Pacific Islands
Stakeholder Participation in Development: Vanuatu

Darryl Tyron
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PACIFIC ISLANDS
STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION
IN DEVELOPMENT:
VANUATU

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Prepared by: Darryl Tyron

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For further copies of the report, please contact:

Mr. David Colbert  
Papua New Guinea and Pacific Islands  
Country Management Unit  
East Asia and Pacific Region  
The World Bank  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC, U.S.A. 20433  
Fax: (202) 522-3393  
E-Mail: Dcolbert1@worldbank.org
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PACIFIC ISLANDS DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES
FOREWORD

As in all societies, prospects for economic and social development for Pacific Island economies are conditioned by the country’s social fabric, cultural heritage and traditions, all of which exert a powerful influence over the pattern and prospects for development. Recognising this, when providing analytical advice and support for policy makers in Pacific economies the World Bank is obligated to move beyond a perspective that focuses merely on economic factors to one that incorporates each society’s social and cultural dynamic and which acknowledges the influence these aspects play in social change and economic decision-making.

The series of Stakeholders studies was initiated in 1996 in order to provide a basis for this broader approach and, over the ensuing twelve months, reports have been prepared for Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Kiribati. For each country the form of the study has varied, reflecting differences in the social and organizational characteristics of each culture. In some, the role of traditional or customary organizations is stronger and more pronounced; in others, formal community structures and organizations may be less defined or play a different role in various parts of the country and in relation to different spheres of social life. The linkages between traditional and introduced structures of power are also different in each country: in some, the boundaries may overlap quite clearly; in others, the functions of the government, the role of the church and the strength of traditions, for example, may continue to be quite distinct.

We also wanted to consider in more detail the social patterns as well as the political dimensions at work in influencing social change and to understand better how Pacific Island societies function. Who are the important players in a community or society and how do they interact formally and informally? What are the structures that define their roles and how do they manage the interface between the needs of the in-group and those of the wider society? How do different social groups define their values and set their priorities and to what degree does the articulation of traditional or customary values influence decisions about economic development and the distribution of the benefits of development? These are some of the questions we wanted to explore.

Each country study has been prepared by a consultant who has extensive familiarity with and knowledge of the social and political dimensions of that country and who could readily provide information about the culture and analysis of the issues surrounding key aspects of the society, such as leadership, decision-making and community perceptions of government and development. The studies have provided timely and valuable input into the economic and sector analyses undertaken as part of the World Bank’s program in the Pacific during 1996 and 1997. I hope they will continue to be critical in informing such work in future years.

Klaus Rohland
Country Director: Pacific Islands
Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

The tragedy of Vanuatu’s “colonial” history is that it was not properly “colonized” by any one colonial power, but fell under the condominium sway of the imperial rivalry of Britain and France.

The legacy of condominium government has been, almost without qualification, disastrous for the development of the country and its preparation for national sovereignty.

The absurdities and the divisiveness inherent in the dual system became side, the struggle for independence created a national political party, the Vanua'aku Party (VP) with a national party organization and, in reaction to it, other parties opposed to its political agenda.

The independence struggle also engendered some sense of nationhood in an archipelago where topography, language and local custom militated against such a unifying concept:

- it gave Vanuatu an independent “identity” from the outset.

The general elections in December 1991 marked the beginning of a new phase in the politics of the country. They brought to an end the unbroken post-independence rule of the VP which had been able to develop and pursue a political program with some degree of coherence and continuity through twelve years of government.

The VP’s loss of government at the elections in 1991 was attributable to its loss of internal party unity rather than any radical shift of voter preference away from traditional linguistic and denominational affiliations.

The four years of francophone-led coalition government (1991-95) which followed provided an object lesson in the dangers to political stability of unnatural alliances of convenience. Principle and policy coherence were the first casualties in the process of coalition formation and hybrid government. The steady politicization of the public service, and a concomitant erosion of its
technical and administrative capacities, precipitated a gradual abandonment of the good governance of the country as a duty of office. The general elections in November 1995 merely confirmed the growing fissiparousness in Vanuatu’s party-based politics - a characteristic common in other parts of Melanesia but clearly detrimental to policy coherence and good governance.

The year 1996 may be remembered as the “annus horribilis” in Vanuatu, the year which saw the institutions of the state constantly assaulted and their integrity dangerously threatened as the country lurched from crisis to crisis:

- an attempted coup d’etat by administrative means; a succession of highly dubious investment schemes; the Ombudsman in courageous but risky conflict with the powers of the day; a parliamentary crisis and the Speaker cited for contempt; a crisis in the security force which escalated from insubordination to the kidnap of the President as part of what may prove to have been a second coup attempt, and the dismissal of the Chief Justice.

CONCLUSIONS FOR ‘GOOD GOVERNANCE’

The following conclusions for the future good governance of Vanuatu may be drawn from the events of the past five years:

- individual ambition for office is rapidly replacing loyalty to a political party organization, shared ideology or sense of national responsibility;
- personal animosities and opportunities for personal aggrandizement and settling scores seem increasingly to animate individual ambition for power;
- compatibility of political philosophies and policy objectives is increasingly irrelevant to the formation of coalition government;
- coherent national policy across government is no longer possible as authority and responsibility are sub-divided between coalition partners on the basis of mutual non-interference;
- as loyalty to party is displaced by consideration of personal advantage, material reward for political allegiance is becoming a sine qua non;
- greater political instability has increased opportunities for corruption, of individuals and institutions, including by external interest groups;
- politicization of public sector employment has led to a serious loss of scarce skills and experience and a decline in service delivery;
- in an archipelagic state, in which differences in language and religion continue to divide, indigenous history, the colonial legacy and recent practice weigh heavily against an early reversal of current trends.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Popular disenchantment with politicians and the corruption of political processes is growing and with it a new support for independent political candidates:
Support for Fr Lini's National United Party seems to be steadily eroding; it is over-represented in the present Council of Ministers and is seen as captive to its Vietnamese financial backer Dinh Van Than;

The prospects for stable government and coherent national policy seem clouded. They are likely to emerge only:

i) after a considerable period of mutual confidence-building through the actual conduct of government by the same coalition partners in more than a single term of office, or

ii) by reuniting the main elements of the anglophone Vanua’aku Party, whose grass-roots organization seems still to be effective and to be recruiting more younger members, thus holding out the prospect of a single-party majority government being returned to office at some future point. This is not likely before 1999, when the next general election is due, and only then if Fr Lini has ceased to be politically active e.g. by appointment as President (possible in 1998), which would remove the raison d’être for the continuous existence of NUP and marginalize Dinh Van Than’s direct involvement in party politics.
The Republic of Vanuatu (formerly known as the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides) is situated in the south west Pacific Ocean. Vanuatu became an independent sovereign state on July 30, 1980. Its capital is Port Vila, located on the island of Efate, in central Vanuatu.

It consists of an archipelago of some eighty islands, arranged in an irregular Y-shape, lying north-west to south-east between 13° and 22° south latitude and between 166° and 175° east longitude. It extends from the Torres Islands in the north to Aneityum in the far south, a distance of some 850 kilometres. Vanuatu also claims Matthew and Hunter Islands, tiny uninhabited islands to the south of Aneityum. This claim is disputed by France. Vanuatu's neighbours are the Solomon Islands (800 kilometres to the north west), New Caledonia (400 km south west), and Fiji (800 km east), capital to capital.

Vanuatu possesses an Exclusive Economic Zone of 450,000 sq.km. surrounding a total land mass of approximately 14,763 sq.km. (NZ Atlas of the South Pacific, 1978).

There are twelve major islands in terms of habitation and economic activity. They are as follows: Banks and Torres Islands (887 sq.km), Espiritu Santo (3677 sq.km), Maewo (230 sq.km), Ambae (469 sq.km), Pentecost (495 sq.km), Ambrym (673 sq.km), Malakula (2067 sq.km), Paama (60 sq.km), Epi (447 sq.km), Efate (915 sq.km), Erromango (975 sq.km), Tanna (680 sq.km), and Aneityum (80 sq.km).

Vanuatu consists mainly of 'high islands' of volcanic origin, the highest point on many of the islands being about 700 metres above sea level. These islands are situated on the Pacific/Australian tectonic plate and are in large part the crests of submarine volcanoes, the highest of which is Mt Tabwemasana (1879 metres) on the island of Espiritu Santo. There are a number of active or intermittently active volcanoes in Vanuatu, the most famous being Yasur on Tanna. Others include Lopevi (Paama), Ambrym, Ambae and Gaua (Banks Islands). These younger islands contrast with the geologically older islands of Espiritu Santo, Malakula, Maewo and Pentecost whose relief is characterised by uplifted and eroded volcanic and sedimentary rocks, usually with a capping plateau of coral limestone.
Mineral deposits include small quantities of copper on Malakula, Santo and Pentecost. Traces of nickel and chrome are also reported from Pentecost, and surface gold has been reported in north and south Malakula. While manganese occurs in the limestones or in underlying tuffs on several islands, the only deposit which has been mined is that at Forari on the island of Efate.

Vanuatu lies in the path of the south east trade winds which prevail for much of the year. Seasonal average temperatures range between 21 and 27 degrees with an average humidity of 75-80 percent. There are two seasons: the rainy or hot season, from November to April, and the dry or cool season, from May to October. Average rainfall varies from 4136 mm in the Banks and Torres to 2947 mm on Espiritu Santo and 2207 mm on Efate. During the hot season cyclones are commonly experienced, many causing severe damage to food crops and village housing, as well as buildings, wharves, electricity and water supply in urban areas.

Volcanic eruptions, especially from Yasur on Tanna, are occasionally accompanied by heavy ash fallout which destroys food gardens for up to three years. This vulnerability to natural disaster and the regenerative qualities of nature seem to imprint the ni-Vanuatu psyche with a patient tolerance of calamity and a seeming trust in the eventual restoration of the natural order.

Despite the high rainfall there are few rivers of any significant size or economic potential. On Espiritu Santo there are the Jordan, Sarakata and Navaka rivers; on Malakula there are the Pangkumu, the Matanui, the Orap and the Palanua, while on Efate there are the Teouma, the Bouffa and the La Colle. The few lakes which exist in Vanuatu are too remote to be of much use for agricultural or domestic purposes.

The great majority of villages are located on the coast, but not usually near to a permanent river or stream, and most water is collected from church roofs and those of other buildings and stored in cement, galvanised iron or more recently fibre-glass tanks. Since the mid-1980s many villages have benefited from water supply facilities installed as aid projects.

**POPULATION**

Between the time of first European contact and the end of World War II, the population of Vanuatu underwent a severe diminution. On Aneityum, for example, the first missionaries numbered their parishioners at over 3,000 in 1858, while at the time of the 1967 Census this number had been reduced to 313. The same level of population decimation was recorded for most other islands, especially those having greatest contact with ships and crewmen from outside Vanuatu. This particularly affected the more southerly islands. The population of Erromango was recorded as 600 in 1967, while the first missionaries in the nineteenth century estimated that the population would have exceeded 5000.
The cause of the huge population loss was largely the introduction by visiting ships of European diseases such as measles, whooping cough and influenza, to which the Melanesian populations of Vanuatu had no immunity. This phenomenon was not confined to Vanuatu, but was reported from all over the Pacific even as far east as the Marquesas Islands in French Polynesia where by 1929 the population had dropped to under 3000 from 20,000 (Rollin 1974).

The population of Vanuatu is a young one, with an annual growth rate of 2.4 percent. Between the 1979 and 1989 Censuses, the population of Vanuatu grew by 28 percent, from 111,251 to 142,630. Between 1989 and 1997 the population has gown to an estimated 170,000, an increase of 16 percent in seven years.

The people of Vanuatu are Melanesian, with a slight Polynesian admixture. This population, known today as ni-Vanuatu (literally a person of Vanuatu), speaks 113 extant indigenous languages. These languages, see Map 1, are spoken by very small population groups, with an average of one language per 1500 inhabitants, perhaps the greatest language density on earth. The largest language has fewer than 10,000 speakers, while the great majority of Vanuatu languages are spoken by only a few hundred speakers. All of the indigenous languages of Vanuatu are members of the Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian language family which extends from Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines right around New Guinea and across the Pacific as far as Easter Island. [The languages of the interior of the great island of New Guinea belong to another unrelated family of languages].

While nearly all of the languages of Vanuatu are Melanesian, there are three Polynesian languages, known as Polynesian Outliers, spoken in the archipelago. These are spoken on Emae, in the Shepherd Islands, and on Ifira Island and Mele village near Port Vila and on the islands of Futuna and Aniwa in the south.

In addition to the indigenous vernaculars, the national language of Vanuatu is an English-based pidgin, Bislama, which is spoken by most ni-Vanuatu. The languages of education are English and French, the product of the Anglo-French Condominium system, see below. In addition some Chinese (Hakka) and Vietnamese is spoken by Asian store-keepers and entrepreneurs.

**DISCOVERY: THE EXPLORERS**

The first European to set foot in Vanuatu was Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, a Portuguese explorer in the service of the King of Spain who believed that he had discovered the great Southern Continent when he landed in Big Bay (northern Santo) in May 1606 with 130 men and three ships. He called the island La Australia del Espiritu Santo and began work on the establishment of a settlement which he called Nueva Jerusaléma (New Jerusalem). However, his relations with the indigenous population of Big Bay, known officially as
the Bay of St. Philip and St.James, were very poor, resulting in the deaths of several ni-Vanuatu. A discouraged and disillusioned Quiros abandoned the project after fifty days and sailed back to Europe with the news of the great southern continent which they believed they had discovered.

It was not until 1768, over one hundred and fifty years later, that the next European visitor, the explorer Louis Antoine de Bougainville reached Vanuatu, sailing past and naming Pentecost and Aurora (now Maewo) and landing briefly on Ambae and Malo, sailing westwards between Santo and Malakula, bestowing on the archipelago the name of the Grandes Cyclades and effectively disproving Quiros' claim that he had discovered the southern continent.

In 1774 Captain James Cook made a thorough tour of most of the islands of Vanuatu, naming the country the New Hebrides. Cook spent about a month and a half in Vanuatu, with a two-week stay on south east Tanna. He also visited Erromango, Efate, Malakula (Port Sandwich) and Santo, naming many of the islands as he went.

Two other notable European explorers passed through Vanuatu on their way north and west, namely Laperouse (1788), who lost his life on the reefs of Vanikoro in the Solomon Islands just to the north of Vanuatu, and Captain William Bligh (1789), who sailed though the Banks islands in an open boat on his way to the Torres Straits after the mutiny of the Bounty in Tahiti in the same year.

**EARLY EUROPEAN CONTACT: WHALERS AND TRADERS**

European traders came to Sydney from England in the late 1700s and early 1800s, making their way to China for cargoes of tea for the British market. Peter Dillon, an Irish sea captain and trader, discovered large stands of sandalwood on Erromango in 1825 and, after an initial hesitant start, the sandalwood trade flourished from 1842 onwards. Whaling activity in Vanuatu was very largely confined to the southern islands and in January 1844 James Paddon set up the first station on Aneityum, the southernmost island in Vanuatu.

The sandalwood trade brought together Polynesian crewmen, European masters and the Melanesian population of mostly southern Vanuatu, although as stocks became depleted in the south the trade moved north to Efate, and then Malakula and finally Espiritu Santo, where Paddon discovered sandalwood in 1853.

But there were many problems, not least of which was the fact that since there were no paramount chiefs in Vanuatu, the sandalwood traders had to negotiate with village 'big men' (see Kastom below) whose authority was restricted to only a few villages. Often this was interpreted as an alliance between the 'big man' and the trader, and villages which were traditionally hostile to such-and-such a 'big man' would not hesitate to attack the trader. The sandalwood trade fell away gradually, with falling prices, and slowed to a trickle by 1865.
Gradually the ni-Vanuatu came to appreciate European goods, leading to improved trading conditions. The islanders' tastes and demands evolved very quickly. While at first beads and hoop-iron were acceptable as trade items, very soon the islanders required axes and metal tools, moving on quickly to muskets and powder. There was also a wider trade brokered by the traders, who facilitated a kind of international trade in the region. For example, tortoise shell was brought from the Solomons and traded on Tanna for pigs which were in turn traded for sandalwood on Espiritu Santo. Goods were also traded between New Caledonia and southern Vanuatu, especially ‘greenstone’ and the nunpuri shell, *ovula ovum*.

The early trading days in Vanuatu were often tempestuous, as numerous bloody attacks and killings attest. Thus, for example, when the *British Sovereign* was wrecked on south Efate in 1847, the crew of twenty made their way ashore only to be massacred and eaten. In a number of other incidents, nearly all in southern Vanuatu, and associated with the sandalwood trade, Polynesian and European crewmen shot and killed ni-Vanuatu for minor offences such as suspected theft, creating an ambiance of deep mistrust.

**THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS**

The work of the Christian missions has left indelible marks on the people and state. The preamble to the constitution establishes the new state “on Christian principles”, and the historical spheres of denominational influence have tended to determine basic political allegiances up and down the island chain.

In the first decades of the 19th century the London Missionary Society (LMS) converted much of the eastern Pacific to Christianity, beginning in Tahiti (1797) and moving westwards to the Cook Islands and Samoa. They thought that the islands of Melanesia would not prove any more difficult, but found otherwise.

The first missionary to the then New Hebrides, John Williams, sailed to Vanuatu from Samoa in 1839 together with an assistant and three Samoan teachers. He reached Erromango on 18 November and, when he went ashore, was struck down and killed.

The LMS then decided to send Samoan teachers or pastors to evangelise Vanuatu as the cultural gap between them would not be as great. However, the Polynesian teachers experienced serious communicative, cultural and health problems. In 1843 two LMS missionaries were forced to flee from southeast Tanna and return to Samoa after they were blamed for a dysentery epidemic.

In 1848 John Geddie arrived on Aneityum with his wife and two assistants, Powell and Archibald. He acquired a plot of land and built a church and a house for himself. In 1852 John Inglis arrived to assist with the task of evangelism. By 1854 two-thirds of the population of Aneityum had been
converted to Christianity. By 1860 he had translated the whole of the New Testament into Aneityumese.

The Presbyterian Church gradually spread north from Aneityum, reaching Erromango again in 1857, Futuna and Tanna in 1858, Efate 1864, Aniwa 1866, and South west Santo 1870. In later years the Presbyterian Church also evangelised the islands of Epi and Paama, large parts of Ambrym, areas of south west and east Malakula, as well as the whole west coast of Espiritu Santo and considerable areas on the east and south coasts of that island. This areal spread of the Presbyterian Church will be seen later to have had important implications for the political composition of the Vanuatu parliament at independence and beyond. (See Map 2 for distribution of churches areas of influence).

The Anglican Church had its beginnings in Vanuatu in 1849 when Bishop George Augustus Selwyn began to make annual voyages from New Zealand through Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. During his voyages he was very helpful to the LMS and Presbyterian missionaries in southern Vanuatu and enjoyed such good rapport with them that in 1881 the Presbyterian Church signed an agreement with the Anglicans to the effect that mutually exclusive territories were established, the Anglicans being guaranteed unchallenged rights to the islands in the north east of Vanuatu: Pentecost, Ambae, Maewo and to the Banks and Torres Islands further to the north. Indeed, the Anglican diocese also included contiguous areas in the south eastern Solomons, namely the Eastern Outer Islands (Tikopia, Santa Cruz, Vanikoro, Utupua, the Reefs Islands), San Cristobal, Ulawa and Nggela and parts of Santa Isabel. Again, this vast single church area has had a profound demographic and political impact in modern Vanuatu, as all schooling in Vanuatu until the 1960s was provided by the missions.

Incidentally, the Anglican Church or Melanesian Mission as it was better known, chose Mota, a language from the Banks Islands in Vanuatu, as the mission evangelical language, right from the 1860s until the policy changed this to English in 1931 under Bishop Wilson.

Catholic Church missionaries made a very brief visit to Vanuatu as early as 1848, returning the following year to New Caledonia. They did not return to the mission field in Vanuatu until 1887, when they landed at Mele, near Port Vila on Efate. The Catholic missions established schools in Port Vila and also on Aneityum, Tanna, Ambrym, Malakula, Pentecost, Ambae and Espiritu Santo. Today they are the second largest church in Vanuatu, second only to the Presbyterians and just ahead of the Anglicans. The Catholic Church in Vanuatu has from the beginning been French-speaking, and again constitutes an important power group in political terms. The Presbyterian, Catholic and Anglican Churches would account for about 80 percent of the population of Vanuatu today.
Other churches which were established in Vanuatu at the beginning of the twentieth century include the Church of Christ (1905), principally on Ambae and south Pentecost; the Apostolic Church (initially the Wesleyan Church) (1901) on Ambae and in Santo and Vila; and the Seventh Day Adventist Church (1912), working largely in medicine and education, centred on Aore (south Santo), with missions on Ambae, Malakula, Efate and Tanna.

In the years leading up to independence, mainly in the 1970s, a number of new Christian churches were established in Vanuatu, notably the Assembly of God, the Eglise Evangélique Libre, the Holiness Fellowship, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon Church), the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Jehovah’s Witness Church. In addition, the Bahai World Faith has had a small number of adherents in Vanuatu since the early 1970s. In post-independence Vanuatu, the introduction of new churches was limited under the Lini government (1980-91); however, since that time there have been a plethora of new small Christian sects and ministries set up, often with U.S. evangelical backing, especially in the less developed areas of some islands, for example on southern Malakula.

In the early 1970s the Vanuatu Christian Council was established, an ecumenical council in which all of the major churches are represented. This council serves as a major vehicle for the churches to impact government policy making, for discussions with the Malvatumauri (National Council of Chiefs), as well as the various non-government organisations working for the development of Vanuatu.

THE PLANTATION ERA

In 1847, during the sandalwood era referred to above, Ben Boyd, an Australian whaler and entrepreneur, recruited a group of Tannese and Loyalty Islanders to work on a pastoral property in New South Wales. These were to be the first of many thousands of ni-Vanuatu who were recruited as plantation labour between that time and the abolition of recruiting in 1906, the year in which the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides (known as Vanuatu since 1980) was established.

Between 1863 and 1906, some 56,165 ni-Vanuatu (Crowley 1990:89) were recruited to work on plantations in Queensland (39,975), Fiji (14,198), Samoa (1,201), Hawaii (550) and French Polynesia (241). In addition, some 13,000 went to work in the nickel mines and on pastoral properties in New Caledonia (Adams 1984: 59) up until the 1930s. This represented something approaching 10 percent of the population of the New Caledonian mainland at that time.

Many of the entrepreneurs prominent in the sandalwood trade in Vanuatu took advantage of a world cotton shortage in the 1860s, establishing plantations in northern New South Wales and Queensland, an industry which required fairly intensive labour. They sought labour in Vanuatu, beginning with the
southern islands of Tanna, but gradually moved north, through central and northern Vanuatu in the early 1870s, reaching the Solomon Islands in 1872 and what is now Papua New Guinea only in 1880. As the cotton market collapsed, sugar plantations were established up the Queensland coast. About 40,000 ni-Vanuatu went to work in Queensland on three-year contracts during the recruiting period (1863-1906). There was much associated malpractice and some recruits were kidnapped or trapped rather than enlisted voluntarily. From 1871 every ship had to carry a government agent to ensure that recruits understood their contracts and that they were not press-ganged into recruiting. However, few of the regulations were enforced. Of the 40,000 recruited for Queensland some 10,000 failed to return home, either dying of various European diseases or being returned to islands other than their home islands, usually with fatal consequences. When the labour trade came to an end in Queensland in 1906, some 1,700 ni-Vanuatu men and women chose to stay on and live there.

The recruiting era left its mark on Vanuatu in many ways, not the least of which was its contribution to the major population decline which characterised the mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For not only were European-introduced illnesses and diseases a cause of major population loss, but also the absence of a significant proportion of the male population overseas contributed to the alarmingly low birth rate during this period.

EARLY COLONISATION

There is nothing more fundamental to an understanding of the culture and modern history of Vanuatu than the place and importance of land. It was land that led Europeans to settle in the nineteenth century and it was the resulting alienation of land from traditional owners which led to mounting indigenous pressure for independence.

Permanent European settlement in Vanuatu may be said to date from 1867 when Henry Ross Lewin purchased 324 hectares of land on Tanna on which he established a cotton plantation, attempting to cash in on the steep rise in world cotton prices occasioned by the American Civil War. There were other 'sales' of land on Tanna, but relations with the local people were so poor that after Lewin was killed in 1871 interest in Tanna dwindled. Efate was much more settled than Tanna, largely because of lower population densities, and became the centre of European attention. The early settlers who established plantations there were mainly from Australia and New Zealand. Crops included cotton, maize and sugar.

However, because of the collapse of world cotton prices and a series of cyclones in the late 1870s, together with the British High Commission’s decision in 1874 to cease issuing recruiting licences to British traders and a great reluctance to register land titles, and knowing full well from its experience in Fiji that permanent alienation of indigenous land was not possible in Vanuatu culture, British economic interests declined.
The major problem, both on Tanna and elsewhere in Vanuatu, was that the indigenous land tenure system did not allow for the permanent transfer of land for cash or goods, land being an integral and inalienable part of ni-Vanuatu culture. The same land tenure rules apply today in post-independence Vanuatu. What was and is possible is the temporary transfer of rights to the use of land for short or long periods, these rights being paid for traditionally in kind (usually in pigs). However, it was never understood by the indigenous land-owners that they were permanently selling their land to European settlers or planters, and this was the root of the unrest and disturbances which characterised ni-Vanuatu-European relations right up until the time of independence in 1980. In fact, it was the permanent dispossession of a vast proportion of their land which led to the movement towards independence for Vanuatu in the 1960s and 70s (see below: Nagriamel, New Hebrides Cultural Association). In post-independence Vanuatu this key developmental issue was resolved by the reversion of all land to its customary owners at the time of independence in 1980 and the subsequent issuing of long- and short-term leases.

As British economic interests declined in Vanuatu at the end of the 1870s, French interest began to blossom. The French saw Vanuatu as a source of labour for the nickel mines in New Caledonia and for plantation development. In 1880 the French planter Ferdinand Chevillard established a plantation in Vila Bay, on Efate, known as Franceville. In 1882 he bought another property on Vanua Lava in the Banks Islands, which he had registered in Noumea. Within a short time French planters purchased some of the failed British plantations on north Efate and established themselves throughout the archipelago, especially on Epi, Malakula and Santo.

A leading figure in this systematic competition to supplant British interests was John Higginson, an English-born Anglophobic Irish entrepreneur, who took French citizenship and worked tirelessly for the French annexation of Vanuatu. In 1882 he founded the Compagnie Calédonienne des Nouvelles-Hébrides (CCNH) with the aim of bringing about French control in Vanuatu through the acquisition of land which would be granted to French settlers. In 1882 the CCNH purchased some 95,460 hectares of land on the islands of Epi, Malakula and Efate (8 percent of the total land area of Vanuatu), registered in New Caledonia. An Australian company, the South Sea Speculation Company, set up by the brother of Higginson's partner, John Morgan, in 1884, also bought huge tracts of land on Epi, Ambae, Pentecost, Ambrym, Malakula and Santo, registered their claims at the Western Pacific High Commission in Suva and then proceeded to sell them to Higginson.

In 1883 the Société Française de Colonisation was established in France and between 1885 and 1887 twenty-eight families were sent out to settle in Vanuatu, having been allotted land by the CCNH.
The Presbyterian Mission became concerned at the increasing economic importance of France, fearing ultimate French political control, and the Presbyterians of Victoria and New South Wales worked for the creation of an Australian company to compete with the CCNH. A group of wealthy businessmen contributed to the establishment of the Australasian New Hebrides Company (ANHC) in 1889. Among them were Burns and Philp, of Burns Philp & Co. to whom the New South Wales Government gave a subsidy of £1500 per annum for a monthly postal service to the New Hebrides. The Presbyterian Mission also contributed, enabling them to send a steamer throughout the group on a regular basis. This service gave a significant boost to British interests in Vanuatu and the ANHC built up a very successful business. With the blessing of the Presbyterian Church the ANHC began to purchase large tracts of land on Santo and Epi. Australian settlers were placed on south Santo by 1891, but the British policy on labour recruiting and land title registration posed grave problems for the planters, so great that the land reverted to the ANHC after an agreement to cancel the debts which they had incurred.

Despite the failures and difficulties endured by both French and British settlers, the numbers of Europeans in Vanuatu increased steadily, with 51 non-mission British settlers recorded in 1891 and over 70 French settlers. There was much violence between ni-Vanuatu and Europeans throughout Vanuatu, nearly always occasioned by land disputes. Indeed, in the 1880s the number of deaths moved the British and French Governments to institute a system of naval patrols in order to protect the lives and property of their citizens.

TOWARDS THE CONDOMINIUM

On 16 November 1887 a convention was entered into between Great Britain and France putting the archipelago under the guard of a Joint Naval Commission, charged with maintaining order and protecting the persons and the possessions of French and British subjects in the New Hebrides. This arrangement was of a purely provisional nature intended to put an end to disputes as to the exclusive ownership of the group by either power.

In fact, French and British rivalry in the Pacific had been a constant feature in the region almost since the beginning of European contact. What is more, their rivalry has always inseparably linked evangelisation and politics, the fruits of which are still being reaped even in present-day Vanuatu.

In Tahiti, members of the London Missionary Society, having first landed in 1797, were rewarded with the conversion of King Pomare II in 1815 and began to play an important part in local politics. In 1836 two French missionaries came to Tahiti to try to establish a foothold. The Tahitians, under the influence of the missionaries, drove them away, leading to exertion of French naval might and the declaration in 1842 of a French Protectorate, to the fury of the British missionaries. France and Britain came almost to the brink of war. The remainder of the story is of no consequence in this discussion.
What is of significance is that this Anglo-French scenario was repeated many times in the Pacific, and always with the same religio-political nexus. Before he left for Oceania in 1836 Bishop Pompallier, the French Marist founder of the Catholic mission in the Western Pacific (the eastern Pacific being the responsibility of the Picpus Fathers), was received in private audience by Louis-Philippe and received a letter to the Commander of the French Naval Forces based in Valparaiso to support the work of the French missionaries. When he reached New Zealand he was supported there by Admiral Lavaud, commander of the French naval base. It was his intention to use New Zealand and Tonga as his springboards into the Pacific territories of Wallis and Futuna, Samoa and Fiji. In Tonga, Pompallier and France were concerned to put a brake on Wesleyan expansion, which had begun there in 1826. In the eastern Pacific therefore there was rivalry between the missionaries of the LMS and the Picpus Fathers, while in the west the Wesleyans and the Marist Fathers were in competition.

In Vanuatu this rivalry translated into competition between the LMS missionaries who first evangelised the then New Hebrides from Samoa, and the French Marists. These developments were not unconnected with what had transpired since the missionaries first arrived in Oceania, since in spite of the setting up of a Joint Naval Commission in 1886 France hoped to gain exclusive control of the New Hebrides as a result of Anglo-German rivalry over Samoa and Tonga. The French figured (Ministre de la Marine 1896) that:

“Les Samoa seraient abandonnées prochainement par les Anglais au profit des Allemands, les Anglais se dédommageraient en occupant les Tonga et ce serait le moment de réclamer alors comme compensation la possession des Nouvelles-Hébrides”.

However, since there was no evidence that Britain was about to abandon its interests in the New Hebrides in exchange for French interests in Tonga, which were of a minor order, the French government made strenuous efforts to reinforce its presence in Tonga in the hope that it could apply pressure to Britain and eventually to negotiate a monopoly over the New Hebrides (Duriez-Toutain 1995).

While the British Government resisted calls for annexation of the New Hebrides and other Pacific territories, it adopted a position that no other power should have sovereignty over them either.

In 1886 the Governor of New Caledonia dispatched two French warships to Vanuatu following the murder of several settlers. French troops landed on Efate and Malakula and appeared reluctant to withdraw. There was considerable concern in Britain and in Australia over the incident. Presbyterian influence was so strong that the Colonial Government protested to the Colonial Office in London, which resulted in the signing of the convention in November 1887 setting up the Joint Naval Commission charged with maintaining order
and protecting the lives and property of British subjects and French citizens in the New Hebrides. The Presbyterians realised that if the French became sole owners of the archipelago, they would be expelled, just as the London Missionary Society was expelled from the Loyalty Islands in New Caledonia. Thus the constant tensions and recriminations between the two parties.

Even after the signing of the Convention, the major problems still concerned land. Higginson's company was on the verge of bankruptcy and in 1894 the French Government took over the company and renamed it the Société Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides (SFNH), and assumed a majority interest in it. Throughout the 1890s there was anarchy and lawlessness, nearly always occasioned by land disputes. The Joint Naval Commission did not provide the control hoped for and was not commissioned to intervene in such dispute resolution. A joint conference between Britain and France was held in 1905 at which Britain demanded a full-scale land enquiry. The outcome of the conference was the confirmation on 27 February 1906 of a Convention establishing the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides.

Under the Condominium the High Commissioners in Fiji and New Caledonia were responsible for the administration, acting through Resident Commissioners in Port Vila. Separate police forces in the New Hebrides were established under the control of each Resident Commissioner, and each government agreed to finance its own administration. Expenses of a joint nature would be paid for out of local taxes.

There were two National Courts, presided over by a British and a French judge, respectively, for the hearing of criminal cases involving French or British nationals. There was also set up a Joint Court, which had jurisdiction over all land and civil cases, and cases between Europeans and ni-Vanuatu. The first President of the Joint Court, nominated by the King of Spain, was Tomas Alonso y Zabala, Count de Buena Esperanza (1910-1913, 1914-1916, 1926-1932).

There was also an agreement that the validity of land deeds registered before 1 January 1896 could not be questioned. This meant that the 300,000 hectares of land which Higginson had bought from other Europeans between 1882 and 1887 could not be contested. In addition, the 400,000 hectares which he had bought from ni-Vanuatu and registered before that date were also unassailable.

The 1906 Convention was unsatisfactory in many respects, not the least of which was its inability to deal satisfactorily with land registration matters, especially registrations post-1906. This led Britain and France to sign what is known as the Protocol of 1914. It was this Protocol which carried the administration of the New Hebrides through to independence in 1980.
1914-1945: THE TWO WORLD WARS AND THE PERIOD BETWEEN

In 1914 there were some 300 British settlers and 700 French resident in Vanuatu. As discussed above, the two greatest forces on the British side were Burns Philp & Co, and the Presbyterian Church. The greatest number of British lived in Vila, mainly officials associated with the Residency. The remainder were settlers and missionaries, scattered fairly evenly throughout the archipelago.

The French population at that time included a number of libérés from New Caledonia, and a number of traders, together with a body of Catholic priests, who lacked the financial strength of the Presbyterians. The largest number were planters who had settled on land granted them by the French New Hebrides Company (SFNH). Nearly all were mortgaged to one of two French trading firms, CFNH (Comptoirs Français des Nouvelles-Hébrides) or de Bechade. The French New Hebrides Company claimed land to the extent of 780,800 hectares, but had no real plantations of its own. Jacomb (1914) estimated that in 1914 of the 3,500,000 acres in Vanuatu, the French Company owned 2,000,000 acres and British planters 400,000 acres, while 1,000,000 acres remained in ni-Vanuatu hands. In Vila most of the smaller trades were in the hands of the French. Most construction work was carried out by French contractors. There were, of course, a considerable number of French officials.

The 120 other nationalities not English or French included: 24 Germans, 26 Japanese, a few Spaniards, Dutchmen, Americans, Norwegians, Danes, Belgians and Swiss. 75 chose to be classed as British and 46 as French.

Because of the outbreak of the First World War, the 1914 Protocol between Britain and France was not ratified until 1922, and the Joint Court did not begin dealing with land claims until 1927. Applications for land registration were very cumbersome and when the President of the Joint Court went on leave in 1932 it had taken him four years to deal with 200 applications on Efate. He estimated that it would take fifty years to register all lands claimed! By the time the Court ceased work in 1941 following the outbreak of the Second World War claims had been dealt with on Efate, Epi and the southern islands of Erromango, Tanna and Aneityum. During all of this period the interests of ni-Vanuatu landholders, nominally protected by the Native Advocate, were most inadequately served.

In the period between the First and Second World Wars, there was significant development on the plantation scene. In terms of labour, it was then and still is the practice that plantation labourers usually came from another island or at least from some distant point on the same island within the larger islands. During the period just over half of all labourers went to work on plantations on Efate. The major sources of this labour were Pentecost, Ambae and Maewo (35 percent), although there were large numbers from Malakula (16 percent), Ambrym and Paama (17 percent) and the Banks Islands (15 percent) (Bedford
and Schlomowitz 1987). During the 1930s there was a major shift in recruiting patterns as more than two-thirds of all labour recruits went to work on plantations on Santo, Aore and Malo.

In 1922, Bonnemaison (1986) estimates that Vanuatu had a population of some 57,800 inhabitants of whom 710 were French and 200 British (excluding missionaries and administrators). Between 1900 and 1922 the number of colonial plantations/agricultural properties had increased from 40 to 80. While in 1909 there were 6,547 hectares under cultivation, in 1920 this figure had increased to over 8,000. This expansion had taken place largely outside Efate, on Malakula, Epi and Santo. It is estimated that the labour force working the 8,000 hectares of plantations was between 3,500 and 4,000. But Melanesian labour became more and more difficult to engage and less than 10 percent of alienated land was under cultivation.

In 1919 the French Governor of the Pacific, Guyon, obtained the agreement of the Government of Indochina to recruit Vietnamese labour for work on French plantations in Vanuatu and New Caledonia. (British planters were excluded from this scheme by their own government). The first group of 145 Vietnamese labourers arrived in Vila in 1921, provoking dock strikes in Australian ports as the Australians and British believed that the recruiting of Vietnamese labour would allow the French to develop all of their land, instead of just 10 percent, and that France would dominate the country. All in all, 21,915 Indochinese labourers entered Vanuatu between 1921 and 1940.

Between 1920 and 1930 land under cultivation increased from 8,000 to 16,000 hectares, and copra production quadrupled, going from 3,000 to 14,000 tonnes. (In 1952 land under cultivation reached 23,000 hectares, and by 1980 it had fallen to 22,000.) During these years the major produce apart from copra was coffee and cocoa.

However, by the end of the 1920s the ‘good life’ was coming to an end. First the Vietnamese organised themselves into trade unions. There were complaints, then riots, about their treatment at the hands of the French planters. In 1928 there was a major fire which destroyed Ballande & Co, with 16 dead and 20 seriously injured, imputed to the dissatisfied Vietnamese. Added to this was the Great Depression, which saw the price of copra fall from 2,250 francs per tonne in 1928 to 675 in 1932; cocoa and cotton prices fell proportionately.

The situation continued to deteriorate. In 1929, there were 797 French and 205 British in Vanuatu, with 69 French properties and 16 British, many of which were managed by Burns Philp. By 1934 many of the properties were for sale, but buyers were few. As the Second World War approached the picture in Vanuatu was one of deep gloom, from which the plantations never really recovered.
World War Two transformed life in Vanuatu, for between May 1942, when the American fleet arrived in Mele Bay on Efate, and 1945 it is reckoned that some 500,000 troops were quartered in or passed through Vanuatu. The Americans quickly built a bomber airstrip, Bauer Field, in Vila as well as two fighter strips in north Efate. A large military hospital was built at Bellevue on Efate, and roads built from Vila to Havannah Harbour via Klehm’s Hill, to Teouma and Devil’s Point.

In Santo the Americans built the equivalent of a small city, with five airfields, six wharves, a patrol torpedo boat base, a huge dry dock, fifty kilometres of roads, and an immense base which housed a large telephone system and fifty-three cinemas. In the Segond Channel, protected by the islands of Tutuba and Aore, as many as 150 ships were anchored, for Santo was the forward base for the war in the Solomons.

During the war, some 10,000 ni-Vanuatu were conscripted on three-month contracts to assist the American troops, who were supported also by Australian and New Zealand armed forces. The impact on the ni-Vanuatu population was naturally dramatic. Never had they seen such wealth, equipment and sheer numbers of people. The ni-Vanuatu were amazed to see black Americans working alongside their white brothers in arms.

In terms of the Condominium administration, World War Two had the effect that staff was reduced to a point where many Condominium services closed down altogether. The Joint Court had no President between 1939 and 1953. There was no British District Agent for Central District No. 2 (Malakula, Ambrym, Pentecost), for example, between 1948 and 1962.

On the credit side, the wealth which poured into Vanuatu with the presence of the American troops between 1942 and 1945 was matched for the planters by a very sharp rise in copra prices during the Korean War (1950-1953).

At the end of 1946, the Vietnamese plantation workers were given residential status and worked with planters for a percentage of the copra produced, plus their keep. In 1953 they were granted the right to repatriation; 1,547 left Vanuatu permanently, while the remainder left in 1963. Only 411 elected to remain in Vanuatu, mainly Catholics opposed to the Vietminh. They were later granted French citizenship.

In the 1950s there was still insufficient Melanesian labour for the plantations, to the point that labour had to be imported. The French planters recruited Wallisian and Tahitian labour, while the British imported plantation labour from the Gilbert Islands (today Kiribati). However, by the early 1960s the winds of change were already blowing and the European planters began to run down their plantations, extracting the maximum tonnage for the smallest outlay.
fact, although the total tonnage of copra continued to increase through the war years and into the 1950s, as early as 1939 one third of Vanuatu copra production was produced on ni-Vanuatu plantations. In 1952, when 27,000 tonnes were produced, more than half was produced on ni-Vanuatu estates.

In 1960 there were 90 French properties as opposed to 10 British. Only one plantation, PRNH at Norsup on Malakula, employed over one hundred workers. By the end of the 1960s copra plantations were in decline. The French no longer encouraged immigration to Vanuatu. The only new development was in the direction of cattle production. This required the clearing of much previously uncleared bush, especially on Santo, which operation met with considerable resistance and protest from the ni-Vanuatu, already incensed by the vast tracts of land under European control, giving rise to the formation of the Nagriamel movement (see below), the first element in what was to become the political life of Vanuatu, culminating in independence in 1980. The national cattle herd rose from an estimated 45,000 head in 1960 to more than 100,000 in the 1970s, of which more than half on the island of Santo.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH

From the time that the missionaries first arrived in the nineteenth century until the 1950s and 60s they alone provided for the educational and health needs of the population of Vanuatu. The Presbyterian Church provided the bulk of medical services, with the Paton Memorial Hospital on Iririki Island in Vila Harbour (1907-1974), and with other hospitals on Tanna and Ambrym and clinics on a number of other islands. It was the practice of the Presbyterian Church to send medical missionaries where possible, a policy followed by other churches, notably the Melanesian Mission (Anglican), with a hospital at mission headquarters, Lolowai on Ambae, and the Seventh Day Adventist Mission, with its hospital on Aore, south Santo. The French administration ran its own hospitals, usually with military surgeons, in Vila, Norsup (Malakula) and Santo. In 1974 the British administration opened the Vila Base Hospital, replacing the old Paton Memorial Hospital on Iririki. In the 1960s both national administrations built new medical facilities, increased the number of medical staff, and set up touring teams which visited most of the islands on immunisation campaigns. While there was still the lack of coordination which marked most Condominium endeavours, the occurrence of endemic diseases such as tuberculosis, yaws and malaria were significantly reduced. In 1983 all medical facilities were unified in a single Department of Health. Since independence there has been an emphasis on primary health care throughout the country, with the assistance of overseas bodies such as the World Health Organisation and Save The Children Fund Australia.

Education in Vanuatu followed very much the same course as the provision of medical services. Until the 1960s all education was provided by the church missions, with very obvious consequences for the political life of Vanuatu as it emerged during the 1970s. The Roman Catholic mission, conducted by French religious, used French as the medium of instruction, and indeed still does,
while the Presbyterian, Anglican, Seventh Day Adventists and all the other anglophone missions used and use English as the medium of instruction. (Since the English-educated Protestants represent some two-thirds of the population, when political parties were first formed in line with the two Condominium powers, France and England, they naturally had a substantial majority in the first parliament in 1980). The level of education in some of the mission schools was not very high, although there were notable exceptions, especially among the Anglicans. The best secondary schools in the country, Vureas and Torgil on Ambae (Anglican) and Onesua on Efate (Presbyterian) produced the anglophone leaders of independent Vanuatu, while the leading francophone ni-Vanuatu were products of the Catholic system, either from Montmartre on Efate, or from New Caledonia.

In the 1960s the French administration embarked upon a major school building program, with new boarding schools constructed in the Banks Islands, Santo, Malakula, Epi, Efate and Tanna. On the British side there was already a fairly comprehensive mission school system in place, eliminating the need for any similar program on their part.

The education system was of course dual, with different curricula in the French- and English-language schools, producing end product students competent in either English or French, but very rarely both. Thus the important role of the English-based pidgin language, Bislama, in both pre- and post-independence Vanuatu, even though this language is purely a lingua franca not used as a medium of instruction. The dual education system continued, Condominium style, until the establishment of a unified Department of Education in 1985. Education has continued to be a major problem in independent Vanuatu, with only 75 percent of children completing primary school and 15-20 percent achieving secondary schooling (Cole 1996).
POWER STRUCTURES IN VANUATU SOCIETY

The Republic of Vanuatu consists of a complex traditional society characterised by small social units, whose leadership is not usually based on hereditary chieftainship. There are 113 extant distinct indigenous languages spoken over small areas. These correspond to recognised groups within which there may be one or more leaders, leadership being based on different principles in different areas.

There are, broadly speaking, three major traditional power systems which operate in Vanuatu (see Map 3). These are as follows:

1. A grade-taking system, involving the passing of a series of economic tests, based on the sacrifice of tusker pigs and prestations of yams and taro, characterises all of northern Vanuatu from the Banks and Torres Islands as far south as Epi. The higher the rank achieved, the greater the gift-giving. In these graded societies the man having achieved the highest rank within a community (which may be anything from one to twenty villages) is known as the 'bigman' or, in colonial administrative terms, the 'chief'. The 'bigman' holds power over a small number of people, usually no more than a few hundred. Lower-ranked men owe him allegiance, and he in turn must provide patronage. Any man can be a candidate for the highest grades, but must climb the rungs of the hierarchical ladder one by one.

Upon the death of the 'bigman', the next-highest ranked man becomes the community leader or 'bigman'. With only one or two exceptions, leadership is not hereditary in the graded society system, although the offspring of a 'bigman' have a better than even chance of becoming 'bigmen' eventually, although there is in place a system of checks and balances which prevent this from happening too rapidly.

2. In central Vanuatu, including south-east Epi, the Shepherd Islands and Efate, there is another traditional power system in operation. Here there is a system of titles, reminiscent of the Polynesian system. Power is no longer won through a system of competitive grade-taking.
Power is won in central Vanuatu through the bestowal of a custom name, which is a title forming part of a hierarchy of titles. While the power structure in the northern parts of Vanuatu is linear, here it is pyramidal. The highest title of 'chief' crowns an ordered set of lower titles all owing allegiance to the chief. The same set of personal titles are handed down from generation to generation. Most titles are handed down from father to son, usually the oldest son.

In terms of social organisation, then, there are three 'classes' in this society: a chief, a kind of court grouped around him and related to him by ties of personal allegiance, and a broader category of commoners. Such a system has obvious parallels with the Polynesian systems in Tonga and Samoa. There are a number of chiefs on the larger islands, and a system of criss-crossing allegiances and trans-territorial relations which makes for a complex web of relationships. Often the social position of a man will vary according to the direction in which he turns. He will make a gift to the east, but receive one from the west; in this way he may be subject and chief in turn. The higher the title the further the geographical relationships extend. The interplay between power and obligation in central Vanuatu is extraordinarily complex.

3. The five southern islands, Erromango, Tanna, Aneityum, Futuna and Aniwa also form a distinct cultural world, although it is structurally similar to the title system described for central Vanuatu. In the south, titles are distributed in space, each one referring to a cluster of place names, to land-holdings and to social status. In this area a man without a title is a man without traditional power.

Tanna society, and the societies of southern Vanuatu, are summed up in a metaphor in which men are represented as trees and their local social groups as canoes. A man’s identity is given by his place, but his canoe draws him along the roads. Each local group is categorised as part of a canoe, which in turn refers to a territory and a stock of titles. Bonnemaison describes the power structure well when he says (1996:215):

"At the prow of the canoe is its emblem, or yremera, the man who, in rituals, has the privilege of wearing the headdress of sparrowhawk feathers. In his person he sums up the group’s honour, but his power is founded more on prestige and display than on political authority properly so-called. In the stern of the canoe sits the helmsman, who sets and holds the course. He is the yani niko, or ‘voice of the canoe’, who commands in the name of the ‘lord’ sitting in the bow. His hidden power is often the stronger. Last, in the middle of the canoe, is the agrarian magician, or naotupunus, who, through his work in the gardens and his magical filiation with the Polynesian god of food, Mwatiktiki, feeds the other two”.

All titles on Tanna refer back to one of the three symbolic functions in Tannese society, which situates them in a hierarchical relationship vis-a-vis traditional
social organisation. Of the three functions, that of the 'voice of the canoe' is
the most essential politically, since he assumes traditional control of land
tenure and guardianship of the territory.

Vanuatu is still one of the most traditionally-oriented countries of the Pacific.
Traditional power structures are still extremely important in daily life, and
remain important in their interaction with the modern parliamentary democracy
which governs the country today.

**MALVATUMAURI - THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHIEFS**

The National Council of Chiefs was established pre-independence in 1977 and
was formally involved in the consultative processes for drafting the
independence Constitution which accords it a constitutional place in chapter
5. It provides an institutional umbrella under which to organize the custom
chiefs of the country and recognizes the important role and authority of chiefs
in traditional village life. The competence of the Malvatumauri under the
Constitution resides in an advisory responsibility on “all matters relating to
custom and tradition”; it “may make recommendations for the preservation and
promotion of ni-Vanuatu culture and languages” and “may be consulted on any
question, particularly any question relating to tradition and custom, in connection
with any bill before Parliament”. Although the Constitution limits their power
to the above advisory and consultative functions, given the importance of land
to custom and traditional values and the central place of land in the ideology
of the independence struggle and its constitutional reversion to custom-
ownership on independence, there is considerable scope for chiefs to exert
influence on issues of public policy.

Custom is so central to the life of the independent state of Vanuatu that it is
enshrined in the Constitution in a number of places: in the Preamble, the
fundamental validity of customary values is proclaimed in “the establishment
of the united and free Republic of Vanuatu founded on traditional Melanesian
values, faith in God and Christian principles”; in the establishment of the
National Council of Chiefs itself, and in chapter 12, where the Constitution
deals with the foundation of the national estate in the following Articles:

73. All land ... belongs to the indigenous custom owners ...

74. The values of custom shall form the basis of ownership and land use ...

76. Parliament, after consultation with the National Council of Chiefs, shall
provide for the implementation of Articles 73, 74 and 75 in a national land
law ...

78(2) The Government shall arrange for the appropriate customary institutions
or procedures to resolve disputes ...

The framers of the Constitution thus set out an institutional relationship
between on the one hand national sovereignty, nation and national estate and on the other, land, tradition and custom. *Kastom* is the living tissue covering those legal bones and Chiefs are the guardians of the lore.

Tensions between the operation of post-colonial structures of power and the maintenance of traditional *kastom* in the life of the country as a whole have given rise to a more conscious re-evaluation and debate about the appropriateness of foreign models of political organization and governance to the evolving state. It has become *de rigueur* for politicians of all stripes to evoke *kastom* in their appeals to electors or in the espousal of policies, as shorthand for in the national interest and warranty for their personal integrity as *'man ples'*. Most chiefs are cynical about the real value of such political affirmations apart from their rhetorical persuasiveness among unsophisticated rural villagers. The more astute see opportunities for trade in bloc votes in return for material benefits to their villages and themselves, and thereby contribute to the ambivalence felt by others, especially among the better-educated younger generation, about the continued relevance of chiefs and chiefly authority. Ironically, land, which every ni-Vanuatu prizes as essential to identity and belonging, has been a vehicle for undermining the traditional system because land disputes are appellable outside the customary jurisdiction of the Chiefs to the imported machinery of the state legal system.

**LAND TENURE**

The Constitution is central to the legal position on land; it returned all land to the traditional custom owners and separately provided for land leases both by citizens and foreigners, and gave the government power to acquire land for public purposes.

In chapter 12 the Constitution deals with the foundation of the national estate in the following Articles:

**73.** All land ... belongs to the indigenous custom owners ...

**74.** The values of custom shall form the basis of ownership and land use ...

**76.** Parliament, after consultation with the National Council of Chiefs, shall provide for the implementation of Articles 73, 74 and 75 in a national land law ...

**78(2)** The Government shall arrange for the appropriate customary institutions or procedures to resolve disputes ...

The Constitution further made explicit, cap.12 Article 74, that "the rules of custom shall form the basis of ownership and use of land in the Republic of Vanuatu." What, however, constitute "the rules of custom" is left undefined and has bedevilled the rights to and use of land both before and after independence. It was something that was not understood by European settlers.
who wished to acquire valid titles to their land-holdings and, indeed, purported to have done so under colonial land registrations; nor has it made the settlement of land disputes among and between indigenous claimants any easier since independence. As Joel Bonnemaison remarked in 1980 “Custom is not a legal system set once and for all, but a spirit and a system of values which are differently expressed in different islands at different times.”

Urban Land

Since independence, and as required by the Constitution itself, a number of acts of Parliament have been passed to regulate transactions in land which, in addition to its cultural significance for individual identity and for subsistence living, represents the most widely distributed economic asset of the ordinary people, albeit one whose economic utilization is constrained by uncertainties of secure title under custom and landowner unwillingness to surrender control to outsiders. Early legislation dealt with the urgent need to define the method for returning land to the traditional owners, for compensating previous non-indigenous title-holders for improvements and to establish a regime for leases both in the urban and rural areas.

Urban areas are for all practical purposes limited to the capital Port Vila and Luganville on the northern island of Santo. At independence, when land reverted to custom ownership, there was an urgent need to clarify its application to the extensive residential and commercial developments in the two towns. A number of Land Orders first declared most of the land in question public land and established two Urban Lands Councils to manage the lands on behalf of the government. The traditional owners were entitled to a percentage of the rents received but as they could not agree on appropriate shares among their rival claims, the rents were never distributed and the government decided to close them both in 1988.

The change of government in 1991 and the accession to power of the francophone UMP led to significant efforts to relax some of the perceived rigidities in the prevailing land law system which in the view of the “liberal” philosophy of the UMP, locked land away from productive economic use. In 1993, it passed an Urban Lands Act which sought to create urban zones in both Tanna and Malekula and to allow other such declarations elsewhere later. More radical still was its intention to free up urban land by allowing indigenous citizens to acquire freehold title under the Freehold Title Act 1994. The title acquired under the Act is however restricted in that it cannot be sold or willed to non-indigenous citizens or foreigners. It marked a significant departure from the previous practice of using custom as the only basis on which to determine ownership and, in effect, abolished the notional residuary rights of custom owners to land over which they retained no use rights.
Rural Land

Immediately after independence, the new government passed the Land Reform Act 1980 to give effect to the provisions of the Constitution returning all land to the traditional custom owners. The Act entitled alienators of custom land to continued occupation of their plantations until conclusion of a lease agreement with the new owners or until they had received compensation for any improvements. A serious difficulty existed in relation to the transfer of ownership in that it was often not possible to identify the rightful custom owner(s) after the lapse in some cases close of to a century of alienation. This problem was compounded by disputes among claimants themselves, although the Act empowered the Minister to negotiate lease agreements where disputes among the custom owners could not be resolved. Further legislation was needed to refine and improve the transfer of ownership, negotiation of leases, valuation of improvements and registration of titles, all of which were addressed in the Alienated Lands Act 1982, the Lands Referee Act and the Land Leases Act 1983.
INDEPENDENT VANUATU

THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of Vanuatu entered into force with the country’s independence, on 30 July 1980. As a document, it is divided into 15 Chapters and two Schedules. It enacts a parliamentary system of government and enshrines the principles of the Westminster-model and the separation of powers between an elected Legislature, an Executive responsible to Parliament and an independent Judiciary. Its provisions reflect the comprises necessary to satisfy the competing interests of the indigenous people and the two condominium powers, especially, for example, in the constitutional recognition of both English and French as official languages in addition to Bislama, the national language. English and French are recognized as the principal languages of education and Articles 5. (2) (c) and (d) and 64. (1) give legal rights to individual citizens to the service of public processes in an official language of choice and avenues for complaint and remedy for failure of those rights.

THE PARLIAMENT

The Parliament consists of a single Chamber of 50 members, elected by secret ballot under a universal franchise, wherein all citizens of 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Citizens who have attained the age of 25 years are eligible to stand for election. Elections are held under an electoral system which contains an element of proportional representation “to ensure fair representation of different political groups and opinions.” Parliament is elected for a four year term though Parliament may be dissolved by the President, on advice from the Prime Minister, and new elections called, but not within a minimum of twelve months after a general election.

Parliament has power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Vanuatu and shall sit in ordinary session twice a year. Parliament may sit in extraordinary session at the request of a majority of members, the Speaker or the Prime Minister. The annual appropriations bill (the Budget) is normally presented at the second ordinary session in November/ December each year.

Quorum for the opening sitting of Parliament is two thirds of the Members and if it fails of one, quorum shall consist of a simple majority after the lapse of three days. This provision has been regularly used by Opposition parties to deny governments quorum at the commencement of a parliamentary session, especially over recent years when the brokering of coalition arrangements has often turned upon the shifting support of venal individual members.
THE JUDICIARY

Chapter 8 of the Constitution vests the administration of justice in the judiciary which is carefully hedged about with constitutional protections from arbitrary external interference - a protection which over recent years has been crucial to preserving the integrity of the political institutions of the state.

Supreme Court - the Constitution creates a Supreme Court with unlimited jurisdiction to hear any civil or criminal proceedings and consists of a Chief Justice and three other Judges. For the first time since independence, the Supreme Court has three ni-Vanuatu Justices on the Bench, one of whom is at the same time acting Chief Justice.

Judges are appointed by the President, on the advice of the Judicial Services Commission, and hold office until reaching retirement age. They may be removed but only in precisely defined circumstances and only by the President acting in accordance with constitutionally prescribed procedures.

The Chief Justice is appointed by the President after consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

Until very recently, the position of the Chief Justice had been occupied by an expatriate British judge and paid for by the British government under its official aid program. The British government, however, in 1995 declined to support a renewal of the contract of Mr Justice d'Imecourt as Chief Justice, who had become very controversial and was locally alleged to be partial towards one of the protagonists in an intensifying struggle for political power. The Vanuatu government of the day re-appointed him and became responsible for the payment of salary and allowances in a package making it reportedly the second most highly remunerated judicial post in the world, after the Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court. In 1996, the Vanuatu government, having changed several times in the interval, purported to dismiss him for gross incompetence, an action Mr d'Imecourt has contested for wrongful dismissal. The matter remains before the court and, pending its resolution, the court has ordered the Vanuatu government to continue to meet the salary and other costs of the Judge.

Although the Vanuatu government has informally approached a number of governments to canvass their willingness to provide and fund a new Chief Justice, there is little willingness to do so until the outstanding litigation is determined.

Magistrates' Courts were established in 1980 and Island Courts, with jurisdiction over customary matters in the villages, in 1983.

A Court of Appeal to hear appeals from the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court is constituted by two or more judges of the Supreme Court sitting
together. In practice, a panel of Court of Appeal judges is maintained by the
Supreme Court and comprises a number of regional justices from Australia,
New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and elsewhere with a common law tradition.
The French government recently declined to become involved in what has
become a politically sensitive issue because the tradition had been so
continuously within the English common law.

Provision is made in the Constitution for advice of the relevant customary
practices to be available to the Court and for decisions to be made in conformity
with tradition where no explicit law applies.

In recent years, the role of the Courts has been more and more important as
the political process has become more and more litigious. As tenure in office
by coalition governments has become increasingly uncertain and unstable, it
has become normal to resist parliamentary challenges by resort to the Supreme
Court for final adjudication. Despite attempts to interfere with the independence
of the Judiciary for political reasons, most flagrantly in February 1996, all
political leaders have continued to see due legal process as the ultimate arbiter
of contested power and have regarded the Court’s judgement as confirming
political legitimacy. While this respect for the role and authority of the Law
and the Court is essential to the preservation of the democratic integrity of
state institutions, the burdens they have been placed under, both by volume
of work and the gravity of some causes of action brought before them, have
severely strained the system’s ability to cope adequately. Strengthening the
capacity of the state legal apparatus has become an important priority for
some donor governments and for the Vanuatu government itself.

OMBUDSMAN

Although the Constitution provides in Chapter 9 Part II for the appointment
of an Ombudsman, it was not until 1994 that the government finally got around
to doing so. It has regretted it ever since. Article 62. (1) (c) which empowers
the Ombudsman to initiate enquiries “ of his (sic) own initiative” and Article
65. which enjoins that the Ombudsman “shall not be subject to the direction
or control of any other person or body in the exercise of his functions”, have
been actively invoked by Vanuatu’s first Ombudsman, Mrs Marie-Noelle
Ferrieux-Patterson, in fearless pursuit and exposure of abuse and malpractice
in public office. Her findings in at least two reports, in 1995 and again last
year, recommended that the Prime Minister dismiss a Minister and that the
Prime Minister himself should be reprimanded by the President! In perhaps
the most unforgettable quote of the year, the then deputy Prime Minister,
Barak Sope, inveighed against her that “ the fact that the Ombudsman can
investigate a Minister is detrimental to the operation of a democracy”.

PACIFIC ISLANDS DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES

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FOREIGN POLICY

Vanuatu's struggle for independence during the 1970s predetermined the directions of its post-independence foreign policy. As a small underdeveloped island country, Vanuatu (the New Hebrides) fought its battles in international fora and resorted to the UN Decolonization Committee as early as 1971 to internationalize its strength. The fact that the struggle was against French resistance extended its antipathy to French policies in the Pacific more generally, and Vanuatu became an advocate of early decolonization in New Caledonia, a cause it continued to support at the UN, in the Melanesian Spearhead Group (PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the independentist FLNKS from New Caledonia and Fiji) and since 1990, in the margins of the South Pacific Forum Heads of Government annual meeting.

Post-independence, Vanuatu under the VP adhered to its “independent” orientation in foreign affairs to resist neo-colonial conscription into the sphere of influence and control of either side in the bloc politics of the cold war. It chose non-alignment and became a formal member of the Non-Aligned Movement which at the time tended to be seen by western powers as left-leaning and heavily influenced by the communist eastern Bloc. Vanuatu’s early establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba, in appreciation of Cuba’s support in the Committee of Twenty-four, added to the view of Vanuatu as something of a renegade from the western camp, despite its membership of the British Commonwealth. A fisheries agreement with the Soviet Union and the establishment of a “People’s Bureau” by Libya (although promptly closed) in the mid-eighties caused serious indigestion in Australia and the western alliance.

Since 1991 and the accession of a francophone coalition government to office, there has been a significant and deliberate policy of improving relations with France and with New Caledonia, and both have responded generously to the overtures Carlot-Korman championed the use of the French language for official use in the anglophone-dominated South Pacific Forum to the annoyance of his fellow heads of governments. He has also been a moderating influence for hostility towards France, even including when France resumed its nuclear test program under President Chirac.

Like other areas of government under coalition rule since 1991, consistent policy direction in foreign relations has been difficult to discern. Vohor and Carlot-Korman have been inveterate travellers, and the latter highly astute in soliciting from Australia and France matching support for his “pet” development schemes. Neither, however, was able to articulate a coherent policy framework for the conduct of Vanuatu’s international activities.

The Security Forces

As a legacy of its condominium past, Vanuatu inherited two very different traditions for the structure and functions of the security services, which
displayed features of the British Constabulary and the French Gendarmerie and garde mobile. Following the secessionist rebellion on Santo and the reluctance of the two metropolitan administering powers to intervene to suppress it, the Lini government felt that it needed an enhanced quasi-military capability to deal with the possibility of future internal insurrections which could threaten the integrity of the newly independent state. It therefore quickly established a para-military wing, the Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF) in support of the general duties police. The two forces were combined under the single command of the Commissioner of Police, though the VMF have a separate HQ, Commanding Officer and Barracks. Recruitment into both forces is conducted under the Police Act.

**VPF**

The general duties police number about 300 and are organized into a number of sections - Criminal Investigation Branch, Special Branch, Traffic, Training, Forensic etc. There is no police presence in most of the islands, with small outstations only on Santo, Malekula, Tanna and Ambae in addition to the main concentration and HQ in the capital Port Vila on Efate. The capabilities of the police in all but the most basic areas of their work are very limited as a consequence of the low educational level of recruits, limited resources for anything more than basic training, low morale, and poor self-esteem as a force compared to their counterparts in the VMF and the Maritime Surveillance Unit. The police also suffer from poor logistic support and poor communications through the island chain. Unlike the para-military VMF, the Police are starved of opportunities for overseas training, except at senior ranks which have been politicized over recent years and are often therefore not professionally well placed to benefit most from such opportunities as are available.

**VMF**

The Vanuatu Mobile Force, although recruited under the Police Act and subject to the same legal restraints in the exercise of its functions, sees itself as a military force superior to the flat-foots plodding the beat, has developed a strong *esprit de corps* and openly agitates to be separated as a force from the police. Politicians, beginning with Fr Lini and most recently Vohor, have entertained the idea and have on occasion given qualified commitment to its realization.

The VMF has a current complement of 350, organized in several companies and platoons under the overall command of a lieutenant colonel, who is himself answerable to the Commissioner of Police: HQ Staff 10, Rifle Company 125, Logistics 65, Engineering Platoon 30, the Band 30, an Armoury and Q Store at Cook Barracks, the Fire Brigade; a platoon stationed on Santo of about 30, drawn from the Rifle Company and supported by logistics personnel and special services, and small detachments of 10 on Tanna and Malekula.

The VMF benefit from formal bilateral defence cooperation programs with
Australia and New Zealand, under which both countries provide specialist training advisers, equipment, capital works, field operations training, and overseas training opportunities. France, the US and Britain also provide support with specialist training (and the overseas travel opportunities that go with it).

The responsibilities of the VMF are simple and plainly stated and reflect the situation that gave rise to its formation: first to support the police in the restoration and maintenance of law and order; and second, to act as a first line of national defence in the face of threats to the country's sovereignty or territorial integrity. As foreseen at the time of the Santo rebellion, the threats most likely to arise were internal challenges, not external aggression, against which unlikely contingency the VMF could offer only a thin first line of resistance.

Today, the greatest threats are likely to come from illegal fishing within territorial waters, transit drug trafficking, and the possibility of international money-laundering, threats to combat which Vanuatu requires international police cooperation and levels of sophisticated knowledge and skills not found in its ranks.

**POLITICAL PARTIES**

The two condominium governments had very different attitudes towards colonization of the New Hebrides - the British were more concerned to protect the indigenous population than with securing the interests of the European settlers in land, but the French, who favoured permanent settlement by their citizens, wished to validate the extensive land claims of their nationals. These differences of basic philosophy were to persist down to the time of independence and contributed to the political divide that began to emerge between ni-Vanuatu who, as accidents of history rather than by conscious affiliation, fell under the influence of the British or the French condominium administration.

The first participation of ni-Vanuatu in the administration of the country came with the establishment in 1957 of the New Hebrides Advisory Council, ADCO. This council consisted of the British and French Resident Commissioners, as co-chairmen, the Director of Public Works and the Condominium Treasurer, as ex officio members, and twelve nominated members, four ni-Vanuatu, four French and four British. The composition of the council was modified progressively, although there was no ni-Vanuatu majority until the last two meetings in December 1974 and April 1975, leading to the establishment of the first New Hebrides Representative Assembly later in 1975 (see below).

The first organized opposition to European exploitation of alienated land arose on the island of Espiritu Santo in the 1960s as planters began to move away from their coastal plantations and open up large tracts of interior "dark bush" for cattle grazing. Custom owners of the land denied that any title could have been acquired by planters as it was inconceivable to them that permanent alienation could ever have been agreed to. Their objections gave rise to the
rural-based custom movement **Nagriamel**, led by the colourful Jimmy Steven, which initiated the first tentative moves internationally in the direction of independence for the New Hebrides, more to achieve local goals than from any sense of a national cause. Similar problems and frustrations elsewhere, especially on Malekula and Efate, served to raise ni-Vanuatu awareness of their own powerlessness to influence decisions over their most basic inheritance 'land'. Political power, it was soon realized, was the essential prerequisite to being able even to participate in determining the future for themselves.

The one, perhaps the only, unmixed blessing to come out of the contested decade of "decolonization" in the New Hebrides was the gradual emergence during the 1970s of a new political culture firmly rooted in mass organization and the populist cause of national independence.

A chronology of the period is a record of the growth of political parties whose platforms were to greater or lesser degrees either for retention of the status quo or in favour of independence - though the concerted demand for independence grew incrementally out of initial lesser demands for a voice in the decision-making processes of the Condominium government and an impatience with the denial of what was felt to be adequate consultation on issues affecting indigenous people.

The first and most important event was the formation in June 1971 of the New Hebrides Cultural Association by Donald Kalpokas, Fr Walter Lini and Fr John Bani which soon after transformed itself into the **New Hebrides National Party (NHNP)**. The Association commenced publication of a newspaper New Hebrides Viewpoints "to raise awareness among the Melanesian population of issues affecting the development of their country, in particular the large-scale alienation of land and the present government set-up which provides little hope of getting things done in the interests of the New Hebrideans".

At the end of the same year and in reaction to the activities of the NHNP, a new largely francophone party, the **Union de la Population des Nouvelles Hebrides (UPNH)**, was formed with support principally drawn from established European plantation owners and commercial interests. It failed to attract and retain much support among Melanesians because its lack of genuine concern for ni-Vanuatu interests was quickly apparent.

If the return to the New Hebrides in 1970/71 from overseas studies by Lini, Bani and Kalpokas was crucial to the founding of the NHNP, the return in 1973/74 of Barak Sope and Kalkot Matas Kelekele was critical to the party's transformation into an effective national organization with a defined political agenda. Sope saw that land was a unifying issue which could assist in mobilizing popular support: "For the New Hebrides land is a tool that can help to bridge the educated-uneducated and the urban-rural gaps". Accordingly, the Party decided in January 1974 to centralize its operations in Pt Vila, elected Fr Lini as a full-time President (on leave from the Anglican Church), Barak Sope as Secretary.
and Kalkot as full-time information officer and publicist. Within a few months, Fr Lini petitioned the UN Committee of 24 calling for independence by 1977.

The churches too had begun to intervene politically and the Presbyterian Assembly in 1973 passed a resolution endorsing progress towards independence.

As a party the UPNH was effectively supplanted in 1974 by the Union des Communautes des Nouvelles Hebrides (UCNH) along the great linguistic divide between the French and English speakers. Although several prominent ni-Vanuatu francophones had been invited to attend the NPNH Congress two weeks earlier, two of them were elected Vice-President and Secretary of the new UCNH. A third, Vincent Boulekone, explicitly attributed his preference for UCNH to the language divide:

"The National Party was born on the English side and it therefore influenced the Anglophones. The Francophone Melanesians were not interested in this, and didn't understand too well why (it) had been born".

A second francophone party emerged in Jan 1974 the Mouvement Autonomiste des Nouvelles Hebrides (MANH) which while it also represented francophone colony interests felt itself remote from the dominance of Pt Vila and nursed the germs of a separatist sentiment, already inchoate in the thinking of the Nagriamel movement, into political consciousness by espousal of a move towards "autonomous status" for different regional units of the country. On Santo, it quickly allied itself with Nagriamel which gave it grass-root Melanesian support, in an alliance which may be seen to have buttressed those secessionist inclinations which erupted in violence on the eve of Vanuatu's independence in 1980.

Although the francophone parties tended to coalesce around francophonie and preservation of the political status quo, there were a number of educated and influential French-speaking Melanesians (among them Boulekone, Carlot and Fr Leymang) who accepted that independence was both desirable and inevitable but differed with the VP over the timetable for its achievement. They believed that a managed transition was required during which to cultivate a cadre of trained Melanesians capable of assuming responsibility for the running of the country after independence. Their support for a staged independence brought them into conflict with some sections of both the commercial and politically active expatriate French elite, especially those in MANH on Santo who were hoping to follow the example of Mayotte at independence and retain for Santo a separate territorial relationship with France.

Accordingly in 1977, those francophone Melanesians who were outside the NHNP, concerned by the policies of the MANH/Nagriamel alliance and in favour of independence united to form the Tan Union which brought together the UCNH, Tabwemassana and Fren Melanesian Pati on Santo, the two Tanna-based custom movements John Frum and Kapiel and on Malekula the Na
Maki Aute. In reaction against the increasing influence of the pro-independence parties, the leaders of the MANH formed a new alliance of Santo-based parties, the **Federation des Indépendants**, which as the inevitability of independence grew became the focal point for planning rebellion and secession.

**SECESSION**

Santo’s rebellion on the eve of independence and its decisive suppression, with assistance from PNG’s Kumul force, by the newly independent Lini government may have been reported abroad with mild amusement as the ‘coconut war’, but it posed a serious threat to Vanuatu’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Certainly that was believed by the leading members of the Lini government. Lini himself wrote in ‘Beyond Pandemonium’,

> “The government and people of the New Hebrides have seen the French supporting and encouraging the rebels on Santo and Tanna. They have supplied weapons and ammunition and received support from the rebels in return.

> Inspector-General Robert told the meeting that he did not care if civil war broke out in the New Hebrides. ... M. Dijoud appeared on TV and radio ... and encouraged French nationals and ‘colons’ to continue their activities against the legally elected government...”

As a consequence, as Jupp observed in 1982, French resistance to Vanuatu’s independence produced the very outcome they most feared - “one party domination by the Anglophone Protestants”. The support for and actual participation in the rebellion by some prominent Melanesian francophones contributed to the suspicion and mistrust which has continued to affect the attitudes of the two communities towards each other down to the present day.

Decisive victory to the VP at the elections in 1979 to choose Vanuatu’s first independent government, and a desire to distance themselves and their policies from any association with the proponents of the Santo rebellion, led the pro-independence francophone Melanesians to form another new political organization, in 1981, the **Union of Moderate Parties (UMP)**, as an umbrella under which to shelter any of the former francophone-aligned groups wishing to join. Vincent Boulekone was elected its first President and Leader of the Opposition, positions he retained until the VP again won the general elections in 1987, following which Maxime Carlot was made Leader of the Opposition. Boulekone resigned as party President in protest against the decision to split the two roles. Serge Vohor replaced him and, in 1991, following the UMP’s win in the general elections that year, deeply resented the appointment of Carlot as Prime Minister which he thought his by right of his party office.

The above brief history of the development of political parties in Vanuatu reveals two significant and abiding features:
- the popular perception of the anglophone VP as the champions of national independence and territorial integrity, and
- the *melange* of sometimes opposed political interests and ambitions loosely collected together under the francophone banner of the UMP.

In the years 1991 - 1997, the internal rivalries of the UMP have confirmed that not even the discipline of government can subdue the intrinsic fissiparousness of the groups to common purpose. There seems no ground to hope that in the future the UMP could be expected, as a result of experiencing the responsibilities of office, to provide a stable and united party, with a coherent set of national policies, to lead an effective coalition government.

**ELECTIONS**

Vanuatu’s present electoral system was first used in 1975, under the Condominium administration, for elections to the Representative Assembly and was intended, by a crude form of proportional representation (a compromise adopted to appease French concerns at the Anglo-French Ministerial Conference in 1974), to prevent a complete domination of the election by the New Hebrides National Party (later the VP). In an electorate with very low levels of literacy and low political awareness among the majority of the population, the voting system sought to avoid any requirement for voters to be literate by publishing photographs of candidates and displaying them on the ballot papers at polling booths. Most parties too have chosen to represent themselves by widely recognized symbols drawn from traditional life.

At the general elections in 1979 and 1983, the electorate, divided into multi-member constituencies, returned 39 members to the Parliament. Multi-member constituencies were seen as avoiding the need for complex electoral boundaries and as ensuring a close correlation between votes polled and seats won. The number of seats in the Parliament was increased to 46 for the elections in 1987 and 1991, and again to 50 in 1995, based on increases in population. Electorates vary in the number of seats they return from four single-member constituencies to seven seats in the largest and most populous islands Tanna, Malekula and Santo/Malo.

Party organization and inner party discipline is obviously critical to the mobilization and distribution of party support within the multi-member electorates. Accurate estimates of the quota necessary to win a seat and of the level of support for the party within the area are essential to maximizing a party’s chances of winning seats. The more accurate the party’s knowledge of its numbers the more control it can exercise over the pre-selection of candidates and the more closely it can coordinate the distribution of its supporters’ votes. Organizational effectiveness had been the distinguishing mark of the VP throughout its history and largely accounted for the strength of its showing in all elections up to the major split in leadership in late 1991 (a split basically along Anglican/Presbyterian lines, both surprising and disappointing for the VP).
Up to the election at the end of that year, the VP had consistently won more seats at the general elections than a strict proportionality of seats to percentage of votes received would have returned. For example in 1979, of 39 seats the VP won 25 with 60.5 percent of the vote which proportionately would have translated to 23.6 seats; in 1983 in won 24 seats with 55 percent of the vote, equal to 21.5 seats; of 46 seats in 1987, it won 26 with 47.3 percent equal to 21.8 seats - figures which demonstrate its ability to win more seats than its overall share of the vote would entitle it to on a strictly proportional basis. By contrast in 1991, after the major rift with Father Lini and a consequent need not only to contest the vote within its traditional membership but to field many more candidates in all electorates than could possibly be returned, its success rate fell and of 46 seats it won only 10 which was almost exactly proportional to its 22.6 percent vote (10.4 seats). Instructively, Father Lini’s newly founded party, the National United Party (NUP), also won 10 seats with 20.4 percent of the vote; and their major rival the Union of Moderate Parties (UMP) won 19 seats with only 30.6 percent of the vote (equal to 14.1 seats) compared with the same number of seats won in 1987 with 39.9 percent of the vote which was equal to 18.4 seats.

Percentage of Vote at General Elections 1979 - 1995

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<td>1.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>IND</td>
<td>4.68</td>
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<td>NAG</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.76</td>
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The problem for fragmenting parties in the period since 1991 and the advent of coalition governments has been the explosion in the number of candidates standing for election and the difficulty of maintaining control over the distribution of votes which can now be bought and sold en bloc for promises (and often a substantial downpayment ) of future rewards. For example, in 1987 the VP stood a total of 34 candidates and won 26 seats; the UMP stood 29 to win 19. In 1991 the VP stood 28 and won 10, NUP 32 and won 10 and the MPP 23 and won 4, a total of 83 candidates standing for parties whose leaders had all been within the VP at the previous election. Combined, their total percentage of the vote (58.4 percent) was considerably up on the previous
election and the number of seats won (24) enough for a majority government, although less than proportionate to their vote (26.8). As noted above, the UMP won the same number of seats (19) from 30 contestants, despite a significantly reduced proportion of the overall vote (which represented a 25 percent fall in its own vote). Clearly, the UMP benefitted from the vote-splitting going on between the three major anglophone parties.

By 1995, the trend was worse and the UMP had followed the VP’s self-destructive tendencies and was riven by internal factional divisions. The elections were contested by a record 170 candidates, 12 parties and 19 independents, most of whom were disenfranchised or disaffected members of the major parties, including several breakaway groups of the UMP. The UMP’s internal divisions, following the elections, erupted into open splits between rival leaders and ushered in the most unstable period of changing coalition governments the country has experienced.

VENALITY AND POLITICS

Of equal concern is the indifference of both sides of politics to reputation or past performance when stitching together a parliamentary majority, now usually with those whose personal interests have most compromised their performance in public office.

The most recent “re-union” of the two UMP groups, and their coalition with NUP and MPP, represents a declaration of “open season” for reaping the benefits of office. Both Willy Jimmy and Barak Sope were severely criticised in successive Reports by the Ombudsman and she has concluded that neither is fit to hold public office. One is now (1997) deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Industry and Commerce, the other the Minister for Finance. No discussion of significance took place to reconcile the differences between Prime Minister Vohor and former Prime Minister Carlot-Korman. Their personal animosity and rivalry may be confidently supposed to slumber only, not to have been extinguished. Their common mistrust of Barak Sope would persist, as would their shared disloyalty to fellow-party member Willie Jimmy. Fr. Lini probably remains at the behest of his financier Dinh Van Than, whose expenses can only be recouped through a client government. No matter what the public perception of past behaviour may be, it is manifestly no impediment to commanding senior and rewarding positions as a price for inclusion in government.

It is a curious paradox that the politicians want the imprimatur of the Supreme Court to validate their hold on power, yet are not only indifferent to legal censure but resentful of its supervision when applied to their performance in offices of state once affirmed as legally obtained. Among a politically unsophisticated populace, disgrace in the conduct of public office, conflict of interest, peculation and fraud, nepotism, malversation - none seem to disqualify the perpetrator from further positions of trust and power. Most remarkably,
Carlot-Korman appointed, as Vanuatu's first Commissioner against Corruption, a man convicted of corruption, and a Police Commissioner with a criminal record!

Low expectations of politicians among urban voters seem reflected in the low voter turn-out at elections, most recently only 23 percent at the Port Vila Municipal elections. This trend seems likely to portend greater, rather than less, success for the venal and corrupt — those with money to buy support can expect their voters to turn-out; those others without a war-chest, regrettably most importantly the VP, seem likely to suffer from the electorate's cynicism and disdain for the political process. Unless able to re-unite the bulk of the former anglophone constituency behind one party, government seems doomed to unnatural and unstable coalitions of the most degenerative and self-serving kinds.

Between November 1995 and May 1997 there was three governments and five different coalition Councils of Ministers, brought together and held together by neither ideology nor policy congruence but rather by common (at least temporarily) personal and political animosities, the opportunity to advantage oneself and one's followers and to punish one's enemies. The cost to the country and to the credibility of the political process in Vanuatu has been extremely high and is still rising.

THE MILITARY IN POLITICS

It is difficult to be sure what factors have contributed most to the more self-assertive role the VMF has projected in the public life of the country over the past two years. Among them, however, the following may be included:

- the ambition to become a separate force from the Police, an ambition set back by the government's decision to separate the two budgets in 1994, which made glaringly apparent the unaffordably high costs of replicating what are currently common administrative and management structures;
- deployment abroad as part of the peace-keeping force provided by Melanesian states for the Bougainville Peace Talks in 1994;
- dissatisfaction with the persistent leadership changes which began to occur, reflecting the inconstancy of political alliances in the governing coalitions;
- increasing militarization of security services in other Melanesian countries (Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands);
- the pretext for industrial/political action provided by budget mismanagement and non-payment of outstanding allowances;
- the possible complicity of politicians, many of whose actions while in government were of very doubtful legality;
- a possible conspiracy to carry out a coup d'état.

Despite the perception, especially within the ranks of the VMF, that the Vanuatu government instigated a Strategic Review at the beginning of 1997, following
the arrest of the VMF 'Standown Group' in November 1996, as a device by which to abolish the para-military wing, it had in fact agreed to the review in April 1996, during Defence Cooperation talks with Australia. Although intended as a mechanism to consider Vanuatu's future security needs, and the budgetary implications of appropriate resource allocations, public consultations strongly favoured the retention of the Mobile Force, without any real assessment or appreciation of likely threats to which it would be required to respond. Indeed, the Review concluded that the major issues affecting future security were essentially non-military; the growing tensions between traditional values and the pressure of development; new threats from external sources that could undermine development and stability — over-exploitation of natural resources, such as fish stocks and forests; transnational crime and the illegal movement of drugs, fire-arms, finance and peoples; the transit of hazardous cargoes and potential ecological damage. Responses to the above challenges were seen to rest primarily with the police, the Maritime wing and barrier controls through Customs, Quarantine and Immigration.

Although the Review Committee submitted its Report to the Minister for Justice in March and to the Council of Ministers in April, there seems little likelihood of the Cabinet moving quickly to act on its recommendations, particularly those which would integrate the Mobile Force more closely into the general force structure and disperse its Rifle Company in small detachments to conduct outer island surveillance and response work. Prime Minister Vohor had previously toyed with idea of separating the Mobile Force from Police and retaining portfolio responsibility himself; Barak Sope may have been implicated in the abduction of the President in October 1996 and himself granted immunity from prosecution to the Standown Group. Sato Kilman, now Minister for Lands (1997), a former VMF Commander and Commissioner of Police, and brother of Standown Group leader Samson Kilman, was arrested at the same time as the rebellious VMF and was alleged to have been in possession of a draft speech to the nation as Prime Minister in the aftermath of a coup d'état. None of them has any wish to see prosecution of the VMF succeed. And Fr Lini, who acted so decisively to suppress the insurrection, was relieved of ministerial responsibility for the Police and VMF.

The first of the trials of five VMF personnel charged with unlawful assembly, kidnapping and unlawful carriage of arms resulted in verdicts of not guilty being handed down, on 16 May 1997, for "lack of sufficient evidence" to prove the charges "beyond reasonable doubt". The dismissal of the charges seems to have been attributable to a failure in the prosecution case to lead its evidence effectively and a complete change in the account of events given by the kidnapped Vanair pilot in court and at the time of their occurrence. Both are disturbing as they suggest:

(a) the professional limitations of the state legal officers to handle complex and serious matters competently, and
(b) the susceptibility of witnesses to run for cover when required publicly to accept responsibility for actions and their consequences (in this instance, long-term gaol sentences for fellow citizens in circumstances where no actual harm was done).

It is hard to be confident that the state will successfully prosecute its other outstanding actions, especially the US$100m. bank guarantee scam, given the technical abstruseness of the alleged fraud. Stealing a purse may be understood, but pledging a negotiable instrument not.

If the VMF Standown Group is exonerated, i.e., escapes punishment, it will seem to vindicate their self-righteous indignation at having been provoked into action by the failure of the state to redress legitimate grievances. Their willingness to assert further direct influence on the political process would seem likely to grow as a result.

**CONCLUSIONS FROM VANUATU’S POLITICAL HISTORY**

On the positive side, the struggle for independence created a national political party organization and, in reaction to it, other parties arose in opposition to its political agenda. The struggle also engendered some sense of nationhood in an archipelago where topography, language and local custom militated against such a notion. It early on gave Vanuatu an international profile through its activities before the UN Decolonization Committee and a foreign policy based on membership of the NAM. It gave Vanuatu an independent “identity” from the outset.

On the negative side the list is very heavy. For a poor country at independence to assume the fiscal responsibility for the maintenance of its own education, health and other socio-economic services is a major challenge, even when the preparation for independence has been long and smooth. But to have to support two (antagonistic) systems is beyond capabilities.

From Vanuatu’s history of dual administration flowed, especially from its divided education and unequal employment in rival systems, but reinforced by religious affiliation, the most profound and intractable schism in the country - the linguistic divide between the anglophone majority and a large francophone minority. Despite the almost universal use of Bislama as a lingua franca, the problem still persists. Carlot-Korman, after winning government in 1991, saw it as not only an opportunity but also a responsibility to redress the discrimination and disadvantages he and the francophone community felt they had endured under more than a decade of anglophone rule.

The taste for power, driven now as much by the desire to prevent its exercise by a personal rival as by any commitment to a political program, together with the vagaries of unstable coalition government have in recent years begun to undermine that legacy of policy coherence and party discipline that Vanuatu won for itself through a nationalist struggle for independence.
In the period since independence in 1980, the practice of party-based parliamentary government has distinguished Vanuatu from most of its Melanesian neighbours. Recent years suggest that this is now unravelling and that Vanuatu is reverting to a seemingly more normal type, in which individuals exploit short-term opportunities for personal or narrow constituency advantage with no sense of national interest or of the responsibilities of public office.

Despite the internal schisms that have riven it since 1988, and more especially since 1991, the Vanua’aku Party has managed to retain much of its grass-roots party structure and commitment to principle and party policy. If politics degenerates further into individual opportunism, it is not unlikely that people may begin to revert to a party that stands for and by something. If too the reconciliation, late in 1996, between Fr Lini’s National United Party and Donald Kalpokas and the Vanua’aku Party (VP) holds, it should tend to consolidate a bloc of popular and parliamentary support sufficient to begin to marginalize the present leverage of individual MPs ready to hawk their allegiances to the highest bidders. The defection of five of NUP’s eight sitting MPs to the VP in May 1997, although it caused Prime Minister Vohor to reshuffle his Cabinet, dumping the VP and re-uniting the fractured UMP, brought the anglophone numbers in the Opposition to 22 of the 50 seats. Carlot-Korman sits outside Cabinet, although on the government side, and by doing so signals his unwillingness to serve in a capacity subordinate to Vohor. Boulekone too is outside Cabinet and has over many years found a certain policy congruence with the VP which may revive in his exclusion from power and disgust with the spectacle of its irresponsible exercise by those in office.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Constitution enshrines the principles for a professional and apolitical public service in Chapter 9. It establishes an independent Public Service Commission, whose members are appointed (and only removable) by the President, as a buffer against direct political interference in appointments and dismissals of tenured public servants. Political appointees to the staff of Ministers (which extend from the principal advisor down to their drivers and cleaners) are not covered by the constitutional protections afforded to public servants.

Following the accession to power of the first coalition government in 1991, the introduction of large numbers of the previously disenfranchised francophones was accompanied by the dismissal of many experienced anglophones. In a country with a very low level of senior secondary school-leavers and tertiary qualified graduates, experience acquired on the job was an important asset and its loss could be ill-afforded.

Over the ensuing years, the erosion of public sector professional competence and service delivery has quickened with the frequency of changes in the
governing coalitions. In 1996 alone, over Vatu 70 million was paid out to 401 political appointees as a result of the three changes of government. Expenditure on staff salaries for the Executive was more than 30 percent over-budget. An estimated VT 30 million is expected to be paid to VP political appointees terminated as a result of the latest Cabinet re-shuffle.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Public information is critical to open, transparent and accountable government. Without access to independent information and comment the public will either not know at all or be too uncritical in its awareness of the performance of its democratically representatives in Parliament and of its servants in public administration.

In Vanuatu, critical public scrutiny of government is limited by very low general educational and literacy rates, limited communications and telecommunications infrastructure, small, mainly urban, circulation of print media, and government control of radio and television, the most widely disseminated information networks.

Radio

Radio is the only medium capable of reaching remote populations throughout the archipelago. Radio was inaugurated in 1966 pre-independence and became Radio Vanuatu, the national broadcaster, at independence in 1980. It broadcasts on both short wave and medium wave, and on FM on Santo, from 0530-2300 hours daily in the national language Bislama and in the two official languages English and French.


Print Media

On the eve of independence, Vanuatu was served by five weekly papers, three monthlies and several quarterlies. After independence, the Vanuatu Weekly/Hebdomadaire published by the government media service has remained in continuous operation, while other news/commentary publications have flourished for a time and folded. Today there is one bi-weekly paper Vanuatu Trading Post, and a weekly Le Fenua Times in addition to the government run Vanuatu Weekly.

TV

Television was introduced as an urgent priority by the first coalition government of Carlot-Korman in 1992. It was made possible only by French government assistance to the newly elected francophone regime. Program content is predominantly foreign, provided by ABC, NZTV and RFO.
The government passed the Broadcasting and Television Corporation Act which established a statutory control authority with a Board responsible for policy and operations of Radio Vanuatu, TV, and Nambawan FM 98.

Traditionally, governments have sought to restrict the freedom of journalists to report news or commentaries unfavourable to themselves and also to deny equitable access to the opposition. Recently, Carlot-Korman as Prime Minister and Vohor have publicly stated their government's support for freedom of speech and an independent press, but have also threatened to dismiss staff, withhold their salaries etc. when angered by publication of material they have wished to suppress, most notably over reporting of the Ombudsman's Report into the Bank guarantee scam, which severely censured the Prime Minister and Finance Minister. They have, of course, also sought to interfere through politicising appointment to the VBTC Board.

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN (VNCW)**

The position of women in most islands of Vanuatu has been traditionally low and their roles have been restricted to child-bearing and providing much of the labour necessary to the cultivation of the family food crops, food preparation, forage, mat-weaving and fuel gathering. They are excluded from participation in decision-making affecting their communities (where meetings of men in the nakamal would discuss and decide all issues of importance) and effectively from any input on family issues which father or husband would decide.

Before independence, there was a Women's Interest Office and post-independence a Women's Affairs Office within the Ministry of Social Affairs. The aim of the office is to help women realize their potential through greater education and participation in the development of the country. Just before Independence, sixty women voted unanimously to establish a National Council of Women. Today it has a central office in Pt Vila and has established approximately 80 representative area councils throughout the islands and extends its network into almost every village through organizational and cooperative links with women's groups (usually voluntary self-help groups associated with the churches) at remote grass-root levels. They have probably the most extensive organizational network in the country and have shown themselves to be the most reliable foundation for small-scale community development projects.

Under the law, women are entitled to equality and are not to be discriminated against on the basis of sex. The Constitution, **Chapter 2, Article 5. (1)** states that all persons are entitled to the following fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual without discrimination on the grounds of race, ... language or sex... . It goes on to enumerate eleven specific points, the last of which refers directly to the position of women and foreshadows the future possibility of legislation to improve the status of women:
(k) equal treatment under the law or administrative action, except that no law shall be inconsistent with this sub-paragraph insofar as it makes provision for the special benefit, welfare, protection or advancement of females ....

Women’s rights in relation to land ownership may be regarded as a touchstone for the application of these provisions to traditional customary practice. In a recent judgement, in the case John Noel v Toto of 1994, the Court held that a law which gives a lesser right to a woman, because of her sex is inconsistent with the guarantee of protection of the law, ... and is inconsistent with the right to equal treatment under the law. In his judgement, Justice Kent opined that any rule of custom which discriminates against women cannot be applied. As Patricia Holmes observes of this judgement and its ruling

While it was clearly available for the Judge to rule in the manner described and the argument is legally persuasive it seems unlikely that either the framers of the Constitution or the present Parliament would agree with his interpretation. ... This then can be viewed as an example of the alteration of custom to reflect new values, albeit a change imposed by a foreign male judge rather than emerging from indigenous acceptance of women’s equality.

Frustrated by the failure of the major parties to endorse women candidates at the last general elections, a group of prominent female activists long associated with the VNCW and the promotion of the status of women in Vanuatu, formed a political group “Women in Politics (VANWIP) and stood six candidates for election. They all polled very poorly but do not regret the decision as having been premature. As Grace Molisa said in response to comment that the time was not yet right for women to stand for Parliament “In Vanuatu there will never be a right time for women”.

Only two women have been elected to Parliament since independence; one, Hilda Lini, three times in 1987, 1991 and 1995. A younger sister of Fr Lini, she was first elected as a VP candidate but remained loyal to her brother after the split in the party in 1991 and was elected as a NUP candidate then and in 1995. Her loyalty to her brother failed, however, after she was dumped from the Council of Ministers by Prime Minister Vohor in November 1996, in favour of her brother as Minister for Justice Culture and Women’s Affairs. She now leads a new political movement Tuvanuatu and sits with her one-time VP colleagues in Opposition.

TRADE UNIONS

Under condominium rule, until the late 1960s, ni-Vanuatu were not allowed to form any sort of trade union or association. In the early 1970s the ni-Vanuatu teachers formed associations, one for each language group. As the agreement of both the British and French Representatives were required, and only the British agreed to recognize them, these associations had no legal status under the joint administration.
After independence, the VP government sought assistance with the drafting of national labour laws. Trade union education was provided through an ILO/Danish government assistance program in 1981-84, resulting in a rapid proliferation of craft-based unions, 22 in all. The Pacific Trade Union Conference held its meeting in Port Vila in 1981, a sign of the wider international interest in and support for this movement.

In 1987, a General Workers Union was registered and it resolved that workers should be organized into four unions: public servants, teachers, transport workers and a national union of labour for private sector employees. A progressive de-registration of non-functional unions proceeded through 1989 and the TUC itself was de-registered in 1990.

At present there are four functioning unions: the Teachers union, Health Workers Union, Public Servants Association and the National Union of Labour. The union movement has not been formally aligned with any political party though it sees both the NUP, under Fr Lini and Dinh Van Than, as unsympathetic and the UMP as not only unsympathetic to labour, but as resuscitating old language-based divisions in the movement which can only weaken its strength and influence.

At the elections in 1995, the union movement backed a number of candidates in the Vanuatu Labour Party, all of whom polled very poorly.
The languages of Vanuatu

Figures in parentheses refer to the estimated number of speakers.

1. Hau (120)
2. Tonga (170)
3. Leleka (150)
4. Leleku (150)
5. Malava (1275)
6. Mos (450)
7. Vatikano (600)
8. Mama (400)
9. Vona (350)
10. Wetau (100)
11. Kangalo (100)
12. Elakada (150)
13. Merua (150)
14. Mairu (180)
15. Central Malava (350)
16. Raga (350)
17. Numa (500)
18. Malanda (600)
19. Rarua (150)
20. Amea (450)
21. Leleka (250)
22. Sete (100)
23. Soa (1800)
24. North Ambrym (2850)
25. Lemiram (600)
26. Elakada (1800)
27. Port Vila (750)
28. South east Ambrym (1800)
29. Pattern (5750)
30. Valpa (300)
31. Nuku (150)
32. Vanuap (375)
33. Pemaimuna (150)
34. Tanaka (150)
35. Rorua (150)
36. Wuta (100)
37. Aka (450)
38. Malama (150)
39. Nore (525)
40. Lemeni (150)
41. Morena (150)
42. Orna (150)
43. Taringi (150)
44. Ambro (150)
45. Wabua (100)
46. Arak (100)
47. Tangis (375)
48. Nanui (180)
49. Mok (350)
50. Ape (1)
51. Tufiu (150)
52. Tavandu (175)
53. Polanobtup (225)
54. Makb (100)
55. Shark Bay (225)
56. Bulman (525)
57. Lorentzbur (525)
58. Sakai (1500)
59. Vao (150)

MAP I
MAP 2: NEW HEBRIDES SHOWING THE PARTITION OF THE ISLANDS BETWEEN THE PRESBYTERIAN AND MELANESIAN MISSIONS, 1881
Traditional power systems

- traditional cultural area
- grade-taking system in the north-eastern islands: big man hierarchy
- grade-taking system in the north-western islands: religion-type hierarchy
- title system central islands: chieftainship of "Polynesian" type
- title system southern islands: masters of the heaven and masters of canoes
- internal limits

VANUATU

MAP 3
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IN DEVELOPMENT: KIRIBATI (NO. 5)
BARRIE MACDONALD

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IN DEVELOPMENT: KIRIBATI (NO. 6)
KARCISIUS TARA KABUTAULAKA

PACIFIC ISLANDS STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION
IN DEVELOPMENT: FIJI (NO. 7)
WILLIAM SUTHERLAND