Lorde, 1996). When the urban women remove themselves from the clutch of one tentacle, another tentacle reaches out and clutches them again, this time, ever more tightly. In their struggles, they become too weak to resist, liberate, emancipate and empower themselves from these tentacles and remain motionlessly enchained to capitalism with just their heads bobbing above the churning sea. The stories from my interlocutors show that they are bound by liberal feminist ideals and capitalism's complex churning sea as highlighted in Chapters Six-Seven.

10.3 UN's Interventions

The UN, as the upholder of and advocator for liberalism and human rights, has encouraged Vanuatu since 1995 through CEDAW to eliminate all forms of discrimination and oppression against women and to grant Ni-Vanuatu women with equal rights. These rights include the provision to own property. Although various international conventions such as the CEDAW, CRC, and MDGs have been widely enacted in many countries, nowhere in the Western world has justice, gender-equity and gender-equality been fully achieved by or for the women in these societies. The

West, like their small brother, Vanuatu's patrilineages valorises masculinity and disparages femininity. Global decision-makers, through the promulgation of Western principles of governance and the dynamics of capitalism promote universal emancipation as a value (Rodman et al. 2009). The demonstrable exclusion of many people, but women in particular, has generated liberal feminist theories of justice, equity, egalitarianism, liberation, emancipation and empowerment. These theories are manifest in practice through the implementation of such interventions as the CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects aimed to offset Ni-Vanuatu women's marginalization in the contemporary context. These interventions, while intent on removing women from their [assumed] impoverished rural societies, draw them into urban areas to seek their livelihoods, and the security of their dependents, through engagement in formal and informal jobs. Vanuatu's historical context and the contemporary characteristics of the subjugation and marginalization of Ni-Vanuatu women were evident through targeted literature reviews in Chapters Two and Three.

I have pondered why the situation of women remained precarious although CEDAW had been operational in Vanuatu for over 17 years. This became the basis of my interest in researching women's marginalization and ascertaining the effectiveness of CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects through the urban Ni-Vanuatu women's personal experiences via a list of nine liberal feminist themes (see Chapter Three): Theme 1 Women's empowerment; Theme 2 Women's participation in education and training; Theme 3 Women's employment; Theme 4 Women's participation in economic and social life; Theme 5 Women's role-modelling and mentorship programme and mind-set changes; Theme 6 Gender-balanced policies; Theme 7 Domestic gender-sensitization; Theme 8 Public gender-sensitization; and Theme 9 Humility and open-minded values. These themes are also embedded in the personal conversational narratives of the interlocutors, which were analysed, evaluated and interpreted in Chapters Six, Seven and Nine. In Chapter Four, I discussed the research methodology and framework from which I generated a list of themes for deeper investigation in the light of the experiences reported through the focus group discussion with my research participants. In noticing some interesting inconsistencies to the general tidy fit between the earlier literature reviews and the orientation of the CEDAW, I was motivated to return to the literatures to find an explanation for these seeming inconsistencies and contradictions within and across some of the narratives.

The outcome of this return to the literatures (outlined in Chapter Five) allowed me to craft the Point/Counterpoint/Standpoint framing for a more nuanced review of these themes. In Chapter Six, I analysed my field notes using the liberal feminist framing (point) followed by a radical perspective of these themes in Chapter Seven (as counterpoint). This comparison drew particular attention to the ways in which the unique experiences of being a woman in Vanuatu accounts for any tensions and seeming contradictions in the fit between their experiences and the literatures from which I generated the list in the first place. I was thus redrawn to the literatures, this time to find an explanation for the prevalence of the liberal influence on the governance of Vanuatu, the experiences of the women, and the seeming intractability of the issues facing them. In Chapter Eight, therefore, I offered a critical review of globalisation of the liberal ideals being intensified the world over – in part through intervention such as the CEDAW. I summarised some of the alternatives being generated by communities aspiring to different values. I drew attention to the solidarity economic model as one that may have more potential to address the issues that are now besetting the governance of Vanuatu. With this insight in mind, I could refine my matrilineal Wantok feminist standpoint to take positions (in Chapter Nine) on themes as they were variously analysed in Chapters Six and Seven.

10.3.1 Revisiting the Promises: EEO programmes and Microfinance projects

I set out to investigate two United Nations' interventions intended to enhance the well-being of women in contemporary Vanuatu. My focus has been on the stated aspirations and reported experiences of:

- i) CEDAW EEO programmes implemented for urban Ni-Vanuatu women in salaried/professional occupations in the formal (public and private) employment sector; and
- ii) The establishment of microfinance projects intended to support local enterprise for poor urban Ni-Vanuatu women.

I questioned whether the implementation of EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects which aimed to liberate, emancipate and empower Ni-Vanuatu women, is the ideal advancement and development tool for urban Ni-Vanuatu women. I asked myself if these have met their well-being needs. I wished to ascertain whether these interventions contributed to improving gender equality in Vanuatu:

- i) by incorporating more urban women into positions of authority in the formal (public and private) employment sectors; and
- ii) in granting loans to women through programs of microfinance to undertake business ownership and operation.

These two UN interventions: CEDAW EEO programmes in 1995 and microfinance projects in 1996 promised urban women to earn sufficient incomes for the purpose of meeting their personal, nuclear, and extended family obligations, to eradicate their poverty, to improve their living standards, and to address their well-being needs. As these interventions were implemented within a complex socio-political, cultural, and economic environment in Vanuatu, I explored whether Vanuatu's indigenous patrilineal and matrilineal norms, and more recently established urban patriarchal attitudes and mind-sets, promoted or oppressed urban women in their daily lives and in their formal and informal jobs. I wished to identify through the women's personal stories the perceived effectiveness of the CEDAW-inspired interventions. For the women in salaried/professional occupations, this enquiry drew me to examine the implementation of EEO programmes in positively granting women achievement of more equal employment opportunities in positions of authority, and reduction in the discrimination experienced from employers, senior female gate-keepers and employees, spouses, business operators, and Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchal dynamics. For Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs, I examined the establishment of microfinance projects as a means to provide incomes to these poor women to make a living and meet their nuclear and extended family obligations. The conditions, opportunities and outcomes of microfinance projects experienced by participants were discussed in relation to the overall impact on their well-being and whether they also experienced impediments from Vanuatu's urban patriarchy, Vanwods MFI and women leaders of affiliated clubs in the course of their microfinance business ownership and operation. Through engagement with both groups of women, I sought to shed light on the persistence of radically unequal and generally difficult situations of many urban Ni-Vanuatu women – a situation that the UN has made a commitment to improve.

I set out to answer the supplementary research questions listed below and then to consider the implications of my findings from these questions by wrapping up with the

fundamental research question: *To what extent do the United Nations' CEDAW programmes for EEO and the establishment of microfinance businesses address the emancipatory aspirations and well-being needs of Ni-Vanuatu women?* The urban Ni-Vanuatu women relate to Vanuatu's accession of CEDAW and the implementation of EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects throughout their stories and provided their views on the perceived effectiveness of CEDAW in their acquisition of positions of authority and in owning and operating microfinance projects. I integrated the implications for this question, drawn from my research as a whole, which are discussed at the end of this chapter.

10.3.2 Re-stating the supplementary questions

Below I restate the supplementary questions I have used to guide me to the enquiries that would meet the general objectives of my investigation, objectives I restate immediately below this list:

- a) How, and to what extent, do women aspire for advancement and equality in constitutional power, corporate governance and economic activities in Vanuatu?
- b) What challenges do women face in contributing to improving living standards of the people of Vanuatu?
- c) In what ways would the women like to see their effectiveness enhanced?
- d) What evidence demonstrates that glass ceilings/walls/cliffs/escalator/sticky floor problems documented in the international organisational literature also affect women in Vanuatu in their aspirations for inclusion in governance, senior management and entrepreneurial activities?
- e) Do family configurations, societal norms and traditional lineage systems encourage or discourage Ni-Vanuatu women to aspire for positions of authority and entrepreneurial activities in the formal contexts?
- f) What actions or measures of social and ethical responsibility and moral obligation should the Vanuatu Government and policy bodies take to enhance the advancement and equality of women into constitutional power, corporate governance and entrepreneurial activities in Vanuatu?
- g) To what extent have the implementation of the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

Women's implemented EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects addressed the well-being needs of Ni-Vanuatu women?

In this research, therefore, I explored the impacts of indigenous cultural norms of patrilineality and matrilineality and urban patriarchal mind-sets, attitudes, beliefs and values in either promoting or oppressing women in their daily lives and in their formal and informal jobs. I also investigated and identified the effectiveness of the implementation of CEDAW-inspired EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects in positively reducing urban Ni-Vanuatu women's discrimination and oppression at the hands of employers, gate-keepers, spouses, business operators, and Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy.

10.3.3 Restating the objectives of this research

The stated objectives of this research were to:

- a) Appraise Vanuatu's influences and inhibitors on the well-being of women in Vanuatu's patrilineal and urban patriarchal relationship and dealings with women;
- b) Investigate urban matrilineal and patrilineal women's experiences of discrimination and oppression;
- c) Identify and evaluate the mechanisms which promote urban women's discrimination and oppression – in particular through the UN's generated programmes of interventions: EEO programmes for women in salaried/professional occupations and the establishment of microfinance projects for Vanuatu microfinance women entrepreneurs;
- d) Identify the complexities of capitalism in the form projected onto Vanuatu and to determine whether the implementation of EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects in this context have addressed, or may yet address, the well-being needs of urban women; and
- f) Identify and offer a suitable economic model to Ni-Vanuatu women as a method of organising work and rural and urban life.

10.4 A Plan for Action

Based on the analyses carried out in Chapters Seven to Nine from the urban women's stories, I have identified various aspirations and affiliation needs for urban Ni-Vanuatu women in salaried/professional occupations and Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs addressed in the second column of Table 10.1 below under the heading 'Aspirations/affiliations of urban Ni-Vanuatu women'. In the third column under the heading 'Way forward for urban women and Ni-Vanuatu women in general', a list of recommendations is offered.

Table 10.1: Aspirations/Affiliations and Way Forward for Urban Women

EEO Programmes/microfinance projects	Aspirations/affiliations of urban Ni-Vanuatu women	Way forward for urban and Ni-Vanuatu women in general
EEO programmes and microfinance projects for women in salaried/professional occupations and Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs	<p>Benchmarking matrilineages' framework of justice, equity and egalitarian values and offering it to Vanuatu's rural patrilineality and urban patriarchy to improve the status of women in Vanuatu (Refer to Chapter Seven and Nine)</p> <p>Advocating for rural women to remain critically active in their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models (Refer to Chapter Nine)</p> <p>Establishing nation-wide role-modeling, coaching and mentoring programmes to provide education in ethical values, leadership and management concepts to Vanuatu's future workers,</p>	<p>Respect given by Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchies and patrilineal women to Ni-Vanuatu women in general and providing better social and working relationships with them</p> <p>Recognition by Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchies and patrilineal women on the roles matrilineal and patrilineal Ni-Vanuatu women play in their indigenous Wantok governance models and in their rural way of life</p> <p>Promotion and recognition by Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchies and patrilineal women to have male champions, educated</p>

	leaders and managers (Refer to Chapter Seven and Nine)	citizens, workers, leaders, managers and governors who are gender-equality conscious
	Eliminating discrimination and oppression from Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchies including senior female gate-keepers and employees to urban women and offering them better working conditions, cultures and harmonious working relationships with decision-makers, better business environment and cultures (Refer to Chapter Seven and Nine)	Preaching and practicing gender-equity & equality ethics in the work force by Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchies (including senior female gate-keepers and employees) to lessen the complex hierarchical master/slave relationships for urban women's formal and informal jobs and treating these women better
	Receiving adequate remuneration for the work they do to enable them to access better housing, educate them-selves and their children, meet their nuclear and extended family commitments and eliminate poverty (Refer to Chapter Six)	Employers practicing gender-equity & equality in the work-force through fair remuneration to urban women according to their work and promotion on merit
EEO programmes for women in salaried/professional occupations	Easier access into positions of authority based on qualifications, merit and capacity (Refer to Chapter Six)	Employers practicing gender equity & equality in the work-place are lessening the complex hierarchical master/slave relationships for urban women in formal jobs
Microfinance projects for Vanuatu's microfinance women entrepreneurs	Non-competitive business opportunities and favourable business environment with affordable interest rates for microfinance loans (Refer to Chapter Seven)	Microfinance institutions and Vanuatu's urban patriarchy to practice gender-equity & equality by lessening the

<p>Central location for all Mamas to assemble and sell their goods and services attracting higher traffic flow to earn them more incomes (Refer to Chapter Seven)</p>	<p>complex hierarchical master/slave relationships to urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal sector jobs by reducing high business licence fees and according them with better interest rates</p> <p>Microfinance institutions and Vanuatu's urban patriarchy including the Vanuatu Government practicing gender-equity & equality in meeting the needs of urban women to operate microfinance businesses successfully and lessen their complex hierarchical master/slave relationships.</p>
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The aspirations for all rural and urban Ni-Vanuatu women are to receive recognition from rural and urban men for the unpaid and paid work they undertake in sustaining and maintaining their nuclear and extended family members. Some of these women aspire for decision-making roles in community affairs as well as in formal and informal jobs, and roles in urban governance towards Vanuatu's future direction. Secondly, the aspirations for women in salaried/professional occupations are to have employers who are gender-equity and gender-equality conscious providing them with a favourable working environment to pursue their formal sector jobs. Thirdly, the aspirations for Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs is for them to be affiliated to appropriate financial institutions, and to a trade and business association working towards protecting their microfinance business interests. These women also wish to receive financial assistance at low interest rates that would help make their microfinance businesses more viable and help reduce the complex hierarchical master/slave relationships that exist.

For Ni-Vanuatu women in general, the way forward for them is to be given equity and equality and recognised as equal citizens, as they are equipped with appropriate leadership and managerial capacity obtained from their domestic sphere responsibilities that enable them to participate in community affairs and in the formal decision-making process in urban governance. They also wished to be acknowledged and recognised for the contribution they make to their formal and informal sector jobs. Secondly, urban women in waged jobs and salaried/professional occupations and Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs wished to receive adequate remuneration and income. The theory of thematic analysis was used to analyse the women's personal conversational narratives under the themes of employment in formal and informal jobs. Thirdly, Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs wished to receive non-competitive business opportunities and have favourable business climate and support and to be centrally located where there is high human traffic flow to earn more income to fulfil their financial obligations.

In the subsequent sections of this thesis (Chapters Seven & Eight) and in this Chapter, I identified various liberal feminist themes in the form of affiliation and aspiration needs which arose from the empirical observations suggesting the way forward for Ni-Vanuatu women in general. The next section of this Chapter is interpreted entirely from my matrilineal Wantok (research) feminist standpoint position by dealing with the supplementary questions and the issues that generate from them.

10.5 Re-Visiting the Supplementary Questions: Standpoint Implications

A number of issues arose from this research which I will respond to individually in the supplementary research questions and conclude by responding to the fundamental research question at the end of this Chapter.

In Chapters Six and Seven, I developed a point and counterpoint analyses of the liberal feminist themes that emerged from the literatures and my fieldwork. I crafted a response to these analyses based on a research orientation gained from insights and values derived from my matrilineal heritage: my 'Standpoint' (as described in Chapter Nine). Below, I take each of the supplementary questions and examine the

implications of my findings and potential actions for each in keeping with the views expressed as my Standpoint.

1. *To what extent and how do women aspire to advancement and equality in constitutional power, corporate governance and economic activities in Vanuatu?*

Women in salaried/professional occupations confirmed their ultimate desire to achieve positions of authority and become successful decision-makers in Vanuatu's corporate and constitutional governance. Secondly, Vanuatu's microfinance women entrepreneurs acknowledged that microfinance business ownership and operation, although arduous and complex, do provide them with incomes, with personal choice and freedom to make appropriate business decisions, improve their self-confidence, self-worth and meet their families' well-being needs. Thirdly, all the urban women indicated their desire to receive adequate remuneration from their formal and informal jobs to enable them to meet their nuclear and extended family obligations, improve their living standards, including adequate housing, receive training and education and also educate their children as well as remove them from poverty. In my analyses of these expressed aspirations, a liberal orientation with its primary focus on EEO in the job/market sector (Point) suggests the ideals expressed from these perspectives are far from being met, as discussed in Chapter Six. From a Counterpoint position, these remedies, and the very world view these are based on, (as discussed in Chapter 7) are problematic as they invite the women of Vanuatu to subject themselves to a process of development being amplified the world over, that in the eyes of many, is causing global social and environmental havoc.

My Standpoint

The implications from my Standpoint are that the implementation of EEO programmes and microfinance projects as the ideal advancement tool provided by the UN to developing countries like Vanuatu have not liberated, emancipated and empowered Ni-Vanuatu women to improve their well-being because the urban women continue to face complex hierarchical master/slave relationships in their formal and informal jobs.

2. *What challenges do women face in contributing to improving living standards of the people of Vanuatu?*

The women's stories reveal that they faced many challenges in their formal and informal jobs because both state and private sector employers had made little progress towards awarding them with justice, equity and egalitarianism. Some urban Ni-Vanuatu women cannot secure formal or informal sector jobs, because they do not receive the relevant literacy, education and information to improve their employability, or access financial credit to establish microfinance businesses, so they must continue to live in poverty. Secondly, women in salaried/professional occupations and Vanwods microfinance business owners described the challenges they faced in earning descent incomes. The meagre incomes they received were distributed among their business financial obligations and their multiple nuclear and extended family obligations, especially when their spouses did not assist them with this Wantok kinship network social responsibility (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). In my analyses of the EEO and microfinance projects in the job/market/business sectors (Point), a liberal orientation with its primary focus on improving the lives of urban women suggests the ideals expressed from these UN's perspectives are far from being met, as discussed in Sections 6.3.1-6.3.9 in Chapter Six. From a counterpoint position, these women (as discussed in Sections 7.3.1-7.3.9 in Chapter Seven) experience more stress and challenges than liberation, emancipation and empowerment from their capitalistic pursuits.

My Standpoint

Capitalism brings many ills to the urban Ni-Vanuatu women as they acquire a new set of responsibilities which causes them stressful burdens affecting their health and well-being. The urban women worked longer hours compared to their traditional rural setting and thus have less time to spend with their families. For women who cannot secure urban formal or informal jobs, they must continue to live in poverty. In contrast, these women who are now disengaged from their Wantok kinship network social security system suffer because they cannot depend on anyone in the urban centres to support them like they could in their indigenous matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models. The urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs experienced complex hierarchical master/slave relationships in their employment. I highlighted these complex master/slave relationships against the liberal feminist

themes I have investigated in Chapters Four, Six, Seven and Nine. Instead of liberation, emancipation and empowerment, the urban Ni-Vanuatu women received discrimination and oppression from their employers, senior female gate-keepers, non-promoted employees, Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy and their spouses. Urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal jobs experienced hierarchical master/slave relationships when employers discriminated them in professional training and development. Furthermore, the women's formal jobs created complex working conditions for them by forcing them to work longer hours; they experienced corruption and non-conducive working cultures, and gate-keeping impediments from male employers and senior women in positions of authority. They also received bickering and snickering comments overtly or covertly from non-promoted long-term employees, and negative patrilineal and patriarchal mind-sets through power struggles that forced some urban women to exit their places of employment. Furthermore, because of the disunity between other groups of women, women experienced hierarchical complex master/slave relationship when Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy refused to bestow them with constitutional positions of authority. Urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal jobs also experienced hierarchical master/slave relationships in owning, operating and maintaining their microfinance businesses as well as experiencing unfair business licence fees from Vanuatu's urban patriarchy. Both groups of urban women experienced hierarchical master/slave relationships in having to meet multiple nuclear and extended family obligations and incurring non-reciprocal social exchange systems. Because employers were not effectively addressing urban Ni-Vanuatu women's marginalization, participants of the focus group discussion proposed interventions that would address the women's discrimination and oppression through adequate role-modelling, mentoring and coaching programmes and the benchmarking of matrilineages' egalitarian framework. A call was also made for Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy to undertake reformation of their mind-set, attitudes, beliefs and values of superiority. Participants also recommended additional interventions, which included gender-balanced policies and emancipation strategies. All citizens were requested to embark on domestic and public gender-sensitization programmes with the adoption of values of humility and open-mindedness that would assist them to not only pay lip-service to justice, equity and egalitarian values but through all the other interventions which address urban Ni-Vanuatu women's marginalization in Vanuatu.

3. *Challenges experienced by women in formal and informal jobs*

Even when urban women had secured formal jobs, they were still required to fulfil their domestic primary caring and nurturing responsibilities, receiving little support from their spouses. The family structural dynamics and responsibilities were reframed into new conditions and mixed responses from their men-folk compared to cultural and socially constructed family structures prevalent in the matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models. A trickle-down effect occurred, whereby, the urban women employed in the formal and informal employment sectors, because of their overly busy schedules arising from their work commitments, must seek hired domestic help from close relatives or house-girls to perform their domestic roles. In my analyses of the liberal EEO job/market aspirations (Point) I highlighted that these ideals have not fulfilled the well-being of urban Ni-Vanuatu women, (Themes 6.8-6.13.4 in Chapter Six). From a Counterpoint position, the women's search for capitalism changes their family structures as they create work for others in their job/market sector pursuit.

My Standpoint

Urban Ni-Vanuatu women continue to face instability in many forms while seeking EEO job/market pursuits. They create jobs for others by seeking unpaid or paid domestic assistance to help with their primary caring and nurturing roles. New alliances are formed with house girls, nannies, and spouses who are willing to assume these domestic roles. Because the women are disengaged from their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok kinship network social security system, they cannot access the required assistance to help in parenting their children.

4. *Challenges identified for women in formal jobs*

The Vanuatu Government's interventions and private sector strategies and policies have not eliminated discrimination against and the oppression of women in Vanuatu. There were insignificant increases in the recruitment of women into positions of authority. The findings of my focus group discussion reveal this problem for two state organisations compared to one private organisation: the first state organisation had one female decision-maker to 30 staff members who were mostly males, while the second

state organisation had one female decision-maker to eight staff members also mostly males. The third private-sector international organisation appointed two female decision-makers to three staff members. Employer unwillingness to operate and comply with EEO programmes is a major impediment for many urban women in Vanuatu. Secondly, groups of matrilineal and patrilineal women confirmed experiencing unequal power relations and male hegemonic control, through rampant discrimination and oppression from Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchal (including employers and senior female gate-keepers') attitudes, mind-sets, embedded values and beliefs, in their daily and working lives. My analyses of the EEO job/market liberal aspirations (Point) suggests more urban Ni-Vanuatu women are not securing positions of authority. Vanuatu statistics clearly indicate that implemented EEO programmes have not assisted the interlocutors to secure positions of authority (Themes 6.8-6.13.4 in Chapter Six). From a Counterpoint position, embedded patrilineal and patriarchal mind-sets continue to stifle the career paths of these women who wished to secure positions of authority (Themes 7.6-7.6.21 in Chapter Eight).

My Standpoint

Matrilineal women, who are already decision-makers within their matrilineal indigenous Wantok governance model, face problems reaching out for positions of authority in the urban centres. Employers, including senior female gate-keepers, other employees within organizations all play either covert or overt roles through various organisational tactics and politics to oppose and discriminate against these urban women and to prevent them from securing positions of authority. Matrilineal women's managerial and leadership skills, acquired from their participation in community affairs, are not put to good use in paid employment. For patrilineal women, although they become liberated and emancipated from an oppressive patrilineal Wantok governance model by moving into the urban centres, they also, like their matrilineal sisters, must thwart embedded urban patriarchal impediments to secure positions of authority. Patrilineal women too experience covert or overt barriers from their employers, including senior female gatekeepers and other employees. The liberal feminist concept of empowerment for both matrilineal and patrilineal women will not happen overnight as they must work many years before they are recognised and given positions of authority in their jobs.

5. *Challenges identified for Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs*

Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs acknowledged exploitation in their capitalistic pursuits because of long working hours between their formal and informal sector jobs and in their primary caring and nurturing roles, the unstable business environment in terms of product competition and customer flow, and the imposition of high business licence fees. On many occasions when the urban microfinance business owners and operators could not earn sufficient incomes, they had to borrow funds from elsewhere to meet their weekly Vanwods MFI personal savings and loan repayment obligations. Secondly, the urban women's multiple roles and financial obligations meant higher stress levels and anxieties to earn sufficient incomes and experienced insufficient time between their multiple jobs for rest periods. I agree with Salong (2008) that matrilineal and patrilineal Vanwods MFI Mamas worked "blood, sweat and tears" (p.28) to keep their microfinance businesses afloat and meet their Vanwods MFI weekly savings and loan repayments. In my analyses of the liberal feminist ideals of microfinance projects in business/market sector (Point) to liberate, emancipate and empower the urban Ni-Vanuatu women, this ideal is not being met (Themes 6.3.1-6.3.9 in Chapter Six). From a Counterpoint position, these women's search for capitalism confirms their exploitation through complex hierarchical master/slave relationships (Themes 7.3.1-7.3.9).

My Standpoint

Spouses of urban Ni-Vanuatu women in informal jobs have recognised the importance of their wives owning and operating microfinance businesses and have granted them respect in the homes. These women assume more leadership and managerial autonomy in the domestic sphere because they are economic contributors able to sustain and maintain their family. However, the women's capitalistic pursuits produce negative side-effects to them in many ways, such as commercialising their primary caring and nurturing roles by drawing the urban women and their domestic helpers more tightly into the Master's harness (Rodman et al. 2009). Because urban women spend more time, energy and resources on their informal jobs, there is less time, fewer resources and emotional and spiritual energy left for their *Wantok* indigenous responsibilities. Similarly in the global context, as more women succeed in their informal jobs, more demands are placed on their earned revenues. They continue to perform their social

and community responsibilities through finances, especially for the very young and the very old, fragile and infirm. As more urban women become part of the informal employment sector, they lose contact with their indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok kinship network systems and form new alliances for paid or unpaid domestic help. Furthermore, for matrilineal women, the concentration in their informal job diverts them from continuing to take an active share in community affairs.

6. *In what ways would the women like to see their effectiveness enhanced?*

All urban women highlighted the need for nation-wide role-modelling, coaching and mentoring programmes to enhance and sustain women's development in Vanuatu. They requested ethical values training, management and leadership skills in this role-modelling programme. This nation-wide advocacy programme must provide public awareness to sensitise Vanuatu's population on gender issues such as the value and worth of women's contribution to the domestic and public spheres and in their formal and informal jobs.

My Standpoint

The need for a nation-wide role-modelling, coaching and mentoring programme will have both positive and negative side-effects. The training must be 'bi-cultural' in that urban women must learn to improve in their jobs but also receive training to continue to participate in their Wantok governance models. For example, although this up-skilling programme will benefit urban women to improve their leadership and managerial skills and equip them with ethical values training, it is a mechanism to attract rural women to leave their rural life and become part of this programme. To eliminate the anticipated negative side-effect, Vanuatu stakeholders need to identify solidarity economy projects that would keep the rural residents actively engaged in their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models, so there is less attraction/reason for rural women to move into the urban centres.

7. ***What evidence demonstrates that glass ceiling, glass wall and sticky floor problems documented in the international organisational literature also affect women in Vanuatu in their governance, senior management and entrepreneurial activities?***

In Chapter Seven, urban women disclosed their experiences of discrimination and oppression from male employers, male and female employees, and senior female gatekeepers. Evidence of glass ceiling, glass wall and sticky floor problems in the formal employment sector include negative and non-conducive work-place cultures, men's attitudes and mind-sets, abuse of power and corrupt practices, constant micro-management, discrimination against women's professional development and in granting women with positions of authority. In the informal sector, the Vanwods MFI and affiliated social clubs imposed social control on the *Mamas* who did not meet their weekly obligations. The *Mamas* also experienced high business licence fees as microfinance entrepreneurs.

My Standpoint

EEO jobs/market endeavours for urban Ni-Vanuatu women to improve their own and their dependents' livelihoods remain intricate, susceptible, unsteady and ambiguous. Many of these women experience overt or covert discrimination and oppression in their capitalistic pursuits. Embedded patrilineal and patriarchal mind-sets continued to deter them from seeking positions of authority. Even if the urban women work many years to get recognition and wage parity, many of them must still work in submission to patriarchal authority. Their liberation, emancipation and empowerment according to liberal feminist ideals remain elusive as they are constrained by higher patriarchal authorities who continue to view their roles as merely to domesticate the work force but not as workers with leadership and managerial skills their organisations can benefit from. Matrilineal women faced fewer impediments to being engaged in community affairs compared to overt and covert discrimination and oppression they experienced as employees in the cash and market economy.

8. *Do family configurations, societal norms and traditional lineage systems encourage or discourage Ni-Vanuatu women to aspire for positions of authority and entrepreneurial activities in the formal contexts?*

In Chapters Six, Seven and Nine, women stressed that family configurations, societal norms and lineage systems both encouraged and discouraged their aspirations for positions of authority and microfinance business ownership. For example, patrilineal women spoke of the liberation, emancipation and empowerment they experienced by moving away from their oppressive rural patrilineal communities to seek paid employment. In contrast, matrilineal women have had to overcome obstacles from Vanuatu's urban patriarchy (including employers and senior female gate-keepers) to secure positions of authority and to own and operate microfinance businesses, impediments they did not encounter in their indigenous traditional setting.

My Standpoint

The matrilineal Wantok governance model and its kinship network social security system will only survive if urban matrilineal Ni-Vanuatu women continue to fulfil their roles and obligations to it. Urban matrilineal women can still play a part in upholding matrilineality through their active participation in it. But they will devalue it through their non-participation. When urban matrilineal Ni-Vanuatu women become disengaged from their matrilineages, not only they, but their children will lose out, because they are not assimilated into their indigenous traditional roots, becoming a lost generation in the urban centres. For patrilineal women, although their move into the urban centres is a blessing for them in becoming liberated and emancipated from an oppressive patrilineal Wantok governance model, that does not cater for their property, patrimony and legacy rights, so, they too will lose contact with their patrilineal Wantok governance model, cultures and traditions, if capitalism continues to keep them totally engaged in their formal and informal jobs.

9. *What actions or measures of social and ethical responsibility and moral obligation should the Vanuatu Government and policy bodies take to enhance the advancement and equality and equity of Ni-Vanuatu women into constitutional power, corporate governance and entrepreneurial activities in Vanuatu?*

In Chapters Six, Seven and Nine, research participants proposed interventions for Vanuatu's stakeholders to increase their social responsibility towards urban Ni-

Vanuatu women and address their well-being needs through benchmarking matrilineages' gender-equality framework, reforming Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchal attitudes and mind-sets; instituting better strategies for women's liberation, emancipation and empowerment; reviewing and strengthening gender-balanced policies in Vanuatu; undertaking gender sensitization in the homes and embarking on public gender sensitization for all citizens; and the adoption of attributes of humility and open-mindedness. I now move on to discuss the success of implemented EEO programmes and microfinance projects through the fundamental research question.

My Standpoint

Newer and Western versions of sustainable liberation, emancipation and empowerment will be unachievable for Ni-Vanuatu citizens unless matrilineal indigenous sustainable gender-equality forms are discussed, benchmarked, advocated for and copied. Although, the implementation of EEO programmes and microfinance projects aims to offer urban women with liberation, emancipation and empowerment through access to positions of authority in the Westminster democratic governance model, an alternative voice, highlighted here, is the sustainable voice of matrilineality recognising, valuing and involving women into positions of authority in community affairs. Regardless of whether urban women elect for formal or informal jobs, my research indicates that gender equality is far from being a reality in patrilineality and in the urban context in contemporary Vanuatu.

10.6 The Fundamental Research QUESTION Revisited

- 1. To what extent have the implementation of the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women's EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects addressed the well-being needs of urban Ni-Vanuatu women?***

In Vanuatu's urban context, the rhetoric and the implementation of CEDAW's EEO programmes has been adopted by the state through various legal and policy instruments. Nevertheless, my response to the fundamental research question as to whether implemented EEO programmes and microfinance projects have addressed Ni-Vanuatu women's well-being needs is No! My empirical observations confirm that urban women in salaried/professional occupations have had to experience rampant discrimination and oppression from men's negative attitudes and mind-sets to secure

positions of authority. For many urban women, they have had to work many years before assuming positions of authority, the maximum being 31 years, as outlined in Chapter Six. Women as formal sector employees received lower pay than men, although they were doing similar jobs. Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs confirmed they received low income from their business activities because of similar-product competition, unpredictable business environment through service to low-income clients, and the imposition of high business licence fees by the state. The incomes of both groups of urban women were distributed to meet their multiple urban centre obligations. Urban patrilineal women also experienced rampant discrimination and oppression from patrilineal men's negative attitudes and mind-sets before and during the course of their capitalistic pursuits. Both matrilineal and patrilineal urban women experienced complex hierarchical master/slave relationships in their urban centre capitalistic pursuits. In my analyses of these expressed aspirations, a liberal orientation with its primary focus on EEO in the job/market sector and microfinance projects in the business/market sector (Point) suggest the ideals expressed from these perspectives are far from being met (Themes 6.3.1-6.3.9 in Chapter Six). From a Counterpoint position, UN's implemented EEO programmes and microfinance projects for women in salaried/professional occupations and Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs acknowledged experiencing unequal power relations and male hegemonic control. They experienced rampant discrimination and oppression in their working lives, in working longer hours, and incurring more stress, anxiety, and fatigue. Although the living conditions of some of the women's families improved slightly, for many, the women's incomes were too low to make ends meet, with the women facing a new extended family challenge and responsibility in terms of a one-way-traffic-gift-exchange system. As such, the result for many women was continuously living in debt. The liberal feminist ideals of EEO job and business/market have not provided women with a stress free life, more income, better jobs, better business opportunities and climate, better housing, better working and business conditions and improved living conditions, but created complex hierarchical master/slave relationships (as discussed in Chapters Seven & Nine).

My Standpoint

EEO job/market and microfinance business/market endeavours to improve the livelihoods of urban Ni-Vanuatu women and their dependents remain elusive. The

implementation of EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects in the market model of human organisation intensifying globally seems a mixed blessing, whether in the form of enhanced access to wages and wage parity and better career opportunities in formal jobs or as microfinance business ownership and operations for women entrepreneurs.

10.7 Liberal Feminist Philosophy of Justice, Equity and Egalitarianism

The liberal feminist philosophy of justice, equity and egalitarianism is a mechanism offered by the UN to Vanuatu's rural and urban patriarchies to recognise and respect the roles women play in community affairs and in their formal and informal jobs. The matrilineages' gender-equality governance framework, values and beliefs are comparable with the liberal philosophy of justice, equity and egalitarianism as women are recognised and respected as co-leaders, co-managers, co-governors in the leadership and governance of community affairs.

A positive aspect for urban matrilineal and patrilineal women is that they have a voice and space, through Vanuatu's Westminster legal system, to seek restorative justice for any urban patriarchal/employer-instigated oppression encountered. In my analyses of these expressed aspirations, from a counterpoint position, the liberal feminist ideals advocated by CEDAW implemented EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects have not improved the working and business conditions for urban Ni-Vanuatu women in their ability to acquire positions of authority and in the ownership and operation of microfinance businesses (as discussed in Chapter Seven).

My Standpoint

Vanuatu's Western-influenced democratic governance model advocates for women's justice, equity and egalitarianism through CEDAW implemented EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects. Matrilineality and its Wantok governance model already recognises, values and empowers women through its concepts of justice, equity and egalitarian values by according them positions of authority in community affairs. Urban matrilineal women report a sense of self-entailing and a deep sense of responsibility and authority. In the urban areas, the dynamics of responsibility are reframed into new conditions. Urban women report a mixed response from their men-folk. This leaves me with questions in regard to the

long-term sustainability of the matrilineal Wantok governance model and its Wantok kinship network social security system and the authority of women in matrilineal communities as more matrilineal women become disenfranchised from their indigenous rural life.

10.8 Patrilineal Women's Emancipation and Empowerment

Patrilineal women who leave their oppressive rural societies receive liberation, emancipation and empowerment accessing paid jobs. In the urban centres, they have access to the liberal feminist ideals of justice, liberation, emancipation, professional development, a voice and space through paid employment to gain positions of authority and own and operate microfinance businesses. Secondly, patrilineal women through their urban centre incomes can own land and property, a provision which their patrilineal Wantok governance model denies them. From a Counterpoint position, when patrilineal women seek positions of authority and ownership and operation of microfinance businesses, they are still susceptible to impediments imposed by Vanuatu's urban patriarchy (as discussed in Chapter Seven, Themes 7.3.1-7.3.9).

My Standpoint

My critical analysis clearly argues against pushing Ni-Vanuatu women into the grip of capitalism and its many tentacles to acquire its desired monetary commodity. It is not an entirely attractive ideal for urban Ni-Vanuatu women to undergo pain (through complex hierarchical master/slave relationships) and continuously live in debt, adding undue stress to them which affects their health and well-being. While patrilineal women record a sense of liberation, emancipation and empowerment, moving into the urban centres removes them from the idyllic, slow-paced indigenous patrilineal Wantok kinship network social security systems, and their traditional roots, culture and heritage. Their children also miss out on the benefits of their indigenous heritage.

10.9 Addressing the QUEST of Chapter One

To respond to the question: *Has the access to capitalism by patrilineal and matrilineal women in salaried/professional occupations and Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs through the implementation of EEO programmes and microfinance projects reduced women's discrimination and oppression, emancipated, and empowered them, and improved their well-being?* My response is,

No! Urban Ni-Vanuatu women continue to experience overt or covert discrimination and oppression by Vanuatu's urban patriarchy (including employers, senior female gatekeepers and employees) in their quest for positions of authority and microfinance business ownership and operation.

Eleven years after the accession of CEDAW in 1995, ILO (2006) confirms the scarcity of women in senior management positions in both the public and private sectors of Vanuatu, as indicated in Chapter One, very few women are accessing positions of authority. Ni-Vanuatu women continue to face glass ceiling barriers in securing positions of authority. The Republic of Vanuatu (2004, p. 57) provides the composition of women to men recruitment in the Vanuatu's police force and public service for 1995 and 2003, as shown in Table 10.2 below.

Table 10.2: Recruitment in Vanuatu's Public Service: 1995 & 2003

Year	Category	Department/ Service	Employees				Total
			Women		Men		
			No.	%	No.	%	
1995	A	Police Force	36	5.6%	603	94.4%	639
1995	B	Public Service	4	9.3%	39	83.7%	43
2003	A	Police Force	30	5.3%	530	94.7%	560
2003	B	Public Service	1,781	38.3%	2,860	61.7%	4,641
2003	C (Director General)	Public Service	1	10%	9	90%	10
2003	D (Director)	Public Service	10	17.85%	46	82.15%	56
2003	E	#Education	0		0		X

No women were recruited into the Vanuatu Education Department although it enacted its own equity and equality policy in 2003.

Source: The Republic of Vanuatu (2004)

Capitalism requires literate, educated and qualified employees. From a liberal feminist ideology, the strategies of role-modelling, coaching, and mentoring and women's professional development programmes are necessary to increase urban women's self-confidence and efficacy in their formal and informal jobs, as well as equip them with appropriate leadership, management and ethical values skills.

These liberal feminist's mechanisms lure and divert people's attention away from their indigenous traditional values and into the tentacles, clutch and bondage of Western capitalism. To encourage more women to pursue professional development and training would only deepen the complex hierarchical master/slave relationships between capitalism's tentacles clutching the women ever more tightly into salaried/professional occupations and microfinance business ownership and operation. Western liberal ideologies of professional development will become Master over the urban women who are slave, as indigenous traditional knowledge, values, beliefs and practices dwindle and are replaced by capitalistic ideologies. As more able bodied rural inhabitants are disengaged from their indigenous rural setting, the disintegration of indigenous knowledge, values and customary practices occur, when rural citizens

are not available to carry the work load or to orally transmit indigenous traditional cultures to future generations.

Capitalism and its clutching tentacles will remain because of its complex socio-political, cultural and economic environment in post-colonial Vanuatu. There will be a constant need to keep integrating women into the urban work-force and into microfinance projects. Employers/Vanuatu's urban patriarchy/microfinance distributors acknowledge that urban women's participation in the work force is progressive and mandatory. Urban Ni-Vanuatu women will continue to collect meagre breadcrumbs from the Master's Table unless Vanuatu stakeholders take proactive action to improve the urban women's working and living conditions that are conducive to their well-being needs(Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). Reforms to men's negative attitudes and mind-sets in both the rural and urban settings must be undertaken. Men must recognise the value and worth of Ni-Vanuatu women and adopt the values of humility and open-mindedness to stop their discrimination and oppression in both the rural and urban settings. Men's attitudes, mind-sets and values of superiority must be eliminated by patrilineages because if patrilineal women continue to experience discrimination and oppression many of them will exit their traditional framework, thus causing demise to the patrilineages' Wantok governance model. The urban centres will become more congested with continuous influx of rural-urban migration. For matrilineal women, unless the matrilineal Wantok governance model is able to keep the women focused and engaged in solidarity economy projects in their indigenous traditional cultures, there will be no need for them to exit. Matrilineal women already have a voice and space to practice leadership and governance in community affairs which will become non-existent if they move into the urban centres.

The Solidarity Economy is one aspect that all Vanuatu stakeholders can aspire to for improvement in the working and living conditions of matrilineal and patrilineal women in both the rural and urban contexts. As women are equal partners, no complex hierarchical master/slave relationships will occur and there will be no need for chieftains to remove women from any social clubs. If Vanuatu stakeholders support and establish solidarity economy projects in the rural areas to keep both matrilineal and patrilineal women engaged and actively leading and managing these projects, the

women will have fewer desires to exit their indigenous matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models. Rural matrilineal and patrilineal women can still remain in their rural settings and earn incomes from their rural solidarity economy projects. Similarly, the MFI projects could be enhanced through an application of solidarity economy principles. This would move towards improving the work environment for the Mamas and extend towards making material improvements in their daily lives and in their living conditions. Therefore, recommendations are made for all Vanuatu stakeholders to become gender-equality conscious and gender-equity friendly, and provide urban women with a more conducive living and working environment, and for them to provide the appropriate environment for urban women to own and operate microfinance businesses.

In the Solidarity Economic framework, parents must recognise their roles to educate and practice justice, equity and egalitarianism in the homes, which will have an expanding effect on their children becoming gender-equality conscious and gender-equity friendly in their adult lives; and refrain them from applying discrimination and oppressive tactics on incur gender violence on the women as spouses, co-workers, employees, senior managers, employers and governors.

For the adoption of the Solidarity Economic model, I support the communicative action call offered by my interlocutors for a nation-wide advocacy programme. This is a mechanism not only to encourage and convince the remaining participants in the matrilineal Wantok governance model to continue to cherish and treasure their indigenous traditional knowledge, conservation strategies, values, beliefs and practices, but also to professionally develop and educate rural citizens of patrilineages concerning good citizenship behaviours, improved relationships between the men and women, as a means to improve patrilineal women's well-being. This will also be a mechanism to encourage and convince patrilineal women to remain in their patrilineages' Wantok governance model. Both groups of urban women will benefit immensely if the complex hierarchical master/slave relationships of capitalism are reduced.

Because matrilineages practices gender-equality framework, it will become a framework for rural areas to adopt in their solidarity economy projects appointing

matrilineal and patrilineal women as equal partners (with no risk of social exclusion as currently practiced by the Vanwods MFI executive and chieftains through the Grameen Bank's social enterprise project). It will also become a mechanism to stop discrimination and the oppression of patrilineal women in their society whereby patrilineal women may be less inclined to exit their patrilineal traditional *Wantok* governance model. Vanuatu's urban patriarchy can also learn from matrilineages' gender-equality framework to recognise the value and worth of urban women, in their formal and informal jobs, stop their discrimination and oppression and enable more capable, qualified and willing women to assume positions of authority and facilitate and coordinate women's access into microfinance business ownership and operation. There are certain issues that must be remedied at the organisational level for Ni-Vanuatu women's liberation, emancipation and empowerment to become a reality, which are discussed next.

10.9.1 Issues to be addressed at the organisational level

Vanuatu employers, senior male and female gate-keepers, and urban patriarchy continue to employ unequal power relations, impose male hegemonic control, male superiority, values and beliefs within organisational contexts which results in the marginalisation of women in formal and informal jobs. Secondly, the roles of women in their matrilineal and patrilineal *Wantok* governance models are acknowledged. Employers also have a need for matrilineal and patrilineal urban women as employees in formal and informal jobs. Matrilineal and patrilineal urban women have indicated through this research that they desire to hold positions of authority and own and operate microfinance businesses. All Vanuatu stakeholders must unite and practice justice, equity and egalitarianism in their dealings with matrilineal and patrilineal women. When the work-force has good working conditions, and employers and employees have a respect for each other regardless of gender, with everyone being equipped with humility and open-mindedness, the well-being needs of urban Ni-Vanuatu women will become a priority for all stakeholders in Vanuatu. Gender sensitization must be undertaken in organizations from a bottom-up and a top-down approach, so everyone in the organization is gender-sensitised and men can improve their relationships and dealings with matrilineal and patrilineal women in Vanuatu.

To improve women's well-being in their formal and informal sector jobs, employers are encouraged to implement transparent and accountable EEO programmes that enable women to be coached, role modelled and mentored into positions of authority. Distributors of microfinance, such as Vanwods MFI, are requested to consider mechanisms to improve the well-being of Mamas through financial lending and offering them lower interest rates, and providing them with a non-competitive, non-burdensome business environment and lower business licence fees obligation, find more sustainable and conducive ways for the Mamas to earn sufficient incomes that reduces the high interest rates they currently pay to the Vanwods MFI executives and to reduce the burden of the current complex hierarchical master/slave relationships they experience. For improvements to occur in Vanuatu, changes must be undertaken at the micro, organisational and nationwide levels. There are also issues to be addressed at the micro-/community level, discussed next.

10.9.2 Issues to be addressed at the micro-community level

Matrilineages and patrilineages' stakeholders have a responsibility to work with the Vanuatu Government and to establish Solidarity Economy projects. Solidarity Economy projects are initiated by the people for the people as prescribed in the next section. Benefits of rural residents remaining in their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models means the continuation of their indigenous governance frameworks, their cultural knowledge and conservation strategies, values and beliefs and their identity as indigenous peoples of Vanuatu. This will also avoid the complex hierarchical master/slave relationships that matrilineal and patrilineal urban women are currently experiencing in the urban centres of Vanuatu

In line with the UN's call for governments to integrate their indigenous governance models with adopted Western governance models, the matrilineal gender-equality framework is offered to Vanuatu's rural (patrilineality) and urban patriarchies, as a strategy for them to learn from and integrate certain elements of this framework to eradicate discrimination against and oppression of Ni-Vanuatu women, and to liberate, emancipate and empower patrilineal Ni-Vanuatu women.

10.9.3 Adoption of the Solidarity economic framework

Allard et al. (2009) suggests some possible Solidarity Economy projects includes: community economic development that creates economic opportunities and enhances the social and environmental conditions of communities, particularly with people who are most marginalised, on a sustainable and inclusive basis; building a social economy: building assets and enterprises collectively owned by communities to generate both social and economic benefits which includes creating social assets (e.g., housing, child care facilities and provision, cultural facilities); creating social and community enterprises including co-operatives; and gathering equity and debt capital for community investment. These facilities are needed to ensure that when rural and urban women are engaged in Solidarity Economy projects, their primary caring and nurturing roles are met so that they can exert all their efforts into their Solidarity Economy businesses. Participants in Solidarity Economy projects are equal partners as there will be no complex hierarchical master/slave relationships, as evident when women pursue formal and informal jobs. All participants of the Solidarity Economy have an equal say and part in their entity's decision-making processes and through consensus will group and work together in solidarity, to improve their business dealings and make a profit of which the benefits will be shared equally to all its members. As a means to continue to encourage rural inhabitants who are still in their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models to remain in them, the Solidarity Economy (see Chapter Eight) would harness capitalism to benefit these rural inhabitants in keeping them actively involved in their societies' economic growth and hub, without the pressures of migration (Neamtan, 2002). Solidarity Economy projects will enable people with similar values, beliefs, and interests to group together and work for a common purpose. The Solidarity Economic model has a supporting system that will provide kinship social security and support networks to adherents during times of financial, social and cultural stress. This recommendation will only be possible through the collaboration of the Vanuatu Government and Vanuatu's six provincial government councils (see Chapter Two). Therefore, Vanuatu's stakeholders, the Vanuatu Government and the provincial government councils, must collaborate to identify and establish Solidarity Economy projects for the rural areas of Vanuatu. There is already provision for provincial governments to self-rule and govern their subjects. To ensure that women's marginalization and subjugation is reduced in patrilineal communities, there must be a will-power by Vanuatu's patrilineages and

urban patriarchy to integrate rural interests and also to take into account the gender issues that need attention – both in the processes of integration by Vanuatu’s national and provincial governments.

10.9.4 Solidarity economy as a socio-political organizational mechanism

Karl Marx theorises that an economic system determines what kind of political structure that prevails in a state. In Chapter Eight, I presented an overview of the various economic models and deliberated on their advantages and disadvantages. The pursuit of capitalism is inadequate to provide the means to achieve the ultimate thriving of all Ni-Vanuatu women and in particular the flourishing of all people and their environment in this region. Vanuatu has been influenced by Western, global and international pressures where incomes, processed food, electronic household gadgets, technological apparatus have become attractive to rural inhabitants. Many rural citizens leave their indigenous rural settings and their communities to work and earn incomes, and to hopefully achieve better living standards and educate their children. The then assumed material benefits associated with urban centre employment is likely to continue to attract rural residents into the urban centres. Because Vanuatu’s matrilineal and patrilineal *Wantok* governance models aspire to the values of communitarianism, social cohesiveness, and reciprocity, an economic model must fit into this socio-political, cultural and economic framework. The principles of the Solidarity Economic model are similar to Vanuatu’s *Kastom ekonomi* as it will work collaboratively with the indigenous matrilineal and patrilineal *Wantok kinship and social security network system* (Westoby, 2010 & Jolly, 1996). Men and women make a commitment as equal owners to these Solidarity Economy projects and contribute their utmost efforts for the successful running of these projects. Solidarity Economy projects means getting like-minded people with a common purpose and goal to work for the success of their projects. If Solidarity Economy projects are established in the rural areas of Vanuatu, they will provide incentives for matrilineal and patrilineal women to be part of this rural socio-political, cultural, and economic development and make them less inclined to move into the urban centres. The value of the Solidarity Economy as a sustainable alternative economic model is to socio-politically organise human beings, society and economic activities for rural inhabitants of Vanuatu and for the Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs, for the harnessing of the women of Vanuatu into the capitalist global economy. Whilst we agree that an investment in the

Solidarity Economy bring greater security to the women of Vanuatu – we are also mindful that a deflection of the women’s attention from their indigenous traditional values can occur while The Master continues on his voracious ways (Kohn, 2005 & Honderich, 1995).

10.9.5 Insights for various stakeholders and the women of Vanuatu

This research study has uncovered many complex issues surrounding women’s quest for formal and informal jobs and their subsequent subjugation and marginalization. Although urban Ni-Vanuatu women desire liberal feminist ideals of liberation, emancipation and empowerment, these ideals are elusive. Nevertheless, patrilineal interlocutors of this research study are requested to learn from their matrilineal sisters, and to the women of Vanuatu, not to slacken the pace, but to continue to demand a voice, space and land and property ownership through kinship for women’s liberation, emancipation and empowerment and women’s participation in community and urban governance. For matrilineal and patrilineal women still resident in the rural areas, I encourage you to continue to cherish and value your indigenous and traditional wisdom and knowledge, cultural and traditional values and way of life, and that you will continue to strive to improve the lives of rural women in your societies who may not have the same capacity of rising up from their subjugation and marginalization. For the Vanuatu Government, patrilineages and urban patriarchy are encouraged to progressively undertake reformation of mind-sets, attitudes, beliefs and values of superiority. Although this research study has indicated that the United Nations’ CEDAW has been unable to provide justice, equity and egalitarian values to most Ni-Vanuatu women and improve their well-being in Vanuatu, insight is offered for the UN to provide financial support to implement nation-wide role-modelling, coaching and mentoring programme(s) and educative and advocacy programme(s) that will educate the citizens of Vanuatu about women’s human rights and to reform patrilineages and patriarchal mind-sets, attitudes and beliefs in Vanuatu.

10.9.6 A Call for a Nation-Wide Advocacy Programme

Powel and Moody (2003) refer to Habermas’ call that communicative action is needed to communicate appropriate messages to people for transformative leadership changes. To ensure people in contemporary Vanuatu are aware of the importance of retaining their indigenous manner of life and governance, a call made is made by urban women

leaders in salaried/professional occupations and microfinance women entrepreneurs; for Vanuatu state and policy makers, civil society and NGOs to embark on a nation-wide communicative action and educative advocacy campaign show-casing matrilineages and its gender equality framework and encouraging patrilineages to adopt liberal feminism's universal theory of equality of justice, equity and egalitarian values (Kirgis Jr, 1994& Cranston, 1986). Messages transpiring from the findings of the employers' focus group discussion and personal conversational narratives with urban women leaders in salaried/professional occupations and microfinance women entrepreneurs ' clearly signal that both women and men must be engaged as champions in this communicative action and educative advocacy campaign.

A nation-wide advocacy programme needs to be bi-cultural meeting the needs of the market as well as meeting the needs of indigenous knowledge, values, mind-sets and beliefs. This kind of role-modelling programme will give Ni-Vanuatu women the ability to continue to cherish their indigenous and traditional Wantok governance models. This nation-wide advocacy programme will also present an opportunity for the Vanuatu Government to identify rural Solidarity Economy projects for implementation in the rural areas to provide the incentives for rural residents to participate in their own rural economic hub, growth and development in their matrilineal and patrilineal governance settings.

10.10 Chapter Summary, Recommendations & Indigenous Studies

Western feminists must unlearn their female privilege positions if they intend to speak for female subaltern subjects (Gamble, 1999). The subaltern perspective recognises that marginalised communities have no voice to speak or if they do have a voice, they cannot speak to an audience because they are always situated half in and half out in the periphery. In Vanuatu's case, patrilineal women and urban Ni-Vanuatu women are subalterns because they do not have a voice and space to address Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). Guha and Spivak (1988) call for a search for women's authentic voices, by looking through a post-colonial subaltern voice and lens. Therefore, in Vanuatu's case, my research offers both matrilineal and patrilineal women with an authentic voice to speak up concerning their experiences of formal and informal jobs. I thus employed three theoretical

constructs (infused to contribute to Indigenous Studies. A summary of this chapter is presented next.

An investigation was made to respond to the question of whether the implementation of EEO programmes in Vanuatu's public and private sectors and the establishment of microfinance projects had served their purpose in reducing discrimination and oppression of women in salaried/professional occupations and Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs, and for Ni-Vanuatu women in general. An investigation was also carried out to confirm whether these programmes provided urban Ni-Vanuatu women with greater opportunities to participate in positions of authority and microfinance business ownership and operation, earn sufficient income to maintain their nuclear and extended family obligations, and improve their well-being needs. For the poorest of Vanuatu's urban women, it enabled an investigation into the extent to which Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs' market-oriented projects and their access to Vanwods MFI membership is a trajectory to emancipation or exploitation in their pursuit of capitalism.

In line with the principles embedded in the implemented EEO programmes and the liberal philosophy of justice, equity, egalitarianism, personal liberty, human rights and democracy, the Vanuatu Government and private sector employers appear to have taken flimsy actions to recognise the value and worth of urban Ni-Vanuatu women, to promote and include a significant number of them into positions of authority in constitutional and corporate governance and in women's ownership and operation of microfinance businesses (The Republic of Vanuatu, 2004). To date, the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects have so far achieved patchy success for urban Ni-Vanuatu women. The urban Ni-Vanuatu women have not received justice, equity and egalitarianism or improved their well-being through the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes or microfinance projects. Through this research, complex hierarchical master/slave relationships were highlighted for urban matrilineal and patrilineal women.

In responding to whether the EEO programmes and microfinance projects had improved the well-being of women in Vanuatu, my response was, No! Based on the secondary data and statistical comparisons of the number of women acquiring

positions of authority before and after the CEDAW accession and the findings from my empirical observations, the implementation of EEO programmes in the public and private sectors have not positively contributed towards incorporating more women into positions of authority (Piau-Lynch, 2007). Furthermore, access to microfinance business projects did not lessen the burden of urban life for Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs as their competitive and non-conducive business environment made it hard for them to get good customer-flow or earn sufficient incomes. Women's multiple nuclear and extended family obligations added further stress to the already meagre crumbs earned from their microfinance businesses (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011).

Moreover, although The Master and The Master's House have provided some form of security for Vanuatu urban matrilineal and patrilineal women through formal and informal jobs, within the constraints of capitalism, caution is presented against the greater assimilation of the most vulnerable to The Master's rapacious appetite for profits and growth for its own sake, because of the creation of the complex hierarchical master/slave relationships for these women (Kohn, 2005 & Honderich, 1995). The reality for many urban Ni-Vanuatu women is that the pursuit of incomes through capitalist relationships brings with it many work-place and business ills, inconveniences in terms of urban life and the outcome of all the urban matrilineal and patrilineal women's work resulting in collecting meagre crumbs from The Master's Table (Thomas & Humphries, 2010 & 2011). The search for a good life in the urban centres through capitalism is laborious, time-consuming and incompatible with the women's matrilineal and patrilineal values in their *Wantok* governance models.

From this research with women in salaried/professional occupations and the Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs, a conclusion is made that disengaging matrilineal women from their matrilineal *Wantok* governance model undermines their authority and capacity to make a useful contribution to community affairs as it deflects their attention, efforts and resources to other projects and priorities, not compatible with their indigenous traditional social capital (Thomas and Humphries, 2010 & 2011).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Gaps in Melanesian and Western Literature and in My Empirical Observations: Possible Future Research Work

11.1 Introduction

In the previous Chapter, I presented the findings of my research study by providing responses to the main research question and the supplementary research questions on the effectiveness of implemented CEDAW-EEO programmes and microfinance projects in fulfilling the well-being needs of urban Ni-Vanuatu women in waged jobs and salaried and professional occupations in formal jobs and the Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs in informal jobs. I also highlighted the affiliations and aspirations of these two groups of urban women. In this, my final Chapter, I identify ideas for future research in Vanuatu. In Chapter Four I listed themes I derived from the literature reviews about the cultural implications of the indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok governance models; the rural-urban migration; urban Ni-Vanuatu women's access of formal and informal jobs; Vanuatu's human resource capacity; Vanuatu's patrilineages' and urban patriarchal dealings and relationships with Ni-Vanuatu women; the application of justice, equity and egalitarianism in rural and urban contexts; possible solidarity economy projects and small businesses; financial literacy and business skills training; and the maintenance and retention of the indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok governance models and its kinship network social security systems. I examined these themes through various interpretations in Chapters Six, Seven, and Nine; pertaining to various disciplines. These chapters demonstrated that a singular, largely liberal interpretation of the lives of women is at best inadequate – and from more radical perspectives, potentially harmful if universal empowerment and social security for all are to be the goal. While the innovation of a multi-vocal response has highlighted the value of a more complex analysis of the lives of the women of Ni-Vanuatu and the place of Vanuatu in the contemporary context of globalisation of intensifying capitalism, there are limitations to this research. These are discussed below.

11.2 Limitations of My Research Study

My research study has focussed mainly on urban Ni-Vanuatu women's access to formal and informal jobs and their dealings and relationships with Vanuatu's

patrilineages and urban patriarchy (including their employers and senior women). It also probes the subject of discrimination and the oppression of urban Ni-Vanuatu women and investigates whether access to paid employment through the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes and the establishment of microfinance projects has liberated, emancipated and empowered them to improve their well-being needs.

As this research is the first of its kind to explore the discrete events and behaviours related to urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs and their dealings and relationships with Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy, there were limited Melanesian and Western literatures that I could draw from concerning Vanuatu's socio-political, cultural and economic contexts. Furthermore, there were limitations to this research study for several reasons. Firstly, it has had to incorporate the perspectives of different groups of research participants such as the employer representatives in the focus group discussion; personal conversational narratives with urban Ni-Vanuatu women in waged occupations in formal jobs; and urban women in salaried/professional occupations; and urban Ni-Vanuatu Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs.

As the field notes for this exploratory study is extremely rich, all pertinent issues cannot be included in the write-up of this research thesis. Nor did I think it wise to provide any type of coding for my selected quotations but instead de-contextualised these stories so it is not easy to identify the identifies of my interlocutors. The potential connections of quotes and their speculative association with a particular woman in a small community might be hazardous for some the women willing to speak with me. Secondly, as the islands and provinces of Vanuatu are dispersed, it is not possible to carry out research into Vanuatu's rural areas to identify cultural and social norms that affect patrilineal and matrilineal mind-sets concerning the social and cultural roles of women and any discrimination and oppression that rural women faced in their rural habitats. Thirdly, the field notes were obtained from urban Ni-Vanuatu women, thus limiting generalizations of the findings to rural women who are still resident in their matrilineal and patrilineal Wantok governance models. Fourthly, two of the research participants in the urban Ni-Vanuatu waged occupations, and in salaried/professional occupations are close family members, while most of the other

research participants are urban Ni-Vanuatu women I have encountered during my line of work as an administrator and manager in Vanuatu. Fifthly, participants of the focus group discussion with employer representatives have provided recommendations of various interventions to state and policy-makers in Vanuatu to adopt to address urban Ni-Vanuatu women' to liberate, emancipate and empower them. By using a post-colonial subaltern lens, I have been able to critique these recommendations and made matrilineal Wantok feminist standpoint positions by identifying their effectiveness in addressing urban Ni-Vanuatu women's discrimination and oppression. Not all analysts may agree with my interpretations

11.3 Research Study Implications for Vanuatu's Stakeholders

Vanuatu's indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal *Wantok 'Kastom ekonomi'* has organised and maintained Vanuatu's rural populations for thousands of years and it is a proven economic model that is sustainable and indigenous-traditionally friendly (Westoby 2010 & Jolly, 1996). Because of Vanuatu's colonial past and legacies and the incorporation of Western and international pressures, capitalism has existed in Vanuatu since 1887. Capitalism will continue to remain in Vanuatu because it is an economic model that is adopted by Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy. Nevertheless, this research study aims to highlight that *Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi* has and still does maintain Vanuatu's rural populations for thousands of years and years to come (ibid). Both rural and urban citizens have been able to incorporate both economic systems (*Vanuatu's Kastom ekonomi* and capitalism) to organise and maintain them-selves.

This research study has provided food for thought for Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy. In paid employment, Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchal (including employers) domination and hegemonic control of rural and urban women through rampant discrimination and oppression is evident. The complex hierarchical master/slave relationships identified in this research outlined in Chapters Seven, Nine and Ten demonstrate that urban Ni-Vanuatu women in salaried/professional occupations and Vanwods microfinance women entrepreneurs continue to face hardships in their quest for paid employment and in their desire to access positions of authority and microfinance business ownership, operation and retention. Ni-Vanuatu women continue to be excluded from Vanuatu's future direction because of the

negative patrilineal and urban patriarchal mind-sets, attitudes, beliefs, and values of male superiority and the relegation of women into the domestic sphere. The arguments made in this research will hopefully strike a chord with readers and provide the motivation to Vanuatu's stakeholders and policy-making bodies to consider any interventions and proposals offered by my research participants and myself as a matrilineal Wantok feminist, as mechanisms to reduce discrimination and oppression, and offer Ni-Vanuatu women with justice, equity and egalitarian values in their working and business environments, and liberate, emancipate and empower them to participate in gainful employment in Vanuatu. This study also offers a mechanism to advocate through communicative action and advocacy work as well as through the installation of solidarity economy income-generation projects for the rural and urban areas of Vanuatu. These solidarity projects would alleviate the complex hierarchical Master/slave relationships that are evident in urban Ni-Vanuatu women's access to formal and informal jobs. Furthermore, specific interventions on the indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok governance model and their kinship network social security system should encourage and motivate rural citizens to remain in their Wantok governance models and uphold their indigenous traditional knowledge, practices, values and beliefs, and relevant conservation strategies.

11.4 Research Gaps

While undertaking this research study, I identified research gaps from Melanesian and Western literatures as well as from the analysis, evaluation and interpretation of my empirical observations in terms of cultural practices and concerning Ni-Vanuatu men's dealings and relationships with women in their indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok governance models; and on urban Ni-Vanuatu women's access to paid employment through the detailed discrimination, oppression and gate-keeping activities they have experienced from Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy. Therefore, possible future research and investigations that would build on my exploratory research and investigate any other social phenomena would include:

- a) Conduct a stock-take of matrilineal and patrilineal societies and investigate women's perspectives and their dealings and relationships with men in these societies;
- b) Investigate the cultural practices of indigenous matrilineages and traditional patrilineages;

- c) Conduct a stock-take of rural-urban migration;
- d) Conduct a stock-take of Ni-Vanuatu women in positions of authority;
- e) Investigate the success of microfinance businesses and Vanwods MFI social club affiliations and their duration;
- f) Conduct a stock-take of Vanuatu's human resources, their educational and qualification backgrounds;
- g) Conduct a stock-take of employees in the state and private sector;
- h) Investigate the living standards of rural-urban migrants;
- i) Investigate state and private sector employers' dealings and relationships with their employees;
- j) Identify strategies to encourage more Ni-Vanuatu women to participate in corporate and constitutional positions of authority and entrepreneurial activities in Vanuatu;
- k) Identify strategies for state and private sector organisations to improve gender-equity and gender-equality in positions of authority;
- l) Identify possible solidarity economy projects for Vanuatu's rural and urban areas;
- m) Identify small businesses for Vanwods MFI women;
- n) Identify and create financial literacy and business skills training for Vanwods MFI women entrepreneurs; and
- o) Identify strategies to encourage both rural and urban inhabitants to maintain contacts with their indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok governance models and their kinship network social security systems.

This list of potential research investigation topics is not exhaustive, as various forms of research can be undertaken in the field of gender issues and perspectives; forms of discrimination that both men and women experience in Vanuatu; the search for equal employment opportunities for males and females in Vanuatu; the pursuit of microfinance businesses for males and females in Vanuatu; encouraging the retention of the indigenous matrilineal and traditional patrilineal Wantok governance model; and improving good governance for Ni-Vanuatu women by preventing rampant discrimination, oppression and subjugation, as well as improving the overall well-being needs of women in Vanuatu.

11.5 Summary

This research study contributes to scholarly literature in the social context of women and development in Vanuatu as well as indigenous studies and research methods highlighting communicative actions and transformative research processes that were offered throughout this research study, with the express desire to assist both men and women to reflect on these findings and improve their communication skills between the genders, Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy' ethics of care and their dealings and relationships with Ni-Vanuatu women, urban Ni-Vanuatu women's career paths, their work ethics, the discrimination and oppression they face, their leadership and management capacities and their oversight.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Doctoral Research Invitation Letter

Mrs Andrina KL Thomas
C/o Strategy & Human Resource
Management
Waikato Management School
University of Hamilton
P O Box 3105
HAMILTON, New Zealand
Tel: (647) 8384466 Ext 6465
Mobile #: 0064211019300/0064211002951
Email: at104@students.waikato.ac.nz

(Date)

Mr/Mrs/Ms (Name of Prospective Participant or Organisation)

Postal Address 1

Postal Address 2

Postal Address 3

Dear Prospective Participant

**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A DOCTORAL RESEARCH:
URBAN NI-VANUATU WOMEN IN WAGED JOBS AND
SALARIED/PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS IN FORMAL JOBS AND
VANWODS MICROFINANCE INCORPORATION MEMBERS/MAMAS
OWNING AND OPERATING INFORMAL JOBS AS MICROFINANCE
BUSINESSES IN VANUATU**

My name is Andrina KL Thomas and I am currently studying at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. I am undertaking a doctoral research on the active participation of urban Ni-Vanuatu women in waged jobs and salaried/professional occupations in formal jobs in constitutional and corporate governance and urban Ni-Vanuatu women as Vanwods Microfinance Incorporation Members/Mamas owning and operating informal jobs as microfinance businesses in Vanuatu.

The study will investigate the types of discrimination and oppression that urban Ni-Vanuatu women face in their daily lives and/or in their formal and informal jobs. You are invited into a conversation to talk about your personal experiences of any discrimination or oppression (glass-ceilings/glass-walls/glass-cliffs/sticky floor problems) you have experienced and the solutions you took to keep your employment or your businesses operating. I also wish to ascertain whether Ni-Vanuatu women are interested in securing more positions of authority in

constitutional and corporate governance and in entrepreneurial activities in Vanuatu.

I have included a range of questions to be asked during the interview, as a conversational guide. Some of the questions will seek simple, factual information; while other will invite a deeper reflection and response from you. I hope that we can explore these in some depth, perhaps rewording some of your experiences as stories that illustrate your insights, concerns, and or aspirations in your formal and informal jobs.

There will be three stages to the research process:

- ✓ Participants in Stage One, there will be a focus group discussion with employer representatives (males and females) who have a vested interest in promoting gender equality through the implementation of CEDAW-EEO programmes in their organizations for Ni-Vanuatu women in their work place, at a day, date and time (to be confirmed) to be arranged through the Vanuatu Department of Women's Affairs and the Vanuatu Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare;
- ✓ Participants in Stage Two which include urban Ni-Vanuatu women in waged jobs and salaried/professional occupations in formal jobs. I will be approaching you individually to arrange days, dates, and times for our face-to-face interviews.;
- ✓ Participants in Stage Three which include Vanwods Microfinance Incorporation members/Mamas. I will be approaching you individually to arrange days, dates, and times for our face-to-face interviews.

Please find attached to this letter, a Participant's Information Sheet which outlines your responsibility as a participant and mine as a researcher. You are also offered a number of ways to amend your input or to withdraw from this research study, if you have any concerns we cannot address.

The importance of the research study is outlined below:

- It is vitally important for all women in Vanuatu as well as other stakeholders such as the Vanuatu Government and other policy makers to understand whether any discrimination and oppression exist for Ni-Vanuatu women.
- It will provide information to Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy and assist them decide how they can improve their dealing and relationship with Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs.
- Through the research design, the women participants are invited to undertake a process of self-reflection through which they will be able to tell their stories. Their once silent voices will be recorded to encourage other women to continue to seek redress for impediments they have experienced in their formal and informal jobs and to improve their future prospects for career advancement and entrepreneurial activities in Vanuatu.

- Will contribute to the scholarly literature on the social context of women and development in Vanuatu, on career theory, on theories of good governance, on social enterprise, and on justice and well-being for Ni-Vanuatu women's quest for equality and advancement career-wise and entrepreneurially as stipulated by the CEDAW Convention. This study will also be the basis for a contribution to transformative research processes as the women reflect on actions for change.
- Is of great benefit to me as a researcher as I will gain a deeper understanding of whether women wish to access positions of authority in Vanuatu through their active participation in the decision-making process in constitutional power, corporate governance or obtain informal jobs through entrepreneurial activities.
- As a Ni-Vanuatu indigenous feminist researcher undertaking research for Ni-Vanuatu women, I believe that the findings of this research project will form a platform for patriarchal awareness to Vanuatu's patrilineages and urban patriarchy to have first-hand information concerning the status of women in Vanuatu.

The research will be conducted during the period October 2009 to May 2010. I am giving you ample to reflect on the research questions so that you can recollect stories in your formal and informal jobs before we participate in the interview. If you want to participate in this research study, please contact me.

Thank you for your interest in this matter and I look forward to working closely with you in this important project in 2009/2010.

Yours sincerely

Andrina KL Thomas
PhD Scholar 2008-2012
University of Waikato

√Encls.

Appendix B: PIS Invitation to Organisations for Focus Group Discussion**Organisations Supporting Gender Equality in Vanuatu**

My name is Andrina Komala Lini Thomas and I am currently researching my doctoral thesis under the supervision of Maria Humphries and Suzette Dyer of the Waikato Management School, Hamilton, New Zealand.

My research focus is to understand how Ni-Vanuatu women can become more active in the decision-making roles within Vanuatu's formal and informal employment sectors and in the community. Women in Vanuatu have a long history of being active at the local level, but less active in the constitutional and corporate levels of decision making.

I intend to investigate how women may gain access to state and corporate positions of authority. As an organisation supporting gender equality in Vanuatu, I would like to invite a representative from your organisation to a Focus Group discussion to be held at the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs on 25 March 2010 from 0900-1200Noon. The focus group discussion will feature the experiences of your organisations in promoting and supporting gender equality in Vanuatu through the implementation of any CEDAW-EEO programmes you are operating for this purpose and any other suggestions you might have to encourage more Ni-Vanuatu women to access positions of authority in Vanuatu.

If you choose to participate, the focus group discussion will take approximately one-and-a-half to two hours. I will record the focus group discussions so that accurate information is obtained during the discussion.

The information I gather will form the basis of my PhD research thesis and will be presented at conferences and published in academic journals. **You will not be identified in any publications resulting from this research. I will also keep your identity confidential, and only I and my PhD supervisors will have access to the original transcripts.**

If you choose to participate, you have the right to refuse to answer any questions, and you may also withdraw all or part of any of your answers up until the time of writing up the research.

You may contact me directly at the address below to indicate your interest in participating,

Contact before October 2009:

Andrina KL Thomas

PhD Scholar Research Study

Department of Strategy and Human Resource Management

Waikato School of Management

P O Box 3105

HAMILTON 3241, New Zealand

Telephones: (00647) 8384466 Ext 6465; 0064211019300; 0064211002952 or 0064210620582

Email: at104@students.waikato.ac.nz

Contact after October 2009 and during the research study:

Andrina KL Thomas

PhD Scholar Research Study

Freshwater Southern Division

C/o Mrs Sylvie K. Kalmet

Employment Services' Unit (ESU)

Department of Labour

Private Mail Bag 9022

PORT VILA

Vanuatu

Telephones: (00678) 29937 (work); (00678) 23532 (home); 00678 7757678
(mobile)

Email: at104@students.waikato.ac.nz with copy to pro.esu@dol.gov.vu

Appendix C: PIS Letter to Urban Women in Formal Jobs**Urban Ni-Vanuatu Women in Waged Jobs; Professional/Salaried Occupations**

My name is Andrina Komala Lini Thomas and I am currently researching my doctoral thesis under the supervision of Maria Humphries and Suzette Dyer of the Waikato Management School, Hamilton, New Zealand.

My research focus is to understand how Ni-Vanuatu women can become more active in the decision-making roles within our community. Women in Vanuatu have a long history of being active at the local level, but less active in the constitutional and corporate levels of decision making.

I intend to investigate how women may gain access to state and corporate decision making processes. As a Ni-Vanuatu woman with an interest in leadership in our nation, I would like to interview you about your experiences of decision-making processes. I have included an interview guide that I would like to follow during our time together.

If you choose to participate, I would like to interview you for approximately one-and-a-half hours and will record our interview.

The information I gather will form the basis of my PhD research and will be presented at conferences and published in academic journals. **You will not be identified in any publications resulting from this research. I will also keep your identity confidential, and only I and my PhD supervisors will have access to the original transcripts.**

If you choose to participate, you have the right to refuse to answer any of the questions, and you may also withdraw all or part of any of your answers up until the time of writing up the research.

You may contact me directly at the address below to indicate your interest in participating,

Contact before October 2009:

Andrina KL Thomas

PhD Scholar Research Study

Department of Strategy and Human Resource Management

Waikato School of Management

P O Box 3105

HAMILTON 3241

New Zealand

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Contact after October 2009 and during the research study:

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Freshwater Southern Division

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Email: at104@students.waikato.ac.nz with copy to pro.esu@dol.gov.vu

Appendix D: Invitation to Women in Informal Jobs**Vanwods Microfinance Incorporation Members/Mamas**

My name is Andrina Komala Lini Thomas and I am currently researching my doctoral thesis under the supervision of Maria Humphries and Suzette Dyer of the Waikato Management School, Hamilton, New Zealand.

My research focus is to understand how Vanuatu women can become more active in the decision-making roles within our community. Women in Vanuatu have a long history of being active at the local level, but less active in the constitutional and corporate levels of decision making.

I intend to investigate how women may gain access to state and corporate decision making processes. I am particularly interested in the decision-making skills that women have developed as a result of their involvement with the Vanwods Microfinance Inc. As such a woman, I would like to interview you about your experiences and how they have helped you to develop any decision making skills. I have included attachments which include a questionnaire and a conversational guide that I would like to follow during our time together.

If you choose to participate, I would like to interview you for approximately one-and-a-half hours by recording our interview.

The information I gather will form the basis of my PhD thesis and research and will be presented at conferences and published in academic journals. You will not be identified in any publications resulting from this research. I will also keep your identity confidential, and only I and my PhD supervisors will have access to the original transcripts.

If you choose to participate, you have the right to refuse to answer any of the questions, and you may also withdraw all or part of any of your answers up until the time of writing up the research.

You may wish to contact me directly at the address below to indicate your interest in participating, or may prefer to contact Mr John Salong who will then pass on your details for me to set up an interview time.

Contact before October 2009:

Andrina KL Thomas

PhD Scholar Research Study

Department of Strategy and Human Resource Management

Waikato School of Management

P O Box 3105

HAMILTON 3241

New Zealand

Telephones: (00647) 8384466 Ext 6465; 0064211019300; 0064211002952 or 0064210620582

Email: at104@students.waikato.ac.nz

Contact after October 2009 and during the research study:

Andrina KL Thomas

PhD Scholar Research Study

Freshwater Southern Division

C/o Mrs Sylvie K. Kalmet

Employment Services' Unit (ESU)

Department of Labour

Private Mail Bag 9022

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Telephones: (00678) 29937 (work); (00678) 23532 (home); 00678 7757678

Email: at104@students.waikato.ac.nz with copy to pro.esu@dol.gov.vu

Appendix E: Consent Forms for Participants

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Waikato Management School
WAIKATO
Te Raupapa
Waikato

The University of
Te Whare Wananga o

Urban Ni-Vanuatu women in formal and informal jobs in Vanuatu and for focus group discussion with employer representatives

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the Participant’s Information Sheet 2009 for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the Participant’s Information Sheet 2009.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Participant’s Information Sheet 2009 form.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Researcher’s Name and contact information:

Andrina Komala Lini Thomas
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Supervisor's Name and contact information:

Chief Supervisor:

Associate Professor Maria Humphries
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Waikato Management School
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Mobile Number: 0272928809
Email: mariah@waikato.ac.nz (communication by email preferred)

Second Supervisor:

Dr Suzette Dyer
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Appendix F: Part A: Demographic Details for Women in Formal Jobs**Urban Ni-Vanuatu Women in Waged Jobs and Salaried/Professional Occupations**

(Please note that questions 1 to 26 will be distributed as a questionnaire)

Questionnaire

1. What is your age?
2. What is your, marital status?
3. How many children do you have?
4. How many other extended family members do you have under your care?
5. What if the family care you undertook was historic or in the past – did it leave a 'legacy', therefore past care for family may meant educational or employment opportunity sacrifices now manifesting in lost – or diminished career advancement for you?
6. What kind of support do you have in the home?
7. Do you come from a patrilineal or matrilineal lineage descent society?
8. Did coming from a matrilineal or patrilineal lineage descent society give you specific opportunity or the courage to persevere in any obstacles or challenges you experienced in your daily life or in your places of employment?
9. Is your spouse/partner employed or self-employed?
10. What areas/activities is your spouse/partner employed in
11. How long has your spouse/partner been employed for?
12. Does your spouse/partner also contribute to household expenses and how regularly?
13. What do you do with the money you earn in terms of catering for future supplies, continuous business operation, your family responsibilities, children's education, improving your home, and contributing to village, community, elders, church and any other responsibilities you might have?
14. How do you apportion money towards these costs and how regularly?
15. How much do you spend each week/month?
16. What is your educational background if any (primary, secondary and any tertiary education or training courses)?
17. Did you undertake any tertiary studies in the country or overseas during the course of your employment?
18. Did your employer stop you from seeking overseas training because you were a woman?
19. Did your employer stop you from seeking overseas training because he/she considered you as being over qualified?
20. Do you know if any other workers in your organisation had the opportunity to obtain overseas training while you were prevented?
21. How long have you been in the work-force?
22. How long have you been working for the current company?
23. What are your positions in the companies you have worked for?
24. How long have you been working for the current company?
25. What is your current position?
26. How many years did it take for you to get from a junior position to a decision-making one?

Thank you for your story and for participating in this research study

Appendix F: Part B: Conversational Guide for Women in Formal Jobs**Urban Ni-Vanuatu Women in Waged Jobs and Salaried/Professional Occupations' Conversational Guide**

As this is a conversation guide only, we could use some or all of the questions in this guide to help tell your story illustrating any obstacles or challenges you had. I invite you to tell your story illustrating an exclusion or frustration in aspirations because “you are a woman” in your places of employment or in your daily life?

1. Did you face any obstacles in acquiring your decision-making job(s) and what were they?
2. What help, guidance and organisational assistance were available to overcome these obstacles?
3. Did the obstacles come from men leaders and administrators (patriarchy) only or women leaders and administrators as well in your organisation? Tell us your story.
4. Did you have a formal role model or mentor who trained you for the decision-making job?
5. Did your spouse/partner actively encourage or prevent you from seeking and accepting any decision-making job(s)?
6. How did you react to this opposition and with what effect?
7. What is your future ambition in the current job or in another career path?
8. What actions or measures should the Vanuatu Government and policy bodies take to improve and encourage more Ni-Vanuatu women into decision-making roles?
9. Are you willing to become a formal role model, mentor, or trainer for other Ni-Vanuatu women who want to become future leaders and when are you available?
10. In your view, are men and women equally (and/or differently) responsible for social and economic wellbeing in Vanuatu?
11. How are men and women equally (and/or differently) contributing actively to the formal economy and why do you say so?
12. Would the incorporation of more women into the formal decision-making bodies improve good governance in Vanuatu and how?
13. Why would women bring such a dimension?
14. How might we, (both women and men) encourage leaders and administrators (patriarchy) in Vanuatu to change their traditional mind-sets on the subjugation of women?
15. Do you think gender equality can be improved in Vanuatu and how?
16. How can we encourage more women to vote for women leaders/representative?
17. Is any woman leader better than a good man, how and why?
18. What should be done to encourage more women to participate in the decision-making process?
19. How can women in all islands of Vanuatu work harder and better together?
20. Any other topics/areas you would like to discuss for this research project.

Thank you for your story and for participating in this research study

Appendix G: Part A: Demographic Details for Women in Informal Jobs**Vanwods Microfinance Inc (MFI) Members/Mamas: Questionnaire**

1. What is your age?
2. What is your marital status?
3. How many children do you have?
4. How many other extended family members do you have under your care?
5. What if the family care you undertook was historic or in the past – did it leave a 'legacy', therefore past care for family may mean educational or employment opportunity sacrifices now manifesting in lost – or diminished career advancement for you?
6. What kind of support do you have in the home?
7. Do you come from a patrilineal or matrilineal lineage descent society?
8. Did coming from a matrilineal or patrilineal lineage descent society give you specific opportunity or the courage to persevere in any obstacles or challenges you experienced and continued to operate your business regardless?
9. Is your spouse/partner employed or self-employed?
10. What areas/activities is your spouse/partner employed in?
11. How long has your spouse/partner been employed for?
12. Does your spouse/partner also contribute to household expenses and how regularly?
13. What do you do with the money you earn from your business, do you apportion it for future supplies, continuous business operation, family responsibilities, children's education, improving your home, and contributing to village, community, elders, church and any other responsibilities you might have?
14. How do you apportion money towards these costs and how regularly?
15. What is your educational background if any (primary, secondary and any tertiary education or training courses)?
16. Were you previously employed and for how long before starting your current business?
17. Did you hold a decision-making position, where, and for how long before you joined the Vanwods MFI?
18. Were you terminated, made redundant from your previous job or resigned because of any obstacles you experienced forcing you to make a living by operating your own business?
19. Did your spouse actively encourage or discourage you from seeking to establish your own business?
20. How did you react to your husband's opposition and with what effect?
21. How long have you been operating your business?
22. What business are you in?
23. How did you hear about the Vanwods MFI?
24. Which Grameen Foundation community group in Port Vila or Espiritu Santo did you join to become a Vanwods MFI member?
25. What is your estimated weekly income?
26. What is your estimated weekly loan repayment?
27. What is your estimated weekly savings?
28. How much do you spend each week/month?

Thank you for your story and for participating in this research study

Appendix G: Part B: Conversational Guide for Women in Informal Jobs**Vanwods Microfinance Inc (MFI) Ni-Vanuatu Members/Mamas**
Conversational Guide

As this is a conversation guide only, we could use some or all of the questions in this guide to help tell your story illustrating any obstacles or challenges you had. I invite you to tell your story illustrating an exclusion or frustration in aspirations in your current or last place of employment because “you are a woman” or in your daily life.

1. Explain how effective you have found the Grameen Foundation collective group and the Vanwods MFI in grooming Ni-Vanuatu women to become responsible business owners?
2. What obstacles do you face in selling your products or services?
3. Describe your current customer base – who are they and where do they come from?
4. Do you want to increase your customer base and what can you do to do so?
5. What is your customers' spending capacity?
6. What are the future means to increase your customer base?
7. To what extent and how participating in the Vanwods MFI economic activities has improved your self-confidence as a business person, made your contribution to the informal economy, contributed to your family's education and improved your family's living standards including assistance to your cultural and social kinship and network systems?
8. What are your future ambitions in the current business or in another business operation?
9. Do you think more Ni-Vanuatu women should participate in the Vanwods MFI, why, how and where?
10. Do you think that the Vanwods MFI should increase its offices to other islands and provinces in Vanuatu and should this be done collectively by Vanwods and the government?
11. Who else could assist with this expansion?
12. What other products and services (such as life insurance, in-country or overseas business training, or VNPF voluntary contributions) should the Vanwods MFI introduce to its members to help Ni-Vanuatu women participating in entrepreneurial activities?
13. To what extent and how?
14. Do you think that more business training given to Ni-Vanuatu women would help them to actively participate in more economic activities in Vanuatu?
15. What kind of training would you like?
16. What actions or measures should the Vanuatu Government, policy bodies and the Vanwods MFI take to improve and encourage more Ni-Vanuatu women into entrepreneurial activities in Vanuatu?
17. Are you willing to become a formal role model, mentor, or trainer for other Ni-Vanuatu women who own businesses and other aspiring Ni-Vanuatu women who want to participate in entrepreneurial activities and when are you available?
18. Are you willing to become a joint venture partner with another Ni-Vanuatu woman in any business operation?
19. In your view, are men and women equally (and/or differently) responsible for social and economic well-being in Vanuatu?
20. How are men and women equally (and/or differently) contributing actively to the formal economy and why do you say so?
21. Would the incorporation of more women business leaders into the formal decision-making bodies improve good governance in Vanuatu and how?
22. Why would women bring such a dimension?

23. How might we, (both women and men) encourage leaders and administrators (patriarchy) in Vanuatu to change their traditional mind-sets on the subjugation of women?
24. Do you think gender equality can be improved in Vanuatu and how?
25. How can we encourage more women to vote for women leaders/representative?
26. Is any woman leader better than a good man, how and why?
27. What should be done to encourage more women to participate in the decision-making process?
28. How can women in all islands of Vanuatu work harder and better together?
29. Any other topics/areas you would like to discuss for this research project.

Thank you for your story and for participating in this research study