

**The Federated States of Micronesia's Engagement with the Outside World:
Control, Self-Preservation, and Continuity**

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
The Australian National University

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May 2016

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge, my own original work, except where acknowledged in the text.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deep and sincere thanks to my head supervisor Paul D'Arcy for his guidance, assistance, and patience. Without you this thesis would never have come to fruition. To my special friends from the Micronesian Australian Friends Association (MAFA)-- Nicholas Halter, Ingrid Alghren, Laurence Edwards, Clifton Mangwerus, Vince Sivas, George Carter, Karen Tu, Roannie Shiu, Latu Lati, and Myjolyne Kim for your endless support, sense of humor, and your deep intellectual discussions with me over many cups of coffee. My colleagues from Coombs: Vicki Luckner, Chris Ballard, Dario Di Rosa, Misael Racines, Cesar Suva, Valerie Bichard, Andrew Connelly: many thanks to each of you. I am also grateful to Mac Marshall, Glenn Petersen, Vicente Diaz, David Hanlon, and Josh Levy, for providing me with academic resources that became essential in the framing of my thesis. To Sinclair Dinnen and Graeme Smith thanks for accepting my invitation to be part of my PhD committee.

To my friends and colleagues in the Federated States of Micronesia: John Haglelgam, Marcus Samo, Peter Sitan, Marion Henry, Fabian Nimea, Epel Ilon, Lorin Robert, Samson Pretrick, Carl Apis, Akilino Susaia, Jackson Soram, and my late uncle David Marar. Thank you for sharing your knowledge about Micronesia during my field study. Also thank you to my sisters, Evlyn and Marlynn Puas, their husbands Fernando and Lipus Setik, as well as Paula Theodore, Paulis Theodore, and Jascinta Marar for taking care of me while I was conducting my interviews in Pohnpei. Additional thank you to my colleague from Salt Lake City, Devan Jensen, and members of my extended family in the USA: James Naich, the Puas family especially Eric, Keno, Ainris and Meriam, Chero Erwin, Martha Chewek, and Burnet Kichiro, who always gave their support when I attended the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) conferences in the USA. My family in Guam Inos and Esther Walter, and Marse Ikelap for allowing me to access guarded information about the history of our extended family, and clan throughout the diaspora. My Rayphand family in both Guam and Saipan including Lucas and Christopher Rayphand and their father Sapuro Rayphand, I am very grateful for your support when I was on Guam.

Foremost in my acknowledgement is to my wife, Kerry, and our two daughters Anelita and Jessica Puas. Thank you for your nurturing love and support especially putting up with me during my dark days when writing this thesis. To my belated dearest four

legged friend, Chucky Puas, who was always at my side and kept me company during the early hours when I was writing and re-writing the chapters. To my mother, Emerensia Muritok Muareluk, thank you for all your love that has sustained me throughout my life, and while undertaking my PhD program.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to all the people of the Federated States of Micronesia who have taught me about our history, and how we have managed through many centuries of colonial turbulence. In the end we remain in control of ourselves now and into the distant future.

ABSTRACT

The history of the people of the Federated States of Micronesia's engagement with the outside world has been a neglected area of academic scholarship. Historians often treated the topic as a footnote since Micronesians were perceived as unseen participants of colonial processes. To this end indigenous perspective of history has been absent from the main corpus of historical literature. Despite the distorted nature of imperial history, which portrayed Micronesians as poor savages, and unsophisticated people, there is an emerging trend of historical discourse contradicting these images.

This PhD dissertation argues that Micronesians have been dealing successfully with the outside world since the colonisation period. This argument is sustained by examination of oral histories, secondary sources, personal experience, interviews, and field research to reconstruct how Micronesian internal processes continued rather than succumbing to the different waves of colonisation. For example, colonisation did not destroy Micronesian cultures and identities, but instead Micronesians recontextualised the changing conditions to suit their own circumstances. Their success rests on the doctrines of adaptation, assimilation, and accommodation deeply rooted in the kinship doctrine of *eaea fengen* (sharing) and *alilis fengen* (assisting each other).

Micronesians inhabit an oceanic environment of small islands and big seas. This oceanic world necessitated inter-island contact that crisscrosses the seas following the web of the expansive *ainang* (clanship) system. An oceanic civilization had already flourished, rich in maritime activities and infrastructure, knowledge and skills of seafaring, warfare, canoe technology, fishing techniques, and conservation practices to perpetuate Micronesian continuity. This oceanic outlook also contained effective mechanisms for dealing with a host of unheralded external influences from beyond the horizon such as China's emerging influence in the Pacific and the impact of climate change on the Federated States of Micronesia.

Micronesians perceived such influences as challenges and opportunities to shape and reshape their societies through the processes of accommodation and later assimilation for the purposes of adapting to the changing circumstances brought by the four colonial powers. As colonisation intensified, Micronesians began to organise themselves against outsiders' oppression. Reassertion of independence was the main objective. The opportunity arose post World War II (WWII) when the process of decolonization began. The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) was formally established

for the purpose of defining the modern identity of the indigenous people; it is reasserting and perpetuating Micronesian values and continuity.

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GLOSSARY OF MORTLOCKESE TERMS

Afaker—the children of the men of a matrilineal clan, whose rights are secondary to the children of the women of the clan

Afelief—metaphoric speech to hide the real meanings or motives

Aiku—distribution of, especially food provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) after natural disasters

Ainang—the clanship system

Aipwa—following the foot steps

Alisfis fengan—caring for each other

Allik—laws

Amwinimwin—psychological punishment aimed towards relatives who have upset you particularly teenage/young adult reaction to scolding by their elders. This could lead to self inflicted injury or suicide.

Angangen fanou—community work

Anukis—the lesser gods

Anulap—the supreme god

Anun—ghosts of

Apupulu—wedding or getting married

Apwarik—a traditional open community dance where young people came together to establish future relationship

Aterenges—relatives from both sides of the parents

Awosiwos—the art of creating confusion

Eaea fengan --sharing of resources

Eoranei—traditions

Faal—clan meeting house

Failifel—tattoo

Fal—carving something into shape

Fanou—land

Fash—pandanus tree

Fauko—fish trap used for the deep side of the lagoon

Fel—sacred

Inepwinou—the first unity in the family system as in the parents and their children

Ioshol—Mortlockese canoe design

Itang—Master orator

Kachaw—an extended clan system in Micronesian history which covered parts of the Marshall Islands, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Chuuk

Kapas apiliwek—reverse psychology to hide the true meanings of words in conversation, also known as kapasan Satowan Island

Kapasan uruo—historical narratives

Koap—cooperative store

Kolin fanou—indigenous songs of the land

Lamelamen eoranei—traditional religion

Lang—the sky

Lefang—the windy season normally from September to April.

Lenien maur—sleeping place or quarters

Leoo—ancestors

Lerek—the summer season when food is in abundance, normally associated with the breadfruit season from May to August

Leset—fishing sometimes referred to as the sea depending on the context of the conversation

Lofor—traditional body lotion or perfume

Maisuuk—Sailing canoe known throughout Yap and Chuuk for its elaborate design

Maniman—spiritual power

Melime—strong storms leading to typhoon

Mongo—eat or food

Mosoro—cooking house

Mwalo—a unit in sub-clan

Mwanmei—first picking of the breadfruit season to honour the ancestors

Mwaremwar—flower leis

Mweishen--meeting of or group of

Ngorongor—chants

Otoul—first picking of the coconut season to honour the ancestors

Oushamw—belonging to a clan meeting house

Palou—navigator

Paut—sorcery

Pawrik—dances

Pei lap—main estate for the extended family

Peshe seset—salty feet from the different seas or not indigenous to a place

Pisaken eoranei—cultural materials

Pwau—restriction from

Pwera—brave

Rakish—the sea oak tree

Remataw—term referring to people of the sea used in the outer islands of Yap and the northwest part of Chuuk.

Roong—life science

Saat—the sea

Safei—medicines

Salei—protein

Shell--display of coconut fronds or a big branch indicating complete restriction of public access to a given area on the land or the reef

Shia—the mangrove tree

Shon ainang—members of a clan

Shon fanuash—people of our island

Shon liken—outsiders

Shon Maikronesia—people of the Federated States of Micronesia

Shon mataw—people of the sea in reference to the people of the Mortlocks

Shoon wok—rewards given to the great spear after war

Shullapan allik—the supreme law or the Constitution

Sofa—my father's clan in Chuuk

Sopunipi—One of the big clans in Lukunor

Sor—my mothers' clan in Chuuk

Sou uro—expert historian

Sou—an expert in a given traditional profession

Souariras—a legendary figure in the Chuuk lagoon

Taek—turmeric used for body decoration especially during traditional dances to enhance one's beauty to attract the opposite sex

Titilap—stories and legends

Tokkie—traditional war stick dances

Toor—traditional dress wrapped around the waist

Tukumaun—magic potion

Unupwel—first harvest of the taro season to honour the ancestors

Uruo—history

Uruon ainang— a clan's history

Uruon fanou—history of the land

Urupow—elaborate feathers worn during community dances to attract the opposite sex

Waa serek—sailing canoe

Waa—canoe

Waitawa—communication between the ancestors and the living through channelling

Wiieo—celebration after the completion of a canoe

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INTRODUCTION

Setting the Context

This doctoral thesis examines how *shon Maikronesia* (Micronesians)¹ have dealt with, and controlled varied past and present external influences from colonial powers to modern economic forces, and environmental influences from typhoons to climate change. It is one of the first written post-colonial Micronesian beliefs and perspectives of *uruo* (history). These perspectives are enshrined in the preamble² to the Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The Constitution represents a Micronesian centered outlook and reassertion of Micronesian heritage and independence.³ This dissertation reflects the author's upbringing, cultural roots and national and global identity. It vacillates between local history and identity, as epitomised by the writer's Lekiniochian-Namoi⁴ identity, national, post-colonial consciousness, and international engagement as a scholar enmeshed in wider global historiography, to record in print a Micronesian perspective of history, which is absent from much of the literature.⁵

The history of Micronesians' engagement with the outside world remains an understudied area of academic scholarship. Most historians who have studied the Pacific Islands and thus Micronesia's past emphasise the history of outsiders' activities in the islands. As historian Paul D'Arcy observed, "historians have been more focused on instances of rapid change ...emphasising Western influences. Not surprisingly they often reproduced the same historical views as the main reasons behind the transformation of islander communities...indigenous relations with Europeans receive the lion's share of attention, while ongoing and new interactions between local communities tend to be neglected".⁶

¹ *Shon Maikronesia* refers to the indigenous people of the modern state of the Federated States of Micronesia. All indigenous terms in this thesis are in Mortlockese-Chuukese. I will indicate if they are in the other Micronesian languages.

² The Preamble of the Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) underscores a brief historical statement of the Micronesian people in terms of their past, the present, and the future. See the *Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia* <<http://fsmLaw.org/fsm/constitution/index.htm>>

³ The Constitution of the FSM is framed in accordance with Micronesian values and perspective of the world.

⁴ *Lekiniochian-Namoi* is a combined local and regional identity in reference to the island of Lekinioch situated in the region of Namoi (now the Mortlocks) in the state of Chuuk, the FSM.

⁵ The author was born on a low-lying atoll, Lekinioch, and has lived in the USA and Australia for many years. This has formed his deep and profound opinion of indigenous history when contrasting with that of the colonial powers as discussed throughout this PhD dissertation.

⁶ Paul D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea: Environment, Identity, and History of Oceania*, University of Hawaii Press, 2006, p.2.

Like D'Arcy, anthropologist Mac Marshall highlights the continuous inter-island connection throughout history in reference to the indigenous people of the Mortlocks region, which also resonates throughout Micronesia. As Marshall observed, "long before ...external control was imposed, people of (the Mortlocks) maintained contact with communities on numerous other islands via sailing canoe voyages using sophisticated celestial navigation techniques".⁷ Marshall's comments countered the corpus of literature that ignored Micronesians' perspective of history. That is, Micronesians were active participants in the production of the colonial history. Of course Micronesians continue to interact with each other today just like in the past. However, they are expanding their diaspora to far distant lands like the USA, Japan, and Australia to internationalise their identity in a globalised world.

Historian David Hanlon strongly advocates the incorporation of Micronesian perspectives that have been missing from historical accounts for too long. This is to ensure that Micronesian voices become an enriching component of historical discourses.⁸ He noted that Micronesians did not passively accept outside influence; they selected, incorporated, and then manipulated what the outsiders had to offer to suit their circumstances.⁹ This destroys the outside-centric accounts that Micronesians were on the periphery of history. To this end the three cited scholars advocate more Micronesian perspectives to enhance the depth of the literature currently limited by the time scholars are able to spend in the field or archives. This dissertation seeks to expand the partial truths that have emerged by presenting a more comprehensive perspective and time frames more reflective of Micronesian experiences.

Four inter-related themes are used to construct this more comprehensive and integrated perspective of indigenous history: the law, religion, social organization, and environment. These four, inter-related spheres of Micronesian actions and conceptualization of the world in turn raise four major questions central to Micronesia's historical processes. Firstly, who do *Shon Maikronesia* identify as the people of Micronesia? Secondly, how do Micronesians organise their socio-political affairs as a people? Thirdly, what devices have Micronesians adopted to preserve their customs and identity? Finally, to what extent have Micronesians controlled the past and present for

⁷ Mac Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef: The Transformation of a Micronesian Community*, Westview Press, USA, 2008, p.3; D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.2.

⁸ David Hanlon, "Magellan's Chroniclers? American Anthropology's History in Micronesia" in *American Anthropology in Micronesia*, An Assessment, edited by Robert C. Kiste and Mac Marshall, University of Hawai'i Press, 1999, p.77.

⁹ Hanlon, "Magellan Chroniclers", p.77.

the purpose of future continuity? These questions are analysed throughout this dissertation by the examination of oral histories, secondary sources, personal experience, interviews, and field research.

The Humble Beginning of My PhD Journey

My journey to the PhD world has been arduous and challenging. It began on my humble island home, Lukunor (also known as Lekinioch),¹⁰ located in the southern region of the state of Chuuk. I learned the *uruo* of my island and its connection to other islands throughout the FSM. The history was in oral form learned from my extended families and relatives. This experience was reinforced in the classroom in elementary school. For example, students were required to draw the geography of our island. We were also required to draw details of the villages and location of each clan's community *faal* (clan meeting house) and provide a narrative of inter-clan relationships. We learned traditional war dances called *tokkie*, and songs from our region as well as other regions called *kolin fanou* (indigenous songs). We also learned about *leset* (fishing) and *angangan fanou* (local agriculture). Elders were invited to our classes during social studies to reinforce our knowledge of oral history through stories and songs.



Figure 1: This is part of my island called Lekinioch where my humble beginning started.

My high school years were spent on different islands, which reconnected me to my relatives dispersed throughout Pohnpei and Chuuk. In contrast, the history I learned in secondary school came from textbooks written by foreigners and largely about topics

¹⁰Lukunor, also known as Lekinioch, is an island in the Lower Mortlocks in the state of Chuuk, FSM.

foreign to the life experiences of young Micronesians such as the dawn of European civilisation. We also learned about Japanese and American activities in Micronesia, which were the main topics of emphasis in my history classes. Islanders' history was not included. This trend continued during my college years in the USA. After the USA, I began my studies in Australia. I enrolled in a Pacific history program taught by Australian academics influenced by the new historical movement, which was initiated by J.W Davidson at the Australian National University (ANU) in the 1950s. In the program, Pacific Island students were given the opportunity to write history from an islander's perspective. However, Micronesia was largely missing from this program due to the lack of Micronesian expertise in Australia. I was frustrated about Micronesia being missing from the whole curriculum.

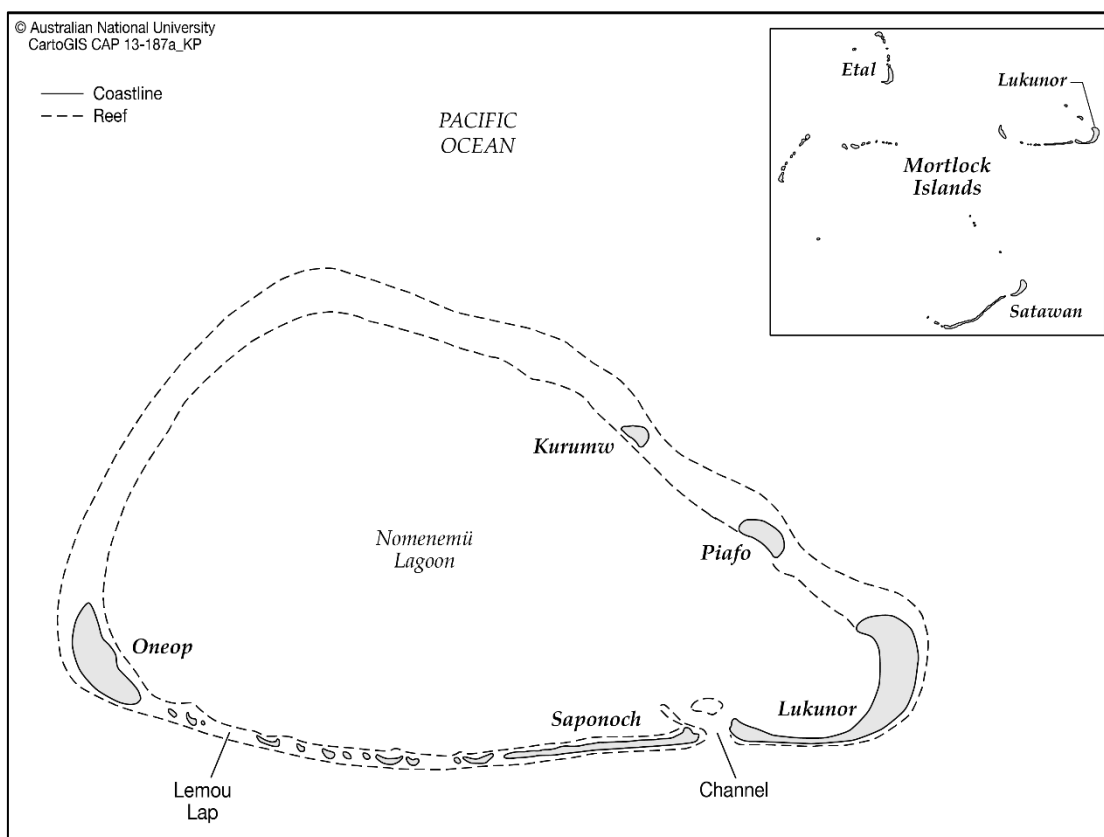


Figure 2: Map of Lukunor atoll. Oneop is an inhabited island that shared the same lagoon. There is a deep historical relationship between the two islands through the clanship system.

I was also exposed to Aboriginal history, including indigenous Australian interpretation of the world and engagement with colonialism. This opened up new insights for me. For example, I began to ask questions about the notion of discovery, decolonisation, independence, identity, and continuity. I was also exposed to the writings of an indigenous Pacific historian Sione Latukefu from Tonga, and a Samoan writer, Albert

Wendt, who has influenced my own intellectual development. There were also non-islander scholars such as Edward Wolfers, Stewart Firth, and Caroline Ralston who challenged my own indigenous perspective of history. Of particular interest was the book, *The Moving Frontier* written by an Australian historian of European background, Henry Reynolds. Reynolds used the book to question the Eurocentric historiography of Australia. Reynolds became one of the chief architects of the watershed case of *Eddie Mabo versus the Commonwealth of Australia* (1992). This case overturned the colonial legal fiction of *terra nullius*¹¹ for the first time since British settlement, and the government of the day reluctantly acknowledged indigenous rights to land.

After my graduation from university, I went back home to teach at the College of Micronesia's, Pohnpei Campus. I encouraged my students to think in terms of their own local history. I remember my first session in Micronesian history where I posed the simple question of "who discovered Micronesia"?¹² No one said the Micronesians. After challenging them, the whole class burst out in laughter and guilt. Most of the students said", well we all know that Micronesians were here first before the Europeans arrived, but according to the textbooks they said Europeans".¹³ After discussion over two weeks, the students decided to ditch the textbooks recommended for the course. They decided to undertake projects writing about their own family or local history using oral sources by interviewing their surviving elders. They were thrilled when I also took them out to undertake fieldwork to see the areas where the Sokehs Rebellion took place as well as the Spanish old fort in Kolonia, Pohnpei.

After many years of teaching in the classroom both in Micronesia and Australia, I decided to undertake a PhD program at the Australian National University (ANU) under the wings of Pacific historian Paul D'Arcy. Not surprisingly Micronesia, by and large, has been a neglected area of study at ANU. D'Arcy keeps the subject alive having done research on the islands over a long period of time. He exposed me to rigorous

¹¹*Terra nullius* was a doctrine the colonial powers used to acquire new territories overseas. It also became part of international law. It referred to the concept that if a territory did not show any signs of agricultural production as perceived by the Europeans, then the first European discoverer could claim the territory on behalf of the colonial power he represented. Ian Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law* (5th ed.), Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.173-174.

¹² My questions to my students were intended to provoke their attention to island history. I posed questions such as: Who discovered Micronesia? Who owns history? Is history written or oral? These questions led to the students' decision to forgo the textbooks and concentrate on undertaking a personal project about the history their local communities.

¹³ Students at the College of Micronesia, Pohnpei Campus, Micronesian History Class, Kolonia, Pohnpei, 1998.

challenges of being an indigenous historian in academia. I was forced to think deeply about Micronesian history and its placement in academia.

My global experiences have enriched me intellectually while I have continued to hone my identity as a Micronesian. I have learned that while oral and written histories are often contradictory; in many respects they are also complementary. Micronesians used their own devices through traditional networks¹⁴ to shield themselves and their knowledge and history, both intellectually and socially until opportunities arose to reassert their voices.¹⁵ I will therefore speak of my own *uruo* and how it can contribute to the enrichment of the historical dialogue between Micronesians and non-Micronesians.

I have long wondered what it would be like writing history based on oral discourses¹⁶ versus the academic traditions of the West. Could I somehow marry the two together? And what sort of historical theories could I work from to lay the groundwork for my personal thesis about Micronesian perspectives of history?¹⁷ How would I integrate archival work into my thesis since Micronesians' main forms of communication and engagement with each other are oral? Would my personal experience as a Micronesian, data collected from my fieldwork, and secondary sources, satisfy academic requirements to write a Micronesian perspective of history? After spending some time pondering these issues, I decided to write my PhD dissertation following the Western traditions, but frame it within a Micronesian perspective.¹⁸ I decided to use a

¹⁴ The clanship network system continued to connect Micronesians during the colonisation period and remained so during the **decolonization** period to create a nation for Micronesians called the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM); *The Constitution of the FSM, Preamble*; Glenn Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies: Adaptation, Integration and Political Organisation*, University of Hawaii Press, Hawaii, 2009, p. 23.

¹⁵ Glenn Petersen, "Strategic Location and Sovereignty: Modern Micronesia in the Historical Context of American Expansionism", *Space and Polity*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1998, pp. 200-201.

¹⁶ Oral history is fundamentally a Micronesian form of history. It has its own internal logic and could be used to determine what the "truth is". There are processes where evidence could be produced to substantiate the truth. For example, language format and concepts used by orators called *itang* are used to test one's knowledge of historical events. Misstating traditional views of *itang* could bring shame to the narrators of history. That is, inventing one's position in history could cause conflict between opposing clans as historical truths determine one's standing and prestige in the community.

¹⁷ Micronesian historical theories are often left to highly knowledgeable clan historians to prove or disprove validity and dynamic of events. Lin Poyer, The Ngatik Massacre: Documentary and Oral Traditional Accounts, *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 20, No.1, p.4 and pp. 20-22. For commentaries and detailed analysis of Pacific history, see Paul D'Arcy, Introduction in *The Pacific World: Lands, Peoples and History of the Pacific, 1500-1900 Vol.3, Peoples of the Pacific: The History of Oceania to 1870*, (edited by Paul D'Arcy), Ashgate Variorum, Burlington, VT, USA, 2008, pp. ix-xiv.

¹⁸ What is perspective? It is debated among scholars whether the term "perspective" debased Micronesian history in academia as it is seen by some academics as about tokenism. It is claimed that perspective allows indigenous scholars to express their point of views, and yet it is not considered as part of mainstream history as practiced at the academic level. Vicente Diaz, *Pers Comm.* at Weaving the Threads of Indigenous Knowledges: Te Whare Kura Symposium, The University of Auckland: Faculty of Arts,

combination of thematic and linear, chronological approaches to document Micronesian perspectives of history. That is to investigate the written history of Micronesia, and where necessary, insert Micronesian perspectives to the growing corpus of knowledge in the field. Many scholars I met along the way have warned me about the huge pitfalls I would encounter, and the tendency of distorting FSM's history in the process. Some provided advice to pursue the easier approach by narrowing down my topic to one or fewer islands to be more manageable. However, as already noted in discussing my own history, regional visions and connections are fundamental to being Micronesian and understanding of our history.

Naturally, I understood their concerns and caring nature to protect me. However, many also encouraged me not to be distracted as it may set the stage and encourage future indigenous scholars to write more about Micronesian perspective of history at the regional level; it is long overdue. I decided to use the Micronesian Constitution as my guiding star. The Constitution is my reference point to start my own personal journey as a Micronesian into the sea of indigenous past in order to understand the present, for the purpose of engaging the future. I chose the Constitution because it is a collection of narratives by the contemporary Micronesian leadership who framed the nation in the images of the islands' past to ensure a prosperous future outlook for *shon Maikronesia*.

My decision to use the Constitution as a guiding star rests much with my background in law. My choice to become a lawyer while growing up in the Mortlocks was deliberate. I realised that law can be used as a protective shield for islanders to preserve and control their future. For example, during the campaign for Micronesian independence, it became very clear that the proposed Constitution would empower Micronesians to govern themselves, and forge relations internationally based on their own understanding of who they are historically. The birth of the Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia emancipated Micronesians from colonisation and allowed entry into the United Nations as a sovereign State.

Micronesianising Historiography

Uruo is perceived by those in the Mortlocks as existing in a dynamic model akin to an intricate spider web dissimilar to Western historiography, which follows a linear model. For example, the *sou uruo* (historians) depending on the question at hand has to choose

a particular event in the web to begin his oral narrative. He then connects the event to other series of events surrounding the question, bearing in mind the purpose of his narrative in seeking “the truth” while his audience of other *sou uruo* are ready to validate the narrator’s historical narratives.¹⁹ It is like travelling on the sea where the *palou* (navigator) is surrounded by a constellation of stars in the universe. The navigator picks a particular star as a reference point at the outset of his journey. He then relates that star to other stars during the journey to get to his specific destination while being mindful of the subtleties of the waves, currents, and the wind, as well as observing his relationship with his crew to ensure a successful voyage.²⁰ Other *palou* upon reaching the designated destinations would judge the voyaging *palou*. That is whether he became lost and showed up late, for instance.

Like the navigator, my challenge is where to start to write about Micronesian history, since it is a vast area consisting of many local clans and thus histories. Naturally the best position to start writing the history of the FSM is from my own personal experience; that is the history of my clan and its relationship with other clans in the Micronesian diaspora.²¹ The next step is consulting the corpus of the literature to locate specific events to put a sense of chronology to it. Most of the time crucial events are absent from the literature, or only mentioned in passing. For example, the big war between Ettal and Lukunor, which influenced the history of the lower Mortlocks, has not been discussed widely in the literature. Because of the poverty of information, I resorted to researching descriptive history in an attempt to follow the historical patterns existing in the sources, while at the same time using my own sources gathered in the field like interviews and also oral history for cross historical analysis or references. I hope to provide a historical framework and invite future indigenous scholars to build upon this dissertation.

The inner core of Micronesian history is sacred. It requires painstaking attention to detail and delicate undertaking as it has its own *maniman*.²² History should only be

¹⁹ During my fieldwork I asked specific dates for certain recent events. The interviewees said that they did not know the dates, but they remembered that someone died when the event occurred. This is the association of events rather than the usual chronological ordering of events as perceived in Western historical discourses.

²⁰ Destination is not so much where one’s end the journey but the various points in the series of the journey. Inter-island journey, like history, is circular and never stops completely at one particular point.

²¹ Due to limited spaces in this thesis I cannot include the entire history of my clan diaspora.

²² *Maniman* from Mortlockese point of view is a form of spiritual power. It can be used to either destroy or save a person depending on the context of a given situation. This term is also used by Pohnpeians but with different spelling. See Rufino Mauricio, *Ideological Bases for Power and Leadership on Pohnpei*

conveyed with respect and salutation to adhere to its inner principles. If one failed to honour this process, the ancestors would punish the narrator (in one form or another) for not adhering to the sacredness of the past. And so in the deep tradition of my Mortlockese-Chuukese-Micronesian ancestral past, it is customary for *sou uruo* to initiate their *kapasan uruo* (historical narratives) with the customary wisdom of “*tiro womi monson amusala ren ai lamelam tekia ren ia tolong lan kapasan uruo*” (let me pay my humble respect to all historians for intruding into the subject of history). This conveys deep humility and respect for other historians from both the past and the present. This is followed by an introductory remark “*kapasan lon manimanen uruo*” (within the spirit of history) intended to invoke the past, and also to provoke the attention of the audience. This is also for the purpose of inviting the past into the present. This acknowledgement of the omnipresence of the past, in contemporary discourses conveys the continuity in oral history. The narrator seeks the blessings of respected historians to protect the narrator should he misstate a particular event of history. So in following the footsteps of my Micronesian heritage let me also convey my own “*tirowomi sou uruo monson*” from both the distant past and the present.

Historical themes and concepts are essential elements of history production as they have specific meanings and application in connection to historical events and context. Their meanings need to be understood for the purposes of facilitating and validating historical processes across time and space. They are also used to identify genuine historians from non-historians. Historical truths are measured in terms of the usage of specific languages and concepts only known to selective group of historians. These historians could then determine the narrators’ intention when speaking of history especially in community settings. For example, in the Mortlocks, and many islands beyond, historians used specific concepts to test the knowledge of those who claimed to know history without question. The exchange usually takes place during inter-island meetings where *itang* (orator) are also involved in contesting their knowledge of history in a different form of language only known to them. History to the *itang* is about validating one’s legitimate right and control of resources locally or within the clan diaspora. Many of the traditional concepts embodied in this dissertation have special meanings.²³

(PhD Thesis), University of Oregon, 1993; p.126; Glenn Petersen, “Kanengamah and Pohnpei’s Politics of Concealment” in *American Anthropologist*, 95(2), p. 341.

²³ Traditional concepts are often hard to translate to the English language as they have specific meanings and application. This thesis translates the concepts to its English equivalency as much as possible to retain their meanings.

It is no accident that the conservation of the environment for survival purposes is reinforced by the traditional religious practises, and historical social ordering of the islands as embodied in the Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia. These practises are designed to connect the clanship system and also strengthen relationships between different clans. It will be argued in subsequent pages and throughout this dissertation that historical continuities of cultural coherence and flexibility in light of external challenges lie at the heart of modern Micronesian identity. They are apparent throughout its long history of adjusting to seemingly overwhelming external forces, both human and environmental. In this context Micronesians do not perceive themselves as victims of imposed external forces in reference to, for example, colonisation, Christianisation, and globalisation. Instead, they perceived themselves as challengers of these potential threats who draw strength from lessons from the past for continuity purposes. For example, during my field study, I interviewed many government officials and academics whose desires are to develop the economic base of Micronesia in light of its cultures, history, and geographical realities²⁴. The notion that Micronesians should emulate the economic models of the developed world, especially the USA, is to live in an unrealistic world that defies Micronesian traditions and relationships. Some former presidents of the Federated States of Micronesia were keen advocates of developing the Micronesian economy in the nation's own image.²⁵

The Environment

Fanou (land) and *saat* (sea) provide the basis for identity and continuity. In the pre-colonial period resources were community owned and jointly managed by members of the extended *ainang*²⁶ (*clan*), or *mwalo* (*sub-clan*). This form of *alilis fengen* (caring for each other), and *eaea fengen* (*sharing resources*) bind the *ainang* members together as a social unit²⁷. *Ainang* is a large extended family identified by the physical space they

²⁴ Mariena Tereas, *Interview*, the College of Micronesia, Palikir, January 20, 2011; John Haglelgam *Interview*, College of Micronesia, Palikir, January 11, 2011; Peter Sitan, *Interview*, Kolonia, January 27, 2011.

²⁵ Tereas, *Interview*; Haglelgam, *Interview*; Sitan, *Interview*; Josh Levy, "Micronesian Nationalism Revisited: Reclaiming Nationalism for the Federated States of Micronesia", paper delivered at Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, Uncasville, Connecticut, June 5, 2012, pp. 1-9; David Hanlon, *Making Micronesia: A Political Biography of Tosiwo Nakayama*, University of Hawaii Press, pp.4-5.

²⁶ *Ainang* is the clanship network system, which has been effectively the foundation of Micronesian identity. It is one of the most important concepts to understand as without such one would not be able to comprehend the full extent of FSM history. Leaders continue to use this network to maintain socio-political connections. Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, p. 23.

²⁷ Keith Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity and Alliance On Namoluk Atoll (PhD Thesis)*, University of Washington, University Microfilms A Xerox Company, Michigan, 1972, p.55.

share with relatives in a local area or within the diaspora. Food production has always been a collective enterprise that connects the *mwalo* or *ainang*.²⁸ Micronesians have lived in close harmony with their *fanou* and *saat* for centuries managing the resources to ensure continuity for future generations. Disharmony also arose when, for example, recalcitrant clans sought to re-order control of resources in the environment that they were not historically entitled to.

The economy and society are interconnected by the principles mentioned above, which in turn are attributed to the conservation of resources. Traditional methods of environmental management are still in practice today. They include *pwau*, *otoul*, *mwanmei* and *unupwel* (restriction and offerings of coconuts, breadfruit, and taro). Many of these practises are also common (but with different terms) in the Micronesian region such as Yap, Pohnpei, and Kosrae.²⁹ Moreover, conservation techniques varied, as it is dependent on the topography, and the seascape of each island.³⁰ For example, in the low-lying islands *pwau* is the most effective method of conservation where it restricts human activities from degrading fragile parts of the coral reef and the land along the seashores.

During *lerak*, the summer season usually from May to September, restrictions on taro consumption may be imposed on members of a clan by its *samol* (traditional leader). Such restrictions allowed taro to grow fully as they take three years to mature. Also during *lerak*, when breadfruit are in abundance, members of each *mwalo* would band together to harvest breadfruits, and store them in storage underground where they ferment which preserved the breadfruit for later use.³¹ Restriction of movement between villages was another way to ensure maintenance of a clan's resources. For example, members of village A may not enter village B without prior permission. This is to prevent wanderers from damaging the land or helping themselves to the resources on someone else's land.

²⁸ *Eaea/alilis fengen* is the principle of sharing to promote continuity. Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity*, p.62; For land sharing see Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp.77-78.

²⁹ Don Rubinstein, *An Ethnography of Micronesian Childhood: Contexts of Socialisation on Fais Island*, p. 52; Kenneth Knudson, *Resources Fluctuation, Productivity, and Social Organization on Micronesian Coral Atolls*, (PhD Dissertation), University of Oregon, 1970, pp. 194-195.

³⁰ Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Yap Political Leadership and Cultural Change in an Island Society*, University of Hawaii Press, 1975, pp. 5-17; Margie V. Cushing Falanruw, "Food Production and Ecosystem Management in Yap", *ISLA: A Journal of Micronesian Studies*, Vol.2, Number 1/Rainy Season 1994, pp.11-18; Bill Raynor, "Resource Management of Upland Forests of Pohnpei: Past Practices and Future Possibilities", *ISLA: A Journal of Micronesian Studies*, Vol.2, Number 1/Rainy Season 1994, pp.49-64.

³¹ *Mar* is an important food item especially eaten during the *lefang* months. Usually relatives from the mother side shared the *mar*.

According to oral history, coral rocks were arranged in a way to facilitate the natural flow of currents and patterns of waves to minimise shore erosion. Planting of native plants such as *rakish* (sea oaks), *fash* (pandanus), *mosor* (*guettarda speciosa*) and *shia* (mangrove) a few feet from the shorelines was also a method used with rocks and heavy debris to fill the gap between the shore and the native plants. This was a form of local adaptation and mitigation strategy to strengthen the shorelines where they were susceptible to currents and waves.³² Since colonisation, the landscape has been altered to accommodate the needs of the outsiders in the forms of docks and sea walls. However, it has created more problems in managing the seascape and shore erosion according to local history. Outsiders' lack of knowledge of the environment and their ignorance of local knowledge to facilitate the proper installation of the seawalls and the docks were the main problems that have persisted into the post-colonial period.

These problems have been re-evaluated along with the new compound threat of climate change. Climate change is a new phenomenon caused by the industrialised countries in far distant lands and yet impacts on the island environment. It is altering the integrity of the fragile environment especially in the low-lying atolls. To this end new seawall design is used as a defence mechanism to protect beach erosion from the impact of climate change.³³ Moreover, traditional methods have been combined with outside engineering methods to also challenge climate change effects. The complementary nature of historical understanding of the environment, and the use of compatible modern technology is an ongoing process as discussed in chapter 6.

The Constitution safeguards traditional methods of conservation as well as its territorial sea as recognised by international law. It also incorporates modern practices compatible with traditions. An example of this can be seen in the allocation of the nation's resources between the municipality, state, and the national governments. For instance, marine space between these respective jurisdictions is clearly defined. Ownership of reefs by different clans and villages is acknowledged in the Constitutions of the states of Yap and Chuuk, for example. Municipalities control the areas around the reefs often using the traditional methods of *pwau* to conserve the sea and land environment, while the states are responsible for conservation outside the municipal border to the 12 miles

³² Marion Henry, FSM Secretary of Resources and Development, *Interview*, Palikir, Pohnpei, July 5, 2013.

³³ In June 22-26 2013 the author travelled to Kosrae where he observed a new sea wall design. It promoted local adaptation to climate change using appropriate form of technology borrowed from the outside world. The FSM's climate change policy promotes integration of modern technology to be used in the nation. See *Nationwide Climate Change Policy 2009*, Palikir, FSM, p. 2.

zone. The national government has conservational jurisdiction from the 12 miles zone to the 200 miles exclusive economic zone (EEZ).³⁴

Religious Practices

Lamelamen eoranei (traditional religious practices) are an integral part of Micronesian self-assurance, control, and continuity. Religious practises formalised people's relationship with the environment as well as with each other throughout history. For example, environmental conservation practises command people to treat and respect nature since it provides sustenance for life. Sacred places, such as designated special spaces, rocks, trees and also places on the reef, have meaningful historical value³⁵ as may be explained by the narratives of the different clans. For example, each designated space honoured the sacredness of the ancestors to that clan. Sacredness connotes restriction of access to the land and the reef, which is reserved for the members of that clan only, referred to as *aan shon ainang* (designated area for a particular clan or subclan).³⁶ People respect these reserved areas as to dishonour such would mean violence between the extended families of the perpetrators and the guardians of the sacred areas. Respect helps maintain equilibrium between people of different clans and the environment. As in the popular traditional saying: "*liwini ngeni ngeni pwal neningeni*." It literally means in English one good turn deserves another.

To seek assistance from the *leoo* (ancestral gods) *waitawa*³⁷ (communication between the ancestors and the living which involved the spokesperson entering into a trance of spiritual possession) is used as a medium of communication between the people and their *leoo*. The *leoo*'s wisdom protects the environment by establishing the norms of conduct for the people as custodians of *fanou* (land) and *saat* (sea). Traditional concepts such as *roong* (life science), *maniman* (spiritual power), *sou safei* (medicine person),

³⁴ *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article I; *Chuuk v. Secretary of Finance*, 8 FSM Intrm.353 (Pon.1998).

³⁵ Each clan set the value and the significance of its designated spaces. It also demands that the public observe such a demand. Conflict could arise from disrespecting its sacredness.

³⁶ Reinforcement of sacred spaces is not confined to the clan members only, but also obligated *afaker* and non-clan relatives to do the same.

³⁷ Ward Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, 2nd edition, Archon Books, Connetcticut, 1978, p. 55. Note that Goodenough used different spellings of the word *waitawa*, (his version is *waitawa*), but it is the same religious concept. He used different spelling forms in relation to many Chuukese words throughout his book sometimes unfamiliar to the author; Francis X. Hezel, *Possession and Trance in Chuuk* <<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/socprobs/frames/posstranfr.htm>>

eoranei (traditions), *anulap* (the big god) and *anukis* (the lesser gods) are integral part of Micronesian religious doctrines as embedded³⁸ in each clan's history.

Offerings are part of religious practises to ensure the ongoing special relationship between the ancestors and the people. For example, *oneiset* (first offering of fish), *mwanmei* (first offering of breadfruit), *otoul* (first offering of coconuts), and *wenipwel* (first offering of taros) are deep gestures to thank the ancestors for keeping the land and sea productive. These offerings are taken to the sub-clan's chief, the living mediator between the sub-clan and its *samol*. It also signifies the sub-clan's appreciation of the public's respect in relation to the doctrine of *pwau*, which effectively allows the land or reef to recover.³⁹ The connection between religious and conservation methods above are still in practise today. Reflecting the importance of religious practices, the FSM Constitution recognises them as inherent fundamental rights⁴⁰ of the Micronesian people.

The extent of "Micronesianising"⁴¹ foreign religion can be well understood in connection to Christianity. Christianity is an alien religion, and yet Micronesians have integrated it into their religious practises.⁴² Micronesians inserted their own religious ideology into the womb of Christianity and over time this insertion reconstituted itself giving birth to what I coined the term as "Micronesianity". Micronesianity is the appropriation of Christianity. Micronesianity perpetuates social cohesion through religious and community relations. For example, the use of *awosiwos*⁴³ is practised to receive favourable outcomes from both the traditional and Christian god in times of conflict or self-doubt. The gods shared the same religious space.

³⁸ Religion in traditional societies was patterned along *ainang*'s own *anulap* and *anukis*. This continues to be the case in many local communities in modern FSM. See William Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, (2nd edition) University of Victoria, 1977, pp.17-18; Francis X. Hezel, *Spirit Possession in Chuuk: A Socio-Cultural Interpretation* <<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/socprobs/frames/spiritposschkfr.htm>>

³⁹ Personal knowledge. See also D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp, 98-99.

⁴⁰ *The Constitution of the FSM, Articles IV and V*.

⁴¹ Micronesianising refers to the process of incorporating outside influence into Micronesian context.

⁴² Joakim Peter, "Eram's Church (Bell): Local Appropriations of Catholicism on Ettal", *ISLA Journal of Micronesian Studies*, Vol.4/No.2/Dry Season, 1996, pp. 282-285.

⁴³ *Awosuwos* is a form of traditional psychological warfare through subtle performance or songs with hidden meanings to call for spiritual support from both the ancestors and the Christian god.



Figure 3: “Micronesianness” as represented by a statue of Jesus Christ that stands at the edge of Lukunor’s channel where the spirits of the ancestors continue to live in the environment (the sea, and the land). They are sharing the same space. Picture taken in June 2014.

Freedom to practise one’s belief system has long been a part of Micronesian history as may be seen in each clan’s practises. Such is recognised by the Constitution and the FSM legal codes. As declared by Article IV, section 2 of the Constitution, “no law may be passed respecting an establishment of religion or impairing the free exercise of religion...”⁴⁴ Section 207 of the FSM Code Title 42 then states that, “Nothing in this (title) shall be interpreted to preclude the practice of, or require medical health care licenses for, the traditional healing arts as customarily employed by citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia”.⁴⁵ Healing is part of Micronesian religious practices. It involved calling upon the *leo* to assist in curing social and physical ailments,⁴⁶ for example. In this respect traditional religious practices also serve to reinforce for social relationships.

Social Organisation

Social organisation reflects the different units of community present on each island or group of islands as patterned along the different *ainang* system. The *ainang* is a kin-

⁴⁴ *The Constitution of the FSM.*

⁴⁵ *FSM Code Title 42* <<http://fsmLaw.org/fsm/code/index.htm>>

⁴⁶ According to oral history ruup (yeaw-skin disease) was the common throughout the islands in the Mortlocks and beyond. It is known what the remedy was for this skin disease. Oral history spoke of magic men who tested the power of their magic or potion to lure beautiful women to clean the men’s diseased skin.

based unit usually translated as a clan designed to perpetuate both local and regional continuity and centres on social relations. *Shon ainang*⁴⁷ (members of the clan) naturally inherited their identity first from the mother's⁴⁸ *ainang* and second by the father's *ainang*. In Chuuk and in some parts of Yap and Pohnpei, matrilineality is more dominant, and one is also connected to the father's clan as an *afaker*.⁴⁹ This dual membership passes on rights and obligations to the next generation. This in turn maintained connection with one's relatives and also allocates one's rank in the islands' *ainang* system.

The degree of obligation by individual members depends on one's social position in the clan. One is, however, expected to be loyal to have access to share the *ainang*'s economic resources and social status. Each member is required to defend the integrity of the clan. The people of each island created their own customary laws to safeguard their resources. The differences in social organisations can be contrasted between volcanic and low-lying islands. This also affected the way the islanders responded to each other within Micronesian archipelagos. For example, islanders on the small coral islands do not share many of the customs that were practised by islanders on the mountainous islands such as Yap, Pohnpei and Kosrae, which are more socially hierarchical because of their large land mass and larger population.⁵⁰

The *ainang* system is not confined to one locale, but spread out to different islands depending on their historical connection: common ancestry, marriage and trading partners. In the high volcanic islands like Pohnpei and Yap social and political relationships are more stratified, with a greater degree of recognised hierarchy between clans (close knit and inter-related families) and lineage (a common ancestor) as in the *Nahnmwarki*⁵¹ and *Sawei* systems of Pohnpei and Yap respectively.

In contrast, the smaller social units in the outer islands of modern-day Yap, Chuuk, and Pohnpei states of FSM rely on their own internal hierarchy of clans within their particular island and their inter-island relatives based largely on who arrived first reflecting the pattern of settlement of each island or group of islands.⁵² Disputes

⁴⁷ *Shon ainang* means one's membership in a clan; Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity*, p.62.

⁴⁸ As most Micronesians societies are matrilineal, the mother's clan identity is one's prime identity.

⁴⁹ *Afaker* means one's associate membership in the father's clan. For more details see Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity*, pp. 94-95.

⁵⁰ Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 130-132.

⁵¹ *Nahnmwarki* is the paramount chief of the chiefdoms in Pohnpei. See David Hanlon *Upon a Stone Altar: A History of the Island of Pohnpei to 1890*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1988, p.366.

⁵² Personal knowledge. *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article XI.

between opposing parties are referred to the social units within the local system or the larger social units between islands depending on the complexities of the issues. For instance, the heads of the village families would deal with stealing of coconuts, while killing would be dealt with between opposing clans in the islands diaspora. However, in the modern day FSM, a blend of the old and new is used to resolve disputes. One can choose whether to use the Court system or traditional options of settlement.⁵³ Often *ainang* leaders have roles in the arbitration of disputes between opposing parties. Traditionally, compensation for damages depended on the nature of the injury and the cultural geography where the injuries occurred.⁵⁴ For example, for offences such as personal injuries, and property damage, the victim, or the extent of injury or damage measured the recompense in material dues proportionate to the pain and suffering experienced. The goal of dispute resolution was to maintain cohesion between the social entities of Micronesia.

In some instances, public shaming of the perpetrator was also warranted. However, where a death of a person occurred it became a complex and sensitive issue between the families of both the victim and the perpetrator. Sometimes retribution was the only way to resolve the breach, but that had the effect of escalating into a vicious cycle of violence.⁵⁵ The modern legal system may interfere to arrest further violence. Violence may be confined to a local area, or it could spread to a wider geographical space because families had extended relations on other islands by virtue of marriage or clan connection.

In the past revenge could restore peace when one side acknowledged defeat,⁵⁶ it was seen as a form of honouring the so-called victor. Land giving, gifting, and surrendering of fishing rights to the victors were also used as practices to restore peace in the community.⁵⁷ Many of these practices are still used in Micronesia, but with their own subtleties. *Shon liken* (outsiders) may find it hard to comprehend customary laws in contemporary Micronesia as such understanding requires a deep connection with the

⁵³ Michael Lieber, *Using Custom in a Court of Law*, Association of Social Anthropologists in Oceania (ASAO) Conference, San Antonio, Texas, February 5-7, pp. 1-12.

⁵⁴ *FSM v Mudong* (Pon. 1982) < <http://fsmlaw.org/fsm/decisions/index.htm> >

⁵⁵ Nason, James Duane, *Clan and Copra: Modernization of Etal, Eastern Caroline Islands*, University of Washington, Seattle, 1983, pp. 141-142; Stephen M. Younger, *Violence and Warfare in the Pre-contact Caroline Islands*, University of Hawaii, pp.144-146; *Personal knowledge* being a member of my clan Sor and connection to other relatives on different islands in the FSM, for example, the Mortlocks, Chuuk, and Pohnpei states.

⁵⁶ Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, pp. 51-52.

⁵⁷ Surrendering of land and/or reef to victims of violent death called *shap* or *liwinen sha* (blood payment) is common in many Micronesian societies. For example, there are many oral histories that could be attested to *shap* and *liwinwn sha*. Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, pp. 52-54.

local community. It is the contention of this dissertation that the same deep-seated continuity in traditional Micronesian societies has served as both a stabilizing influence in times of external disruption, but also served to distance external commentators and administrators' understanding of the driving forces within Micronesian society.

The Law

As history is about continuity of identity, ownership of resources, and relations between clans, *allik* (laws) were also needed to maintain order in the islands' communities. *Allik* were expressed in religious activities, environmental conservation practices and reinforced by the different social organisations as in the clans system.⁵⁸ History defines the overall modes of conduct embedded in traditions as upheld by the leaders of the different clans and their people. For example, contest over ownership of resources are often scrutinised by clan leaders. Their knowledge of history is treated as evidence. Evidence is put forth by retelling one's own history, and how a clan fits into the overall socio-political structure of an island, or group of islands. The clans' historians who are usually in a leadership role, and are often accepted as the best mechanism of settling a dispute render final decisions.⁵⁹ In my youth I witnessed this form of dispute resolution. For example, a particular clan claimed part of a reef as its property based on the traditional concept of *shoon wok* (reward for spears after a fight). When it was put under historical scrutiny, most of the historians from the other clans disagreed with that claim. The claimant did not pursue the matter further as to do so would bring shame to the claimant. Even if it went through the court system it was guaranteed that it would be a hopeless case, as the Court too would rely upon the evidence from the historians of other clans.

Historically, food security reinforced clanship solidarity and has always been a major part of Micronesian conservation laws, particularly in the low-lying islands where the need to protect their meagre resources is foremost. *Pwau* (traditional law banning human activities) is an effective traditional conservation practice, which restricts the harvesting of fish in certain areas of the reef.⁶⁰ *Pwau* serves two purposes: firstly, to honour the death of an important person in the clan, and secondly to conserve the reef's

⁵⁸ Oral history; Francis X Hezel, *Congries of Spirit: The Meaning of Religion*
<<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/religion/frames/congspiritsfr.htm>>

⁵⁹ Oral history; Personal knowledge from direct observation, Michael D. Lieber, *More Than a Living: Fishing and the Social Order on a Polynesian Atoll*, Westview Press, 1994, pp.4-12.

⁶⁰ Oral history; Personal knowledge.

resources by public announcement.⁶¹ For example, when an important member of a clan who owns the reef died, *pwau* is automatically imposed. Publicly announced *pwau* is also imposed when the clan decides to close the reef during the windy season. A big tree branch called *shell* is planted in the designated area to warn the public to stay away from the reef. The restriction is ended when the branch is removed. The public respects this form of conservation method as it benefits the island community as a whole.

Any violation of the *pwau* may lead to severe consequences including violence or even death. Oral history speaks of violent fights between the members of the clan who imposed the *pwau* and the violator and relatives.⁶² There were serious injuries suffered by the violators. The dispute ended when the heads of the two opposing clans came together for settlement. *Pwau* is also practised on the land by *sou fanou* (land owners). In this practice, coconut fronds are tied around a tree or the entrance to the land area to indicate that *pwau* is currently imposed. Uninhabited islands, or parts thereof, are subject to the same restrictive measures by the clan who has the traditional rights and duties as the guardians of the land. Land *pwau* fulfils the same purposes as discussed in relation to owners of the reef. These traditional methods are examples of the laws of the land, which are recognised by the FSM Constitution.

The FSM is a nation with many unique forms of custom and traditions⁶³ that differ between its geographical spaces⁶⁴. The variety of traditions should not be seen as an impediment to its internal coherence, but rather a pool of shared ideas from a socio-political basket with a common goal that is resilient enough to accommodate diversity.⁶⁵ Indeed the FSM *Shulapan allik* (Constitution) embodies the concept of unity in cultural diversity.⁶⁶ It is the hallmark of the modern state of the FSM, and provides the framework in which its institutions are linked to Micronesian values, identity, and continuity.

⁶¹ Personal Knowledge as I usually accompanied my father when imposing the restriction by planting a big branch of a tree on the reef belonged to his clan *Sofa*. See also D'Arcy, *People of the Sea*, pp.98-100.

⁶² Oral history. An example would be *Anaun Lengashu* (a sub-clan chief of Lukunor) who gave away a big reef as a *shap* (payment of blood) to his wife's clan as he was so upset about the treatment of his young son who was killed by the hands of his sister for breaking *pwau*. This was because the sister of the Anaun Lengashu killed her brother's son for breaching *pwau*. It is claimed that the size of the give-away approximated the area where the currents carried the blood of the victim on the surrounding reef.

⁶³ The term custom and traditions are called *facsin* in Kosrae, *tiahk* in Pohnpei, *eoranei* in Chuuk, *yalen* or *kafal fuluy* in Yap. See Glenn Petersen, *Regime Change and Regime Maintenance in Discussion Papers Number 12 Ethnicity and Interests at the 1990 Federated States of Micronesia Constitutional Convention*, The Australian National University, 1993, p.40.

⁶⁴ Paul D'Arcy, "Cultural Divisions and Island Environments Since the Time of Dumont d'Urville" in the *Journal of Pacific History*, Volume 38, No.2 2003, pp.217-218.

⁶⁵ Marshall, "Partial Connections, pp.107-108.

⁶⁶ *The Constitution of FSM*, Preamble.

As stated in the preamble: “We affirm our common wish to live together in peace and harmony, to preserve the heritage of the past, and to protect the promise of the future. To make one nation of many islands, we respect the diversity of our cultures. Our differences enrich us”.⁶⁷ The preservation of heritage is protected by article V. It states: “nothing in this Constitution takes away the role or function of traditional leaders as recognised by customs and traditions...”⁶⁸ Article XI, section 11 reinforces article V by declaring that; “Court decisions shall be consistent with this Constitution, Micronesian customs and traditions, and the social configuration of Micronesia. In rendering a decision, the Court must consult and apply sources of the (FSM)”.⁶⁹

The *Shulapan allik* is connected to the globalised world as referred to in “the Declaration of Rights” enumerated under article IV, sections 1-13. Articles VII to XII are structured to approximate traditional political values based on geography. For example, Article VII establishes a three-layered government and their respective branches, and allocates their roles and functions within a Micronesian context. These layers correspond to the configuration of Micronesia while integrating relevant elements of the outside world.⁷⁰ Articles VIII and IX limit the powers of the governments from arbitrary decisions. Inherent in this are the parallel powers of traditional leaders and the powers of the present day political leaders. The construction, scope, and content of the Constitution focuses on the unique interaction between law and custom in the modern world to ensure continuity. It says, “With this Constitution we, who have been the wards of other nations, become the proud guardian of our islands, now and forever”⁷¹. The Constitution by definition is the supreme law of the land⁷².

Characterising FSM the Economy

There are three theories that have been proposed to describe the economic situation in the Pacific including the Federated States of Micronesia. It is often hoped that such theories will provide answers to improve small island economies. The three models are MIRAB (Migration, Remittance, Aid, and Bureaucracy) SITEs (Small Islands Tourist Economies), and PROFIT (People considerations, Resource management, Overseas

⁶⁷ *The Constitution of the FSM.*

⁶⁸ *The Constitution of the FSM.*

⁶⁹ *The Constitution of the FSM.*

⁷⁰ Dennis Yamase, *The Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia: The First twenty Five Years*, FSM Supreme Court, Palikir, Pohnpei, July 12, 2006

<<http://fsm-supremecourt.org/fsm/rules/FSMSupCt25YrsforPDF.pdf>>; *The Constitution of the FSM.*

⁷¹ *The Constitution of the FSM*, Preamble.

⁷² *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article II.

engagement, Finance, Insurance and Taxation, Transportation). MIRAB emphasises foreign aid and transnational migration and remittances where money and goods are remitted from the metropolitan countries, often from the former colonial powers, to sustain small island⁷³ economies like the FSM. The SITEs model refers to tourism as having a dominant role in the building of island economies. Tourism earnings account for a large proportion of the Gross National Products (GDP). SITEs aim is to “increase foreign exchange earnings to finance imports”.⁷⁴ The PROFIT theory is geared towards shrewd immigration and cyclical migration policy. Its concern is for domestic control of local resources through political processes to secure and control viable means of transportation, and luring foreign direct investment by offering low or no taxes.⁷⁵ It thrives on the use of hard-core diplomacy to achieve purposeful outcomes. It has low reliance on aid and remittances to sustain local incomes and focuses on strong financial management.⁷⁶

The FSM economy has been characterised as mirroring the MIRAB economic model. That is because the FSM lacks sustained tourism. It has no mineral resources, financial control is weak, and hard-core diplomacy as practiced in the MIRAB model is constrained by the terms of the Compact. Under the MIRAB model, the Compact allows Micronesians to migrate to the USA. They remit money and goods to their families on the islands. The Compact also finances the FSM government bureaucracy, the main employer of the citizens⁷⁷. In my field interviews with government officials, many of them have not heard or even understood the MIRAB model. However, those who were familiar with MIRAB rejected the model because it projects a negative image of Micronesians as incapable of providing for themselves. This is at the heart of the dependency assumptions concocted by foreign economists with no expertise on Micronesia. For example, there has been no reliable figures about remittances and the Compact should not be seen as a form of foreign aid since it is a treaty, and it is within Micronesia’s right to receive money from the USA.

⁷³ Paul D’Arcy, *The Nourishing Sea: Partner Guardianship of Fishery and Seabed Mineral Resources for the Economic Viability of Small Pacific Island Nations in Sustainability*, pp. 33-48.

⁷⁴ Riaz Shareef, *Small Islands Tourism Economies: A Snapshot of Country Risk Ratings*, p.2, Department of Economics, University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia.

<http://www.mssanz.org.au/MODSIM03/Volume_03/B05/04_Shareef_Snapshot.pdf>

⁷⁵ Geoff Bertram, “Introduction: The MIRAB Model in the Twenty-First Century” in *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, Vol. 47, No. 1, April 2006 ISSN 1360-7456, p. 5.

⁷⁶ Bertram, *Introduction: The MIRAB Model*, p.5.

⁷⁷ The Compact provides the main funds for the operation of the FSM government.

Perhaps, one can argue that one of the best economic practices suitable to islanders is one that enmeshes the cultural daily life in the FSM, rarely acknowledged by outside commentators, and relevant elements of the modern world. Such practices revolve around the complex web of the Diasporic *Ainang* System (DAS) driven by its own inherent social forces reinforced by reciprocity, sharing, and sustainable conservation practices.⁷⁸ DAS has its own channels of circulation and distribution of goods and monies to ensure that no one is excluded from the extended family benefits. The wealth of DAS cannot be measured in terms of statistical analysis as practiced by economists. That is because Micronesians' wealth is measured in terms of how many relatives one has. It is not wholly measured in terms of how the value of the dollar is distributed on a per capita basis based on gross domestic product (GDP) abstraction which then translates into the ranking of a country's wealth as ranked on the economic international scale. I argue that DAS is a homegrown ideology, which has its own internal self-supporting mechanism in the shaping, sustaining, and positioning of the FSM in the contemporary world.

All the three economic models discussed above are only at best marginally relevant in a Micronesian context. Perhaps Micronesia's future should start with a reclassification as a dual economy with the *ainang* system at its very core.⁷⁹ It has its own measure of success not yet well understood or valued by many economists of the day. MIRAB has also been challenged by Pacific scholars as nothing more than reinforcing neo-colonialism with a new image.⁸⁰ It continues to underestimate the astute judgment of islanders in pacing and framing their own economic circumstances. MIRAB reflects nothing more than the continuing belittling of Pacific islands as described by Epeli Hau'ofa.⁸¹ Micronesia is refining the DAS lifestyle as it suits its social, political, and economic lifestyle.

History as Dynamic

Historically Micronesians have proven skilful and knowledgeable people who have managed their relationships with each other and their environment to sustain their

⁷⁸ The author coined the DAS term to explain the complex foundation of Micronesian societies that could be included in economic analysis to better our understanding of the islanders economic system. Perhaps such an understanding could assist foreign consultants to work closely with Micronesians to design an economic model appropriated for the islanders. See also Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity*, pp. 62-64; Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp.19-23.

⁷⁹ Petersen, *The Traditional Micronesioian Societies*, pp. 19-23.

⁸⁰ Levin Institute, Globalisation 101 <<http://www.globalization101.org/what-is-globalization/>>

⁸¹ Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands" in *We are the Ocean: Selected Works*, University of Hawaii Press, USA, 2008, pp.29-30.

identity.⁸² They are active agents in the production and reproduction of their own history.⁸³ For example, the Federated States of Micronesia's (FSM) Constitution speaks of local agencies as always active throughout the colonial and post-colonial periods. Drafted by community representatives from across the FSM, the Constitution represents the most comprehensive statement of Micronesian history, identity, and survival to date.⁸⁴

FSM history, like its seas, is fluid, dynamically subtle, and inherently complex with its own undercurrents. Deep human relations and the oceanic environment are the essence of historical narratives; they embody Micronesian history of continuity. This thesis adopts the Micronesian perspective of *uruo* to bring into balance the misrepresentation and inaccurate images of Micronesians as manufactured, reproduced, and transported in time and space by *shon liken*.

The Geography of Contemporary Federated States of Micronesia

Despite the increasing globalisation of the world economy, Micronesia's current realities remain, as always, deeply embedded in the geographical realities of the local oceanic environment. "Millions of years ago undersea volcanic activity created the islands that now comprise the Federated States of Micronesia. The vast distance from one another (one days' sail for most) and from continental land masses allowed the evolution of unique ecosystems and a large number of endemic species".⁸⁵ Of course these species have been a part of Micronesians' food supply for many centuries. Today they are threatened because of the changes in their natural habitat due to climate change and overfishing activities by distant fishing fleets as will be detailed in later chapters. The distance between islands also influenced the common language shared by groups of islands and the dialectical variants.⁸⁶

⁸²Christopher Lobban and Maria Schefter, *Tropical Pacific Island Environments*, University of Guam Press, USA, 1997, pp. 269-271 and p.p. 288-294; William Alkire, "Cultural Ecology and Ecological Anthropology in Micronesia" in *American Anthropology: An Assessment*, edited by Robert C Kiste and Mac Marshall, University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 81-102.

⁸³David Chapell, "The Post-Contact Period", in *The Pacific Islands: Environment and Society* (revised edition) by Moshe Rapaport, University of Hawaii Press, 2013, pp. 144-145.

⁸⁴Paul D'Arcy, "Cultural Divisions and Island Environments since the Time of Dumont d'Urville", *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 38(2), October 2003, p.p. 217-236, Canberra, Australia; David Hanlon, "Micronesia: Writing and Rewriting the Histories of a Nonentity" in *Pacific Studies*, Vol.12, No.2, March 1989, p.15.

⁸⁵*Millennium Development Goals and Status Report 2010: The Federated States of Micronesia*. Prepared by Office of Statistics, Budget and Economic Management, Overseas Development Assistance and Compact Management, December 15, 2010, Pohnpei, p.71.

⁸⁶Jeffery C. Marck, "Micronesian Dialects and the Overnight Voyage" in *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 95, No.2 (1986) pp. 253-258.

The inhabitants on the low-lying islands depend heavily on fishing, and small-scale farming to meet their daily needs. This is supplemented by purchases of western foods from the port towns,⁸⁷ from relatives visiting or sending food or funds. In addition, relatives residing and working overseas also remit funds.⁸⁸ Small local stores provide sources for purchasing Western foods when necessary. However, on the volcanic islands where the central port towns are located, the inhabitants, despite the abundant land to farm, prefer imported food products from Australia, Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan and the USA for their daily diet.

Non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, stroke and heart problems are now common in the population because of the changes from traditional dietary habits to that of modern diet high in refined products and chemical additives.⁸⁹ The FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs (DHSA) is advocating a return to a more traditional diet to improve community health, which is also crucial in the maintenance of the health of the nation. As a consequence, many islanders are re-planting indigenous crops for the purposes of adhering to a healthy diet to slow down the widespread consequences of non-communicable diseases, which have slowly spread beyond the major port towns.⁹⁰

The FSM forms the northwest part of the region of Oceania. It lies immediately above the equator between Papua New Guinea to the south and Guam to the north, and Palau to the west, and the Marshall Islands to the east. It consists of more than 607 islands⁹¹ dispersed in a vast oceanic space. Only sixty-five⁹² of the islands are inhabited varying in population size from less than one hundred in the low-lying islands to thirty five thousand in the volcanic islands.⁹³ The islands range from small atolls that barely

⁸⁷ Port towns are the hubs of politico-economic activities in each of the states within the federation. They emerged during the colonial period and are still maintained as such.

⁸⁸ Francis X. Hezel, *The New Shape of Old Cultures: A Half Century of Social Change in Micronesia*, University of Hawaii Press, 2001, pp.152-154.

⁸⁹ Marcus Samo, Assistant Secretary of the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs *Interview*, July 9, 2013, Kolonia, Pohnpei, January 21, 2011; Gibson Susumu and Mark Kostka, Federated States of Micronesia *Food Security Assessment Report*, pp.18-19; Micronesia, Federated States of: Country Health Information Profiles, p.219 < http://www.wpro.who.int/countries/fsm/17MICpro2011_finaldraft.pdf>

⁹⁰ Kippier Lippwe, *Personal Comm.* Department of Health and Social Affairs, July 2, 2013.

⁹¹ Gibson Susumu, and Mark Kostka, *Federated States of Micronesia Food Security*, p.1.

⁹² *Millennium Development Goals and Status Report 2010: The Federated States of Micronesia*. Prepared by Office of Statistics, Budget and Economic Management, Overseas Development Assistance and Compact Management (SBOC), Palikir, Pohnpei, December 15, 2010, pp.1-2.

⁹³ *Millennium Development Goals*, pp.1-2.

exceed four metres above the sea level to many volcanic islands.⁹⁴ The total land area of Micronesia is approximately 271 square miles.⁹⁵



Figure 4: Federated States of Micronesia in relation to the world. This map was produced, under the author's instruction, by the Cartography Department at the Australian National University (ANU) in 2014.

The FSM has 2,978,000 square kilometres of economic exclusive zone (EEZ).⁹⁶ According to the latest census published by the office of Statistics, Budget and Economics Management, Overseas Development and Compact Management (SBOC), the FSM's population is estimated to be just over 107, 000.⁹⁷ It is estimated that 49,840 of the 107,000 figures⁹⁸ are living in the USA as of October 11, 2012. Out of the above 49,840 figure, around 16,790 were born in the USA⁹⁹ and are referred to as the “Compact generation”.

According to linguists, there are nine languages, however, four are mainly spoken in the Federated States of Micronesia: Pohnpeian, Chuukese, Kosraean, and Yapese. Many linguists claim that these languages belong to the modern Trukic language, a derivative

⁹⁴ Rosita Henry, William Jeffery, and Christine Pam, *Heritage and Climate Change in Micronesia: A Report on a Pilot Study Conducted on Moch Island, Mortlock Islands, Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia* January 2008, James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland, Australia, 2008, p.7.

⁹⁵ Myjolynn Kim, *Into the Deep: Launching Culture and Policy in the Federated States of Micronesia*, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and Federated States of Micronesia Office of National Archives, Culture and Historic Preservation, 2011, p. 271.

⁹⁶ Paul D'Arcy, “The Lawless Ocean? Voluntary Compliance Regimes and Offshore Resource Exploitation in the Pacific”, p. 3

⁹⁷ SBOC <<http://www.sboc.fm/>>

⁹⁸ Francis X. Hezel, Pacific Island Policy Issue 9, *Micronesians on the Move: Eastward and Upward Bound*, East-West Center, Hawaii, p.p.33-34.

⁹⁹ Hezel, “Micronesia on the Move”, p. 34.

of the Malayo-Polynesian or Austronesian language family group.¹⁰⁰ Chuukese and Pohnpeian languages have their own dialectical variants. However, English is the *lingua franca* of the FSM. Most Micronesians today are multilingual speakers, especially on the island of Pohnpei, where the capital is located. People from across Micronesia gravitate towards Pohnpei for tertiary education, employment, and to visit relatives.

The climate is tropical and humid with heavy year round rainfall, especially in the eastern part of the nation. The temperature is usually around 80 degrees Fahrenheit with two seasons: the dry months, which are generally from May to September, and the windy months from October to April.¹⁰¹ In Mortlockese-Chuukese terms the dry months are called *lerak*¹⁰² (bountiful breadfruit season during the dry summer months) and the windy months *lefang*.¹⁰³ The FSM is located on the southern edge of the typhoon belt. Typhoons vary in intensity, but usually cause severe environmental damage.¹⁰⁴ Climate change is also impacting on the nation's environment. For example, local fishermen have observed that tropical depressions, and sea surge are more frequent than before and have increased in their intensity.¹⁰⁵ Studies on climate change conducted by Fletcher, H. Charles and Richard and M. Bruce;¹⁰⁶ Rosita Henry, et al,¹⁰⁷ and Susumu Gibson et al,¹⁰⁸ and Mark Keim¹⁰⁹ confirmed the locals' observations. The studies indicated the rise in sea level is slowly eroding beaches and increasing saltwater incursion on water wells and on agricultural lands. The protection of the environment from external threats is central to the maintenance and continuity of the FSM. For example, the introduction

¹⁰⁰ Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, p. 26; Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp.37-38; Mauricio Rufino, *Ideological Bases for Power*, p.p.36-39; Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples*, pp. 10-11; Rubinstein, *An Ethnography of Micronesian Childhood*, p. 23.

¹⁰¹ Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, pp. 22-23. *Lerak* is referred to the breadfruit seasons where abundance of food is available. It coincides with the summer months from May to September. *Lefang* is referred to the lean months and it is also known as the windy months. Navigators called the windy months as "*meramen atilei fatel*" (the months to rest the paddles).

¹⁰² *Lerak*; For in depth discussion see D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.p. 14-16 and 152-153. Thomas Gladwin, *East is a Big Bird: Navigation and Logic on Puluwat Atoll*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970, pp. 24-25; William Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll and Inter Island Socio-Economic Ties*, University of Illinois, Press, 1965, pp. 44-45.

¹⁰³ *Lefang* (the windy season from September to April); D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp.152-153.

¹⁰⁴ William Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll and Inter Island Socio-Economic Ties*, University of Illinois, Press, 1965, pp.17-20.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with locals from the Mortlocks, July 14, 2013, Sokehs, Pohnpei; *Federated States of Micronesia Development Framework: Looking to the Future - A Foundation for Discussion at the FSM Development Partners Forum*, 2012, p.27.

¹⁰⁶ Charles H. Fletcher, and Bruce M. Richmond, *Climate Management, and Adaptive Strategies*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁷ Henry, Jeffery, Pam, *Heritage and Climate Change in Micronesia*, pp.38-39.

¹⁰⁸ Susumu Gibson, John Wichap, and Marlyter Silbanuz, *Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) Report Federated States of Micronesia: Agricultural Damage Report*, Palikir, December 2009, pp.4-9.

¹⁰⁹ Mark E. Keim, "Sea Level Rise Disaster in Micronesia: Sentinel Event for Climate Change", National Center for Environmental Health, Agency for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia, USA<<http://healthandcultureinoceania.wikispaces.com/file/view/sea+level+rise+in+Micronesia.pdf>>

of foreign agricultural practices not suited to local conditions, the environmental impact of WWII, and now climate change raise the urgency for locals to resort to traditional conservation practices in collaboration with Western technologies.

In May 1979 the Federated States of Micronesia became a constitutional government in a Free Association transitional arrangement with the administering colonial power, the United States of America. This transitional arrangement has been the source of increasing friction with the USA over governance and independence issues despite the close economic, migration, and cultural ties between the two nations.¹¹⁰ The Federated States of Micronesia is made up of four constituent states: Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap with the capital on the main island of Pohnpei. The Constitution underscored a long history of political process stemming from Micronesians' determination to control the future of their islands. Self-preservation, control, and continuity were at the heart of Micronesians' collective desire to become independent post WW II when decolonization was taking place around the world.¹¹¹

The different island identities are based on the given groups' perception of themselves in relation to the sea or land. For example, the term *shon-metaw* is in reference to the Mortlockese people as from the deep seas. In some islands in the state of Yap and the northwest part of Chuuk the term is *re-mataw*. In the modern time identities are based on the sub-geographical areas of the Federated States of Micronesia such as *mehn Pohnpei* (people of Pohnpei) or *shon Chuuk* (people of Chuuk). These identities connote people's historical past which are now collectively under the Micronesian identity. The identities continue the historical affinity between the islanders.¹¹²

Theories of Peopling the FSM

Micronesian identities and continuity are memorialised and celebrated in indigenous *uruon fanou* (history of the land), *pwarik* (dances)¹¹³ *pisakin eoranei* (material cultures), *kolin fonu* (local songs), *ngorongor* (chants), *titilap* (stories and legends), and *palou*

¹¹⁰ Edward C. King, "Custom and Constitutionalism in the Federated States of Micronesia" in *Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal*, July 2002, p. 3; Clement Mulalap, "Islands in the Stream; Addressing Climate Change From a Small Island Developing State Perspective" in *Climate Change and Indigenous People: The Search for Legal Remedies*, (ed) Randall Abate and Elizabeth Warner, Cheltenham (UK), Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013, p. 36.

¹¹¹ Norman Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, The Institute for Polynesian Studies, Brigham Young University, Hawaii, 1985, p.7.

¹¹² Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p.7.

¹¹³ Glenn Petersen, "Dancing Defiance: The Politics of Pohnpeian Dance Performances" in *Pacific Studies*, Vol. 15. No. 4, December 1992, pp.13-27.

(navigational knowledge).¹¹⁴ Oral history has enabled islanders to trace their places of origin and their connection to such by looking at historical continuity. This body of knowledge is largely ignored and uncited by most academic investigators of the origins of the peoples of Micronesia. Most academic theories assert that Micronesians most likely originated from Southeast Asia and Melanesia. For example, William Alkire,¹¹⁵ Glenn Petersen,¹¹⁶ and Paul Rainbird¹¹⁷ are proponents of this theoretical assumption based on archaeological, botanical, linguistic, and migration interpretation.¹¹⁸

Thomas Gladwin noted that the pattern of settlement of Chuuk and Yap originated from the Marshall Islands via Kosrae, Pohnpei then Chuuk.¹¹⁹ However, anthropologist Ward Goodenough referred to *kachaw*, as the world with layers of heavens in his quest to represent how some Chuukese perceived their origins.¹²⁰ Pohnpeian archaeologist and historian Rufino Mauricio referred to Pohnpeians as migrating from unknown islands from the east, west, and south.¹²¹ Ironically, these valuable traditions add weight to archaeological theories of migrations from Melanesia to the south as one of the sources of Micronesian settlement. Don Rubinstein noted that according to local traditions, the island of Fais in Yap was fished up from the depth of the sea based on oral history of *Moyitigitig*.¹²² This tradition is in keeping with the Oceania-wide traditions of early founding discoverers and navigators such as the Polynesian ancestor Maui fishing islands out of the sea that is fixing them in place from the hitherto unknown, through navigational plotting.

¹¹⁴ Peter, "Eram's Church (Bell): Local Appropriations of Catholicism on Ettal", pp. 275, 279, 283.

¹¹⁵ William Alkire, *Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp. 5-13.

¹¹⁶ Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 39-40.

¹¹⁷ Paul Rainbird, *The Archeology of Micronesia*, Cambridge University Press, 2004. pp. 97-100.

¹¹⁸ Alkire, *An Introduction to the People and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp. 5-13.

¹¹⁹ Gladwin, *East is a Big Bird*, p.4.

¹²⁰ Ward Goodenough, "Skyworld and This World: The Place of Kachaw in Micronesian Cosmology", in *American Anthropology*, 88, No.3 (1986), pp. 551-568. This idea of the heaven with layers was noted as originated from Nama Island in the Mortlocks. This confirmed how some Lukunor Islanders perceived the heaven during the 1980s. For example, while I tried to explain to one of my uncles, Taichy, about the earth existing in the universe. He countered my explanation by stating that human beings live inside the earth which has different layers referred to as *lang* (heaven) where the wind come from the different different directions or layers as in the *efong*, *eor*, and *lotow* (north, east and south). He was not convinced with my explanation.

¹²¹ Mauricio, *Ideological Bases for Power and Leadership on Pohnpei*, pp. 2-7.

¹²² Don Rubinstein, *An Ethnography of Micronesian Childhood*, p.18, 21-22; See also Rawari Taonui, "Polynesian Oral Traditions" in K.R. Howe, (ed) *Vaka Moana: Voyages of the Ancestors*, Auckland, 2006, p.30.

However, Oha Uman, Ferdun Saladier, and Ante Chipen in a detailed and valuable collection of local traditions, *Uruon Chuuk*,¹²³ spoke of oral narratives of inter-island migration within Micronesia. This *uruo* was written in the Chuukese language recorded in the 1970s by many Chuukese authors based on oral history. Apart from a few English translations commissioned in the late 1990s by Paul D'Arcy, it remains largely untranslated and uncited within academia. My readings of the oral narratives confirmed what I learned from my elders. For example, the peopling of the islands in the Mortlocks originated from the Chuuk lagoon. It also confirmed the pattern of contact between the Yapese, Pohnpeians and Kosraeans. *Uruon Chuuk* also contains details of the sea-lanes between islands for migration purposes facilitated by the *leoo* whose dwellings are situated at particular points in the sea. It pointed to Pohnpei and Kosrae as the point of origin where the Chuukese people came from.¹²⁴ Marshall confirmed the oral histories of contact between Mortlockese, Pohnpeians, and the islands in the northwest of Chuuk lagoon before colonisation.¹²⁵ Despite this *uruo*, each island always resorted to its own *uruo* to trace its origin and, more importantly, its connection to other Micronesians. For example, the first inhabitants of my island of Lukunor in the Mortlocks region traced their origin to a village in Weno called Wichap in the Chuuk lagoon.¹²⁶ Likewise other low-lying islands in Chuuk claimed their origins in the same lagoon.¹²⁷ The islands in the Chuuk lagoon in turn spoke of Yap, Pohnpei, and Kosrae as their points of origin.¹²⁸

Moreover, Pohnpeians traced their origins as from distant shores over the horizon.¹²⁹ Peter Lohn, the traditional *wasai*¹³⁰ of the chiefdom of Sokehs noted that some of these

¹²³ Oha Uman, Ferdun Saladier and Ante Chipen, *Uruon Chuuk: A Resource of Oral legends, Traditions, and History of Truk*, Vol.1, ESEA Title IV Omnibus Program for Social studies-Cultural Heritage Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, July 1979, pp.1-7.

¹²⁴ Ferdun, Saladier, and Chipen, *Uruon Chuuk*, pp.1-7.

¹²⁵ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p.19.

¹²⁶ Wichap is one of the villages in Weno Island, the capital of the state of Chuuk.

¹²⁷ Joakim Peter, "Chuukese Travellers and the Idea of Horizon" in *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, Vol.41, No.3, Victorian University of Wellington, New Zealand, December 2000, p. 258; Eve C. Pinsker, "Traditional Leaders Today in the Federated States of Micronesia" in *Chiefs Today: Traditional Pacific Leadership and the Postcolonial State*, edited by Geoffrey M. White Lamont Lindstrom, Stanford University Press, California, 1997, p.163.

¹²⁸ Philip and Ferdun Salandier, *Uruon Chuuk: A Resource of Oral Legends, Traditions and History of Truk*, Vol. 1. ESEA Title IV Omnibus Program for Social Studies-Cultural Heritage, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, July, 1979, pp. 1-7. However, others such as Goodenough argued that people from Weno were the descendants of the *anu-aramas* half-human, half-ghost who came from the different heavens.

¹²⁹ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 1988, p. 42.

¹³⁰ *Wasai* is the second in line to the Nahnmwarki of Sokehs (the highest traditional chief) from that district in the volcanic island of Pohnpei.

distant shores are Tuvalu and Kiribati.¹³¹ Many inhabitants of the low lying islands in Yap came from Chuuk as evidenced by clan relationships based on oral histories. Kosraeans pointed to the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Yap as some of the places where they came from.¹³² In all we can see that Micronesians perceive their origins as situated at different points within the huge area that encompassed the Micronesia Region. Micronesians have argued that their own *uruo* is a science in itself; it has its own internal logic and coherency. Their historical claims therefore have the same capability as Western sciences in the determination of historical certainty.¹³³ For example, when looking at land cases in Chuuk, the Court often looks at oral histories to determine who actually owns the land based on *ainang* histories.¹³⁴

Trends of Historical Claims

The genesis of Micronesia historiography began with the arrival of the Portuguese and Spanish explorers in the 16th Century. Treatment and portrayals of Micronesians in the early literature focused largely upon the types of responses exhibited by Micronesians to outsiders. For example, Dumont de D'Urville, Captain Arellano, and Andrew Cheyne referred to Chuukese as a violent and treacherous lot. Pohnpeians were unfriendly, while Mortlockese were hospitable and considerate.¹³⁵ In Ulithi, Joao de Barros, a Portuguese historian, observed the indigenous people to be of simple rationality, and still in "the simplicity of the first age".¹³⁶ The distorted images of *shon Maikronesia* continued to appear in subsequent literature by a host of scholars such as ethnographers, archaeologists, legal writers, economists, and journalists. Micronesia is often compared unfavourably to Polynesia and Melanesia to conjure up the image of tiny islands with weak social structures. Like "a handful of chickpeas flung over the sea",¹³⁷ the images

¹³¹ Oral history also connects the Mortlockese and the people from Kiribati with the clan called *tuum*.

¹³² Harvey Gordon Segal, *Kosrae: The Sleeping Lady Awakens*, Kosrae Tourist Division, Department of Conservation and Development, Kosrae State Government, FSM, 1989, p.6; Uman, Saladier, and Chipen, *Uruon Chuuk*, pp.1-7.

¹³³ Oral history according to traditional perspective has its own logic. It is used to validate or invalidate the processes of historical debate and pinpoint certainty. For example, the first clan on a particular island can shed light on the order of events being the first occupant.

¹³⁴ As an example see *Mark Mailo v Etomara Atonesia*, 7 FSM Intrm.294, Chk.S.Ct.Tr.1995, CA no.73-92.

¹³⁵ Mac Marshall, *Weekend Warriors: Alcohol in a Micronesian Culture*, Mayfield Publishing Company, Palo Alto, California, 1979, p.38; Francis X. Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization: A History of the Caroline and Marshall Islands in Pre-Colonial Days, 1521-1885*, University of Hawaii Press, 1983, pp. 23, 90-91.

¹³⁶ Hezel, *First Taint of Civilization*, p.12.

¹³⁷ Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, p. xi; Mauricio, *Ideological Bases for Power and Leadership on Pohnpei*, p.240.

of the micro-islands connote disconnection, isolation, and lacking essential resources sought after by the outside world.

Proponents of the perceptions are many. They include anthropologists William Alkire¹³⁸, Ward Goodenough¹³⁹, and Sherwood Lingenfelter¹⁴⁰ who described Micronesia as small islands suffering from isolation, and with poor soil depending heavily on rain to provide a subsistence life.¹⁴¹ Francis Hezel, although often displaying great empathy for contemporary Micronesians and portraying them favourably, expounded on this description by reducing earlier generations of Micronesians to the lower end of the human civilisation scale. He referred to Micronesians as “simply living on fish and taro or breadfruit, wear their traditional dress ...and carry on long-distance canoe voyages for which their islands were famous for”.¹⁴² The attendant question is, who is to say that living in an oceanic environment with its own challenges is “simpler” than living on dry industrialised continental land with mammoth politico-economic problems¹⁴³. The eyes of the observer, and the cultural baggage that determines what they see and fail to see dictate images of Micronesia. In portraying Micronesians as simple people living on the margins of subsistence, outsiders ignore complex lore designed to enable people to live in harmony with nature and the complexity of social organisation that developed to provide inter-island links. For example, coping with recurrent typhoons required a sophisticated organisation was needed to support a seafaring culture where many men are away for long periods, supporting technically sophisticated enterprises like canoe building and seafaring required sophisticated knowledge and group involvement. European powers are assessed as organised and efficient by the degree to which they could mobilize their societies to put fleets to sea for national enterprises. However, smaller Pacific societies, which maintained the infrastructure to put their entire population to sea in seaworthy ships at short notice with far less resources to call upon, are depicted as living on the margins of subsistence.

Like elsewhere in the Pacific, many contemporary scholars have inadvertently perpetuated the negative images of Micronesia as a resource-poor nation suffering from

¹³⁸ Alkire, *Introduction to the Peoples and the cultures of Micronesia*, p.44.

¹³⁹ Ward Goodenough, *Under Heaven's Brow: Pre-Christian Religious Tradition in Chuuk*, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 2002, p.29.

¹⁴⁰ Lingenfelter, *Yap: Political Leadership and Culture Change*, p.7.

¹⁴¹ Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, p. 44.

¹⁴² Hezel, *The New Shape of Old Island Cultures*, p.7.

¹⁴³ Hau'ofa, *We Are the Ocean*, pp. 30-31.

remoteness and isolation, political corruption, dependency¹⁴⁴, and an investment-unfriendly environment due to its famous anti-foreign Constitution.¹⁴⁵ Meller wrote of Micronesia, “Limited living space and paucity of resources contributed to a subsistence closely bounded by the vicissitudes of nature and the ravages of human enemies”, saved by “goods produced elsewhere (which) freed them from the day to day dependence on the vagaries of nature”.¹⁴⁶ To fuel this image, human geographer, John Connell observed that nowhere else in the Pacific is the gulf between image and reality as great as it is (in Micronesia).¹⁴⁷ “Micronesia’s image has become tarnished by a unique form of trustee military colonialism, an unusually dependent form of development, and limited prospects of achieving any degree of economic, and political independence, despite the signing of the Compact of Free Association. In a century, this strategically important region has gone from subsistence to subsidy”.¹⁴⁸ Connell’s comments do not represent the realities of contemporary Micronesia. For example in the islands far from the political centres, traditional life styles largely untouched by USA subsidies and funds, remain the norm.

This dissertation counters Connell’s observation of externally imposed dependency by arguing that the current political arrangement between the FSM and USA stems from Micronesian initiatives based on historical lessons to respond to contemporary international affairs on their own terms. That is, the USA sought what it desired (military denial) in exchange for what the Micronesians demanded (to pay for that interest). Connell exemplifies the deep-seated economic deterministic mentality of many contemporary commentators on the Pacific. This mentality ignores the roots of social and economic realities in Micronesia.¹⁴⁹ As will be argued in later chapters, these external criticisms reflect externally imposed processes rather than inherent problems and solutions within Micronesian society.

The Compact is seen as the vehicle for Micronesians to access the USA employment market. The Compact is more correctly to be seen as a lease between a landlord and the tenant. The Compact monies are synonymous with rent and so the money may be spent

¹⁴⁴ Hezel, Francis X., “Micronesian Governments: A View From Outside” in *Micronesian Counselor* #55, April 2005 <<http://www.micsem.org>>

¹⁴⁵ *The FSM Constitution*, Article VIII, Sections 4-5.

¹⁴⁶ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, Part 1, The Setting, p.5.

¹⁴⁷ Gonzaga Puas, “Micronesia Still a Colony” in *Pacific Daily News*, January 15, 2000, p.19.

¹⁴⁸ Puas, “Micronesia Still a Colony”, p.19.

¹⁴⁹ Many foreign observers continue to view Micronesia as too dependent on the USA. The question is how does one define dependency from Micronesian perspective? No literature existed yet on this particular topic. See Hanlon, “Magellan’s Chroniclers?”, pp. 53-54.

the way the FSM desires. It is not up to outside observers to dictate the type of economic activities the Micronesians should pursue as has been attempted by USA officials at various times during the Compact era.

Writing at an earlier time before the move towards independence gathered force, political scientist Roger Gale, contradicted the negative assessments of Meller and Connell. He stated that there are islands in Micronesia, for example Pohnpei and Kosrae that are “lush and verdant”,¹⁵⁰ which provide sufficient food crops for the islanders. Moreover, to Micronesians the soil is very rich, as it has sustained islanders for millennia. Surpluses are shared between villages and neighbouring islands. Trade is also common between islands. The size of the islands had taught the inhabitants well about conservation techniques and appreciation of their environment. Moreover, “smallness” has its own advantages and it is a relative term. For example, the micro-islands may have discouraged outsiders to settle permanently thus reducing the disruption to local lives that often follows and thus denying the negative forces and elements of the global economy that have disrupted local lives elsewhere, such as around large mining sites for example. Today Micronesians continue to carry on their traditional life with manageable interruptions from the outside world. The redesignation of Micronesia’s past territorial sea, which now forms its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), also speaks for itself. Micronesia’s territory now dwarfs many continental nations. As in the past, Micronesians continue to perceive the sea as an extension of the land itself. The outside world is starting to appreciate this fact; it puts the concept of smallness in a different context. Outsiders are now fixated with the potential economic wealth in the FSM’s EEZ.¹⁵¹ Pacific island leaders are now consistently depicting themselves as Big Ocean Nations rather than Small Island Nations as will be outlined in a later chapter.

Micronesian perception of the land-sea continuum has not been well understood by outsiders. For example, the former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, once said in response to the questions about the ethics of nuclear testing in inhabited zones of the western Pacific without local consent first being sought; “who gives a damn there are only 90,000 people out there”.¹⁵² Kissinger’s condemnation of Micronesians and their

¹⁵⁰ Roger Gale, *Americanisation of Micronesia: A Study of the Consolidation of US Rule in the Pacific*, University Press of America, Washington DC, 1979, p.7.

¹⁵¹ Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, pp. 170-171; Peter Sitan, “The Development of the Tuna Fisheries in the Federated States of Micronesia”, Unpublished paper presented at the Micronesian Symposium, Australian National University, April 27-28, 2014, pp. 3-6.

¹⁵² Bethwel Henry, the first speaker of the Congress of Micronesia, *Interview*, June 28, 2012. See also David Hanlon ‘You Did What, Mr. President? Trying to Write a Biography of Tosiwo Nakayama’, <http://press.anu.edu.au/tpl/mobile_devices/ch12.html>

islands reaffirmed outsiders' ignorance of the enormity of the size of the islands' resource base when including the sea, let alone the ethical issue of deciding that others should suffer nuclear testing for the "good of humanity" to preserve world peace, regardless of whether they consented or not.

Kissinger spoke his mind from a continental perspective. It has no bearing on islanders' perspective of their oceanic world and their place in history. Micronesia might then be more accurately described as "Macronesia" as Hanlon once noted.¹⁵³ Perhaps the context is Micronesia's 107,000 citizens who share a sovereign territory of 1.3 million square miles of land and the sea.¹⁵⁴ While the sea serves as a unifying force for Micronesians, outsiders consider it as an obstacle for its effective management. Outsiders perceive the sea as separating the islands rather than connecting the islands.¹⁵⁵

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are no wiser in adopting the negative line predicting economic doom for Micronesia. For example, the IMF predicted that, "the economy (faces) important risks...from a potential deterioration in the external environment and, over the long term, the scheduled expiration of Compact grants and continued outmigration of the working age population."¹⁵⁶ Many observers echoed IMF's concern. The President of the FSM sought assistance from the ADB and other international organisations to pre-empt the negative economic outlook. However, the irony is that ADB has patchy records about the economic record of FSM as its data is largely based on "fly in, fly out" consultants who remain briefly before returning to Manila to write their reports and recommendations. For example, in the ADB 2011 Report regarding technical assistance to the FSM, ADB consultants were allocated two to three months each in the FSM to complete their assignments.¹⁵⁷ The report did not deal with indigenous perspectives of their unique economic circumstances, but on what ADB believed is the way to move forward economically. The sea as an asset was not treated by the report either. It failed to note the importance of the sea and the increase in FSM's income regarding the

¹⁵³ David Hanlon, "Tosiwo Nakayama", paper presented in Tokyo, 2011, p.2.

¹⁵⁴ Sitan, *The Development of the Tuna Fisheries*, p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ Houfa, *The Ocean in Us*, p.38; *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*, Preamble; D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp. 144-146.

¹⁵⁶ *Federated States of Micronesia (FSM): 2012 Article IV Consultation Concluding Statement of the IMF November 19, 2012* <<http://imf.org/external>>; ADB Technical Assistance Report, *Project Number: 44471 Capacity Development Technical Assistance (CDTA) November 2011 Federated States of Micronesia: Strengthening: Infrastructure Planning and Implementation (Financed by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction)*, p.4. <<http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-document/60497/44471-012-fsm-tar.pdf>>

¹⁵⁷ ADB Technical Assistance Report, *Project Number: 44471*, p.4.

fishing industry. For example, the value of tuna in 2008 was estimated at \$41,818,486 (USD) compared to \$92,496,175 estimated in 2012.¹⁵⁸ The industry is expected to grow further in the years ahead.

Many consultants do not understand Micronesians' current circumstances let alone the depth of their history. To prove this point, Hezel claimed that the emergence of the cash economy has altered the fabric of Micronesian families "almost beyond recognition during the last few decades".¹⁵⁹ The reality on the ground is somewhat different. The counter argument is that money has been incorporated into the island system as another commodity circulating within the extended family model of *alilis*, and *eaea fengan* as Marshall diligently puts it.¹⁶⁰ Micronesians have not been overwhelmed by global economic forces, but rather have incorporated these into existing mechanisms that have proven their worth over millennia. A few days in any location makes it clear that the doctrine of *alilis fengen* and the *ainang* system continue to operate and provide stability and support for clan members as always.

Micronesian Perspective of History

My upbringing and fieldwork has alerted me to the large corpus of oral history absent from most external commentaries on FSM societies. Only a fraction has been revealed to western researchers and much of that has been assessed in variable ways.¹⁶¹ A holistic approach is required to bettering our understanding of Micronesians perspectives of history. The increasing presence of Micronesian perspectives in published histories requires that oral history must play a greater role in academia¹⁶². The challenge for all historians is to be conscious of the diversities of Micronesian voices and to ensure their placement in mainstream academic discourses. As in all history, different *ainang* have the tendency to skew historical narratives to stake their own claims and interests. Academic historians can work together with their local counterparts to construct possibilities and verify the validity of competing claims. Historians must be aware of all the available tools at their disposal to fill in the existing

¹⁵⁸ Sitan, *The Development of the Tuna Fisheries*, p. 21.

¹⁵⁹ Hezel, *The New Shape of Old Island Cultures*, p.8.

¹⁶⁰ Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity*, p.62.

¹⁶¹ Negative portrayal of indigenous identity is exemplified by Lin Poyer, "The Ngatik Massacre: Documentary and Oral Traditional Accounts", *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 20, no.1, 4-22; Ann Nakano, *Broken Canoe: Conversations and Observations in Micronesia*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1983; Positive views are yet to be revealed by the new generations of indigenous scholars.

¹⁶² Micronesian historical theories are often left to clan historians to prove or disprove the validity and dynamic of events. See Lin Poyer, "The Ngatik Massacre", pp. 20-22. For commentaries and detailed analysis of Pacific history, see Paul D'Arcy, "Introduction" in Paul D'Arcy, *The Pacific World* pp. ix-xiv.

gaps in Micronesian historiography. Written history has been appropriated as a complementary tool for Micronesian scholars to reconstruct their histories; they are becoming more accessible for indigenous scholars to examine. This trend perpetuates Micronesians as active agents in the production and reconstruction of their historical experiences. They are redefining and reclaiming their historical past that has been misplaced, mystified, and mistreated for centuries as a consequence of colonialism and its agencies. Micronesian perspective of history is gaining momentum by emerging scholars from both the islands and outside.¹⁶³

Some non-Micronesian scholars have been supportive of situating Micronesian perspectives within mainstream academia. In their assessment, oral history is just as reliable as written history. The fact that many scholars do not have access to oral history does not necessarily follow that it is not history per se. The debate is not which history is more credible, but how to reconcile both forms of history to increase our understanding of island discourses. Both should be treated as complementing each other for the purpose of enlarging scholarly engagement. As D'Arcy observed:

“Until quite recently archaeologists and others who study pre-European history of (Micronesia) tended to treat island communities as relatively self-contained. Modern academic writings portray external contacts as being of limited significance in the development of individual islands after initial colonisation by human beings. Pre-European cultural development is usually depicted as driven by the interaction of internal processes. These include; cultural emphasis on competition: adaptation of the founding culture to a new environment; population growth on a limited land area; environmental change, both natural and human-induced, and cultural emphasis on competition for status channelled into warfare, or the intensification of production for redistribution to forge social and political obligations. The possibility of new arrivals introducing cultural innovations is not dismissed, but it is always considered of secondary importance”.¹⁶⁴

D'Arcy,¹⁶⁵ Peter,¹⁶⁶ Ridgell et al¹⁶⁷, and Berg,¹⁶⁸ for example, have disproven the idea that islands were isolated, by documenting detailed accounts of inter-island interactions

¹⁶³ Peter, “Eram’s Church (Bell): Local Appropriations of Catholicism on Ettal”, pp. 278-280.

¹⁶⁴ Paul D'Arcy, “Connected by the Sea: Towards Regional History of the Western Caroline Islands in *Journal of Pacific History*, 36:2, p. 163.

¹⁶⁵ For specific details see book by D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*.

¹⁶⁶ See article for indigenous perspective by Peter, “Chuukese travellers.”

¹⁶⁷ Reilly Ridgell, Manny Ikea, and Isaoshy Uruo (1994), “The Persistence of Central Carolinian Navigation” in *ISLA: A Journal of Micronesian Studies* 2(2) Dry Season, pp. 197-205.

¹⁶⁸ M.L. Berg, “Yapese Politics, Yapese Money, and the Sawei Tribute Network Before World War I” in *Journal of Pacific History*, V.27, No.2, (Dec., 1992), pp.150-164.

across time. Historians within my clan also contradict this image and suggest that, in fact, even D'Arcy and other western scholars most supportive of the pervasiveness of island interaction, are still well short of conceiving the true extent of inter-island interaction. For example, my clan spoke of continuing contact between members throughout history in far more detail and intensity than is portrayed in published academic sources. Contact with and knowledge of communities in the Marshall Islands and Kiribati figures prominently in some clan traditions, but is seen as isolated and unusual in academic literature. Today those connections remain active especially when I travel in the FSM where relatives from different islands welcome me into their homes without hesitation.¹⁶⁹

Highlighting Micronesian Perspectives

A handful of scholars from different disciplines are opening new frontiers for Micronesian historiography. Historians such as Mauricio Rufino, Joakim Peter, Paul D'Arcy, David Hanlon, Vicente Diaz as well as sociologist Ansito Walter, and anthropologists Mac Marshall, Donald Rubinstein, Glenn Petersen, and Manuel Rauchholz have made valuable contributions to Micronesian historiography.¹⁷⁰ These new breed of scholars have advocated a style that is inclusive of indigenous perspectives. In so doing they provide a space and validity for Micronesian perspectives to be heard in a broader setting. Mauricio Rufino, Joakim Peter, Myjollynne Kim, LJ Rayphand, Margarita Cholmay, and the writer represent a new and exciting wave of indigenous scholars who are decolonising their history with resort to the unique insights their cultural upbringing has given them combined with academic lessons from external scholars open to exploring and questioning European-dominated historical sources on cultural encounters in the Pacific.¹⁷¹ The only nationally prominent advocate for FSM-centred history in the previous generation is John Haglelgam.¹⁷²

These indigenous scholars are critically engaging with the Micronesian historical knowledge. For example, Mauricio noted the value of oral history in the perpetuation of

¹⁶⁹ Personal experience. Many of my relatives are unknown to me until they explain our affinity and historical links.

¹⁷⁰ The scholars mentioned have provoked new levels in Micronesian studies perpetrating the idea of indigenising history to broaden our understanding of Micronesian traditional societies in response to colonisation and their status in the modern world.

¹⁷¹ New generation of indigenous scholars are currently investigating their own island histories and connection to their immediate region and beyond.

¹⁷² John Haglelgam "Problems of National Unity and Economic Development in the Federated States of Micronesia", in *ISLA Journal of Micronesian Studies*, Volume.1, Number 1, Rainy Season, 1992, University of Guam Press, p.6.

Micronesian identity and continuity. Oral history, he claimed, is an organising tool that can be used in conjunction with other academic disciplines to enrich an understanding of Micronesia's past. As he stated: "oral traditions provide a comprehensive and multi-vocal narrative of history of the evolving (Micronesian) socio-political system. This narrative history is much more than compendium of stories about past events. It also represents a structured and dynamic body of knowledge administered and managed...and continually translates past events...in terms of the present day affairs".¹⁷³ Rufino echoes Haglelgam's view where he stated that, Micronesians have "a common and ancient heritage born from the spirit of exploration, from the skills of navigators, and the builders of the outrigger canoes. Despite the differences in languages and specific traditional practises from island to island, we have long been aware of each other, occupy similar circumstances, and have been subjected to similar influences, both natural and political".¹⁷⁴

Historian of Micronesia from neighbouring Guam, Vince Diaz, supports Mauricio's points by raising the need to reposition history to incorporate indigenous perspectives. Hanlon referred to such repositioning as the "decentralisation" of colonial history to treat Micronesian perspectives as history in its own right.¹⁷⁵ This resonates in Walter's comment calling to dismantle the self-promoting exercise designed to perpetuate outsiders' historical interest.¹⁷⁶ Again, Diaz praised such an intellectual movement as remarkable and a worthy cause in order to eradicate colonial distortions of Micronesia's past.¹⁷⁷ That is to say, that the colonisation process was managed by the intellectual powers of Micronesians. Outsiders saw Micronesian intellectualism as inferior or non-existent. The inability of the colonists to recognise this drive for maintaining self-direction enabled the islanders to continue to live in a dual world while waiting for future opportunities to reassert their independence.

Hanlon reaffirms Hezel's comments by stating, "that there has always been far more to the islands' past than colonialism".¹⁷⁸ There is indeed a growing admission by scholars that "Micronesians (were the) agents, actors, negotiators, appropriators, and

¹⁷³ Mauricio, *Ideological Bases for Power and Leadership on Pohnpei*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁷⁴ Haglelgam, *Problems of National Unity*, p. 6.

¹⁷⁵ Hanlon, "Micronesia: Writing and Rewriting the Histories of a Nonentity" in *Pacific Studies*, March 1989, V.12, No.2. pp. 4-6.

¹⁷⁶ Ansito Walter, *Desirability, Problems, and Methods of Achieving National Independence: Opinions of Citizens and Senators of the Federated States of Micronesia (PhD Thesis)*, American University, San Diego, 1985 published University of Michigan Ann Harbour, Michigan USA, p. 33.

¹⁷⁷ Vincente Diaz, *Repositioning the Missionary: Rewriting the Histories of Colonialism, Native Catholicism, and Indigeneity in Guam*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 2010, pp. 21-23.

¹⁷⁸ Hanlon, "Magellan's Chroniclers?", p. 77.

manipulators... who had dealt with past colonial regimes, survived war, and now”¹⁷⁹ continue to challenge new sets of circumstances. The new generation is laying the foundation of a new paradigm shift in Micronesian historical dialogue. It calls for re-interpretation of history from indigenous perspectives, which have been marginalised from published works for too long.

Marshall, D’Arcy, Rubinstein, and Petersen underscored the importance of the *ainang* as inter-connecting Micronesian islands throughout history. Such connection continues to grow globally with the new diaspora. As Marshall observed, “(Micronesian) culture is not bound to (an isolated) place, (but)...it is carried with (the people) as they cross borders in search of new opportunities...or safety (with their relatives) from warfare and (disasters)”¹⁸⁰. Marshall’s comment is supported by a prominent FSM diplomat, James Naich¹⁸¹ wherein he asserted that Micronesians’ relationship with each other has been an essential element that defined, shaped, and sustained Micronesians as a distinct group of people who have survived centuries of external threats.¹⁸² D’Arcy expanded on these views in commenting that the history of Micronesia is about a sea of crowded islands and open sea markers that assisted inter-island voyages¹⁸³ allowing the *ainang* system to flourish.

The Sea as History

External development experts often neglect the importance of the sea to Micronesians. For example, the sea is seen as an obstacle to the movement of goods and services from major world markets. In contrast the sea is a major part of Micronesian identity. In his book, *The People of the Sea*, D’Arcy outlined the importance of the sea. He noted; “People of the sea need to feel truly at home with the sea. Most of the inhabitants of Oceania lived along the coastal margins of their island homes. The sights, sounds and smells of the sea pervaded their lives while the tastes of the sea were often on their lips”.¹⁸⁴ This is true in the case of Micronesia, where the sea is always part of daily activities. No one can escape the sea, or wishes to.

¹⁷⁹ Hanlon, “Magellan’s Chroniclers?”, p.119.

¹⁸⁰ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p.10.

¹⁸¹ James Naich, is the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) at the FSM Embassy in Washington DC. I interview him on the net, December 21, 2014.

¹⁸² Naich, *Interview*.

¹⁸³ D’Arcy, “Connected by the Sea”, p.165.

¹⁸⁴ D’Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.27.

Pacific scholars such as Epeli Hau'ofa ignited a debate on external misrepresentation of the role of the sea in Pacific Island life in the early 1990s. He referred to colonisation as disrupting islanders' mobility on the seas.¹⁸⁵ Colonisation superimposed imaginary boundaries in Oceania as a means to divide and rule local inhabitants. Islanders were contained within the designated boundaries under the rule of various colonial powers. Hau'ofa called for a reshaping of Pacific Island history to reflect Pacific Islanders' oceanic past. As he noted, "Nineteenth-century imperialism erected boundaries that led to the contraction of Oceania, transforming once a boundless world into the Pacific Island States and territories that we know today. People were confined to their tiny spaces, isolated from each other. No longer could they travel freely to do what they had done for centuries."¹⁸⁶

Hau'ofa's view was more of a general vision of how to decolonise Pacific history than a detailed account of Pacific Islanders use of the sea as a conduit for communication.¹⁸⁷

While his call for decolonisation of Pacific history is laudable, part of that decolonisation involves correcting external images not only from westerners, but also other Pacific Islanders with different engagements with the sea. For example, a number of Hau'ofa's assumptions are questionable, at least from a Micronesian perspective. It should be remembered that sea boundaries have been part of Micronesian history as it demarcated the many Micronesian identities that existed before colonisation.

Demarcations defined people, space, and established the norms of interaction between islands, or island groups.¹⁸⁸ For example, in the Mortlocks strict protocols governed fishing activities and sailing between islands. When a canoe approached an island it must observe protocols, or the canoe would be deemed a threat. Expectation of foreknowledge of protocols by senior sailors was required to save lives as well as the knowledge of sea and landmarks as each has special meaning. As landfall approached, they signalled when to fold the sail, to sit, paddle, and wait for further signals from the hosts to approach the beach. Disrespecting protocols could mean battle.

A variety of academics have noted inter-island protocols in the much studied *sawei* system when canoes from the outer islands in Chuuk would sail to meet their relatives in the island chain in Yap to pay tribute and exchange gifts with the chiefs in the main

¹⁸⁵ Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands", p.34.

¹⁸⁶ Houfa, "Our Sea of Islands", p. 34.

¹⁸⁷ D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp. 55-56.

¹⁸⁸ Personal knowledge. See also D'Arcy, *People of the Sea*, p.136.

island of Yap in the district of Gagil.¹⁸⁹ In Chuuk, protocols were also established between islands when visiting relatives, or trade with each other especially the islands in the Chuuk lagoon.¹⁹⁰ Island security was defined by the boundaries on the seas. The protocols endured throughout the colonial period along with inter-island exchanges despite the best efforts of colonial authorities to assert control. Decolonisation of FSM in my lifetime has not lifted the restrictions, but rather they sit alongside international maritime laws that recognise the post-colonial divisions.

However, just as the sea is the provider for islanders, the sea may also destroy islanders through a new form of threat, climate change. Like colonisation, climate change is foreign induced and is slowly affecting Micronesians. Micronesians will need to deal with this new phenomenon. This will be discussed in this dissertation's assessment of the future of Micronesia in a later chapter. Meeting this new threat will require resorting to historical knowledge of adaptation in partnership with the technical knowledge from the outside world. However, Micronesians will continue to engage with the sea. It must be remembered that Micronesians have been adapting to natural disasters such as typhoons, tidal waves, and drought in their aquatic world. Adaptation strategies have in turn influenced the way Micronesians engaged with each other.¹⁹¹ Inter-island engagement prior to colonisation has refined the means and methods of travel and interaction to sophisticated levels, and allowed Micronesians to adapt to new influences emanating from the outside world successfully.¹⁹²

Outsiders continue to impose their ideologies in Micronesia by economic and political pressures. Micronesian identity endures despite this however. Rather than being

¹⁸⁹ D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp. 146-150; Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp.49-52; Rosalind L. Hunter-Anderson and Yigal (Go'opsan) Zan, "Demystifying the Sawei, A Traditional Interisland Exchange", in *ISLA: A Journal of Micronesian Studies*, Vol.4, No.1/Rainy Season, 1996, pp. 4-6; Reilly Ridgell, Manny Ikea, and Isaach Uruo, "The Persistence of Central Carolinian Navigation" in *ISLA: A Journal of Micronesian Studies*, 2:2, Dry Season, 1994, 181-206, pp.197-205.

¹⁹⁰ Felix Naich, *oral history* confirmed the trading activities between the Chuuk Lagoon and Mortlockese. During one of the trading seasons, a sailing fleet from Lukunor stopped by Losap lagoon in the Upper Mortlocks on an uninhabited island called *Piafo* (meaning new beach). After they rested, the Chief applied his magical chant to drag Piafo behind his sailing canoe to Lukunor for his son. *Piafo* is now standing on the northern reef of Lukunor. The people of the Mortlocks still talked about this powerful event.

¹⁹¹ The exchange of adaptation ideas between islands was long established before colonisation. Exchange of ideas meant social and political interaction; they influenced islanders' thought processes. See discussion on mobility in Juliana Flinn, *Diplomats and Thatch Houses: Asserting Tradition in a Changing Micronesia*, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1992, pp.11-14.

¹⁹² *Pukuan* are traditional signposts that demanded certain behaviours when arriving at specific seamarks or landmarks. In the legendary *palou* (navigator) Rongoshik and Rongelap it revealed the strict observation of inter island protocols. Rongelap (who had only general knowledge of the protocols) died, while Rongoshik (the one with specific knowledge of the protocols) survived.

overwhelmed, Micronesians rearticulated colonisation through the process of accommodation and assimilation to absorb its shock waves. For example, academics James Nason and Joakim Peter referred to the resiliency of the Mortlockese people in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries in adapting to Christianity on their own terms. As Nason noted, “neither missionary activity nor the European ships which carried civilisation with them to the islands, have changed the (islanders) and their mode of living significantly”.¹⁹³ This 19th Century observation resonates Micronesian engagement with outsiders today.

Since the 1950s Pacific history has gained prominence as a specialised academic discipline advanced by James Davidson, considered as the father of Pacific history. It has undergone fundamental changes as historians began to develop different approaches and methodologies in the discipline.¹⁹⁴ However, certain issues remained unresolved as many scholars continue the old habit of reproducing the Pacific in the images of imperial history. For example, in a recent book reviewing the sum of Pacific historiography entitled *Texts and Contexts*¹⁹⁵ edited by Pacific historians Doug Munro and Brij Lal, historians were asked to review selected books that were considered foundational in Pacific historiography.

Each of the reviewers gave their impression of how Pacific history was written over time. Of particular concern was the lack of indigenous historians to participate in the review process. For example, critics such as historian Gavan Daws pointed out the shortcomings in Munro’s and Lal’s foundational review. Daws¹⁹⁶ perceived *Texts and Contexts* as a vehicle for reprising out-dated outsiders’ practice of Pacific history. He questioned why indigenous historians were not selected for such a review, and the reason for such a narrow selection.¹⁹⁷ *Texts and Contexts* should be appreciated insofar as it reflects a gazing into the past; a self-congratulatory exercise by a combined Euro-Indio vision of what constituted Pacific historiography rather than what Pacific historiography should be.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹³ Nason, *Clan and Copra*, p. 170; Peter, “Eram’s Church (Bell): Local Appropriations of Catholicism on Ettal”, pp. 282-285.

¹⁹⁴ Paul D’Arcy, “The Teaching of Pacific History: Introduction Diverse Approaches for Diverse Audiences” in *The Journal Of Pacific History* (Forum) V.46, No.2, September 2011, pp. 197-206.

¹⁹⁵ Doug Munro, and Brij Lal, *The Texts in Its Context*” in *Texts and Contexts: Reflection in Pacific Islands Historiography*, University of Hawaii Press, 2006, pp.1-11.

¹⁹⁶ Gavin Daws, “Comment: Texts and Contexts A First Person Note” in *The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. No. 2, September 2006, pp.250-252.

¹⁹⁷ Daws, *Comment: Text and Context*, p. 252.

¹⁹⁸ Daws, *Comment: Text and Context*, pp. 256-259.

As part of the *Texts and Contexts* edition, Hanlon reviewed the book *The First Taint of Civilization* authored by Hezel. In his assessment, the book continues the old habit of reflecting negative images of Micronesians in contemporary literature. He said, “the overall argument of (some writers)...points to a fatality of impact that left island peoples ignorant of their past, uncomfortable with the present, and uncertain about their future”.¹⁹⁹ Perhaps there should be a follow-up text on “Oralities and Contexts” to ensure a holistic trend and development of Pacific history. Diaz echoes Daws’ observation wherein he said, “no group of people...holds a monopoly over intellectual...access to truth... as theorised and practiced in rituals such as historical scholarship...and in things such as books”.²⁰⁰ The observations made by the above historians resonate with similar fundamental issues in Micronesian historiography. That is, who is writing Micronesian history, for whom, and for what purpose?

Thesis Outline

As this thesis is a reflection on perceptions of the past within Micronesia today, each chapter discusses the interaction between the four themes as fundamental to a Micronesian perspective of history and as influential factors in the type of engagement possible with the outside world. Micronesians are armed with their own local strategies to facilitate the changing historical circumstances brought by colonisation and globalisation. Local adaptation involves the processes of cultural refinement through the successive generations to ensure the maintenance of Micronesian identity and continuity.

My doctoral dissertation is organised into 8 chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the Micronesian Constitution as the organising framework for the reproduction of Micronesian continuity as Islanders adapt to the changing world. The Micronesian identity is embedded in the Constitution perpetrating the idea of Micronesians as a distinct group of people who share a common history. This identity is analysed in relation to the past, present and the future. Micronesians are conscientious of their past and strive to preserve that heritage for future generations. That heritage must therefore be protected at all cost. The Constitution is therefore the appropriate socio-political instrument to preserve Micronesian identity and continuity.

¹⁹⁹ David Hanlon, “On Hezel’s *The First Taint of Civilization*” in Doug Munro and Brij Lal, *Texts and Contexts: Reflection in Pacific Islands Historiography*, University of Hawaii Press, 2006, p.207.

²⁰⁰ Diaz, *Repositioning the Missionary*, p.19.

Chapter 2 deals with the various Micronesian identities and how they are packaged into one to constitute the modern nation called the Federated States of Micronesia. It demonstrates the extent of Micronesians' desire to be in control of their own destiny in the modern world in order to perpetuate their continuity. The principle of "diversity in unity" reveals the depth and success of multiculturalism that predated the external powers and continues into modern times of the constituent groups. The Constitution is central to the preservation and maintenance of the multiple identities and at the same time promotes the Micronesian super identity. The Constitution is a living document that speaks to the past and organises the present for the betterment of the future. Principally, it established and strengthens Micronesian institutions to deny further external usurpation of Micronesian independence as enshrined under international legal regimes.

Chapter 3 compares and contrasts Micronesian engagement with the outside world from 1521-1979. This is the era of Micronesian interaction with the colonial powers: Spain, Germany, Japan and the USA. Micronesian terms of engagement with these colonisers depended on the application of their intellectual history to manage outside influences to suit Micronesian contexts. Micronesian historical knowledge of adaptation was used to safeguard indigenous interests despite the unequal power relation between the colonisers and the colonised. The main emphasis will be on the effective management of the four colonising powers by Micronesians to suit Micronesians own purposes.

Chapter 4 focuses on Micronesia's move towards constitutional independence in 1979 and afterwards. Issues such as the rejection of the USA's offer for Micronesia to integrate into the USA political system, are highlighted. Furthermore, the reasons for the creation a Constitution to advance Micronesian interests against those of the USA will be addressed. This chapter also deals with the Compact of Free Association as a forerunner to full independence. The Compact allowed Micronesia more time to organise itself politically and economically until 2023 when financial assistance under the Compact diminishes substantially.

Chapter 5 analyses Micronesian engagement with both China and the USA in Micronesia's jurisdictional space and also the international arena. The interaction between the two superpowers is part of the long history of colonial rivalry in the northwest Pacific. Although China is not seen as a colonial power, the implication is that the USA is treating China as such because it is seen by the USA as a rival. The

competition is about winning influence in Micronesia and therefore gaining a strategic and economic foothold in the region.

Chapter 6 deals with climate change and its consequences in the FSM. Like colonisation, climate change is a new phenomenon emanating from external forces, in this case industrial pollution by the world's major economic powers. The consequences of this industrial negligence is now confronting the security of the FSM in terms of its customs, identity, health, food production, emigration and sovereignty. The FSM is constantly exploring ways to maintain itself despite this new threat. Climate change is a top priority for the national agenda and it will also affect FSM's future engagement with the outside world.

Chapter 7 discusses the issues that are currently affecting the total development of Micronesia. They include, the Compact, climate change impact, the Constitution, leadership, and foreign affairs. These issues are discussed in light of the political conversation between the three levels of government and how this conversation will assist the nation's move forward politically. For example, should the FSM take a different route in terms of the Compact, which is affecting its international policy because of the strategic denial principle that could be exercised by the USA at anytime when its security is under threat? Could this principle be modified to suit Micronesians need? The above challenges will shape FSM's future policies and diplomatic engagement with the external world as well as its present integrity.

Chapter 8 investigates and speculates on future challenges facing the Federated States of Micronesia. It will argue that Micronesians should solve their internal problems as best they can by way of learning from lessons of history. That is, the best method to resolve arising issues is by resorting to their knowledge of history, as this knowledge is at the heart of preserving Micronesian culture and identity. This is essential to the perpetuation of Micronesian future continuity in a changing world.

CHAPTER 1: THE CONSTITUTION

Foregrounding the Constitution

The backdrop to the constitutional philosophy of the Federated States of Micronesia reflects the dynamic of history as a circular web of social connections. This chapter deals with the *Shulapan allik*¹ (Constitution) of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) as the embodiment and perpetuation of *shon Maikronesia* history, identity and continuity, while acknowledging the relevant elements of colonial history. The *Shulapan allik* reconciles internal differences and asserts a distinct politico-cultural perspective and personality.² To understand how this perspective developed it requires an investigation of four interwoven processes. Firstly, what historical precedents motivate the diverse Micronesian population to share a nation-state? Secondly, what historical factors inspired the leaders to convince the indigenous population that a constitution was necessary to regain control of their islands? Thirdly, why were the leaders advancing the concept of constitutional independence while sidelining economic development as a secondary issue? Finally, how do Micronesians perceive themselves after the establishment of the Constitution in terms of the ongoing debate between economic and political development as well as jurisdictional issues between the federal and state governments?

These four inter-related questions are central to this dissertation as they facilitate our understanding of Micronesian opposition to the long occupation of Micronesia by foreigners. As will be demonstrated, the ongoing, contested interaction between internal Micronesian priorities and actions on the one hand, and external influences on the other, continued well after the Constitution came into force. With recourse to detailed legal analysis modified with cultural observations, this chapter sets the scene from the dawn of fledgling independence to the future prospects. It is generally accepted among constitutional law specialists that a constitution is a written document designed to

¹ The concept of *Shulapan allik* is a Mortlockese-Chuukese term referring to the Constitution as the backbone of all laws in relation to the modern state of the FSM. For an in-depth discussion of modern forms of constitution and theories refer to Tony Blackshields, and George Williams, *Australian Constitutional Law and Theory: Commentary and Materials* (2nd edition), The Federation Press, 1998, pp.4-20. For specific discussion on FSM Constitutional Federalism see John Haglelgam, "Federalism in the Federated States of Micronesia" in *Federalism and Multiculturalism*, 2006, pp.125-138. <<http://localgov.up.edu.ph/federalism-and-multiculturalism-haglelgam-federalism-in-the-federated-states-of-micronesia.html>>

² See *The FSM Constitution, Preamble*, conveying the distinct Micronesian identity and perspectives in view of the many islands.

provide the socio-political framework in which a nation is governed. It defines power relations between government organs and the people as well as the manner in which the constitution can be amended to alter power relations.³ The general objective of a constitution is to prevent government tyranny against its people.⁴ Colonial tyranny was the backdrop in which Micronesians sought to establish a constitution to protect their future interests in line with international standards in order to assert their status as an independent nation with all the hallmarks of that status. It was reassuring for Micronesians to use the western concept of a Constitution. The Constitution then became a framework to harmonise and project a united voice for Micronesians. It also was a concept recognized by external powers and presented legitimacy for Micronesian sovereignty.

The Constitution is a living document that reminds the people of the historical past, and at the same time shields Micronesians from the present threat. As constitutional scholars Tony Blackshield and George Williams commented, “if a constitution is written, then, with the passing of time...the living constitution inevitably comes to be related much as the past is related to the present.”⁵ In reflecting the historical past and the geographical realities of Micronesia, the Constitution established a government structure referred to as co-ordinate federalism. This entails that both the states and the national government are sovereign within their respective power, “each is to be free to perform its functions without hindrance by the other governments...except in the case of concurrent legislative powers (where the national government) prevailed over the states” if laws of the states are inconsistent with national laws.⁶ Political scientist Peter Larmour credited the successful constitutional making in the Pacific Islands to the pre-existing cultural conditions that facilitated the transfer of the colonial institutions into the hands of indigenous Pacific Islanders.⁷ Micronesian experience fits Larmour’s comments.

Colonisation underscored the uneven power relations between *shon Maikronesia* and the colonial powers. Colonial authorities ignored the rights of the indigenous people as first settlers of the islands, and instead annexed the islands into their own externally imposed political structures. The consequence of this alien imposition was the

³ Shields and William, *Australian Constitutional Law and Theory*, pp. 5-7.

⁴ Peter Hanks and Deborah Cass, Jennifer Clarke, *Australian Constitutional Law: Materials and Commentary* 6th edition, Buttersworth, Sydney, p.8.

⁵ Shields and William, *Australian Constitutional Law*, p. 5.

⁶ Zines, Leslie, *The High Court and the Constitution*, Butterworths, Sydney, 1981, p.1.

⁷ Peter Larmour, *Foreign Flowers: Institutional Transfer and Good Governance in the Pacific Islands*, University of Hawai’i Press, 2005, pp. 36, 41, 70.

development of a sense of Micronesian unity as a separate, distinct group of people. This shared feeling intensified post WWII when Micronesians realized that the USA control of Micronesia was perpetuating colonial attitudes and behaviours experienced prior to the war. The universal awareness that decolonization was a fundamental right of indigenous people fuelled Micronesians' desire to emancipate themselves from further external control. However, to do so a constitution was required for the purpose of gaining international acceptance.

The Essential Elements of the FSM Constitutional Model

The search for a constitutional model befitting Micronesians' outlook became the task of the emerging Micronesian leaders post-WWII. The leaders envisioned a constitution embedded in *eoranian fanou* (cultures of Micronesia) and supported by international standards.⁸ Historically, Micronesians did not have a written legal code. Codes of conduct were handed down orally and enforced through the generations through system of culture and post-colonially through the adopted legal system. Violations of socially sanctioned behaviours are dealt with in accordance with community standards. The Constitution acknowledges the various *eoranian fanou* while at the same time provides the legal structure for their reinforcement in the modern world.⁹

The success of the *Shulapan allik* rests on the adaptability of the traditional infrastructure to deal with the imports of legal doctrines. The *Shulapan allik* defines who Micronesians are as a people, designates a territorial home, and provides the structure and manner of government.¹⁰ The Constitution's ultimate aim is to perpetuate the principles of peaceful co-existence within its territory as well as promoting the new Micronesian identity internationally.¹¹ In reflecting the historical past and the realities of the then present, the Constitution superimposed a coordinated federalism as the principle form of governance. Under the constitution, each island (municipality) and island groups (states) are free to form their own constitutions without hindrance by the federal government except in circumstances of concurrent powers where the *Shulpan allik* could be negotiated, or else prevails.¹²

⁸ WWII brought dramatic changes in the world order. Micronesian experiences of colonisation were more acute than before, and so the desire to control their own destiny. For general discussion see David Hanlon, "Magellan's Chroniclers?", pp.53-54; Gale, *Americanisation of Micronesia*, pp, 67-73.

⁹ *The Constitution of the FSM, Article II, section 1.*

¹⁰ Shields and George William, p.p, 5-7.

¹¹ Hanks, Cass, and Clarke, *Australian Constitutional Law: Materials and Commentary*, p.8.

¹² Zines, *The High Court and the Constitution*, p.1.

The establishment of the *Shulapan allik* meant that the FSM has fulfilled the four internationally accepted requirements to become a sovereign nation. That is, (1) it has a constitution to protect Micronesian interests; (2) a population whose desire is to share a common identity; (3) a territory for its residents to live as a free people, and; (4) as a nation state fully recognized by the international community¹³. These four elements are essential in the conduct of Micronesian affairs both internally and externally. As the FSM preamble of the Constitution states: “We, the people of Micronesia, exercising our inherent sovereignty, do hereby establish this Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia. With this Constitution, we affirm our common wish to live together in peace and harmony, to preserve the heritage of the past, and to protect the promise of the future... We extend to all nations what we seek from each: peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity”.¹⁴

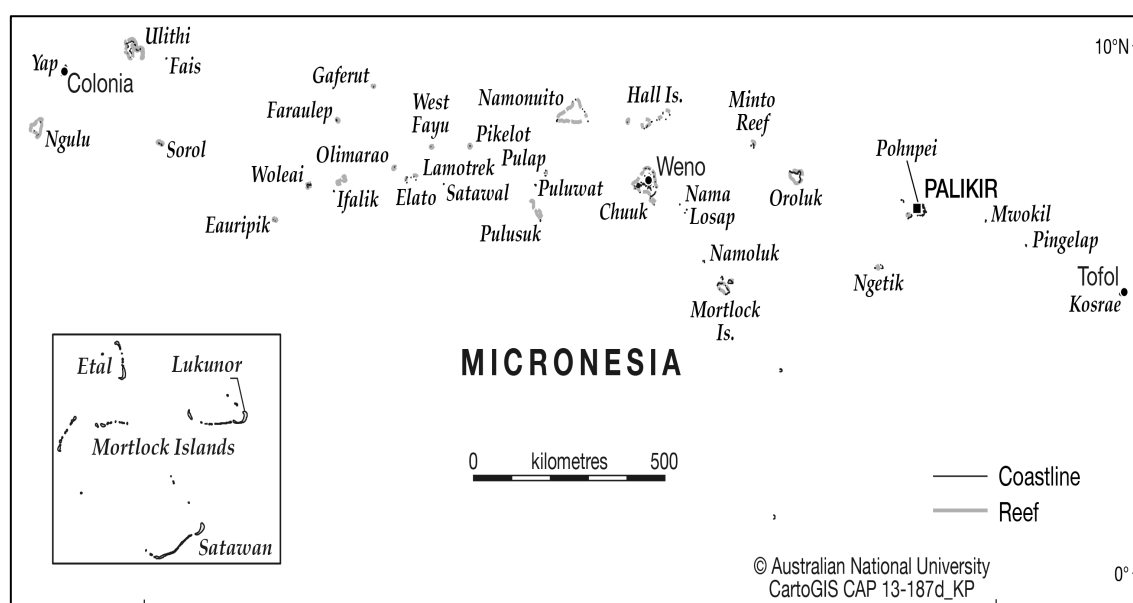


Figure 5: The islands of the Federated States of Micronesia. Courtesy of the Australian National University, Cartography Department.

The FSM Constitution is *sui generis*¹⁵ as it puts Micronesian customary values at its very heart for the purpose of protecting the integrity and sovereignty of the traditional inhabitants. For example, the *Shulapan allik* obliges the courts to take account of customs and traditions by following the “geographical and social configuration

¹³ The FSM was admitted into the UN in 1991. However, the end of the Trust Territory agreement was in 1986. The FSM was free to have dialogue with the international community to pursue its own political interest, but must be in line with USA interests as outlined in the Compact; Epel Illon, *Interview*, Palikir Pohnpei, January 13, 2011.

¹⁴ *The Constitution of the FSM*, the Preamble.

¹⁵ *Sui generis* is a legal term referring to the uniqueness of its own kind.

principle” when rendering their decisions.¹⁶ That is, each municipality is encouraged to maintain their cultural practises as rooted in their historical past.¹⁷ It also acknowledges the hierarchical power structure within the local communities and beyond. Devolution of power as practiced traditionally is also present where upon the demarcation of responsibilities between the municipalities, the national government and the states are emphasized.¹⁸ The *Shulapan allik* also allocates power to each of the three branches of government (executive, legislative, and judiciary) so as to maintain political and social cohesion nationally.

The states and municipalities manage their own affairs by the power of their own constitutions in relation to the national government. The national government in turn represents the states in matters of international concern.¹⁹ Article XIII of the FSM Constitution, Section 3 requires the states and national governments to cooperate with each other in maintaining the integrity of the federation. As it states, “it is the solemn obligation of the national and state governments to uphold the provisions of (the) Constitution and to advance the principles of unity upon which (the) Constitution is founded”.²⁰ The Constitution is therefore the supreme law of the land. No laws foreign or domestic, usurps its sovereign power.

The Constitution and the Environment

As stated earlier, the Micronesian people live in an oceanic environment where they share common historical experiences. Their national identity came from the sea. Their territorial seas have been recognised by the international community and must be protected at all times from unscrupulous external threats exploiting their resources. The Constitution is thus the legal instrument that shields Micronesian interests. The Constitution makes it clear that Micronesians are the custodians of their oceanic environment and its resources.²¹ Their history is a testimony to such claim, which fundamentally advocates the doctrine of interdependency between the people, the sea,

¹⁶ *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article XI, Section 11.

¹⁷ Haglelgam, “Federalism and Multiculturalism”, p. 128.

¹⁸ The demarcation principle approximated the grouping of islands. See John Haglelgam, “Problems of national Unity and Economic Development in the Federated Staes of Microensia” in Micronesian past” in *ISLA: Journal of Micronesian Studies*, Vol.4, No.1/Rainy Season, 1996, pp. 5-12; Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp.12-13.

¹⁹ The FSM government was modeled on the USA Constitution while its features are largely Micronesian construction. See Edward C. King, “Custom and Constitutionalism in the Federated States of Micronesia”, in *Asian-Pacific L. & Pol’y J. 1*, University of Hawaii Law School, July 2002, p.3.

²⁰ *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article XIII, Section 3.

²¹ *The Constitution of the FSM*, Preamble.

and the land.²² For example, Micronesians conserved and preserved the environment and in return the environment provides sustenance for survival. This doctrine influenced how Micronesians conducted their social, economic, religious and political affairs. The people derived their sense of identity through genealogy by tracing this identity to specific spaces within the oceanic environment such as the locales where their clans or extended families originated.²³ Genealogy in turn influenced the way each island conducted its affairs locally, and as well as regionally, and nationally²⁴. These inter-relationships collectively shaped how Micronesians engaged with each other.

The national Constitution embraces the preservation of the sea and asked the international community to observe such practice. It speaks of unity, identity, and continuity. As the Constitution declares, “the seas bring us together, they do not separate us. Our islands sustain us. Our island nation enlarges us and makes us stronger”.²⁵ The sea is intimately linked to Micronesian identity as reflected in the Yapese Outer Island and Chuukese terms of self-reference *remetaw* or *shon metaw* (the people of the deep sea).²⁶ Micronesians have lived together in harmony within the seas. Colonisers misunderstood the special relationship between Micronesians and the sea. For example, Micronesians were discouraged from sailing during the colonial times as it was considered too costly in terms of rescue efforts.²⁷ Colonial governments also sought to prevent warring between islands,²⁸ and to restrict men from long sailing voyages, which colonial administrators felt interfered with the men’s labour contributions to land-based food production. However, Micronesians continued to sail the seas despite such restrictions because the sea and seafaring was an essential part of their identity and ways of being.²⁹

²² The Concept of interdependency is widespread in the FSM as the clanship system acts as the web for people’s social security; Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 22-23.

²³ The term *shon ainang* is used to trace one’s local identity and within the clanship system. See David Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar: A History of the Island of Pohnpei to 1890*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1984, p.353; Marshall, “The Structure of Solidarity”, p.55; Nason, *Clan and Copra*, pp.59-60.

²⁴ Some of clans on Lukunor are Sor, Sapunipi, Sofa, Inemarew, Soumosh. Sofa, for example, traces its origins to Yap, according to my great uncle Julio Maipi, who came from that clan. Sor and the others came from the Chuuk lagoon, but their origins came from Pohnpei and Kosrae.

²⁵ *The Constitution of the FSM, Preamble*.

²⁶ Mortlockese called themselves *shon metaw* which is the same as *re-mataw* often used by the people of the northwest of Chuuk and some of the low-lying islands in Yap. These terms are in reference to people of the sea as emphasized by Paul D’Arcy’s book *The People of the Sea*.

²⁷ Francis Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land: A Century of Colonial Rule in the Caroline And Marshall Islands*, University of Hawaii Press, 1995, p.108; D’Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p. 164.

²⁸ Flinn, *Diplomats and Thatch Houses*, p.25; D’Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.164.

²⁹ In the 1960s and 70s sailing canoes were still traveling between islands in the Mortlocks. Personal experience. Gladwin, *East is Big Bird*, pp.134-144; Nason, *Clan and Copra*, p. 258.

Customary rights of the seas are protected by the Constitution. For example, ownership of reefs and fishing rights beyond the reefs as well as within the lagoons are traditionally demarcated. These are provided for under Article V, Sections 1, 2 and 3. Section 1 states: “nothing in this Constitution takes away a role or function of...custom and tradition, or prevents a traditional leader from being recognised, honoured, and given formal or functional roles at any level of government as may be prescribed by this Constitution or by statute.”³⁰ Section 2 further states that, “the traditions of the people of the Federated States of Micronesia may be protected by statute. If challenged as violative of Article IV, protection of Micronesian tradition shall be considered a compelling social purpose warranting such governmental action.”³¹ Section 3 ensures that customs and traditions are protected under the guidance of the indigenous leaders: “the Congress may establish, when needed, a Chamber of Chiefs consisting of traditional leaders from each state having such leaders, and of elected representatives from states having no traditional leaders. The Constitution of a state having traditional leaders may provide for an active, functional role for them.”³²

Framing of Identities to Constitutionality

Pre-existing regional and local identities are recognised by the FSM Constitution with the provision for three layers of government: the federal, state, and local or municipality. At the municipal level the residents of each island community elect their own government officials and recognise their traditional leaders to ensure harmonious co-existence between municipal ordinances and customary laws. This duality is typified by the constitutions of Lekiniokh Municipality (in Chuuk), and the state of Yap.

The Lekiniokh Constitution empowers *sou eak* (traditional leaders) to ensure imported laws are compatible with local customs. In the vernacular words of its constitution it declares, *Oolap V, Okisen 1 a apasa, “ei chulap mi amafila me apechakula eoranei, nonnoon aramas, samolen eoranei me pechakilen soupisek. Tumwunen limaach, osupwangen aramas, are afeiteitan tufich epwe ffor pwal itei pwungen alluk. Okisen 2. Soueak a auwennam on tumunen me apechakkulen eoranei”*.³³ The English translation reads as follows: “the constitution shall reinforce the traditions of the people, recognise their traditional leaders, and customary ownership of properties. The maintenance of

³⁰ *The Constitution of the FSM, Article IV, Section 2.*

³¹ *The Constitution.*

³² *The Constitution, Article XI, Section 11.*

³³ *The Constitution of Lekiniokh Municipality, Lekiniokh Island 1996, section 1- 2. August 17, 1991.*

traditional community health and prevention of poverty shall be reinforced by the municipal's ordinances." Section 2 further states that, "traditional leaders shall be the guardians and reinforcers of traditions".³⁴ Also, the Municipality of Namoluk Constitution reinforces its customs and traditions. It states, "the people of Namoluk...affirm our desire to respect and uphold our traditions and customs, protect and promote our natural heritage and social bonds we have as a people, now and forever".³⁵

Traditions and customs are also constitutionally protected in the neighbouring FSM state of Yap. For example, Article III, Section 1 expresses that "due recognition shall be given to the *Dalip pi Nguchol*³⁶ and their traditional and customary roles."³⁷ Section 2 states further that "there shall be a Council of *Pilung*³⁸ and Council of *Tamol*³⁹ which shall perform functions which concern tradition and custom. Due recognition shall be given to traditions and customs in providing a system of law, and nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to limit or invalidate any recognized tradition or custom as articulated by section 3." ⁴⁰

The state of Chuuk also ensures that traditions and customs are safeguarded fully in its Constitution. As Article IV, Section 1 states; "existing Chuukese custom and tradition shall be respected. The Legislature may prescribe by statute for their protection. If challenged as violative of Article III, protection of Chuukese custom and tradition shall be considered a compelling social purpose warranting such governmental action."⁴¹ Section 2 further states, "nothing in this Constitution takes away the role or function of a traditional leader as recognized by Chuukese custom and tradition, or prevents a traditional leader from being recognized, honoured, and given formal or functional roles in government."⁴² Section 3 allows the state legislature to appropriate funds annually for a traditional leaders' conference. Section 4 ensures that "traditional rights over all

³⁴ *The Constitution of Lekinloch Municipality*.

³⁵ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p. 6.

³⁶ *Dalip pi Nguchol* is referred to as the paramount chiefs of Yap state. See Donald Rubinstein and Clement Mulalap, *A Proposed Chinese Mega-Resort in Yap: Vulnerabilities, Opportunities, and Pacific Geopolitics*, Paper presented at Micronesian Symposium "Micronesia in Focus" Australian National University, Canberra, April 28-29 2014, p.9.

³⁷ *Yap State Constitution, Article III, section 1* <<http://fsmlaw.org/yap/constitution/index.htm>>

³⁸ *Pilung* refers to the three pillars of traditional wisdom and power. See Eve C. Pinsker, "Traditional Leaders Today in the Federated States of Micronesia", in *Chiefs Today Traditional Pacific Leadership and the Post Colonial State*, edited by Geoffrey M. White and Lamont Lindstrom, Stanford University Press California, 1997, pp. 155-159.

³⁹ *Tamol* refers to traditional chiefs of outer islands Yap. In Chuukese it is called *samol*.

⁴⁰ *Yap State Constitution Article III, Section 2*.

⁴¹ *Chuuk State Constitution, Article IV, Section 1* <<http://fsmlaw.org/chuuk/index.htm>>

⁴² *Chuuk State Constitution, Article IV, section 2*.

reefs, tidelands, and other submerged lands, including their water columns, and successors' rights thereto, are recognized. The Legislature may regulate their reasonable use".⁴³

Article II, section 1 of the Kosraen state constitution confirms that, "except when a tradition protected by statute provides to the contrary: (a) No law may deny or impair freedom of expression, peaceable assembly, association, or petition, and (b), "a person may not be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, or be denied the equal protection of the laws".⁴⁴

In the Pohnpeian Constitution Article 5, section 1, states that its constitution "upholds, respects, and protects the customs and traditions of the traditional kingdoms of Pohnpei".⁴⁵ Section 2 demands that "the Government of Pohnpei shall respect and protect the customs and traditions of Pohnpei. Statutes may be enacted to uphold customs or traditions. If such a statute is challenged as violating the rights guaranteed by this Constitution, it shall be upheld upon proof of the existence and regular practice of the custom or tradition and reasonableness of the means established for its protection, as determined by the Pohnpei Supreme Court."⁴⁶ Section 3 then seeks to "strengthen and retain good family relations in Pohnpei, as needed," by recognizing and protecting "the responsibility and authority of parents over their children. This Constitution also acknowledges the duties and rights of children in regard to respect and good family relations as needed".⁴⁷

Prelude to the Creation of the Constitution

The FSM Constitution was negotiated during the 1975 Constitutional Convention (ConCon) and ratified in 1978 by voters from the-then districts of Yap, Truk, Ponape, and Kusaie of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. During the negotiation process each state delegation expressed what needed to be included in the proposed Constitution. The essential features discussed were related to the harmonisation of the variety of cultures in the structure of the proposed government. The key question was how should the Constitution be framed to accommodate the issues? Recognising their differences, the delegations agreed upon traditions and local environmental issues to be

⁴³ *Chuuk State Constitution*, Article IV, section 4.

⁴⁴ *Kosrae State Constitution*, Article II, section 1 <<http://fsmlaw.org/kosrae/index.htm>>

⁴⁵ *Pohnpei State Constitution*, Article IV, section 1 <<http://fsmlaw.org/pohnpei/index.htm>>

⁴⁶ *Pohnpei State Constitution*, Article 4, Section 2.

⁴⁷ *Pohnpei State Constitution*, Article IV, section 3.

left to the state and the municipal governments,⁴⁸ while foreign relations were delegated to the national government. The Yap and Pohnpei delegations wanted their paramount chiefs to have a role at the national level. The delegation from Chuuk, however, disagreed with the idea as there is no paramount chief since each village or island has its own *Samol*. It would be hard to nominate a paramount chief from the pool of *Samol* to represent Chuuk at the national level. Kosrae had lacked paramount chiefs since western diseases in the 19th Century reduced the population. An agreement was struck between all the delegations that a chamber of chiefs should be created constitutionally,⁴⁹ but the decision on how to select chiefs to represent them at the national level was left to each state to decide. To date, the provision relating to the creation of a chamber of chiefs remains dormant, as there has been no move to activate it. At the state and municipal levels, however, chiefs continue to play essential roles in protecting cultures and traditions.⁵⁰ It is very possible that the ongoing power struggle between the executive and the legislative branches of government may precipitate the need of the chamber of chiefs to intervene so as to neutralise the ongoing tension. This thesis suggests that traditional chiefs can assist in the shaping of the nation's future.⁵¹

Connecting the Constitution and Micronesian History

The Constitution underscores the continuity of Micronesian history, and especially the belief in the ongoing value of unity in the face of challenges in the modern world. It empowers Micronesians to wear the Micronesian identity as a personal badge of honour as they carry their passports crisscrossing the globe.⁵² The assertion of Micronesia's place in history is noted in the Preamble. It states, "...with this Constitution, we affirm our common wish to live together in peace and harmony, to preserve the heritage of the past, and to protect the promise of the future. To make one nation of many islands, we respect the diversity of our cultures. Our differences enrich us. The seas bring us together, they do not separate us. Our islands sustain us, our island nation enlarges us and makes us stronger. Our ancestors, who made their homes on these islands, displaced

⁴⁸ For in depth discussion see Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p.p.261-281.

⁴⁹ The Constitution of the FSM, Article V.

⁵⁰ The Constitution of the FSM.

⁵¹ Political leaders of the FSM need to understand the purpose of traditions as included in the Constitution as an alternative to legal dispute. The Chamber of Chiefs is to serve such purpose. See the Constitution of the FSM Article V, Section 3.

⁵² The Constitution of the FSM was constructed based on Micronesian historical experience in response to the changing international circumstances. As the preamble states, "to preserve the heritage of (Micronesian) past and to protect the promise of the future...to make one nation of many islands, we respect the diversity of our cultures. Our differences enrich us".

no other people. We, who remain, wish no other home than this. Having known war, we hope for peace. Having been divided, we wish unity. Having been ruled, we seek freedom. Micronesia began in the days when man explored seas in rafts and canoes. The Micronesian nation is born in an age when men voyage among stars; our world itself is an island. We extend to all nations what we seek from each: peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity. With this Constitution we, who have been the wards of other nations, become the proud guardian of our own islands, now and forever".⁵³

While it is easy to dismiss such preambles as statements of desire rather than reality, this dissertation asserts that the values espoused above are culturally valued and historically proven pillars of Micronesian identity. These statements were inserted into the Constitution to help restore Micronesian memories of values suppressed by colonial rule and to permanently commit them into the national psyche for the purposes of perpetuating the Micronesian identity and continuity. While framed by colonial boundaries, a deeper reading of Micronesian history and nation-building reveals Micronesia was born from Micronesians' own historical consciousness stemming from their deep affinity with each other prior to and post colonialism.⁵⁴

Oral history and linguistic evidence suggest that the configuration of the FSM approximates the pattern of past boundaries.⁵⁵ The *sawei* system,⁵⁶ which centred on inter-island connections between the volcanic island of Yap and its low-lying islands in the western part of Chuuk, is a reminder of the extensive connection between the central and eastern FSM. This connection also served as a form of insurance to ensure the survivability of the people who depended on each other in an environment susceptible to natural disasters such as typhoons, ocean surges, and famine. The FSM is located in

⁵³ *The Constitution of the FSM, Preamble.*

⁵⁴ Historian Hanlon argued that Micronesia is a colonial construct and only exists in people's imagination. However, anthropologist Petersen claimed that it may be so, but the people of Micronesia have a sense of their historical connection now united by the name Micronesia thereby no longer an imagination. It is a reality in contemporary Federated States of Micronesia. For in depth discussion see Hanlon, "Magellan's Chroniclers?", pp.53-54; Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp.12-13.

⁵⁵ The FSM is part of the Trukic geo-linguistic group prior to the arrival of the colonists. For further discussion see Manuel Rauchholz, "Notes on Clan Histories and Migration in Micronesia" in *Pacific Asia Inquiry*, Volume 2, Number 1, Fall 2011, pp. 54-55.

⁵⁶ William Alkire, "Traditional Exchange Systems and Modern political Developments in the Yap District of Micronesia", *Papers from a symposium on Ecological Problems of the Traditional Societies of the Pacific Region*, Edited by Roland W. Force and Brenda Bishop, August-September, 1979, pp. 16-18; William Lessa, "Ulithi and the Outer Native World", in *American Anthropologist*, 92, University of California Los Angeles, 1950, p. 32; D'Arcy, *People of the Sea*, pp.146-147; Hunter-Anderson and Yigal Zang, "Demystifying the Sawei", pp.4-6. The sawei system basically was a tribute system between the volcanic island of Yap and the low-lying islands to east of it and the northwest Chuuk. It was seen as security insurance for all involved.

what is known as typhoon alley. Typhoons or *melimel* (strong storms) frequent these islands every year. They can devastate any of the islands they cross, and deprive the islanders of their food supply. In such instances the high volcanic island of Yap and Chuuk would provide assistance to the low-lying islands as their larger land area and high ground meant that they could better withstand typhoon damage. Assistance is distributed through the established *sawei* network; a regular voyage of outer islanders to Yap to acknowledge the latter's parental kin relationship. Yapese hosts benefited from the prestige of this off-island recognition of their authority, which made them willing to give far more than they received in the material exchanges between low and high islands that took place during the outer islands fleets' stay on Yap.⁵⁷

Similar networks are also found in the islands of present day Chuuk and Pohnpei states. In the Mortlocks for example, the *ainang* system imposed duties and obligations to provide food to its members in the island chain during famine or when one travels between the islands.⁵⁸ Pohnpei history also speaks of a network system between its low-lying islands surrounding the volcanic island of Pohnpei. These network systems are still in existence, but with evolving dimensions as they incorporate new elements of the modern world.⁵⁹ Pohnpei and Kosrae were also linked, for example by the exchange of ideas in the design of their architecture. Kosraean structures have similar designs to Nan Madol in Pohnpei, suggesting ancient cultural links.

Reconnecting Islands

The sea remains central to Micronesian survival. It serves as the highway for inter-island communication and trade throughout the Micronesian archipelagos.⁶⁰ Although modern modes of transportation have replaced sailing canoes, the sea routes remain known to Micronesians today. The modern economy is increasingly focused on marine resources. Micronesians continue to retest their knowledge by retracing their ancestral voyages on sailing canoes and open motorboats using traditional navigation techniques. For example, in June 2013 a traditional *palou* from Polowat named Soste (and his

⁵⁷ Paul D'Arcy, *People of the Sea*, pp.146-150.

⁵⁸ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp.39-40; Flinn, *Diplomas and Thatch Houses*, p.141.

⁵⁹ Personal knowledge. The descendants of Mortlockese people who migrated to Pohnpei after the 1907 super-typhoon that devastated the Mortlocks Islands are holding some traditional titles bestowed upon them by the traditional chiefs of Pohnpei especially the chiefdom of Sokehs. This is in recognition of their contribution to *tiahk en sapw*; Marshall, p.p.40-42; Goodenough, *Property, Kin, and Community in Truk*, p.86.

⁶⁰ D'Arcy, *People of the Sea*, pp. 144-145; Nason, *Clan and Copra*, pp-120-123; Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp.8-10.

relatives) sailed from his island to Guam using traditional methods of navigation⁶¹. Likewise Peter Sitan, a traditional *palou* from the Mortlocks, tested his skills on the sea as recently as 2008 using an outboard motor skiff to travel from his island of Ettal in Chuuk to the main island of Pohnpei⁶². Soste's and Peter Sitan's actions served as a reminder of the ongoing links to and value placed on sea navigation by Micronesians. As part of the Constitution's Preamble states, Micronesian history "began in the days when man explored seas in rafts and canoes. The Micronesian nation is born in an age when men voyage among stars".⁶³ This quote suggests that Micronesians still honour their ancestral ways to perpetuate islanders' continuity as demonstrated by the two navigators. It is worth noting that Sitan is the President of National Fisheries Corporation (NFC) who applied his traditional knowledge of the sea by boosting the return of the FSM fishing fleets to profit and sustainability. Micronesians are in touch with their deepest past, while at the same time mastering the modern world.

The *Ainang* System

The *ainang* system has been central to Micronesian relationship across the horizon. For example, the *kachaw* clan in Chuuk has its origin in Kosrae and Pohnpei.⁶⁴ Likewise, some Yapese clans' origins extended to the islands of Chuuk and vice versa.⁶⁵ Today the indigenous people continue their relationship with each other via the established *ainang* network. Linguistic evidence also suggests a shared Micronesian connection through a family of closely related languages and dialects known as Chuukic continuum that encompasses the Mortlocks Islands in the eastern part of the Caroline Islands to the western end of the island chain in Palau.⁶⁶ This is evidenced by the fact that many of the low-lying islanders in Yap can converse with the people in the western part of Chuuk and the Mortlocks region.⁶⁷ Connection between Micronesians through these closely related languages and dialects remains strong and the Constitution has provided

⁶¹ Pacific Voyagers, *Polowat sailing Canoe Arrives* <<http://pacificvoyagers.org/polowat-sailing-canoe-arrives/>>

⁶² I interviewed Peter Sitan in Pohnpei during my fieldwork on January 20, 2011; Phillip H. Blas, "Traditional Chuukese Sailing Canoe Reaches Guam Crew navigated 500 miles without using modern technology" in *Pacific Daily News*, Guam, June 19, 2013, p. 1.

⁶³ *The Constitution of the FSM*, the Preamble.

⁶⁴ Saladier and Chipen *Uruon Chuuk*, pp.1-7; Myjolyne Kim, *Into the Deep*, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁵ William H. Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll and Inter Island Socio-Economic Ties*, University of Illinois Press, 1965, p.10.

⁶⁶ *Op. Cit*, Manuel Rauchholz, "Notes on Clan Histories and Migration in Micronesia", p.54-55; Myjolyne Kim, *Into the Deep*, pp.6-7; Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll*, pp. 28-30.

⁶⁷ Jeffrey C. Marck, "Micronesian Dialects and the Overnight Voyage" in *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 95, No.1 (1986) pp.253-258.

the opportunities for more interaction.⁶⁸ For example, any citizens of the FSM can travel and reside anywhere in FSM, and most migrate if one has kin connection in the new place.

Since Micronesian people are a historically mobile people, naturally they continue to transplant themselves further afield. This is made possible by the global transportation system and political links with former colonial powers. Current estimates indicate that under the Compact, more than twenty percent of the Micronesian population now resides outside the nation, particularly in the USA.⁶⁹ This new diaspora will continue to expand as a result of the globalised world, and the inherent urge of the Micronesian people to travel to join their families now searching for opportunities outside Micronesia. It is argued that a consequence of this process is the exportation of Micronesian ideologies to the new spaces in order to facilitate Micronesians' transition to their adopted environment while maintaining a connection to their island homes.⁷⁰ The *ainang* system is the glue that links geographically dispersed clan members together and to their nation state.

Forever mobile throughout their long past, Micronesians are adapting quickly to their new globalised life style. As Captain Marar notes; "Micronesians are genuinely great navigators; they continue to explore new stars to sail in the new globalised sea of the globalised world to reconnect with their history and new experiences".⁷¹ Despite the movement of Micronesian people beyond the horizon, the *Shulapan allik* recognises their citizenship. For example, Micronesians living abroad continue to participate in national elections; their votes are sent to the FSM to be counted. Furthermore, their interests in land over non-citizens are legally protected by the constitution.⁷²

The Legal System in its Micronesian Context

While reflecting Micronesian history and values, the FSM Constitution is still derived from an American model. This provides an inherent tension between American and Micronesian jurisprudence.⁷³ This tension was naturally present at the outset as American judges dominated the Court system. Legal precedents were framed in the

⁶⁸ *The Constitution of the FSM, the Preamble.*

⁶⁹ SBOC <<http://www.sboc.fm/>>

⁷⁰ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp.144-145.

⁷¹ David Marar, *Pers. Comm*, Nett, Pohnpei, January 20, 2011.

⁷² *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia, Article XIII, Section 4.*

⁷³ There is often tension between FSM and USA interpretation of the law especially when the issue of culture is involved. Although some cases have been settled there remains a debate whether decisions were conclusive. See *FSM v Mudong* (Pon. 1982); *FSM v Tammed* (Yap 1990).

images of US judicial precedents. For example, lawyer Brian Tamanaha argued that American judges used their knowledge of the US legal system when interpreting Micronesian cases due to their unfamiliarity with Micronesian traditions as was constitutionally demanded.⁷⁴ However, former Associate Judge, Dennis Yamase, asserted that this is no longer the case as more Micronesian judges have entered the Court and are shaping the system in accordance with Micronesian jurisprudence.⁷⁵ The Court has matured legally and is promoting constitutional principles immersed in traditional practices⁷⁶ such as alternative dispute resolutions to restore community confidence to suit a Micronesian context.⁷⁷ However, one still wonders about the validity of Yamase's claim as in practice particularly when most judges are educated in institutions that teach American jurisprudence.

It is understood that at the time of independence there were no qualified indigenous lawyers certified by competent law schools to organise and develop the legal system and a Micronesian-based jurisprudence. Consequently American judges were appointed to undertake the task. The judges' landmark decisions essentially reinforced non-Micronesian legal principles, which promoted the interest of the State and the universal rights of a person as an individual. This line of thought and priority contradicted traditional values despite the fact that the Constitution equally recognised the importance of cultures and traditions in the Court's decisions.⁷⁸ This is still a controversy and the subject of ongoing debate between the black letter approach and the radicals who seek a wider and full interpretation of the Constitution including the application of customary laws. The key legal question remains, what constitutes "the law" from a Micronesian perspective?⁷⁹

Jurisprudential debate has been central to Micronesian independence, identity and continuity. This has raised the issue of whether the FSM's legal system is genuinely constructed on the basis of local values, or whether the system has been utilised by outsiders to re-impose their values under a different guise.⁸⁰ Is the lack of understanding of Micronesian cultures an appropriate defence on the part of the foreign judges when

⁷⁴ Gonzaga Puas *The FSM Legal System: Responses to US Influence*, Paper delivered during the Association for Social Anthropologist in Oceania, Portland Oregon, February 6, 2011.

⁷⁵ Yamase, *The Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia*, pp. 36-38.

⁷⁶ My take on the concept of traditional practices is rooted in the ancestral ways in opposition to cultural practices, which is an adaption form to suit the processes of modern world.

⁷⁷ Yamase, *The Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia*, pp. 36-38.

⁷⁸ Puas, *The FSM Legal System*, pp.11-12.

⁷⁹ No one has raised the issue and it needs to be addressed. See Puas, *The FSM Legal System*, pp. 11-12. .

⁸⁰ Puas, *The FSM Legal System*, pp.11-12.

rendering decisions contrary to indigenous cultures?⁸¹ Foreign judges presiding over FSM courts immediately after the implementation of the Constitution have been regarded as the main architects of FSM's jurisprudence as their influence has shaped the legal system. The established precedents and their rulings have provoked debate between two opposing camps within the FSM legal fraternity.⁸² On one view, the decisions of the foreign judges have been admired and recognised as developing the legal landscape in the fledgling nation. This is because their decisions were seen as endorsing black letter law and the primacy of the individual in any contest involving customary law.⁸³ This perspective has been supported for providing certainty by not having to determine customary issues in key cases. These key cases left behind a solid legal system. The alternative view is that the American justices left behind a half-baked legal system almost devoid of Micronesian perspective, or input.⁸⁴ Such can be seen in their narrow interpretation of the Constitution at the outset, which arguably put the legal system on an inappropriate footing for developing an independent and locally responsive legal system.

Values and Identity in the Legal System

Micronesian criticism of the narrow interpretation of the Constitution in decisions made by American judges can be seen in cases such as *FSM v Mudong* (Pon. 1982),⁸⁵ *FSM v Alaphonso* (Truk 1982,⁸⁶ *Semens v Continental Airlines, et al* (Pon.1986)⁸⁷ and *FSM v Tammed* (Yap 1990).⁸⁸ The Court's decisions in these cases, and subsequent similar cases, constituted a systematic promotion of American social values at the expense of Micronesian cultural values. The decisions of those Justices effectively moulded the FSM legal system in the image of American jurisprudence, rather than developing a Micronesian legal system based on the goals recognised during the Constitutional

⁸¹ Puas, *The FSM Legal System*, pp11-12.

⁸² Personal observation as a trained lawyer who has worked frequently with lawyers within the FSM over the last 11 years. There has been an ongoing debate about legal precedents left by foreigners, which are still followed by Micronesian judges. Micronesian legal scholars have not written on this subject extensively.

⁸³ *Personal Observation*.

⁸⁴ Brian Tamanaha, *Understanding Law in Micronesia: An Interpretive Approach to Transplanted Law*, in *Studies in Humanities* Vo. 7, Center of Non-Western Societies, Leiden University, The Netherlands, 1993, pp. 59-67. Discussions with colleagues at the FSM Supreme Court, Palikir, Pohnpei, January 2010 during contractual employment at the Congress of the FSM.

⁸⁵ *FSM v Mudong* (Pon. 1982) < <http://fsmlaw.org/fsm/decisions/index.htm>>

⁸⁶ *FSM v Alaphonso* (Truk 1982) < <http://fsmlaw.org/fsm/decisions/index.htm>>

⁸⁷ *Semens v Continental Airlines, et al* (Pon.1986) < <http://fsmlaw.org/fsm/decisions/index.htm>>

⁸⁸ *FSM v Tammed* (Yap 1990) < <http://fsmlaw.org/fsm/decisions/index.htm>>

Convention.⁸⁹ The basis of this harsh assessment is that constitutionally, Court decisions must first look at *eoranian fanou* in the FSM.⁹⁰ In the case of *Etpison v Berman* (Pon. 1984), for example, it was stated by the Court that, “the FSM Supreme Court may look to decisions under the United States Constitution for guidance in determining the scope of jurisdiction since the jurisdictional language of the FSM Constitution is similar to that of the United States”.⁹¹ *In re Sproat* (Pon. 1985) again the Court said, “The jurisdictional language in the FSM Constitution is patterned upon the United States Constitution”⁹² and so too the implementation of US legal concepts. *In FSM v Alaphanso* (Truk 182), the Court reasoned that, “most concepts and many actual words and phrases in the FSM Constitution (as in)...the Declaration of Rights came directly from the (US) Constitution...Bill of Rights. In the two Constitutions, the language...is nearly identical”,⁹³ and therefore it is only logical that the Court established a precedent based on American imports of the law and in so doing established the development of Micronesian jurisprudence.⁹⁴

A comparison of the US and FSM Constitutions reveals obvious differences. They have different history, textual language, structure and underlying philosophy.⁹⁵ Even if the Micronesian Constitution was patterned upon the US Constitution, it does not necessarily follow that the Court must transplant US precedents in order to decide cases arising in a Micronesian context. The Court could have made a greater effort in accommodating Micronesian *eoranien fanou* by facilitating the presence of scholars or Micronesians knowledgeable in the relevant matters before the Court.

Conflict between a narrow interpretation of the law and *eoranian fanou* was initially tested in the cases noted above. Because the Court lacked the depth of knowledge in relation to *eoranien fanou*, it derailed the development of a fully-fledged Micronesian jurisprudence. This could be considered as a return to the colonial years when black letter law (written law) was perceived as superior to that of customary law.⁹⁶ This

⁸⁹ Meller, Constitutionalism in Micronesia, p.p. 340-341.

⁹⁰ The Constitution of the FSM, Article XI, Section 11.

⁹¹ *Etpison v Berman* (Pon. 1984) < <http://fsmlaw.org/fsm/decisions/index.htm> >

⁹² *In re: Sproat* (Pon. 1985) < <http://fsmlaw.org/fsm/decisions/index.htm> >

⁹³ *Alaphanso v. FSM* (App. 1982), 1 FSM Interim, 209 <<http://fsmlaw.org/fsm/decisions/index.htm>>

⁹⁴ *Alaphanso v FSM*.

⁹⁵ It seems that Edward C. King contradicted himself when discussing the differences between the Constitution of the FSM and the USA. Yet he preferred to follow the USA approach in deciding the law. For further discussion see Edward C. King, “Custom and Constitutionalism”, pp.2-3. Puas, “The FSM Legal System”, p.13.

⁹⁶ The law provides for mechanisms whereby judges can use expert witnesses when it involves customary practises. Justice King ignored such an avenue. See FSM's *National Judiciary Act, Public Law No. 1-31* <http://fsm-supremecourt.org/fsm/code/title04/T04_Ch01.htm>

argument treats the two Justices as facilitators of American “judicial activism” that further diluted Micronesian customs and traditions for the purpose of maintaining American interests in the FSM.⁹⁷ Micronesia requires judicial decisions that seriously consider customary law and provide decisions that are inclusive, holistic, and harmonious with Micronesian communities. They do not accept that customary law does not operate ‘outside’ the constitutional legal system. In fact many municipal level courts ignore the formal legal system and use traditional methods of settling disputes.

The case of *FSM v Mudong* (1982) highlighted the conflict that could arise when interpreting the Constitution from an individual rights perspective in a case enmeshed in customary and traditional issues. In that case the two appellants asked the Court to dismiss their cases, as the issues had been resolved through *tiaken Pohnpei*, that is, a Pohnpeian customary apology.⁹⁸ The Court denied the defendants’ motion, citing “prosecutorial discretion” and referring to custom as insufficient grounds on which to call a halt to and dismissal of criminal proceedings.⁹⁹ The Court indicated that “the customary effect upon court proceedings of a customary forgiveness is not self-evident, and the defendants offered no evidence to establish that dismissal of a court proceeding is one of customary” law.¹⁰⁰ However, it should have been self-evident to the Court that it would be impossible to find precedents that could establish that the dismissal of court proceedings was available under customary law in circumstances where there was no court system role in customary law.¹⁰¹

In support of the prosecutorial discretion argument, the Court reasoned that “the National Criminal Code does not grant the prosecutor authority to dismiss an existing prosecution on the basis of customary law.”¹⁰² The Court further reasoned, *inter alia*, that customary law and the Constitution perform different functions.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ Puas, *The FSM Legal System*, pp. 21-22.

⁹⁸ Customary apology in Pohnpei involves bringing together the families of the opposing parties over sakau and make apologetic speeches evoking traditional connections. See the case of *FSM v Mudong*.

⁹⁹ It is often a risk when prosecution discretion is exercised by outsiders as they lack the depth of knowledge of Micronesian customs. Today it is a policy to hire Micronesians first. Foreigners may be hired if a position cannot be filled by indigenous professionals.

¹⁰⁰ *FSM v Mudong*.

¹⁰¹ *Amicus curaie* is referred to as ‘friends of the Court’, and usually involves experienced lawyers who are retired and are familiar with the Court system and the law. *FSM’s National Judiciary Act, Public Law No. 1-31*.

¹⁰² *FSM v Mudong*.

¹⁰³ It may be true theoretically that the constitutions of the USA and FSM perform different roles as they have different histories. The Constitution of the FSM values customs as part of the judicial process especially when issues of the social configuration principle are involved. The issues could be generally settled if Court looks at *The National Judiciary Act, Public Law No. 1-31*.

The Court could have considered the alternative that “those customs that have the status of customary law are a source of law and should be recognised by the Court as such, without evidence having to be adduced.”¹⁰⁴ That is, evidence of Pohnpeian practice should have been sufficient without the appellants requiring ‘expert’ evidence from a foreign anthropologist. Pohnpeian custom should have been self-evident as it is uniform practice on the main island. Perhaps the Court could have called upon its *amicus curiae*¹⁰⁵ to assist it in establishing the proper interpretation and thus application of Pohnpeian traditions. Moreover, the Court as subject to the National Judiciary Act, Public Law No. 1-31, could have appointed an assessor. As Section 12 states, the Court is authorised “to appoint assessors to advise about local law or custom...any Justice of the Supreme Court may appoint one or more assessors to advise him at the trial of any case with respect to local law or custom or such other matters requiring specialised knowledge. All such advice shall be of record and the assessors shall be subject to examination and cross-examination by any party.”¹⁰⁶ This misinterpretation of the Constitution by the American judges may be considered as undermining the development of the Micronesian justice system, which in turn can be argued, weakens Micronesia’s unique cultural identity. In so doing, precedents were set by earlier judges which differentiated the law from custom, with the view that it would be easier for subsequent judges to concentrate on a precedent-based system, however this has made it difficult for subsequent Micronesian judges to reset the system to include both the law and custom.

There is still a significant tension between custom and the court legal system within FSM. It can be argued that the Constitution should not control, but also recognise custom as it plays an important role in disputes, violence, or wrongdoing in the Pohnpeian community.¹⁰⁷ Many independent Pacific island nation constitutions and legal systems effectively recognize customary law within their procedures.¹⁰⁸ The Constitution can and should also recognize customary means of dispute resolution within criminal proceedings. However, Micronesian custom, and the “constitutional legal system established by the people of the FSM, flow from differing premises and

¹⁰⁴ Tess N. Cain, “Convergence, or Clash? The Recognition of Customary Law and Practice in Sentencing Decisions of the Courts of the Pacific Islands Region”, in *Melbourne Journal of International Law*, Vo. 2, 2001, p.51.

¹⁰⁵ See principle of *Amicus curiae*.

¹⁰⁶ *FSM v Mudong*.

¹⁰⁷ The Constitution specifically indicated that judges should be mindful in their decisions when customary matters are involved. The Constitutional of the FSM, Article XI, Section 11; *Etscheit v Santos*, 5 FSM Intrm 35.38 (App.1991); *Tosie v Healy-Tibbets Builders, Inc*, 5 FSM Intrm. 358. 361 (Kos. 1992).

¹⁰⁸ Larmour, *Foreign Flowers*, pp.15-17.

traditions. They serve different purposes...Customary law de-emphasises notions of individual guilt, rights and responsibility, and places greater stress on the groups to which the individual accused and victims belong. The Constitutional...system concentrates upon smaller and larger units than those immediate groups emphasised by customary law”.¹⁰⁹

The Constitution, however, does provide the solution to this tension between custom and court legal procedures. The root of the problem lies in the enactment of the Constitution within the court system rather than in the Constitution itself. The Constitution does not set up dual independent systems of law as suggested in the above analysis. Rather, the Constitution intended the Court to take customs and traditions into account in all its decisions, as set out in Article XI Section 11, and these words should be accorded this recognition during the decision-making process and not diluted so as to promote individual rights in all contexts.¹¹⁰ As sociologists MacIver and Page commented; “customs support the law and without such it becomes meaningless. Custom establishes social order of its own so that conflict arising between custom and the law is not a conflict between law and lawlessness, but between the orders of reflection (customs) and the order of spontaneity (law). In general, customs regulate the whole social life of man. Law itself cannot cover the whole gamut of social behaviour. It is the customary practices that contribute to the harmonious social interactions in a society...”¹¹¹ This combination of law and custom working in tandem towards the same objective of consensus-based social harmony is essential in the Micronesian context.

It is clear that the Court meant to elevate the status of individual rights over those of the group and justified this position by claiming that the rights of “immediate groups” fall within the purview of customary concern. This reasoning does not reflect the reality on the ground in FSM. As noted earlier in this chapter, Micronesians belong to an extended *ainang* diaspora dispersed throughout the islands. They are not divided into isolated clans that can be left alone to perform their own customary duties.¹¹² Customary law is part of the Constitution and should have been considered holistically by the Court as a

¹⁰⁹ *FSM v Mudong*

¹¹⁰ Daniel P. Ryan, *Essential principles of Contract and sales in the Northern Pacific: Federated States of Micronesia, the Republics of Palau and the Marshall Islands and US Territories*, iUniverse, USA, p.xxiii.

¹¹¹ Robert MacIver and Charles Page, quotes <<http://sociologyguide.com/basic-concepts/Custom.php>>

¹¹² The Extended *Ainang* family.

valid means of resolving dispute and bringing equilibrium back into the community – surely the ultimate intention of the Constitution.¹¹³

Familial relations are equally as important as *ainang* relationships within Micronesian custom. It is undoubtedly true that familial relationships are at the very core of Micronesian society and are the source of numerous rights and obligations, which influence practically every aspect of the lives of individual Micronesians. These relationships are an important component, perhaps the most important component, of the custom and tradition referred to generally in the Constitution, Article V, and more specifically in the National Criminal Code, which states, “this Court has no desire to disregard or minimise the importance of such relationships”.¹¹⁴

In *FSM vs. Tammed* the Court noted, “the duty of a national court justice (is) to give full and careful consideration to a request to consider a particular customary practice or value in arriving at a decision requires careful investigation of the nature and customary effect of the specific practice at issue, a serious effort to reconcile the custom and tradition with other constitutional requirements, and an individualised decision as to whether the specific custom or tradition should be given effect in the particular contexts of the case before the court”.¹¹⁵ To complicate the issues of custom the Court further stated that, “the party asserting customary law has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence the existence, applicability and customary effect of such customary law.”¹¹⁶ The key issue at stake here is who should be recognised as the authorities to provide that evidence to the Court to ensure that Micronesian values are not eroding.

Conflict between the FSM Constitution and State Traditions

In 1990 a consolidated appeal case went before the court as a test case between the primacy of the constitution and state traditions. The case was *FSM v Tammed (1990)* where two separate appellants were charged with rape. However, before they were arrested or charged they were caught and beaten by the relatives of the victims with both sustaining serious injuries and one of them requiring hospitalisation. Both

¹¹³ Customary law is part of the Constitution and should be emphasized as well. See *the Constitution of the FSM*, Article XI, Section XI.

¹¹⁴ *FSM v Ruben* (1984); *FSM v Tammed* (1990).

¹¹⁵ *FSM v Tammed* (1990)

¹¹⁶ Ankush Sharma, *Customary Law and received Law in the Federated States of Micronesia*, <Micronesia@http://www.paclii.org/journals/fJSPL/vol10/7.shtml.

defendants were convicted of the charges, but disagreed with the sentencing and appealed.

Both appellants argued that the “trial court erred in not giving mitigating effect to the beatings each had received when it handed down their respective sentences”.¹¹⁷ The Appellate Court faced the dilemma as to whether or not the customary beatings could be considered as mitigating factors in sentencing. The Chief Justice reasoned, “the record reflects no serious effort by any party in either case to establish the precise contours of customary punishments. There are contentions that some aspects of the beatings were violative of customary procedures, there seems to be general agreement that these beatings have “substantial customary and traditional implications”.¹¹⁸

This ruling came in the face of pre-sentence reports for one appellant whose relatives accepted that the beatings were derived from customary practices. The government’s counsel suggested “as a matter of customary law, the beating may have restored the defendants fully to the community, not only reducing or obviating the need for further punishment, but entirely cleansing him of liability...because of the customary nature of the punishment, then no prosecution was ever initiated against any of those who attacked either of the defendants”.¹¹⁹

However, the Court had to draw the line between custom and the law in order to render its decision. The dilemma was to balance the customary practice of the beating of a wrongdoer against the constitutional right of an individual not to be assaulted.¹²⁰ The Court did not want to encourage violence against the individual. On the contrary, if the Court condemned beatings as a customary practice it devalued customary law and thus denied the rights of families under customary law as raised in the *Mudong* case. The Court issued an instruction that upon remand the beatings had some mitigating effect, but without having any regard to their customary implications or their compatibility with the criminal law or civil rights.¹²¹

It can be argued that the Court made its decisions on the basis that the State and the individual have greater rights than traditional interests. Further argument suggested that perhaps some consideration with respect to international law could have been explored

¹¹⁷ *FSM v Tammed*

¹¹⁸ *FSM v Tammed*

¹¹⁹ *FSM v Tammed*

¹²⁰ Sharma, *Customary Law and received Law in the Federated States of Micronesia*, <Micronesia@http://www.paclii.org/journals/fJSPL/vol10/7.shtml>

¹²¹ Many traditionalists argued that cultural beating is compatible to the *Constitution of the FSM* in view of Article V, Section 2.

to moderate the American perspective of the law by way of balancing it with certain Articles in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international instruments available at their disposal.¹²² This is because in some jurisdictions there have been decisions where judges have used international law instruments to resolve problems existing in their domestic jurisdictions. In the alternative, judicial decisions about customary law could have been sought from other Pacific jurisdictions such as Vanuatu, Samoa or Tuvalu¹²³ as discussed in the case of *Semens v Continental* heard in the FSM Court system. In this case, Justice King acknowledged the possibility that, “When constitutional and statutory provisions, customs, and traditions fail to furnish a full solution to issues the Court will look to common law applied in the United States and elsewhere”.¹²⁴ In this case however, Justice King applied American precedents, and did not consider other Pacific Island states, which shared a variety of cultural values with the FSM.¹²⁵

Some indigenous lawyers have rejected the above analysis by the Court in *Mudong* on the basis that the Constitution has highlighted the importance of custom in the justice system as reflected in Articles V and XI. The notion that customs and the Constitution flowed from “differing premises” is to narrowly interpret the Constitution if the effect is to ignore customs, except in cases where the Court thinks it applies to “those immediate groups emphasised by customary law”.¹²⁶ The distinction between custom and individual rights is not made explicit in the Constitution, as the intent was that they both be considered in decision-making.

In addition, the concept of the individual in many Micronesian customs is hard to determine, as the individual is considered inseparable from his or her *ainang* group.¹²⁷

¹²² *Semens v Continental et al*, (Pon.1986)

<http://www.fsmlaw.org/fsm/decisions/vol2fsm131_150.htm>

¹²³ *Semens v Continental et al*. Justice King said let us look at the South Pacific to borrow precedents of common law, but then look at the USA instead. It is a contradiction, which demonstrated the inconsistencies in the law as handled by outsiders.

¹²⁴ *Sakau* is a ceremonial drink in Pohnpei where it is used during community gatherings like funerals, feasts or customary apology. It is made from the root of the pepper tree (*Piper methysticum*)

¹²⁵ *FSM V Mudong*. The prosecutor lacked knowledge of custom and so to deny Mudong’s request to drop the case meant that Pohnpeian custom was secondary to the law in view of the outsider.

¹²⁶ During my contract work as a lawyer at the FSM Congress and Department of Justice in 2005 and 2010, I discussed the matters with the Micronesian lawyers in government.

¹²⁷ Individuals are part of the *ainang* system and there is no private individual in many parts of the FSM. One’s problem becomes the affair of the whole extended family in land dispute and death. Perhaps the Court could have adopted the doctrine of “circle sentencing” (restorative justice). This is prominent in many Australian jurisdictions involving Aborigines where the Court can determine the question of law, but the Aboriginal elders decide on the sentencing of the individual offender <<http://www.courts.act.gov.au/supreme/page/view/1363>>

The decision that the rights of an individual is paramount when compared to an *ainang* group, as held by the Court, contributed to the devaluing of Micronesian custom by removing the rights of the extended families to settle their own disputes, which was a central tenet of traditional community justice. Such a practice could alienate the individual, with devastating consequences for both the family and the community at large. In this regard it should be noted that the FSM has one of the highest suicide rates by *amwinimwin*.¹²⁸ Traditional remedies play a crucial role in the maintenance of *eoranian fanou*, the foundation of local identity and continuity.

Tamanaha and his allies accused the Court of Americanising the judicial system through what many call “creative legalism”.¹²⁹ That is, judges gave ‘lip service’ to custom and ignored other jurisdictions in the Pacific whose treatment of custom in their legal system could have provided a model, instead preferring to ‘cherry pick’ US cases; not an entirely unreasonable stance given that the judges are more familiar with them. This has raised questions as to the capacity of foreign judges to be involved in matters concerning customs and the law. For example, the writer has argued that Congress should consider introducing legislation requiring all foreign judges and lawyers to undertake workshops in Micronesian customs and traditions.¹³⁰ This would, in effect, increase their capacity to deal with the difficult issues concerning customs and the law to safeguard the continuation of Micronesian values.

The Law as Reinforcer of Identity

Brian Tamanaha, a US lawyer who worked in Yap and later wrote a book about his experiences, entitled *Understanding Law in Micronesia: An Interpretive Approach to Transplanted Law*. He criticised Justice King for his selective approach in favouring American legalism, which had no direct connection between the laws and values of Micronesia.¹³¹ He said that outsiders’ created their own brand of what the law “ought to be” rather than what “the law is”, particularly from a Micronesian perspective.¹³² Tamanaha further argued that the suggestion by Justice King that Micronesians knew what they were in for when ratifying the Constitution in order for King to strengthen his own analysis, for example in *the FSM vs. Alaphanso*, was not a defence to the criticism.

¹²⁸ *Amwinimwin* is a form of psychological punishment imposed on parents and close relatives who in the eyes of victim wrongly punish him or her. See Francis X. Hezel, *Cultural Patterns in Trukese Suicide* <<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/suicide/frames/cultpatfr.htm>> (I use different spelling of the term)

¹²⁹ Tamanaha, *Understanding Law in Micronesia*, pp. 59-67.

¹³⁰ Tamanaha, *Understanding Law in Micronesia*, pp. 59-67.

¹³¹ Tamanaha, *Understanding Law in Micronesia*, pp. 59-67.

¹³² Tamanaha, *Understanding Law in Micronesia*, pp. 59-67.

Tamanaha claimed that even though a high percentage of the population ratified the Constitution, it does not mean that the voters understood the constitutional text in its entirety.¹³³ Tamanaha is not alone in his view. It is a part of the ongoing debate between the opposing factions within the FSM legal profession as to whether or not Micronesian perspective of the legal system has been fully represented by outsiders. Many indigenous lawyers have entered the legal profession since Tamanaha's time, and have brought with them different perspectives to the debate. Many have questioned both Tamanaha's and King's perception of the law and traditions in Micronesia as both are outsiders.

Conclusion

The administration of the Constitution as discussed in the above cases has been a challenge to Micronesians. This is especially so because the law itself is not purely based on imported legal concepts, but must fit local customs to sustain continuity. Since coming into contact with the outside world, customs and traditions have adapted and maintained their integrity in the globalised world. The management and administration of the law are the responsibility of each state and municipal jurisdictions, but in conformity with the national Constitution. At the municipal level, methods of settling disputes continue to be largely led by the heads of the extended family, or traditional village leaders of each clan in conjunction with the court system. The FSM honours its Constitution and the culture it safeguards. Like any newly independent nation, the FSM faces the tension between its traditions and imported laws. This can be seen in cases outlined earlier where American judges implemented precedents, which often contradicted local understanding of effective ways of adjudicating disputes.

The judges' lack of understanding of Micronesian custom and cultures should not be used as a defence in their determinations. The Constitution is clear on the issue of customs and traditions having primacy in judges' decisions. Also, there were mechanisms available for judges to refer to if they required assistance on cultural issues. These avenues were ignored. The result led to legal precedents that continue to promote outsiders influence in Micronesia. Micronesian judges, however, are entering the constitutional system to restrengthen constitutionally defined Micronesian jurisprudence based on its historical experience to ensure the indigenous continuation of the Micronesian identity, which is the subject of chapter 2.

¹³³ Tamanaha, *Understanding the Law in Micronesia*, pp. 59-67.

CHAPTER 2: THE CURRENT MICRONESIAN IDENTITY

Background

The indigenous past is in the present; it is timeless with no sense of historical evolution as the Micronesian perspective of history contradicts the idea of the linear model of history practised by Western historians. As explained in the Introduction, the Micronesian perspective of history is dynamic and revolves around a complex web of events. To understand events of the historical past, a *sou uruo* must first isolate an event and announce it to their listeners. This is to alert other *sou uruo* to create the context of these events for the purpose of organising the relationship between such events in order to determine the validity of the historical narratives and their conclusion. In subsequent chapters my narrative will become descriptive to allow the readers to organise their thoughts about historical parallelism since I will be following the linear model approach, but will narrate the history within the context of Micronesian perspective. No Micronesian has written a comprehensive account of the colonial and post-colonial period in relation to how the modern Micronesian identity was formed, evolved and perpetuated for continuity purposes.

This chapter examines the processes that shaped the Micronesian identity and the reasons for its perpetuation as perceived by Micronesians.¹ It demonstrates the continuity of traditional ways of organizing society and nature, as still thriving in FSM today. By default, this subject is largely covered by academics raised and trained beyond Micronesia. I was struck by the disassociation of nature and humans in my review of the scholarly literature on Micronesian societies.² By and large, most academic studies of Micronesia initiate their historical discourses by describing the geography and environment of the islands. They do so before inserting the human inhabitants into the scene as though they are removed from the environment.

¹ Micronesian perception of their identity was mainly gathered in the field from those who experienced the process of independence.

² See examples such as Paul Rainbird, *The Archaeology of Micronesia*, Cambridge University Press, 2004; Roger Gale, *The Americanization of Micronesia: A Study of the Consolidation of U.S. Rule in the Pacific*, Washington D.C, 1979; Ward Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, 2nd edition, Archon Books, Conneticut, 1978; William Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia* (second edition), University of Victoria, British Columbia, 1977; Kirk Gray, *Modernization in Micronesia: Acculturation, Colonialism and Cultural Change* (PhD Thesis), Western Michigan University, 1974, p.p.1-6.

The nature-culture nexus has always been an intellectual battleground between scholars. It is also a contested area between academics advocating environmental circumstances or cultural ways of viewing the world as the prime influences on human behaviour and history³ versus indigenous perspectives of societies, such as those in Micronesia, who consider human beings as both part of nature and influential agents in the shaping of the environment.⁴ Scholars within academia are increasingly advancing the interdependent nexus between nature and culture.⁵ This chapter demonstrates the large degree of continuity in social relations and human-environment relations that exists across Micronesian societies. The chapters following then trace how this identity and its organizing principles came about over history, and how this legacy will play out in the words and actions of young people.

At a number of points along the continuum between cultural determinism and environmental determinism lies the danger of Micronesians becoming exotic stereotypes like actors in fictional Hollywood movies.⁶ Some writers narrated the tropical environment with exotic images of its inhabitants to conjure up certain preconceived cultural abstracts.⁷ For example, many scholars refer to Micronesia as a dehumanized space to relate external myths and fantasies.⁸ This exercise distorts the realities of Micronesia, a place with its own unique historical images and identities.

In reality, the modern Micronesian identity is a consequence of long historical processes that have spanned centuries of indigenous development, followed by a shorter period of external colonial rule, which culminated in the indigenous desire to establish an independent Constitution for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in 1979.⁹

Historians argue that all documents and perceived identities and affiliations are situated

³ Kerry R. Howe, *Nature, Culture and History: The "Knowing" of Oceania*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu Hawai'i, 2000; pp.55-57 and pp.59-64; David Kupferman, "On Location at a Nonentity: Reading Hollywood's "Micronesia", in *Contemporary Pacific*, Vol. 23, No.1, University of Hawai'i Press, 2011, pp.142 and 162; Jane Landman and Chris Ballard, "An Ocean Images: Film and History in the Pacific", *The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 45, No.1, June 2010, p.4.

⁴ Okusi Mahina, "The Poetics of Tongan Traditional History, Tala-e-fanua: An Ecology Centred Concept of Culture and History" in *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 28, No.1 June 1993, pp. 219-220; Kenneth E. Knudson, *Resource Fluctuation, productivity, and Social Organisation On Micronesian Coral Islands*, University of Oregon, 1970, pp. 6-8; Howe, *Nature, Culture and History: The "Knowing" of Oceania*, pp.55-57 and pp.59-64.

⁵ Personal experience showed this to be the case. Academia has been slow to come to this realization and only partially contested it.

⁶ Kupferman, "On Location at a Nonentity, pp.142-143.

⁷ Howe, *Nature, Culture, and History*, pp.13-14.

⁸ Peter Hay, "A Phenomenology of Islands", *Island Studies Journal*, Vol.1, No.1, Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada, 2006. P.21; Howe, *Nature, Culture and History*, 2000, pp.10-14.

⁹ It took almost fifteen years after the Congress of Micronesia was established in 1965 for Micronesians to finally achieve a constitutional government. Hanlon, *Making Micronesia: A Political Biography*, p.100.

within broader historical processes and are deeply embedded in the context in which they arise.¹⁰ Prior to colonial rule, people's identities were connected to one's village, island, lineage, or the clan at the regional level.¹¹ Both the *ainang* system and geography defined an individual's connection to a geographical space or in the social system.¹² For example, one could claim to be from a kin-based social unit within a village situated on a particular island, which belonged to a particular region. That is, the islands consisted of multiple identities co-existing with each other.

The term Micronesia is an externally imposed description of the scattered islands in terms of geography and as a cultural area, and was created to serve colonial purposes. In time the islanders adopted the term Micronesian to differentiate themselves from the outsiders and later used the term as a unifying tool to fight the tyranny of colonialism.¹³ The outcome of this historical discourse is the re-constitutionalisation of the term Micronesian by islanders as an identity in response to the globalised world.¹⁴

The decolonisation process of the 1960s and 1970s led to the emergence of Pacific identities framed within the context of self-governing nation states.¹⁵ Many Pacific Islanders constructed their identities along the lines of their colonial experience built upon the foundation of their unique historical past. Micronesians were also part of such a process, but were only able to exercise significant control rather late in the picture due to the prolonged control of their sovereignty by the US as a strategic UN Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). American rule merely delayed rather than stifled this process however, as Micronesians later constructed their own national identity as part of the political emancipation process from external control.

The name "Micronesia" is a European construct based on the questionable association of the physical appearance of its inhabitants, coupled with cultural similarities within a

¹⁰ Doug Munro and Brij V. Lal, "The Text in Its Context: An Introduction" in *Text and Context: Reflections* edited by Munro and Lal, pp. 1-11; Penelope J. Corfield, "All People are Living Histories-- Which is Why History Matters"

<http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/why_history_matters.html>

¹¹ Oral history. See also Francis X. Hezel, "The Chuuk Problem: At the Foot of the Political Pyramid" in *Micronesian Counselor* #50 (April 2004)

<<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/counselor/frames/chuukprobfr.htm?http&&www.micsem.org/pubs/counselor/chuukprob.htm>>

¹² Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 22-23; Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp. 8-11.

¹³ Robert Kiste, "A Half century in Restrospect" in *American Anthropology in Micronesia: An Assessment*, edited by Robert Kiste and Mac Marshall, University of Hawaii Press, 1999, pp.442-443.

¹⁴ Hanlon, *Making Micronesia: A Political Biography*, pp.5-6.

¹⁵ Meller. *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p.7.

shared geographic location in Oceania alongside Polynesia and Melanesia.¹⁶ Micronesia encompasses many island nations: Kiribati, Marshall Islands, FSM, Palau, and the USA territories of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam. However, the Federated States of Micronesia now assumes the name Micronesia by political design.¹⁷ Today it is recognised internationally as Micronesia, and the indigenous inhabitants are referred to as Micronesians, especially when framing themselves in political and cultural discourses. Micronesians legitimately consider themselves as a diverse and distinct group of people with a proud history and traditions.

That identity derives from Micronesians' close relationship to their oceanic environment. It has already been noted that the Constitution refers to the Micronesian identity as historically deriving from the sea.¹⁸ The sea is the prime source of livelihood and one that has shaped Micronesians history and identity. For example, the sea provides the space where people performed meaningful activities, where they fought wars, fished, sailed, found romance, worked, and performed religious rituals.¹⁹ These activities exemplify how islanders interact with their environment and also with each other. The sea nurtured, reproduced, and transported Micronesian ideologies across space and time.

Micronesians still perceive and cherish their traditional universe as a tripartite union between *saat* (sea), *fanou* (land), *lang* (sky);²⁰ these are the sacred domains where the spirits of the progenitors dwell.²¹ Inherent in these are the local guardians empowered with *maniman*²² who instruct successive generations of Micronesians about their historical heritage. The Constitution is conceived of by many Micronesians as a canoe carved out of the progenitors' ideological images with a purpose to transport and reinforce their history. It is the sacred vessel that beholds Micronesian identity and

¹⁶ See the *Journal of Pacific History* special issue titled "Dumont d'Urville's Divisions of Oceania: Fundamental Precincts or Arbitrary Constructs?", Vol. 38, No. 2, Sep. 2003, pp.155-288; and Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard, eds. *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750-1940*. Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008, pp.9-10.

¹⁷ Micronesia is now often associated with the Federated States of Micronesia in many international forums. The people of Palau or the Marshall Islands identify themselves with the name of their countries as in Palauans or Marshalllese. The disintegration of Micronesia was blamed on the USA as it divided up the TTPI which was against the Trusteeship Agreement. Meller. *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p.340.

¹⁸ *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*, Preamble.

¹⁹ D'Arcy, Paul. *The People of the Sea*, p.32; Hau'ofa, Epeli, *We Are the Ocean*, p.32.

²⁰ For detail discussion refer to Willaim H. Alkire, "Land, Sea, Gender and Ghosts in Woleai-Lamotrek" in *Special Publication No. 25, American Anthropological Association*, 1989, pp.85-86; Rainbird, *The Archaeology of Micronesia*, pp.37-38. See also William Lessa, *Ulithi: A Micronesian Design for Living*, University of California, Los Angeles, Holt Rhinehart and Winston, Inc, 1966, pp. 56-57.

²¹ Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Yap: Political Leadership*, p.80.

²² *Maniman* is the Micronesian equivalent to what Polynesians refer to as *Mana*, and broadly means spiritual power.

continuity while engaging with the changes of the modern world. Accordingly, let me then pay my deep respect to my ancestors in conveying my “*tiro saat, tiro lang, tiro pwwel*”²³ and *tiro nganei ash samol*. ”²⁴ This is a special acknowledgement to the Micronesian *saat, fanou, lang*. It is an invocation honouring the natural spaces where the ancestors dwell and oversee their *aramas* (people).

Former speaker of the Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia, Jack Fritz, like many esteemed traditional leaders before him, always began his oratory speeches with a passionate delivery of the above traditional line. It reveals Micronesians’ deep connection to their oceanic environment, the land, and the sky. Fritz’s sentiment reflects Tosiwo Nakayama’s, FSM’s first President, instructive dictum to his people where he impressed upon them to fully embrace their customs, traditions, and the God-given islands.²⁵ Micronesians, he said, should cease being afraid of outsiders who attempted to destroy their pride, dignity and self-esteem in order to steal their islands. Micronesians should also be reminded of the sea;²⁶ it is central to their livelihood, history and identity.²⁷

Masao Nakayama, the older brother of Tosiwo and a former FSM ambassador to the United Nations (UN), echoed both the President’s and Speaker’s comments when he explained what the sea means to Micronesians at the UN Convention Law of the Sea in 1974. He declared: “Though essential, the land is tiny and relatively barren. It provides people with protection from the elements and a place to eat and sleep in comfort. But the real focus of life is on the sea. The sea provides food and tools and the medium to transport an islander from one cluster of humanity to another. As compared to the power and moods of the sea, the land is insignificant, humble (and) dull. The rhythm of life is dictated by the sea. The turbulence of the sea tells people when they can travel and when they can’t. It controls the habits of fish and the habits of the human seeking them. The sea sustains life with the food it provides, but also carries the potential to end it in the fury of one of its periodic rages. The sea challenges people, tests their character,

²³ *Pwwel* is the same as *fanou*. However, it is more appropriate to use the term *pwwel* when delivering a speech during community gatherings.

²⁴ *Samol* is referred to traditional chiefs. Former speaker of the FSM Congress, Jack Fritz, delivered his speeches using the tripartite connections as a sign of deep respect to the different spaces where Chuukese-Micronesians ancestors dwell. Elders before Jack Fritz also used the same opening remarks. It is still used today by people during all sorts of meetings.

²⁵ David Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia: Discourses Over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-1982*, University of Hawaii Press, 1988, p.138.

²⁶ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, p.138.

²⁷ *The Constitution of the FSM, Preamble*.

provides life with drama and meaning.”²⁸ D’Arcy also noted that, “The sea dominates the lives and consciousness of the inhabitants...as nowhere else on earth. In this ocean setting, the sea cannot be ignored.”²⁹

The two Nakayamas and Fritz’s prophetic statements convey Micronesians’ deep relationship with the sea. As Captain David Marar alluded to this relationship, “*rematau* (people of the sea) is the identity that any Micronesian can wear as a badge of honour. It evokes the unending song sung from the ocean deep to remind *shon fanuash* (people of our island or land) of where they came from.”³⁰



Figure 6: This is one of the traditional fishing techniques called *lalo* used to catch bonito, which is still practiced today. This involves using coconut fronds to trap fish near the beach. This photo was taken on Lukunor Island in early 2014.

²⁸ Masao Nakayama and Fred Ramp, *Traditional Native Approaches to Ocean Governance*, 1974
<<http://unu.edu>>

²⁹ D’Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.26.

³⁰ David Marar (Wing Commander of the FSM Maritime Patrol Division) Interview, January 3, 2011, Nett, Pohnpei, FSM. Simion Weito, (a captain of one of the FSM surveillance ships) Interview, January 3, 2011. Simion is also the *makal* (the traditional leader) of his island called Houk in the Northwest region of Chuuk.



Figure 7: Another view of *lalo*. This photo was taken on Lukunor Island in early 2014.

Joakim Peter, a Mortlockese academic, summed up the all-pervasiveness of the sea and sea skills in Micronesian life when he described how, “singing (represents) the use of navigation as a way of speaking ...about elements of contemporary (Micronesia): politics, government, and Christianity...the song cautions against bad political or social handling to enforce social order.”³¹ This metaphoric song understood only by Micronesians continues to guide them into the future. Micronesians are creatures of the sea.

The sea has always influenced the Micronesian perception of the world, which in turn has framed their cultural identity. Historically the term *shon metau* (people of the deep sea) has been used in reference to the low-lying islands in Chuuk and Yap whose lifestyle depends on the sea. Anthropologist Lieber and historian D’Arcy discussed how the sea shapes island cultures, a theme, which also resonates across the vast array of Micronesian oral histories. D’Arcy in his book *The People of the Sea* provides a detailed study in relation to how Pacific islanders interact with the sea and how this interaction has shaped islanders’ cultural identities.³² Lieber’s book *More Than a Living: Fishing and Social Order on a Polynesian Atoll*, focuses on the atoll of Kapingamarangi where daily life and social structure depends on fishing activities. With the changes in technology new fishing practices arose as the people adapted to the

³¹ *The Constitution of the FSM, Preamble*; Joakim Peter, *The Chuukese Traveller*, p. 261.

³² D’Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, chapter 7.

See also Haou’fa, *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works*, pp. 27-40.

changing circumstances on the atoll. New ideas were also borrowed from neighbouring islands such as the volcanic island of Pohnpei and Nukuoro atoll. However, fishing remains the central activity for the male population on Kapingamarangi.³³

The inception of the Congress of Micronesia (COM) in the mid-1960s underscored the emergence of the modern identity and the various inhabitants' historical backgrounds. The Congress was the forum for the elected leaders to discuss decolonization and independence. The concept of one Micronesian identity was a top priority for the leaders. However, the identity was under constant threat by political elements that remained favourable to Americanisation. This Americanisation doctrine was unpopular to the conservative elements of the Congress. To them, Americanisation would mean American culture and values usurping those of the indigenous population. That is, Micronesians would be the new minority group and inevitably be treated as second-class citizens. Proponents of Americanisation included Amata Kabua³⁴ and Nick Bossy,³⁵ and also many who suffered during the War. The thought of Micronesia losing its security due to the threat of the Cold War was more prominent. To its proponents, a continued close association, and even integration with the USA would ensure Micronesian security. The administrators were impassioned with the new identity; they thought the quest to de-Americanise the islands was too premature citing Micronesian inexperience being inadequate to form and operate a government.³⁶ Despite the USA's roadblocks to the issue of Micronesian independence, it did not fade away. The mood for independence instead gained momentum in the early 1970s. After a series of political negotiations between the two opposing parties, the issue remained deadlocked. The Micronesian leadership would not give in to the American wish to control Micronesia.³⁷ The pro-independence movement rallied the people with resounding support resulting in a Constitutional Convention (ConCon) on Saipan in the early 1970s. It was a serious demonstration of the leaders' intention to define Micronesian political identity in the islanders' own image after a long period of American rule.

³³ Lieber, *More Than a Living*, pp. 179-180.

³⁴ Hanlon, *Making Micronesia: A Political Biography*, pp. 168-169.

³⁵ Hanlon, *Making Micronesia: A Political Biography*, pp.174-175.

³⁶ Glenn Petersen, "Lesson learned: The Micronesian Quest for Independence in the Context of American Imperial history", in *Micronesian Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol.3, no.1-2, December 2004, p.53.

³⁷ Hanlon, *Making Micronesia: A Political Biography*, pp.119-122.

Towards a New Future

The Constitutional Convention was held in Saipan in the early 1970s. Its purpose was manifold, but its main focus was to debate the new Micronesian identity as premised on a proposed nationwide Constitution. This was a testing time for the whole Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) to determine whether to remain under the US administration, or not.³⁸ The Constitutional Convention was also the forum in which the differences between Micronesians within the American-administered TTPI emerged. For example, the districts of Palau, Marianas Islands, and the Marshall Islands decided that it was better for them to leave the proposed Micronesian union, and create their own separate identities. Palau and the Marshall Islands *inter alias* reasoned that they did not want to be controlled by an imposed central identity that identified them as Micronesians.³⁹ Further, these districts also did not want to share with the poorer districts their revenue from the US test missile range in the case of the Marshall Islands, and the proposed oil super port to be constructed in Palau by Japan and Iran. The Northern Mariana Islands' greater exposure to the outside world motivated them to opt to be part of the American super identity. In employing the colonial principle of "divide and rule", the USA granted the wishes of Palau and the Marshalls to leave the TTPI to form their own political identities, later known as Palauan and Marshallese. The remaining districts of Ponape, Truk, Yap and Kusaie⁴⁰ decided to form the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) with its people now referred to as Micronesians. The Micronesian identity has been recognised by the UN. However, the identity required the forces of social valorisation in order for it to be embedded in everyday people's imagination. The Preamble of the FSM Constitution became the mantra in print to perpetuate the Micronesian identity in the brave new world of autonomy and self-representation.⁴¹

The Constitution united the indigenous people whose political desire was to share a nation. Since 1979 the Micronesian identity has been universally accepted worldwide. The Constitution also bestows the identity on those who are born in foreign lands with

³⁸ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp.219-223; Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, pp. 179-182; William H. Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp.92-94.

³⁹ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, pp. 178-179.

⁴⁰ Kusaie was part of the Ponape district and later became Kosrae state separated from Ponape to carry on the proposed mandate of the constitutional convention. This was to allow the Constitution to pass and thus the creation of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p.9.

⁴¹ Personal knowledge, in the 1970s high school students were required to learn the preamble by heart. In my communication with many high school teachers during my fieldwork in January 2011, students are still encouraged to have knowledge of the Preamble.

Micronesian heritage. The FSM passport validates the Micronesian identity when one travels to different jurisdictions internationally.⁴² Also, the constitution is a shield⁴³ against outsiders' encroachment on this new identity.

Local, Regional, and National Identities

My personal case may be used as an example of what it is to be a Micronesian with multiple identities, but with the national identity under the Constitution. I am a Lekiniochian (a person born on the island of Lekinioch) from the Mortlocks (Mortlockese) in the state of Chuuk (Chuukese) in Federated States of Micronesia (a Micronesian).⁴⁴ I am a Micronesian, an identity bestowed upon me by the Constitution of the FSM to inform others of what the indigenous Chuukese, Yapese, Kosraens and Pohnpeians collectively refer to themselves in this age of globalisation.⁴⁵ This identity reclaims Micronesia's historical past from the colonial powers. I am a part of the new generation of the clan *sor*, but I am also associated with another clan as *afakiran sofa*, which entitles me to speak about my own perspective of my island and my *uruon ainang*.⁴⁶ I have lived and travelled far and wide both domestically and internationally and have always remained loyal to my identity. I was born and raised in the Mortlocks where my perspective of the world was shaped. My progenitors travelled the Chuukese region and beyond on sophisticated sailing canoes to connect with their *ainang* members who were spread across multiple atolls and high islands. Today, I am following their footsteps and have added new experiences to enrich my own *shon metau* background as a result of my own voyages to new spaces.⁴⁷

Travelling remains central to Micronesian history and identity. This is because it continues the traditional network system established by Micronesians prior to colonisation. Such a network transmits, sustains, and transforms Micronesian ideologies

⁴² Micronesians were issued passports reflecting their status within the international system as TTPI residents. However, the passports were under the control of the USA Government.

⁴³ The Constitution of the FSM. It asserts Micronesian rights to their islands as recognized in international law. See United Nations Human Rights, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Part I, *Article 1*, <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>>; *The Constitution of the FSM, Article II, Section 1* <<http://fsm.supremecourt.org/fsm/constitution/article2.htm>>; *Charter of the United Nations, Article 1(2)* <<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml>>

⁴⁴ Personal identity based on my island clan and the region I came from which are rolled into the Micronesian identity.

⁴⁵ *The FSM Constitution, Preamble*.

⁴⁶ *Sor* is my mother's clan; it is my ascribed status. *Sofa* is my father's clan, which gave me the title *afakiran*, a honorary member of the *Sofa* clan. On clan associations and relationships, see also Marshall, "The Structure of Solidarity", pp. 50-66; Nason, *Clan and Copra*, pp. 59-63.

⁴⁷ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp.98-99, 134.

within the globalisation process.⁴⁸ Although the modes of travelling have changed, Micronesians have adapted to new ways of travel to different spaces, further away from their shores.⁴⁹ They are forming new communities within a wider diaspora, carrying with them their history and identity. The new waves of followers are continuing this process. Joakim Peter referred to this move as *aipwa*; that is, following the footprints of fellow islanders who are now residing elsewhere around the globe.⁵⁰ As Mac Marshall states in relation to *shon* Namoluk, “movement, migration, voyaging beyond the horizon are nothing new to Micronesian people.”⁵¹

In this process, many Micronesians have now resided outside Micronesia while remaining connected to their Micronesian identity by adapting to their new places of residence to match established ways of doing things and interacting. For example, Sociologist Lola Bautista’s study of Micronesians from Satowan Island living abroad provided an insight into Micronesian ideology of domestic space when transplanted to foreign spaces. Her research revealed that configuration of spaces used in the layout of family compounds in Satowan has been duplicated in Guam. The idea is to allow the Satowanese to continue engaging with each other as if they were on their home island.⁵² She observed how the Satowanese allocated cultural spaces between genders such as *lenien maur* (sleeping quarters), *mosoro* (cooking space) and a common area to accommodate everyday interaction in order to facilitate cultural practices.⁵³ A separate detachment like a *faal*, if it could be afforded, would also provide cultural space for young men to interact.⁵⁴ My observation of my extended family’s compound situated on what they referred to as the “ranch” in Guam confirms Bautista’s findings. My observation also indicated that my family’s cultural identity remains strong despite its relocation. However, some features of cultural practises are eroding as the new

⁴⁸ As a member of the Micronesian diaspora, I am carrying my Micronesian ideologies with me as the basis of my identity in the globalised world. See also Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp.98-99, 134. Epeli Hau’ofa also discussed the concept of movement of Pacific islanders who are now part of a wider Pacific community in his article *Our Sea of Islands*, pp.34-39; Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 12-19, 62, 64; Uman, Saladier and Chipen, *Uruon Chuuk*, pp.1-7.

⁴⁹ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp.98-99 and 134; See Hau’ofa, “Our Sea of Islands”, pp. 34-39.

⁵⁰ Peter, “Chuukese Travellers”, pp. 256-257.

⁵¹ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p.6.

⁵² Lola Q. Bautista, “Building Sense Out of Households: Migrants from Chuuk (re)create Local Settlements in Guam” in *City and Society*, University of Hawai’i at Mano, Final Report to the NSF in December 2007, pp.80-83.

⁵³ Spaces are configured approximating Bautista’s study to reflect the gender avoidance between sisters and brothers. See social protocols in Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity*, pp.54-55.

⁵⁴ Interaction between brothers and sisters are still seen as taboo and so both sexes have separate spaces for interaction. It is becoming problematic with the new generation who are born in the USA. They seem not to observe the taboo between sisters and brothers. Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity*, p.54; Lingenfelter, *Yap: Political Leadership*, pp. 44-45.

generation born in Guam and elsewhere in the USA are growing up in a new environment far from the centre of everyday cultural interactions like in the Mortlocks.⁵⁵

Reinforcing Identity

Ainang membership and locality affiliation, citizenship, and FSM constitutional rights form the foundation of Micronesian identity and the sense of belonging in the fluid modern world. For example, Article III, section 2 of the Constitution defines Micronesians in terms of nationality and citizenship. It states, “a person born of parents one or both of whom are citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia is a citizen and national of the Federated States by birth.”⁵⁶ Section 3 demands total loyalty of its citizens by prohibiting dual citizenship after a certain age. It says, “a citizen of the Federated States of Micronesia who is recognized as a citizen of another nation shall, within 3 years of his 18th birthday...register his intent to remain a citizen of the Federated States and renounce his citizenship of another nation. If he fails to comply with this Section, he becomes a national of the Federated States of Micronesia.”⁵⁷ A national is a Micronesian by heritage, but with limited constitutional rights. However, that is not to say that nationals are exempt from identifying themselves as Micronesians by virtue of ancestral connection to the FSM.⁵⁸

Being a Micronesian involves more than conforming to legal criteria as it is deeply embedded in cultural ideology and practices. Personal identity is an ascribed status as can be seen in the *ainang* system in many parts of Micronesia. Citizenship, however, is acquired through the legal system. For example, American-born Micronesians perpetuate the Micronesian identity in a global context, although they have no direct experience of Micronesia. The island culture, however, recognises their membership in the *ainang* system.⁵⁹ Although offspring of mixed parental marriages who are born in other global places have less exposure to Micronesian cultural knowledge, their absence from the FSM does not deny their permanent membership of their parent’s *ainang*.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p.142.

⁵⁶ *The Constitution of the FSM, Article III, Section 2.*

⁵⁷ *The Constitution of the FSM, Article III, section 3.*

⁵⁸ There is a clash between the terms citizenship and national especially when the issue of land or title inheritance is involved. For example, inheritance is by tradition and nothing can interfere in that process and yet the Constitution banned traditional entitlements if one loses FSM citizenship. It is a flaw in the Constitution that needs urgent discussion.

⁵⁹ Individuals born outside of Micronesia with blood connection to the islands are automatically a member of their clan either as a *afaker* or full blown membership depending on the gender of the parent.

⁶⁰ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp.141-142.

Membership is about connections deeply rooted in Micronesian culture for the purpose of prolonging the survivability of the *ainang* system into the future, despite one's absence.⁶¹

To celebrate and protect the Micronesian identity, a law was created in 2010, which designated March 31 of each year as FSM's Cultures and Traditions National Holiday. The law states; "most nations celebrate their cultures and traditions as an integral part of their national identity. Inherent in this practice, is the celebration of indigenous cultures (and)...the FSM is blessed with its own indigenous cultures...even in the face of globalization. (It has) retained much of (its) cultural identity through the process of assimilation, and (it) will continue to withstand continuing foreign influences into the future."⁶²

As a people vulnerable to natural disasters in the oceanic environment, maintaining both intra and inter-island connections is fundamental to the reinforcement of the social safety net.⁶³ This tradition is alive and well today. Displays of connections are demonstrated during public holidays to commemorate the history of each island, state and the nation. On the aforementioned 31 March national holiday, the national government invites cultural groups and dignitaries around the nation to attend the commemorative celebrations that are hosted in honour of the national holiday.⁶⁴ The states and municipalities also have their own traditional holidays celebrated every year consisting of events, which include traditional dances, displays of traditional foods and handicrafts, and speeches from dignitaries. For example, in Yap state a state holiday called "Yap Day" is celebrated on the first weekend of March every year. They display their island wares, stick and marching dances. A canoe festival is also on display where Yapese showcase their canoes and sailing skills rooted to the *sawei* traditions. As recently as 2010 Carolinians sailed from Saipan in the Northern Mariana islands to Yap which is more than 756 km (or 643 miles) away.⁶⁵ It only took them a week to reach their destination. This event was used to demonstrate their navigational prowess, and the value placed on this knowledge as part of their identity and historical continuity.

⁶¹ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp. 142-143; Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian societies*, p.82.

⁶² The FSM Congress, *Congressional Bill No. 16-01*, which later became a law created a national holiday to honor the cultures and traditions of the Federated States of Micronesia.

⁶³ See the *Sawei* system discussed in D'Arcy, *People of the Sea*, pp.146-150.

⁶⁴ Personal experience. Other traditional celebrations could be seen during the states' constitutional days.

⁶⁵ If one follows the traditional sea-lanes of sailing from proper Yap to Saipan it should be more than the 756 kilometers—the distance from Gaferut to Guam. D'Arcy, *People of the Sea*, p. 154 and p.158 for map of sea-lanes and approximate distances between the islands in Yap all the way to the Mortlocks in Chuuk.

Pohnpei state also has a holiday to celebrate the Constitution where the people come together to perform their dances, market their agricultural produce, and display their island wares.⁶⁶ Traditional leaders make speeches emphasising the history of their islands. The Chuukese have their own constitutional holiday as well where the showcasing of traditional dances, local foods, handicrafts and competitions involving traditional activities such as copra husking and spear throwing.⁶⁷ Moreover, its low-lying atolls have their own cultural and traditional day. Leaders from the national and state governments are invited to join these celebrations. These events are also repeated in Kosrae and elsewhere in the FSM.⁶⁸

Some observers perceive the differences in cultures as an obstacle to maintaining the future integrity of the Federated States of Micronesia. Perhaps this is so when viewed within the context of colonial discourse where external threats are always looming on the horizons ready to rupture the nation at any moment. This discourse may be connected to the past partition of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, which saw the emergence of the various small island states out of the territory. Some claim the FSM will follow suit because of its cultural diversity. For example, Petersen claimed in 1990 that “the FSM will break up in violence. Just as colonisation strung these islands together, islanders will undo it to suit their own circumstances as in the historical past.”⁶⁹

However, Petersen’s subsequent research led him to change his position.⁷⁰ He joined his fellow anthropologists such as Marshall and Rauchholz to convey the local perspective that Micronesians are conscious of the fact that their similarities outweigh their differences as forged by their history. This historical connection has been stated in many scholarly studies of frequent canoe voyages between islands, which led to the homogenisation of Micronesian cultures, and traditions on many islands.⁷¹ Seafaring was the lifeline of Micronesian islanders. It created economic opportunities, enhanced knowledge of space, connected people, strengthened relationships and initiated new

⁶⁶ Personal witness while living in Pohnpei when teaching at the College of Micronesia, Pohnpei Campus. See Myjolynne Kim, *Into the Deep*, pp. 9-11.

⁶⁷ Personal experience as a Mortlockese-Chuukese witnessing Chuuk Constitution day. Kim, *Into the Deep*, pp.9-11.

⁶⁸ Personal witness to Kosraen community celebration in Pohnpei; Kim, *Into the Deep*, pp.9-11.

⁶⁹ Petersen, “Regime Change”, pp. 67-68; The Chuuk Commission is taking position just in case it sees an opportunity lurking on the horizon; Lack of a coherent culture was also discussed as the basis that may break up the FSM. For further details see Yoko Komai, “The Failure to Objectify Culture: A lack of nationalism in the FSM” in *People and Culture in Oceania*, Vol.19, No.41, 2005. P.21.

⁷⁰ Glenn Petersen, *Pers Comm*, Micronesian Australia Friends Association (MAFA) Workshop, Australian National University, July 12, 2014.

⁷¹ Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 8-12; Joakim Peter; *Chuukese Travellers*, p. 258.

alliances.⁷² In Micronesia today travelling between islands continues, but with different means of transportation. Modern travelling continues to reproduce Micronesians' shared values and at the same time binds Micronesians closer together.

Oral traditions speak of movements between Kosraens, Pohnpeians, Chuukese and Yapese that reinforced these existing connections. As Oha Uman, a traditional historian from Chuuk said: “*ewe samolin Ponpei a nomw a uro pwe epwe eor kinamwe lefilen (aramasan Maikronesia). A tingei aewan Souariras (wisan epwe chok fori an epwe chok pwepweruk) nganei chuuk. Soukachaw (sou pwera) epe la mas on Kusaie ren epe akaula sain Likinikechaw (shon afitikoko seni fanuan Masel) an epe tolong. A tingei Sou Yap (sou safei) Puluwat (Sou fal waa).*”⁷³ “The *samol lap* (paramount chief) from Pohnpei desired a united people of the Caroline Islands to live together in peace. For that purpose, he sent *souariras* (the great dancer) to Chuuk to teach the people about dancing, and *sou pwera* (the great fighter) to Kosrae to keep outsiders from entering the empire. He also sent *sou safei* (the great medicine man) to Yap to teach the people the art of medicine, and finally the *sou fal waa* (the great canoe builder) to Puluwat.”⁷⁴

However, before the *samol* sent his *sou* people to their destinations, he also instructed them to treat all their subjects well in accordance with established customs and traditions. Interaction between the people between the respective areas under the *sou* was common.⁷⁵ For example, if people from *sou safei* needed to learn the art of canoe building, they would travel to the place where *sou fal waa* resided or vice versa. As Joakim Peter commented, in the earlier days frequent voyages between islands were vital to the extended *sou* system; it kept relationships alive and at the same time created opportunities for people to interact and learn from each other.⁷⁶ This interaction between Micronesians remains in place today, but with additional purposes as Micronesians continue to adapt. The ongoing adaptation process binds the indigenous people in contemporary FSM.

Waa and Identity

Waa (canoe) and the *sou fal waa* (master canoe builder) represent an essential element of the Micronesian identity. That is because *waa* has sustained and transported Micronesian ideas across time and space. Specialised skills in canoe building and

⁷² The *Sawei* system is an example of such. D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp.146-149.

⁷³ Uman, Saladier and Chipen, *Uruon Chuuk*, pp.1-7.

⁷⁴ Author's own translation of pp1-7 in the *Uruon Chuuk* from Chuukese to English.

⁷⁵ Author's own translation of pp.1-7 in the *Uruon Chuuk* from Chuukese to English.

⁷⁶ Peter, *Chuukese Travellers*, p. 258; Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p.3.

navigation were central to freedom of movement on the sea, which allowed islanders to restrengthen their connection, identity, and continuity. Every island had *sou fal waa*. However, according to the *Uruon Chuuk*, there was a main source from which *sou fal waa* derived their knowledge. From that source different techniques then emerged on different islands as they competed to create the best canoe model. *Waa* building was not just about cutting down a tree and carving it into a form. The *sou fal waa* had to possess multiple skills and global knowledge in relation to traditions. For example, intimate knowledge of breadfruit trees, carving techniques, special tools, measurement, and people's personalities.⁷⁷ Knowing people's personalities is essential to the building of canoes as it kept the team together as well as maintaining the skills within the extended family circle.

Traditional rituals are integral parts of canoe building as they signal the different stages of construction and the order in which the team needs to pay tribute to the ancestral gods to ensure success. For example, during *wiieo* ceremony, held upon the completion of the *waa*, the clan of the master builder, with his invited guests, would celebrate the event.⁷⁸ It is an opportune time to display the canoe as a showpiece to the public and to allow the larger community take notice of the clan's achievement. The *itang* (master orator) would participate in this event to bless and praise the clan in its future endeavours.

Each island retained their specific knowledge about *waa* building. There is also exchange of knowledge between islands when specific canoe designs for specific purposes are sought. For example, D'Arcy noted that even well resourced high islanders used a variety of methods to retain their ability to build and sail canoes after sustained Western contact.⁷⁹ The villagers of Gachpar in Yap, for example, relied heavily on Carolinian seafarers for their knowledge and skills of voyaging. These skills enabled the Yap islanders to continue to sail to Palau and the Philippines.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ It is my own personal knowledge and as being an islander from Lukunor learned from my elders. I directly observed master canoe builders (*sou fal waa*) as possessing multiple skills and talent like chanting, traditional measurement, and religious practices, for example. William Alkire, "Technical Knowledge and the Evolution of Political Systems in the Central and Western Caroline Islands of Micronesia, *Canadian Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 2, no.2, Winter 1980. pp, 230-231; D'Arcy, *People of the Sea*, pp.90-91; Don Rubinstein, *An Ethnography of Micronesian Childhood*, p.54.

⁷⁸ *Wiieo* is a community gathering like feast and speeches to bless the completion of a canoe in adherence with custom. It is a time to display the pride of the clan's master canoe builder.

⁷⁹ D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.144.

⁸⁰ Peter Sitan *Interview* on January 2, 2011; David Marar *Interview* on January 5, 2011, Nett, Pohnpei.

There are many types of canoe design⁸¹ found in the Caroline Islands encompassing the modern states of Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae and Yap. However, *ioshol* and *maisuu* are shared Mortlockese designs. *Maisuu* are also found in the western part of Chuuk, including the low-lying islands of Yap.⁸² *Maisuu* has the “V” shape on both ends of the canoe resembling the tail of the frigate bird and its speed and agility. *Palou* Sitan offered further explanation of the v shape as representing the genitalia of the female body; it represents, life, fertility, and continuity.⁸³ The body of the canoe is painted in black and red to protect it from waterlog and the sun’s heat, while *ioshol* was painted black in its entirety without the frigate bird tail shape at both ends. In Pohnpei and Kosrae their present canoes have long outriggers, almost the length of the body,⁸⁴ and they are used primarily for transportation around the island itself rather than between islands. They did not see the need for long-distance canoes as they are well resourced agriculturally.



Figure 8: *Maisuu* sailing canoe often used by some Mortlockese and the outer islands of northwest Chuuk and the atoll dwellers in Yap. Photo taken by Don Rubinstein during one of his visits to Yap in 2013-2014.

⁸¹ *Maisuu* me *ioshol* are different canoe style. *Mai suk* is bulkier and are considered to carry more weight on the sea. *Ioshol* are used for warfare for its agility, speed and maneuverability. On Lukunor there was another type of canoe imported from Kapingamarangi called *sain Kirinis*, literally mean the style of a canoe imported from Kapingamarangi. Kamilo Likichimus was a master canoe builder from Lukunor, *Interview*, Weno Chuuk, June 20, 2013.

⁸² Sitan, *Interview*, January 2, 2011.

⁸³ During one of my personal communication with Peter at the Australian National University on April 29, 2014, he sketched the “V-shape” and exposed it from all angles. When viewed from a distance looking at the V shape at ninety degrees angle, there emerged a physical imagery of the female body sign of fertility.

⁸⁴ Segal G. Harvey, *Kosrae: The Sleeping Lady Awakens*, Kosrae Tourist Division, Department of Conservation and Development, Kosrae State Government, Federated States of Micronesia, 1989, p. 52.

The title *palou* (master navigator) epitomises the essence of Micronesian oceanic identity. The title is bestowed upon those who have demonstrated the many qualities and abilities necessary to lead people on voyages far and wide. For instance, a *palou* must have the skills of a negotiator, an astronomer, a master chanter, a charmer, a priest of the high seas, a warrior, patience, and most of all a leader with courage.⁸⁵ He is almost like an *itang* in terms of the skills and knowledge he possesses and needs to master. No one questions the skills of the *palou* when on the sea as to do so would bring negative consequences. The *palou* still practises their skills and is well regarded in island communities today. Their achievements are celebrated by *po* (admission to the exclusive club for master navigators) especially in the western islands of Chuuk and the low-lying islands of Yap, for example, Pollap and Satawal.⁸⁶ In the Mortlocks *palou* are still around, although no sailing canoes have been constructed since typhoon Pamela destroyed all existing ones in the Mortlocks in 1976.⁸⁷

Shaping of Identities

The Federated States of Micronesia is a collection of many islands with different forms of landscapes, communities, and traditions. The physical environment and climate influence the way space is used, conceptualised, given social identity, and also how resources are consumed and conserved. The Micronesian archipelago is made of three types of islands⁸⁸: volcanic high islands, like the main islands of Pohnpei, Yap, Kosrae, Weno, Fefan and Uman; low-lying atolls, such as Namonenu, Namonuito, Ulithi, Lamotrek, Mokilia and Pingelap; and stand-alone raised coral islands, for example Nama and Satawal. Typical atolls are encircled by coral reefs with a deep lagoon with enough vegetation to support its dwellers and bio system, while stand-alone raised coral islands are completely surrounded by the sea.⁸⁹ Atoll islanders are heavily dependent on the sea because of a lack of land. Volcanic islands are typically lush with rich fauna and flora in comparison to the low-lying islands because of the presence of mountains, which block moisture-laden winds off the sea, forcing them upwards to condense as rain

⁸⁵ D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.80

⁸⁶ James Naich, *Pers Comm.* on the Internet, August 21, 2013.

⁸⁷ Emilio, Jimmy, *Personal Comm.* January 5, 2013. Jimmy is a descendant of one of the great *palou* of Ettal called Limiroch. However, there was another *palou* called Simen who possessed the art of *palou*. D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.80.

⁸⁸ Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, p.5.

⁸⁹ Alikre, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, p.5.

clouds.⁹⁰ The different types of island environments have influenced community organisation and social identity.

Island communities are constructed and spread along the shoreline allowing immediate access to the sea on both high and low islands. *Prima facie*, the sea provides food, sea life that can be utilised for their medicinal properties and a place to perform religious activities to appease the *anun saat* [sea gods]. It is also the place where young people develop and practise their skills in fishing, sailing, martial arts, swimming, weather reading, romance, and leisure. All these activities are crucial in the construction of one's "sense of belonging" to the islands, or being a genuine *remetaw*. The sea is also where rites of passage take place, especially for young males. In the past, a rite of passage to enter manhood was for example, a young male had to join a *fauko* (deep-sea fish trap) trip where certain rituals had to be performed. His elders had to decide his fate based on his performance of the required *fauko* criteria. As Felik, a traditional historian once noted, "the sea is where one is born and returns when one dies."⁹¹ Once a young male became a man, he was required to sleep in the *ainang's faal* (men's house) until he found a suitable wife. The chosen wife must be outside the clan to comply with *eoranei fel* (sacred traditions); that is avoiding marrying his own female relatives. The *faal* was like the forum where young men undertook further training in traditional curriculum such as martial arts, dancing, mask carving, canoe building, fishing techniques, and public oratory.⁹² The *ainang* history was taught in detail in order to orient the young men about their place in the *ainang* diaspora as well as within the community hierarchy.

It was also a testing time for young men to hone their interests in particular sets of skills to enable them to acquire the title *sou* (one who specialised in), for example, *sou set* (specialised fishermen) *sou fal waa* (specialised canoe builders) and *sou rong* (expert in traditional medicine and martial art).⁹³ Steven Maipi, a former teacher from Lukunor,

⁹⁰ Darcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp.13-20.

⁹¹ Felix Naich, or Felik as locals called him, was a historian of Lukunor Island. He was born early 20th Century and experienced all the changes on Lukunor Island from the German era to the US era. I grew up listening to his histories of the Island from settlement, culture and contact with the outside world. In his estimation, knowledge of history gives one identity and stability in life. Explanation of the importance of traditional history is explained generally by William H. Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll and Inter Island Socio-Economic Ties*, pp.114-119; David Hanlon, "Micronesia: Writing And Rewriting the Histories of a Nonentity", in *Pacific Studies*, Vol.12, No.2, March 1989, pp.7-8.

⁹² Felix Naich, Oral history. Many of the activities are still in existence when I was living on Lukunor, my island home.

⁹³ The term *sou* is still used in the Mortlocks to refer to people with the specialised skills. Oral history as told by the historian Felix Naich and Kamilo Likichimus, also a well known master canoe carver. I learned the history from Felix and observed Kamilo carving many canoes in the 1960s and 1970s on Lukunor Island. I also interviewed Peter Sitan at the Australian National University on April 29, 2014. The term *sou* is also used in Pohnpei referring to persons with high standing in the community.

described what constituted a real man, “a man must not only possess the skills required by *eoranei*, but must know when to use his internal strength as to when to fight, negotiate, and withdraw.”⁹⁴ These principles were played out in relations with outsiders, especially during the Japanese and US occupations, to protect the integrity of Micronesian cultures.

In many parts of Micronesia, entering manhood or womanhood is an important event in a person’s life as it formalises one’s status in the community as well as creating new networks in the community by virtue of marriage outside the clan.⁹⁵ In the past, finding a suitable wife or husband involved one’s participation in social events such as traditional *apwarik* [special dances].⁹⁶ *Apwarik* could be sponsored by any *samol* of a particular *ainang*. The place for *apwarik* often took place in the *faal* (clan’s community meeting house) owned by the *ainang*. *Apwarik* was a time when relationships formed. The son or daughter of the *samol* who sponsored the *apwarik* had to pick his or her choice of partner first during the *apwarik*. *Apwarik* could take many nights and only ended when the son or the daughter of the *samol* found a partner to marry. Others formed relationships during *apwarik* as well. *Apwarik* was important in the life of the community as it created many important activities; it created trade, enhanced religious practises, and reinforced connections between local people and others from different islands. For example, people who participated in *apwarik* had to dress up to impress their opposites. The best island attires were worn during the event such as *urupow* (elaborate feathers), *taek* (turmeric), *lofor* (traditional perfume), *mwaremwar* or *akelet* (leis), and *toor* (traditional lavalava).⁹⁷ New dances were invented, and *kapasan tong* (love poetry) were also composed to attract the attention of the intended partner. Many items, which were used during *apwarik*, had to be sought from elsewhere. *Waa serek*

⁹⁴ Steven Maipi was my teacher in the early 1970s. He came from the clan *Sor*. His sub-clan are known to have secret knowledge of paralysing people by pressuring specific parts of the human anatomy called *tikifel*. He explained what it means to be a real man in view of our customs and traditions.

⁹⁵ Personal experience. It was explained to me that social behaviors distinguish man from woman as well as from real men from ordinary men. From early childhood I learned how to behave accordingly.

⁹⁶ Personal knowledge as taught to me by Felix Naich, Oral historian.

⁹⁷ Oral history as told by my elders. *Apwarik* was one of the big events in island life. This is because it brought together young people and in the process they formed relationships. The event was also use for showing of one’s wealth as imported items were used for bodily decoration. Wealth connects to people’s identity and social standing. Religious practices were also used as in *awar* (magic/love potion) See brief comments by Thomas Gladwin, *East is a Big Bird*, pp.61-62; See also Ward Goodenough, “Under the Heaven’s Brow: Pre- Christian Religious Tradition in Chuuk” in *American Philosophical Society*, Volume 246, pp.26-27.

(sailing canoes) were often sent to far off destinations to concentrate on trade for the desired goods and also to reconnect with distant clan members.⁹⁸

Lamelam [religious] rituals were part of the *apwarik* activities. Opposing parties who competed to win the affection of the most desired partners would call on the assistance of their ancestral gods. *Lofor me tukmaun* [potions] and *ngorongor* [chanting] were used as part of the *apwarik* rituals to increase the chances for one to capture the heart of a future partner. The traditional historian Felik spoke of a popular legend called “*pon mosor*” (sweet smell of the mosor flowers) where a shy young man always hid outside the *apwarik* venue. The sweet smell of his *mosor mwaremwar* (lei) captured the imagination of the queen of the *apwarik*. The queen followed the smell and immediately fell in love with the shy young man. It was claimed that the *mwaremwar* was a love potion given by the young man’s father, assisted by the hands of an ancestral god.⁹⁹

Continuity Under Threat

Continuity of the human-environmental relations at the heart of Micronesian identity is under threat because of climate change and illegal fishing activities by distant countries. Currently, the national government is undergoing a series of changes to implement strategies to slow down such threats, especially the impact of climate change.¹⁰⁰ The key question directing government strategy is the question of what is the best method to maintain the health of the environment to sustain Micronesian continuity?

Micronesians must fight these threats to safeguard their home islands. Deep historical knowledge and reinforcement of environmental laws, both at the domestic and international levels, are essential in the maintenance of the ecological system.¹⁰¹

Islanders’ acute awareness of their aquatic environment has enabled them to plan better for the future. This essentially optimistic local outlook is at odds with the general prognosis for Micronesia’s environmental future and community sustainability as the consensus opinion internationally emphasises only the vulnerability of these Pacific communities. This dissertation seeks to overturn the marginalisation of Micronesians’ knowledge of their environment and ability to self-sustain. Continued misrepresentation has practical and far-reaching contemporary consequences.

⁹⁸ Oral history. This Mortlockese economic activities were replicated across the Caroline Islands, especially in and among atoll communities, see for example, Alkire, *Coral Islanders*, chapter 3, “Daily Activities” pp.41-68.

⁹⁹ Alkire, *Coral Islanders*, chapter 3.

¹⁰⁰ *FSM Climate Change Policy*, Palikir, 2011, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰¹ Lieber, *More Than a Living*, pp. 51-59.

Fanou works in sync with *saat*; they provide sustenance, stability, identity, and continuity for Micronesians. The land is the provider of the daily intake of carbohydrate, while the sea complements it with protein.¹⁰² Applying that concept to a Mortlockese perspective, it means the land provides *mongo* (the daily meal), and the sea provides *salei* (*protein*) to complement *mongo*. One's identity is also tied to the land, as it is where the *ainang* established its roots as in the traditional *faal* system.¹⁰³ Any person who is not connected to a *faal* would be considered a stranger from afar. However, strangers are often adopted by *mwalo*, and as a consequence new connections are established with the stranger's distant *ainang*.¹⁰⁴ New connections expand familial networks. This is important in contemporary Micronesian political discourse, especially during elections when kinsfolk are called upon to contribute to the campaign process. This in turn reinforces clan identity and networks in the island diaspora. The extended family continues to be the safety net for Micronesians. It is the foundation of the traditional economy to prevent destitution. The extended family system has increased its global connections by virtue of the new diaspora facilitated by the Compact between the FSM and the USA. This has expanded the Micronesian identity and continuity on a global scale.

¹⁰² Islanders from the Mortlocks always need *salei* meaning meat or fish to eat with taros and breadfruit, for example. If one eats only carbohydrate then it is considered as an impoverished meal.

¹⁰³ Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁰⁴ Goodenough, *Under Heaven's Brow*, p.29.



Figure 9: This is a clan's *faal* on Lukunor Island. This style of faal is common throughout the Mortlocks region. It is used by men to perform their traditional activities and also serves as the meeting place for the clan. Photo taken in 2012.

Community and Gender Relations

Gender roles are typically differentiated by the complexities of the tasks and traditions of each island environment.¹⁰⁵ For example, in the Mortlocks region male tasks typically involve activities requiring strength such as climbing trees, carrying heavy loads, diving, canoe building, and long-distance sailing.¹⁰⁶ Females are assigned tasks that are considered light: cooking, caring of children, firewood gathering, and weaving. However, there are tasks that are shared by both the sexes such as grating coconuts, firewood gathering, and tending the gardens. In the western part of Chuuk, cooking, seashell gathering, and collecting taros are female tasks. Also, it should be noted that in many of the outer islands, fishing tasks are assigned to males, while women perform land-based tasks.¹⁰⁷

However, the gendered division of labour does not mean males always have the dominant power because of physical strength. In some communities females wield power because they control the land and maintain the clanship system where one's

¹⁰⁵ Francis Hezel X, SJ, Edwin Q.P. Petteys, and Deborah L. Chang, *Sustainable Human Development in the FSM, The People and Their Cultures* <<http://micsem.org/pubs/articles/economic/shd/frames/chapter02fr.htm>>

¹⁰⁶ Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp. 45-46; Lingenfelter, *Yap: Political leadership*, pp.19-29; Ward, *Under Heaven's Brow*, pp. 26-26.

¹⁰⁷ Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp. 45-46; D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.177; Lingenfelter, *Yap: Political leadership*, pp.19-29; Descantes Christophe, *Integrating Archeology and Ethnohistory: The Development of Exchange Between Yap and Ulithi*, Western Carolines Islands (Micronesia) PhD UMI Dissertaion Services, Ann Arbor, 1998, pp. 71-72.

identity is rooted. It is also noted that gender relations are also changing because of certain features of the modern economic system, which is affecting power relations because of differential performance in the modern educational system and the employment market.

Community Structure

The basic unit of an island community in the Mortlock Islands is *inepwinou* (father, mother and their children) followed by *mwalo* (sister of the same great grandmother and all their off springs.) The size of each *mwalo* depends on the number of children of the sisters. Different *mwalo* are part of an *oushamw* (belonging to the *mwalo*) who share the same *faal*, which is made up a branch of an *ainang*. Members of *mwalo* share their *pei lap* (estate). Each island has different *ainang*; they are ranked in order of their arrival.¹⁰⁸ Membership of an *ainang* is automatically inherited with all the ascribed rights and privileges. The extent of an *ainang* diaspora is dependant upon the *ainang*'s own history. For example, in many parts of the FSM, each of these *ainang* is fed into a greater network dispersed throughout a designated geographical space and beyond.¹⁰⁹ When one arrives on an island for the first time, the question always asked of the visitor is “*ia omw ainang or an semomw ainang?*” (What is your clan or father's clan?) This is to enable the receiving islanders to connect the visitor to their kinsfolk.¹¹⁰

Aterenges is the next level up, which constitutes relatives from both sides of the parents. Membership in the father's clan is *afaker* (honorary member) however, with lesser rights to the father's clan properties. Members of the father's *ainang* have duties and obligations to defend their *afaker* when under threat. *Afaker* are treated with marked respect by their father's clan. For example, *afaker* can go unpunished if consuming food on the father clan's land while in different parts of an island.¹¹¹

The *uruo* of each *ainang* is used to establish the history of each island in the FSM.¹¹² *Ainang* connects identity to locality and other places in a region. For example, the *ainang sor* is widespread throughout the region of Chuuk and the low-lying islands of

¹⁰⁸ Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll and Inter-Island Socioeconomic Ties*, p. 29; Oral history of Lukunor Island.

¹⁰⁹ Clan connection is now more widespread within the federation as people are allowed to migrate between the four states.

¹¹⁰ Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp.46-47; Rubinstein, *An Ethnography of Micronesian Childhood*, p. 90. Personal experience when I travelled in the Mortlocks, the Chuuk lagoon and Pohnpei.

¹¹¹ *Afaker* are special to the father's clan as it is the duty of the father to protect his children; Nason, *Clan and Copra*, p.91;

¹¹² David Damas, *Bountiful Island: A Study of Land Tenure On a Micronesian Island*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Canada, 1994, pp.18-19; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, pp. 7-9.

Yap, as Alkire suggested in his study of Lamotrek.¹¹³ This is one of the biggest *ainang* in a wider region. The origins of other clans began in the Chuuk lagoon and extend to Pohnpei and Kosrae as suggested by oral narratives. Rauchholz noted that in pre-colonial times, there was contact between the different Trukic communities by “family connection and commerce.”¹¹⁴

Political power on each island resides with the *makal* of *ainang* who represent the first settlers; the *ainang* control land and the reef by virtue of being the first residents. The *makal* allocated ownership of land and the reef to subsequent clans; they in turn passed on their properties through the generations. The *makal* are still recognised as the traditional spokesperson for each island especially in the Mortlocks region. Today the clanship network system is still in full swing and is central to the Micronesian sense of social identity. The *ainang* system is a safety valve that constantly dislodged foreign elements that purported to rupture the long-standing Micronesian traditional societies. *Ainang* is the basis of economic production, which sustains the various social identities, which in turn collectively feeds into the larger pool of the present Micronesian identity.

The inhabitants of the volcanic island of Pohnpei have developed a different social system in comparison to those that can be found on the low-lying islands in Chuuk and Yap. Pohnpei’s social structure is highly stratified with five districts headed by a paramount chief called the *Nanmwarki*.¹¹⁵ His “spokesperson”, the *Nahniken*,¹¹⁶ is chosen from the second-ranking clan in each district. *Nahnmwarki* and *Nahniken* sit at the apex of the social pyramid with their subordinates and the untitled people below them.¹¹⁷ Their subordinates are assigned specific community tasks as well as maintaining the specific structure of the social order. During *kamadipw* (community feast) social ranks are displayed by the order of where individuals are seated and served in the *nahs* (traditional meeting place). The public members observe everyday rituals especially during *kamadhipw* (feasts) where they pay their dues to the *Nahnmwarki* by contributing *sakau*, pigs, yams, fish and other items appropriate for the *kamadipw*.

¹¹³ Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, (the clan called Saur in Yap and Sor in Chuuk), p. 42; Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p. 35; Rauchholz, “Notes on Clan Histories and Migration in Micronesia”, pp. 57-59.

¹¹⁴ Rauchholz, “Notes on Clan Histories and Migration in Micronesia”, p.53.

¹¹⁵ Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, p.144; Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp. 60-63; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar* (Thesis), p.354.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, Glenn Petersen; *Ibid*, Alkire; *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp. 60-63; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar* (Thesis), p.354.

¹¹⁷ Francis X. Hezel, Edwin Q.P. Petteys, and Deborah L. Chang, *Sustainable Human Development in the FSM*, Micronesia Seminar <<http://micsem.org/pubs/articles/economic/shd/frames/chapter03fr.htm>>

In the low-lying islands in Yap and Chuuk the social structure is less stratified where the *samol* or *tamol* is responsible for each clan or sub clan.¹¹⁸ Their ranks are noted during *mweishen fanou* (island meeting). In Kosrae the highest chief was called *Tokosra* (the sacred chief) and *Kanka* (secular chief).¹¹⁹

Survival mechanisms in the FSM, both intra and inter-island, are premised on the principle of reciprocity. At both levels, individuals assist each other when the need arises, for example, in the erection of *faal* or building of canoes and agricultural activities that require a large number of people. An individual may volunteer to trade his labour in exchange for a particular item from the other person, or may be obliged to assist due to familial ties. The volunteer will in return expect the recipient of such labour to reciprocate when the need for future work arises thus triggering the stimulus and response cycle.¹²⁰ This model underscores the foundation of economic modes of production in traditional Micronesian societies and further protects members of the community from exploitation.¹²¹ This practice has continued through successive colonial periods to the present day. However, it must be remembered that the strength of traditional practices varies between the port towns and the distant islands because of the former's exposure to external influences, particularly the market economy.¹²²

Colonisation has also influenced labour relations and property transactions between people. This was particularly true after WWII when Micronesia was slowly integrated into the capitalist economy under the USA.¹²³ Money was increasingly used as mode of exchange. Its power interferes with the existing reciprocal system, especially in the port towns where labourers are paid in cash rather than returning favours. Land, labour, and western commodities can also be bought with money especially by the new petty business people. Money found its way into the local system during the colonisation period, but many people are mindful about its impact on the communities.¹²⁴ For example, many people at the village level continue to work by the *ainang* system as it

¹¹⁸ *Samol* is used in many parts of Chuuk while *Tamol* is used in the outer islands of Yap.

¹¹⁹ Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, p.132.

¹²⁰ David Labby, *The Demystification of Yap: Dialectics of Culture on a Micronesian Island*, University of Chicago Press, 1976, p.20.

¹²¹ Personal experience involved in reciprocating in village activities such as working in the taro farms like *apwipwi* (working together like in a team and taking turn on working on members of the team's land).

¹²² Gonzaga Puas, *Labour Standards in the FSM*, FSM Department of Justice, Palikir, April 12, 2005, pp. 3-4.

¹²³ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, p.p.73-83.

¹²⁴ When I was growing up on the islands dried copra was sold to the field trip ships in return for cash. Goods were then bought and distributed within the extended family as the copra were collected from the family land; Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p.p. 31-32; Labby, *The Demystification of Yap*, p.8.

has proven many times over to be a safety net. Money does have its own value, but it is controlled by the external world. The Micronesian identity thus reflects the social dynamics of the FSM. It constantly negotiates itself in response to the changes in the global system.

However, this is not to say that the social disruption brought about by the influence of the outside world has completely obliterated the Micronesian social safety net mechanism. For example, emigration, education and the legal system are playing their parts to suppress the tide of societal disruption, as alluded to in Hezel's studies.

Emigration, both internally and internationally, has created more opportunities for many islanders to relocate to different places, creating a new outlet by which to understand the globalised world.¹²⁵ The educational system, especially the College of Micronesia, is equipping the new generation with the means to understand and live successfully in the new world.¹²⁶

The style of governance at the three levels of government has allowed the new generation to engage in the democratic process. Varieties of youth and community groups have expanded in large numbers throughout the nation thus giving rise to more opportunities for the younger generation to assist each other to be better citizens. They are collaborating with other international youth groups. The expanding numbers of indigenous people with college degrees from many parts of the world, and the perpetual rearticulation of the extended family system in the FSM is a testimony of how the people have reversed the image of the FSM as the suicide capital of the world.

Conclusion

As discussed throughout this chapter, the modern Micronesian identity emerged as a consequence of the colonisation process. The colonial powers attempted to re-order indigenous societies by imposing an alien system of government upon them. It did not result in Micronesians abandoning the traditional system that has served them well for many centuries. The traditional system with its own inherent adaptation mechanism perpetuates the principles of the *ainang* system now built into the Micronesian Constitution to ensure continuity. The Constitution represents the collective identities within the modern state of the Federated States of Micronesia as deeply rooted in the nation's historical past. It also conveys resiliency and continuity.

¹²⁵ *Micronesia Forum* < <http://www.micronesiaforum.org/> >

¹²⁶ *Micronesia Forum* < <http://www.micronesiaforum.org/> >

In the globalized system where many identities are disappearing because of the speed of new ideologies spread through technological means and unsuited to the preservation of indigenous cultures, Micronesians continue to adapt as much as possible to ensure their progress into the future. This has been possible because of Micronesia's historical strength in maintaining traditional values. The Micronesian identity is the foundation of Micronesian strength and any questioning of its resilience stems from an external perception of FSM, not from the inhabitants themselves. The Constitution perpetuates Micronesians' continuity in the modern world, whilst also safeguarding FSM's traditions and ensuring the integrity of the islander's values, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESPONDING TO COLONISATION

The preceding chapters strongly suggest that there was greater continuity than change in indigenous survivability because of the strength of their traditional institutions. This suggests that colonial rule in the FSM was relatively ineffective. The previous two chapters proposed that the reason for Micronesians' endurance stemmed from their ability to rearticulate foreign influences to suit their own context.¹ This chapter deals with Micronesian engagement with the colonial powers: Spain, Germany, Japan and the USA. It will discuss how Micronesians indigenised outsiders' influences to suit local contexts despite the seemingly unequal power relations. As history is a forum of intellectual discourses, Micronesian perspectives will be emphasized since they are the least covered of the colonial era. Many of the incidents and attitudes expressed to me about the colonial era are recollections of my parents and grandparents; they are absent from published accounts of this period. By including them here alongside conventional historiography, I seek to broaden the debate and range of sources to stimulate and widen our understanding of Micronesians' perspective of history.

The colonisation process brought many foreign ideologies to the Federated States of Micronesia. One of the ideologies was written history. This form of history is in itself a self-serving instrument in the framing and perpetuation of Micronesians as subservient to outsiders' civilisation. This is rather an exaggeration since Micronesians continue to use traditional forms of history to educate the subsequent generations about indigenous history. The decolonisation period post-WWII saw the re-emergence of indigenous history that had been suppressed by outsiders for centuries. The question is how does one intellectually imagine indigenous history within the framework of linear history, or vice versa, since their productions and nuances are different? In other words how does one reconcile the two different types of history? As this thesis is written for an academic audience, I am compelled to adopt the chronological order of history, however, with relevant elements of indigenous perspectives to open up a new frontier of Micronesian historical discourses. This chapter, and subsequent chapters, will therefore follow the linear approach to hopefully bring together our understanding of how Micronesians perceived themselves during and after the colonial period.

¹ Paul D'Arcy, "What Was the Impact of Japanese Rule on the Indigenous Population of Japan's South Seas Mandate?", p.p.1-21; Nason, *Clan and Copra*, pp. 200-228.

There are many theories about the causes and effects of colonisation ranging from exportation of the European civilisation and Christianisanship to economics and empire building.² However, for the purpose of this chapter colonisation will be defined as an act of establishing a colony by a foreign power to assert control over the indigenous people of an area.³ Hezel expanded on this by framing it in the context of the *terra nullius* principle which states that "colonisation is the utilisation of the earth, of the flora, fauna and the above all of the human beings to the advantage of the colonising nation, and the latter is therefore obligated to give in return for the higher culture...and its better methods", at least according to their own definitions of relative worth and value.⁴

By applying these two definitions in Micronesia's context, the process of colonisation then had its genesis in the 16th century when Spain declared what is now known as the FSM as part of its colonial empire. Spain administered the FSM from Guam and later from the Philippines until the latter part of the 19th century. Effective rule beyond Guam was minimal until the late 19th century and most Micronesian islands remained unknown and unvisited by the Spanish until then. An attempt to extend Spanish influence beyond Guam into the present day FSM saw a Christian mission established on Ulithi in the early 1730s; it was not successful.⁵ However, actual Spanish colonisation began in 1866 when Spanish authorities finally decided to establish their presence in Pohnpei and Yap. Micronesians' tacit consent was not just desirable, but essential in the absence of effective coercive ability and compelling economic returns to justify the extra effort needed to impose colonial laws by the over-stretched and under-funded Spanish forces.

² See colonisation in the Pacific in article by Peter Hempenstall, "Imperial Manoeuvres" in *Tides of History: The Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century* edited by K.R.Howe, Robert C. Kiste and Brij V. Lal, University of Hawaii, 1987, pp. 29-39.

³ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/colonize#colonize_16>

⁴ *Terra nullius* is a principal in international law used by the colonial powers to acquire overseas territories. It referred to the concept that if a territory did not show any signs of agricultural activities or still in the state of nature as perceived by the Europeans, then the first European discoverer could claim the territory on behalf of the colonial power he represented. Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.132; Ian Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law* (5th ed.), Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.173-174.

⁵ Francis Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, pp. 58-59.

General Perspectives of *Peshe Seset*

*Peshe seset*⁶ are always looked upon with suspicion by Micronesians. Suspicion is an element of survival that allowed Micronesians to keep an eye on intruders. Such suspicion was employed during the colonial era. However, the question is how did the colonisers perceive the indigenous population? The historical literature speaks volumes about the treatment of Micronesians in terms of derogatory language and labels such as “savage”, “primitive”, and “uncivilized” in comparison to the outsiders’ scales of civilisation.

To the Micronesians, the outsiders were pale *peshe seset* who were arrogant, and oblivious to the order of the indigenous world. This arrogance led *peshe seset* to underestimate the strength of Micronesians. They treated the small population as too weak to mount a substantial force against colonial occupation. For example, small military detachments were usually deployed to guard the different colonial interests in Micronesia, only to find out that their forces were insufficient in the wake of serious local opposition.⁷

The *peshe seset* mistook Micronesian silence as a sign of weakness. Micronesians used a variety of survival strategies against the colonial authorities which were learned from their past historical experiences. These included open military resistance, patience, passive resistance in the form of non-compliance, and political manipulation. This is part of their history--to adapt to new circumstances as learned from past observation as to what strategies to implement for effective protection under any given circumstance. Invariably, indirect resistance rather than direct confrontation against a foe armed with modern weaponry proved most effective. At other times Micronesians patiently accepted colonial demands on the surface, while underneath they continued the traditional system of authority and interactions with each other to maintain their identities and continuity.⁸

Having also experienced frequent natural disasters and inter-island warfare in their oceanic environment prior to colonisation, Micronesians have developed a significant

⁶ The term *peshe seset* means salty feet from foreign seas. I am using the term in reference to the colonists who were not indigenous to Micronesia, and yet asserted control of the islands without permission.

⁷ The Spanish and Germans military detachments in Pohnpei could not put down Pohnpeian resistance so they had to send for reinforcement from their headquarters outside Micronesia. They underestimated local resistance. Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford, *Protests and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific*, University of the South Pacific, Fiji, 1984, p. p.109-110. Francis Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, pp.30-33; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar* (PhD Thesis), pp. 271-273.

⁸ Hezel, *The New Shape of Old Island Cultures*, p.1

capacity to rapidly mobilise resources and to defend their homes. Centuries of struggle against nature and men to preserve their cultures regardless of any threats left Micronesians better prepared for the new external threat of poorly resourced colonial authorities than the colonisers realised.⁹ In addition, external rivalries between the colonial powers, and the geographical nature of the islands also made colonisation ineffective.¹⁰ The strength of Micronesian continuity and resilience, as outlined in the previous chapter, derive principally from their social system and the understanding of their oceanic environment.

Historically, the environment is susceptible to natural threats such as typhoons and drought and has made Micronesians extremely adaptable and capable of rapidly mobilising available resources to deal with catastrophic circumstances. These threats have influenced the way Micronesians have organised their social, political, and economic connections. Their organisational skills have stood them in good stead for they are also facing anthropomorphic challenges from beyond the horizon, few of which have matched the intensity of typhoons, with the possible exceptions of WWII (the typhoon of war) and some severe exotic epidemics.¹¹ These survival strategies have been at the heart of Micronesian adaptation practices.¹² Prior to colonisation the flow of information between islands was already established via the clan network between islands, which was also the source of developing islanders' diplomatic skills. That is, conflict avoidance was crucial to Micronesian survival.¹³ The same network was also used to circulate information about the colonial powers and their activities.

Local Responses to the New Arrivals

Colonisation brought both negative and positive consequences to Micronesia. Micronesian life was affected in varying degrees when outsiders started to appear on their shores. Micronesian modes of engagement with the outsiders depended on the intensity of the colonisation process as it differed between the high volcanic islands and the low-lying atolls, and also between the different atolls. For example, on some islands outsiders met intimidation and violent death at their first point of contact.¹⁴ On other

⁹ Hempenstall, and Noel Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific*, pp.112-113.

¹⁰ Gale, *The Americanization of Micronesia*, pp. 22-23.

¹¹ D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp.152-153; Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp. 26-27; Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp. 6-7.

¹² Rainbird, *The Archaeology of Micronesia*, p. 245; Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp.86-88; Knudson, *Resource, Fluctuation, Productivity*, pp. 4-6.

¹³ Gray, K. Lamond. *Modernization in Micronesia: Acculturation, Colonialism and Cultural Change* (PhD Thesis), Western Michigan University, 1974, pp.59-61; Puas, "The FSM Legal System", pp. 3-4.

¹⁴ Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, pp.100 -101.

occasions islanders received the outsiders on friendly terms.¹⁵ The type of responses exhibited by the islanders during the early engagement period signified the nature of the social system present on that island.

Many historians have claimed that the recognition of iron and other western goods as valuable items often created friendly conditions for encounters.¹⁶ Metal tools were highly valued as they shortened the time required for the backbreaking traditional manual tasks. Historian Scott Russell noted the value of iron to an Ulithian man who a Spanish priest “converted” to Christianity. The Ulithian man after his conversion said to the priest; “as you long for heaven, so we long for iron.”¹⁷ This statement demonstrates the manipulative dimensions of exchange used by islanders and also the fluidity of negotiation between the two sides to achieve their own objectives. No one knows exactly how the Micronesians came to recognise iron; however, some have speculated that it was discovered in driftwood and possibly by unrecorded earlier contacts.

Unfriendly relations in early encounters may have resulted from the outsiders intruding into Micronesian spaces without prior permission, especially in sacred spaces.¹⁸ Killing was a form of eliminating threat in the local communities. The methods of killing exercised by islanders were ambush,¹⁹ open confrontation, and seeking guidance from their ancestors in terms of magic or *paut* (sorcery).²⁰ The selection security measures utilised to suppress any arising threat posed by outsiders was conditioned by the particular circumstances of each island during the contact period. For example, ambush was common in island histories as it was swift, and secretive. It warned enemies to refrain from intruding into unfamiliar spaces. Open confrontation was a display of bravery, ferocity and determination to defeat the opponents. Open confrontation involved large-scale warfare between island alliances or between extended opposing clans.²¹ Negotiation was used to dissuade warring sides from taking up arms. Physical violence was used to signal to the outsiders that Micronesians were capable of mounting

¹⁵ Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, pp. 96-97.

¹⁶ Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, pp. 96-97.

¹⁷ Scott Russell, “Roots of the Falawasch”. Mangilao, Guam unpublished MS paper, MARC Library, n.d, p. 2.

¹⁸ Personal Opinion. Outsiders may not be aware of sacred spaces of the gods, which were considered as off-limits to the public. Intrusion into such spaces would result in fight or death.

¹⁹ Oral history. Ambush is personal, however, it could develop to full-scale warfare between two extended families.

²⁰ Oral history, Sorcery is a psychological element of warfare, which involved calling upon the ancestors for support. David Hanlon, “Sorcery, Savage Memories and the Edge of Commensurability for History in the Pacific”, Editor Brij Lal, *Pacific Islands History: Journeys and Transformation* in *Journal of Pacific History*, 1993, pp.118-119.

²¹ Oral history. Open warfare involved displaying one’s bravery. This is to intimidate the opponents.

attacks if they were put under intense pressure.²² The quick realisation that there was a mismatch between the two sides led islanders to utilise a variety of different tactics to sustain their interests. From the patchy record of first contacts, as best we can tell, the majority of first contacts in Micronesia were mainly peaceful with sporadic violence.

Sustained Contact

Having established the basic background of the islands, it should not be a surprise that outsiders met different treatments during the colonisation period. The Pacific Ocean is the largest body of water in the world, and promised profits for the whalers. The search for more profits led many whalers to the islands in the Federated States of Micronesia, largely by accident. By the mid-1800s whalers, traders, and beachcombers began to arrive in large numbers. Having no whaling stations in Micronesia to provide provisions for the foreign vessels, they had to rely on whichever islands they came upon. It meant the outsiders had to give in to the islanders as they controlled the land resources that they required. Pohnpei and Kosrae became known for good provisions. Subsequently, Pohnpeians and Kosraeans experienced increasing numbers of visiting vessels to their shores. The islands offered needed provisions and fine harbours for the vessels to shelter during the windy months. Most were Europeans and Americans with a number of other Pacific Islanders among the crews.²³ New trade ensued between the locals and outsiders. The “high chiefs” of Pohnpei and Kosrae manipulated the trade to suit local circumstances since they controlled the needed provisions. As the volume of trade increased the value of the island commodities also increased.

While in port, sailors rested and indulged in pursuit of pleasure in women and alcohol. The attraction of the island lifestyle encouraged many sailors to abandon their ships; they became the first beachcombers.²⁴ The increased traffic in whaling and trading vessels developed islanders’ awareness of international commerce and politics.²⁵ For example, in Pohnpei the powerful *Nahnmwarki(s)*²⁶ and local businessman Henry Nahnpai exploited this knowledge and manipulated the visiting vessels and foreign

²² Violence took many forms from small and personal attack to large-scale conflict like in the Pohnpeians’ violent resistance against the Spanish and Germans. See Hanlon, *Upon the Stone Altar* (PhD Thesis), pp. 287-289; Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, pp.136-144.

²³ Francis X. Hezel, “Book Review: Double Ghosts: Oceanian Voyages on Euroamerican Ships”, *Journal of World History*, 10, 2, 1999, pp.479-481.

²⁴ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar* (PhD Thesis), pp. 92-93.

²⁵ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, pp.91-92; Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, pp. 84-85.

²⁶ For explanation of the title Nahnmwarki see the indigenous historian and archeologist from Pohnpei Rufino Mauricio, *Ideological Bases for Power and Leadership on Pohnpei* (PhD Thesis), p.60. Please note that there is no plural for Nahnmwarki so I use the term referring to the different title holders.

residents for personal interests. The *Nahnmwarki* also manipulated the beachcombers to serve them as negotiators in order to acquire more material wealth from the visiting vessels. This contest later played out in local politics, especially between the local leaders in their contestation to consolidate their power base. In the less visited low-lying islands like Ngatik (Sapwuahfik), Mokil and Pingelap the locals also honed their trade skills to obtain iron, clothes, and tobacco.²⁷ Trade also brought a violent massacre where the male population of Ngatik²⁸ was decimated by a combined group of rogue outsiders aided by Pohnpeians. This reconstitution of the population became a subject of interesting scholarly study of ethnicity in contemporary Micronesia.

In Kosrae the chiefs also exploited the trade, and did not hesitate to use violent means such as looting and burning of the visiting ships to keep the foreigners at bay.²⁹ These acts could be explained in terms of the tension between the chiefs and their subjects against the intruding outsiders. For example, the visiting sailors exploited local women sexually. This was unacceptable to the locals and was compounded by a handful of sailors who abandoned their ships against the wishes of the locals. In response violence broke out and two ships were burned and sunk by Kosraens. To avoid further conflict captains of the visiting ships sought assistance from the high chiefs in Kosrae and Pohnpei by offering rewards for their sailors' return.

In the outer islands of Chuuk as in the Mortlocks, whalers also sought provisions occasionally but on friendly terms. The high volcanic islands of Chuuk were avoided due to their fierce reputation as portrayed by the early explorers. In Yap foreigners were mindful of the power of the local chiefs over their subjects and acknowledged such by appeasing them. The chiefs used their influence over their trading activities to demonstrate their power over local politics. This was to send the message to the foreigners that they were in control. Much fewer beachcombers settle in Yap than Pohnpei.³⁰

²⁷ Oral history indicated that at least in Chuuk some of the foreigners who married locals were instrumental in educating Micronesian people about the outside world. For example, many outsiders like Jack Ehlers, who married a lady from Lekinioch, mediated between outsiders and the indigenous people during the German period. Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.66.

²⁸ See Lin Poyer, *The Ngatik Massacre: A History and Identity on a Micronesian Atoll*, Smithsonian Institution Press, London, 1993, pp. 4-22.; Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, pp. 120-122.

²⁹ Harvey Segal, *Kosrae: The Sleeping Lady Awakens*, pp.73-74.

³⁰ Amanda Morgan, "Mystery in the Eye of the Beholder: Cross Cultural Encounters on 19th Century Yap," *Journal of Pacific History*, 31, 1, June 1996, pp.27-41.

Micronesiansing Missionaries

Unbeknownst to Micronesians, reports of drunken, disorderly behaviour and the sex trade in Pohnpei and Kosrae reached the ears of the religious leaders in the USA. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) based in Boston took up the challenge to Christianise Micronesia. It was believed that the success of the ABCFM in Hawaii could be reproduced in Micronesia.³¹ However, that was not to be the case as their success relied on the following questions. Did the American missionaries seek permission from the Micronesian islanders to bring Christianity to their islands? What sort of reception were the missionaries expecting since they did not understand the islands' social structure? The missionaries' lack of knowledge of the Micronesian societies handicapped their efforts to convert Micronesian islanders to the Christian faith.

In 1852 a group of ABCFM missionaries sailed to Pohnpei and Kosrae. Benjamin Snow and his wife in addition to a Hawaiian couple were permitted by the highest leader to start their mission activities in Kosrae. The rest of the American parties, Dr. Luther Gulick and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Sturges and their Hawaiian assistant Ka'aikaula sailed to Pohnpei.³² Immediately upon their arrival in Pohnpei, the missionaries were at the mercy of local politics. The missionaries set up residence in the district of Kiti as encouraged by the powerful *Nahnken* who gave the missionaries land to use. The *Nahnken* took an interest in the missionaries' activities foreseeing future benefits from hosting them.³³ In Pohnpeian society the *Nahnken* is lower than the *Nahnmwarki* and yet the missionaries followed the *Nahnken*'s demands. This immediately landed them in the middle of the internal politics of Pohnpei, as there had also been ongoing problems caused by the unruly behaviours of many foreign residents. Such occurrences delayed the establishment of the Christian faith in Pohnpei.

Lip service was a methodology employed by the locals to convert to Christianity. To manipulate the missionaries, *Nahnken* was converted and naturally his followers were too. This was part of the Micronesian strategy of indirectly controlling outsiders and at the same time Micronesianising the foreigners to advance internal priorities, such as the

³¹ Hanlon, *Upon the Stone Altar* (PhD Thesis), pp.143-144.

³² Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, pp.143-144; Hanlon, *Upon the Stone Altar* (PhD Thesis), pp.143-144. There is a discrepancy in the two authors' comments on the pattern of missionisation in Pohnpei and Kosrae. For example, Hezel said that the missionaries landed in Kosrae first before sailing to Pohnpei. Hanlon on the other hand said the opposite direction.

³³ Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, p.147.

chiefly rivalries.³⁴ Manipulation of the missionaries meant that the missionaries had to work harder for many years before Christianity was tolerated in Pohnpei and also in Kosrae.³⁵

Micronesianing the Spanish Rule

To prop up the Spanish pride in being one of the remaining superpowers in the Pacific, in 1886 governor Posidallo and his Spanish force set foot on Pohnpei to take control of the region for the Spanish Empire. Spain claimed much of Micronesia with this move, although its actual physical presence was largely confined to the port town of Kolonia in Pohnpei. By the time the Spanish arrived, Pohnpeians were already aware of the side effects of foreign influence as had been brought by the whalers, beachcombers, traders, and American missionaries; they preceded the Spanish by fifty years.³⁶ The Spanish thought that controlling Pohnpei would be an easy affair. Again, like the missionaries, they did not seek permission from the locals to set up their foreign imposed institutions. Their knowledge of Pohnpeian societies was poor. Then what kind of reception did the Spanish think they would receive while imposing their presence in Pohnpei? They would soon find out.

The Spanish incursion in Pohnpei was subdued until Governor Posidallo tested his power over a land called *Mesenieng* already in the possession of the ABCFM after the local ruler, the *Lepen* of Nett, granted them the right to reside on the land. The governor needed the land to establish his headquarters. He had to find a way to acquire it. The governor sought the assistance of the *Lepen* of Nett to claim the land. To the *Lepen* of Nett this was absurd. The land did not belong to any of the foreign claimants, as the land system in Pohnpei did not recognise agreements on paper under the customary system called *tiahk en sapw*.³⁷ Doane, one of the American missionaries who represented the ABCFM resisted the governor's insistence. This angered the governor. Consequently, Doane was arrested and deported to the Philippines for undermining Spanish authority. Doane's deportation highlighted the power struggle between the Americans and Spanish as well as the simmering relations with the Pohnpeians.

³⁴ See David Hanlon, "Another Side of Henry Nanpei", *The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Apr., 1988), pp. 36-51.

³⁵ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p.175.

³⁶ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p. 240.

³⁷ *Tiahk en sapw* encapsules all the customary practices of Pohnpei, which defined the Pohnpeian identity. Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar* (book), p. 5.

The Pohnpeians did not anticipate anything new that would alter their perception of the new arrivals.³⁸ The Spanish initially did not seem to learn from the experiences of the previous outsiders who preceded them. The Pohnpeians were not going to succumb to the new rulers after having managed the influence of the all other arrivals before them. The indigenous people adopted the “wait and see” approach to observe what the Spanish were up to before responding. Patience is an element inherent in indigenous cultural practises to strategize during both natural disasters and man-made threats. These traits characterised Micronesian strength rather than weakness in the face of adversaries, although outsiders only saw passivity rather than assertiveness in their culturally restricted reading of their actions.

The Spanish failed to understand the dynamics of Pohnpeian society in the late 19th century. Kolonia was one of the busiest port towns in the Pacific. For example, Hanlon estimated that more than fifty ships arrived during the windy months when they sought shelter from the storms.³⁹ During the windy season, port life centred on rum and women much to the displeasure of the missionaries. As well as ships’ crews, the community of beachcombers, traders, castaways, whalers, and adventurers also threw themselves into the mix.⁴⁰ Islanders and outsiders mingled with each other seeking mutual interests. Pohnpeians understood the need of the foreigners and dealt with them accordingly. The missionaries were preaching to the locals about the bible. However, at the same time many of the resident foreigners countered the message of the missionaries by their involvement in prostitution and heavy drinking⁴¹ to satisfy the needs of the crews from the visiting vessels. Pohnpeians also cashed in on the prostitution business and traded local products in exchange for tobacco, alcohol and any western commodities.⁴²

The indigenous political system in Pohnpei was and still is structured into five chiefdoms. At the apex are the *Nahnmwarki*,⁴³ the paramount chiefs and their spokesperson, the *Nahnken*⁴⁴. The paramount chief has power over the land and its people. In turn the people worked the land and paid tribute to the *Nahnmwarki*. The *Nahnmwarki* also assigned titles to his subjects on a competitive level in return for obligatory titles. The power of each *Nahnmwarki* depends on the size of the land he

³⁸ Hempenstall and Noel. *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific*, pp.106-107.

³⁹ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p.112; Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, p.122.

⁴⁰ Hanlon, *Upon the Stone Altar*, pp.94-95; Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, pp.110-111.

⁴¹ Mac Marshall, *Weekend Warriors: Alcohol in a Micronesian Culture*, Mayfield Publishing Company, Palo Alto, California, 1979, p.32; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar* (book), pp.155, 157-158.

⁴² Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, pp.93-94.

⁴³ Maquricio, *Ideological Bases for Power*, p.60.

⁴⁴ Mauricio, *Ideological Bases for Power*, p.60.

controls and the size of the population in his political domain. Political and economic relationships between the five chiefdoms were fluid and could also be rigid depending on local circumstances. Demands by *Nahnmwarki* were often carried out by his subjects accordingly.

The relationship between Posidallo and Pohnpeians became strained when he moved to consolidate his power. Posidallo sought to increase Spanish control by developing a road infrastructure to allow free movement of Spanish officials around the island. He also sought to promote the Catholic faith, and the Spanish language to be the new *lingua franca*. Both moves were not well received by the locals or the American missionaries. To make things worse, the governor called upon the *Nahnmwarki* to support his ambitious plan to build the road system.⁴⁵ The governor wanted a team of men from each of the chiefdoms to be rotated on a weekly basis as labourers during the construction of the circumferential road. In addition each *Nahnmwarki* would supply food for the working teams.⁴⁶

When the *Nahnmwarki* of Madolenihmw objected to the governor's demands, he was threatened with punishment. Further breakdown between the opposing sides ensued when the *Nahnmwarki* of Nett was ordered to clean a latrine as a form of punishment for insubordination.⁴⁷ This insult to their leader infuriated the local population as he epitomised Pohnpeian sacredness, power, and identity. For Pohnpeians to receive orders from an alien figurehead without consulting the *Nahnmwarki* was unthinkable, let alone to punish and humiliate someone of this rank. This gesture of arrogance brought the simmering tension between the two sides to a boiling point. Pohnpeians rallied behind their traditional leaders by refusing to comply with the governor's demands.⁴⁸

In response, the governor ordered the closures of schools and the ceasing of local activities like feasting until the road system was completed.⁴⁹ This only hardened Pohnpeians resolve to resist; they were ready to pick up arms to retaliate against the Spanish. A detachment of soldiers was sent to Sokehs to arrest the *Lepen* and *Wasai* (traditional chiefs of Pohnpei under the *Nahnmwarki*) for subverting Spanish order. The detachment arrived during a local feast and demanded that the two men be taken to

⁴⁵ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p. 264; Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.29; Paul D'Arcy, "Spanish and German Colonial Rule", University of Hawaii, 1986, p. 2. Unpublished paper.

⁴⁶ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.29; Hanlon, *Upon the Stone Altar*, p.264.

⁴⁷ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar* (book), pp. 267-268; Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.29.

⁴⁸ Hempenstall and Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific*, pp.108-109.

⁴⁹ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p. 267-268; Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.29.

the governor in Kolonia. In frustration at the lack of immediate compliance, the detachment opened fire and killed seven Pohnpeians.⁵⁰ The Pohnpeians responded by killing seventeen of the soldiers, including their leader. The *Wasai* then declared that, “it was better to die fighting rather than living as slaves” signifying a new era of engagement between the islanders and the Spanish.⁵¹

The incident initiated a state of war between the opposing sides. The Pohnpeians took their fight to the colony in Kolonia to demonstrate their determination to subvert any further Spanish demands. Governor Posadillo’s style of administration was criticised by his own Spanish priests, but this criticism fell on deaf ears. When Posadillo learned of more planned retaliation against the Spanish, he pre-empted this threat by evacuating his people to a ship anchored off the colony. However, the governor and a few of his men remained in the colonial compound.⁵²

To prevent the governor from escaping, Pohnpeians posted guards in the vicinity of the compound. Fearing for their lives, the governor and his men tried to escape, but they were caught and killed. The rest of the surviving Spanish parties remained on the ship waiting to be rescued by sympathetic parties. Rescue arrived when a Spanish man-of-war arrived to deliver supplies to the colony. Upon hearing about the governor’s death, the commander of the ship, de la Concha, was left behind in Pohnpei to hold on to the colony until reinforcements arrived from Manila.

A new governor, Don Luis Casadro y Rey, arrived a few weeks later from Manila accompanied by three warships, seven hundred soldiers, and two artillery batteries to be used to overwhelm the locals.⁵³ Immediately upon his arrival, the new governor started to bombard the colony with his naval guns to intimidate the locals. The impact of this brought together the *Nahnmwarki* of Kiti, Madolenihmw, Uh and the *Wasai* of Sokehs to meet with the Spanish at the negotiating table.⁵⁴ The governor demanded the unconditional surrender of Pohnpeian agitators, and the return of all guns and property taken from the Spanish fort in Mesening. He further demanded that *Lepen Net* and *Wasai Sokehs* should face Spanish justice and that the rest of the inhabitants adhere to Spanish law and order. However, the people of Nett did not like the new order. *Lepen*

⁵⁰ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, pp. 267-268; Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.30; John Fisher and Ann Fisher, *The Eastern Caroline Islands*, pp. 37-38. Paul Ehrlich, “*The Clothes of Men*”: *Ponape Island and German Colonial Rule, 1899-1914* (PhD Thesis), State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1973, P.71.

⁵¹ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p.p. 267-268.

⁵² Hempenstall and Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific*, p.109.

⁵³ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p. 32.

⁵⁴ Hempenstall and Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific*, p.110.

Net, against the wishes of his people, decided to surrender to prevent further bloodshed. The execution of the two traditional leaders was imminent as a warning to the local population. However, three locals volunteered to be executed instead of *Lepen* and *Wasai*.⁵⁵ The Spanish executed the volunteers instead of the two perceived agitators. The question remains, why did the Spanish agree to that deal?⁵⁶

Believing that he had total control of the Pohnpeians after these executions, the new governor pushed for the completion of the road system.⁵⁷ He obviously had not learnt from Posadillo's experience. At first he designed a scheme to pay local people for the road construction, but Pohnpeians remained unwilling participants. He went ahead with the road program using whatever labourers he could muster, but it was without success.⁵⁸ Local politics also played their own part. For example, in Kitti there were two opposing factions headed respectively by the *Nahnmwarki* and the local businessman and pastor, Henry Nahnpei, who the American missionaries supported. In order to shift the balance of power, the *Nahnmwarki* of Kitti associated himself with the Catholic Spanish. He urged the Spanish governor to build a church in Kitti.⁵⁹ The Spanish saw this opportunity to expand their presence around the island. The church was built next to the Protestant church and a guardhouse was also erected for Spanish soldiers signalling a new discourse in island politics. The Spanish believed that their presence in Kitti was a success and were keen to duplicate the same experience in other parts of the island.⁶⁰ The governor demanded that another Catholic Church be built in the settlement of Ohwa on the other side of the island in Madolenihmw.⁶¹ He further ordered a new road to connect the two churches. The proposed church in Madolenihmw was also to be built within a stone's throw from the Protestant church. The governor ignored the strong Protestant support in Madolenihmw, and the advice from his own priests against such a move. Believing in his own superiority, he ordered the completion of the church to coincide with the birthday of the Queen Regent of Spain.⁶² His misjudgement and overall attitude fuelled simmering tensions on the island.

⁵⁵ Hempenstall and Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific*, p.110; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p.274.

⁵⁶ So far I have not come across an answer in any literature.

⁵⁷ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.p. 38-40; David Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, pp. 311-314.

⁵⁸ Hempenstall, and Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific* p. 111.

⁵⁹ The ABCFM and the Spanish Catholic were incorporated into local politics to increase the dominance of certain leaders. See power struggle between the leaders in Kiti. Hanlon, *Upon the Stone Altar*, pp. 311-313.

⁶⁰ Hanlon, *Upon the Stone Altar*, pp. 311-313.

⁶¹ Hempenstall and Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific* p. 114; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, pp. 314-317.

⁶² Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.40; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p.312.

Fighting broke out between the Spanish and the people of Ohwa. Many of the Spanish soldiers and workers were killed. The surviving priests were assisted by Nahnpei to escape. News of the event reached Kolonia whereupon the governor responded by sending the warship *Manila* to bombard Ohwa. This military operation failed when the gunship ran onto a reef. The soldiers who were sent ashore did not have the capacity to engage the islanders.⁶³ Knowledge of the terrain and seashores utilised by the locals gave them the upper hand. It was mentioned in local accounts that magical power was also used to ward off the Spanish aggressors.⁶⁴ The soldiers were unable to bring order to Madolenihmw, and returned to Kolonia to wait for further orders.

It took a few more months for reinforcements to arrive from the Philippines. The new commanding officer Colonel Isidro Gutierrez was keen to capture the local leaders and wipe out the whole opposition. His plans were thwarted by his lack of knowledge of the terrain and weather conditions in Pohnpei. His humiliation at failing to quickly achieve his objective eventually led to his suicide the night before he was to launch an attack on Ohwa.⁶⁵ Fighting resumed with the Pohnpeians continuing to resist the oncoming assaults using local knowledge of the battle zones. After many attempts to subdue the local resistance, the Spanish retreated to Kolonia, but only after they claimed a token victory in securing an abandoned local fort in Madelonihmw. The Spanish were confined to their little compound in Kolonia protected by what is known today as the Spanish wall.⁶⁶ The Spanish lack of knowledge about local politics, geography, and the traditional system doomed their attempt to build a successful colony.⁶⁷ In the end the Spanish withdrew in humiliation from Pohnpei. The Spanish Wall that still stands in the heart of Pohnpei's capital, Kolonia, is a reminder of Spain's short history in the FSM.

In Yap, Spain also attempted to set up a colony. While they encountered American missionaries in Pohnpei they came across the already established German commercial interests in Yap. In an attempt to counter this influence the whole Caroline Islands were awarded to Spain by the Vatican.⁶⁸ Relations between the Yapese and the Spanish were cordial but cautious. Hezel portrayed the Yapese as "tenacious of their beliefs and practice... and were far more discriminative of what they would accept from the outside

⁶³ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.40; Hanlon, "Sorcery, Savage Memories and the Edge of Commensurability", p.114.

⁶⁴ Hanlon, *Sorcery, Savage Memories and the Edge of Commensurability*, pp.114-115.

⁶⁵ Hanlon, *Sorcery, Savage Memories and the Edge of Commensurability*, pp.319-320.

⁶⁶ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p.329.

⁶⁷ Hempenstall and Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific*, p.108.

⁶⁸ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, pp.8-9; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, pp. 245-246.

world.”⁶⁹ The Spaniards were quick to establish open and friendly relations with the local Yapese chiefs to achieve their aims in this well regulated society.

Resistance to Spanish rule was expressed in many forms. These forms included the continued traditional practises of keeping women in the men’s long house for sexual purposes against Spanish wishes, and the honouring of traditional gods. The Yapese paid lip service to the newcomers’ wishes while at the same time continuing to pursue their own priorities behind the backs of the Spanish. The Spanish were quick to learn that maintaining the balance of power between the village chiefs was essential to maintaining their presence in Yap. For example, the chief of Gachpar withdrew his support when he complained about the lack of Spanish benefits reaching his village. Governor Bartola and the senior Spanish priests travelled to Gachpar to appease the powerful chief.⁷⁰ The governor humbled himself before the chief at the meeting. Sensing this humbleness and respect, the chief welcomed the governor, which opened a new frontier of mutually beneficial relations. The governor indicated that a missionary would come and live in Gachpar;⁷¹ the chief saw this as a means of retaining his eroding power. The encounter prevented violence and was used as an educational example for the Spanish to retain peaceful co-existence between the Yapese and themselves.⁷²

In the low-lying Caroline Islands, the Spanish exercised almost no power over the outer islands, which they rarely, if ever, visited. The islands were too scattered over a large expanse of water, which was almost impossible to administer.⁷³ Also, the Spanish empire was dwindling and lacked the necessary resources to enforce its power. The islanders continued their cultural practices as usual. The handful of German traders who occasioned the islands to gather copra for the European market did not make a big inroad to inducing change on a large scale. In later years Micronesians were ready to face the challenges posed by other external powers.

Engagement with Germany

The Spanish loss to the Americans in the Spanish-American War resulted in Spain’s ejection from Micronesia. As a spoil of war, the USA took over Guam as an unincorporated territory. However, the rest of Micronesia was sold to Germany by Spain. Micronesians had already experienced German influence since it was allowed to

⁶⁹ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.15.

⁷⁰ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p. 24.

⁷¹ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p. 24.

⁷² Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p. 24.

⁷³ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.14.

conduct commercial trade during the Spanish colonial era. However, Micronesians were not consulted about the arrangements.⁷⁴ Like the Spaniards before them, the Germans did not have a coherent policy in Micronesia. Its main objective was mainly economic in nature: to develop the copra industry and later exploit phosphate when it was discovered on Fais and Angaur.⁷⁵ However, in terms of enhancing the social and economic welfare of Micronesians there was nothing much to show as the German companies conducted their businesses on the *laissez faire* principal. This suited Micronesians as it minimised interruption on Micronesian traditional lifestyles.

Yap and Pohnpei became the hubs for the German commercial and administrative activities headed by district officers and their entourages. German traders working for the Jailut Gesellschaft copra company in Chuuk and Kosrae were appointed as German representatives. To increase the volume of its copra exports to European markets, Germany encouraged copra production in the islands. Micronesians understood clearly that the Germans were not in Micronesia to improve Micronesian's economic conditions, but rather for their own interests. As Micronesian scholar Walter noted; the German "administration did not come to (Micronesia) ... (to fulfil) the wishes of the Micronesian people, but according to their own desires".⁷⁶ In Chuuk, copra was not profitable and so individual traders were left to pursue whatever other business activities from which they might profit.⁷⁷ However, elsewhere in Micronesia copra was profitable due to the different growing techniques.

Christianity continued to be used as a tool for Western indoctrination. A buy-back scheme to control the spread of guns was instituted to minimise local conflict in the hope of centring Christianity, as the new locus in a new colonial era that was hoped would bring peace and prosperity.⁷⁸ The success of these measures is questionable given the continued presence of many 'pagan' practices into this period. For example, in the Mortlocks *waitowa* (communicating to the spirits), *apwarik*, (traditional dances), *falifel* (tattooing), and *apupulun fanou* (non-Christian marriages) were revived and continued to thrive. One missionary observed: "neither the missionary activities nor the ship(s) (that carried European) civilisation changed their concepts and their mode of living" in

⁷⁴ Gale, *The Americanization of Micronesia*, pp.30-31; Hempenstall and Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific* p.118 Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, pp.94-95.

⁷⁵ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, pp.121-122.

⁷⁶ Walter, *Desirability, Problems, and Methods of Achieving National Independence* (PhD Thesis), p.34.

⁷⁷ Francis X. Hezel, *A Brief Economy of Micronesia*, MicSem Article
<<http://micsem.org/pubs/articles/economic/frames/ecohistfr.htm>>

⁷⁸ Hezel, *A Brief Economy History of Micronesia*,
<<http://micsem.org/pubs/articles/economic/frames/ecohistfr.htm>>

reference to the islands of Nama and Ettal.⁷⁹ In Yap, the Spanish missionaries struggled to end the ‘institutionalised prostitution’, the high rate of divorce, polygamy and the practise of *kan* (offerings to ancestral spirits).⁸⁰ Wilhelm Friedrich (a German missionary), who worked in the Mortlocks in the 1930s complained about islanders who professed themselves as Christians and yet “continued to make use of magic means whenever something needs to be accomplished”.⁸¹ In other outer islands such as Satawal and Ifalik, Christianity was virtually non-existent until the 1950s.⁸²

Islanders from different parts of Chuuk were recruited on minimal wages to work in the mines of Nauru and Angaur.⁸³ Islanders from the low-lying islands in Yap were recruited to work on German projects on the main island and were also sent to Nauru, Palau and Fais to work in the phosphate mines. Internal island politics also played a role in the Yapese recruitment system. For example, influential chiefs used their power in the *sawei* structure to extract wages from the low-cast workers. However, at the same time, such workers began to disassociate themselves from the *Sawei* system when they realised the exploitative nature of the labour system.⁸⁴

In Pohnpei, the German administration attempted to establish good relations with the locals, but the memories of the Spanish era were still fresh. The relationship between the two sides was cordial, but changed with subsequent German administrators. The Germans re-imposed labour requirements for road construction, and also imposed a new tax regime and an obligation to work 15 days on public projects.⁸⁵ A new land system based on individual ownership was also introduced in an attempt to drive a wedge between the *Nahnmwarki* and their subjects. The German administrators envisioned that a private land system would be more productive instead of the commoners paying tribute to the *Nahnmwarki* in return for occupying the land.

Local politics and personalities were also involved in the political discourse and local action at times contradicted the German administration policy. For example, businessman Henry Nanpei who many claimed was the instigator of the “Sokehs Rebellion” attempted to turn the Protestant South and the Northern Catholics against

⁷⁹ Nason, *Clan and Copra*, p. 170.

⁸⁰ Hezel, *The Catholic Church in Yap: A foothold in the Carolines*
<<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/books/catholic/yap/>>

⁸¹ Lothar Käser, *Light in the South Seas Wilhelm Friedrich & Elisabeth Kärcher: The Life and Work of a Liebenzell Missionary Couple*, Verlag Der Liebenzeller Mission (not yet published), p. 134.

⁸² Hezel, *The Catholic Church in Yap*, <<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/books/catholic/yap/>>

⁸³ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp. 22-23.

⁸⁴ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p. 109.

⁸⁵ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.136.

each other to consolidate his own personal power.⁸⁶ Nanpei was a shrewd businessman who benefited from the trade boom, and also a key player in the Protestant church movement. He envisioned an alternative political system in Pohnpei premised on the parliamentary model wherein he saw himself as the new ruler of Pohnpei. His naked ambition was well known to the leaders of Pohnpei and the colonial masters.⁸⁷ It was not successful as the traditional system continued its course on the basis of social and political order.

Tension between Pohnpeians and their colonial administrators grew when a new German administrator, Boeder, was appointed to oversee German interests on the island. Boeder was well known for his harsh treatment of indigenous workers. For example, whilst in Africa he used force to put down a labour revolt against German interests. He came from a military background and was determined to implement his African style policies in Pohnpei. He ignored sound advice from his predecessors and executed harsh measures whenever he could to match his protestant work ethic.⁸⁸ In the rush to complete the road construction, he forced a labour team to build a bridge to join the island of Sokehs and the main island of Pohnpei. He miscalculated the risk the work imposed on the indigenous road workers.

Violence broke out when an overseer beat a local worker brutally to the point where the worker almost died. Pohnpeian response was immediate and swift and culminated in the loss of many lives on the German side including Boeder himself. This event was a breaking point where Pohnpeians felt the need to restore their pride and honour as embedded in their local customs and traditions.⁸⁹ The outsiders were oblivious to this reality and as a result contributed to their own demise. Like the previous Spanish governors before, Boeder's sense of superiority and misjudgement led to the loss of his life.⁹⁰ Micronesians, like any human group, tolerated external pressures to a certain extent; however, they would not allow subjugation that undermined the roots of their culture and traditions. Violent resistance against outsiders periodically occurred in Micronesian history, but there were internal mechanisms to control and minimise

⁸⁶ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p. 134.

⁸⁷ D'Arcy, "Spanish and German Colonial Rule", pp. 3-5; Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific*, p.118.

⁸⁸ D'Arcy, "Spanish and German Colonial Rule", p.4.

⁸⁹ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p.348.

⁹⁰ D'Arcy, *Spanish and German Colonial Rule*, p.4

violence. Micronesian intellectuality also played its part to restore internal coherence for the purpose of peaceful co-existence.⁹¹

The news of Boeder's death by a handful of locals from Sokehs was disproportionate. For example, Germany dispatched gunships with trained troops from its head quarters in New Guinea. Upon their arrival, they immediately bombarded the island of Sokehs with cannon fire, in an attempt to flush out the perpetrators. However, they had already escaped before the arrival of the German military force. They were scattered around the main island of Pohnpei; many sought shelter with their relatives. After the German conducted an intensive search for the perpetrators, the leaders of the resistance group gave themselves up to prevent further spillage of Pohnpeian blood. The leaders were brought to Kolonia and were executed in front of a crowd in the hope to teach the locals a lesson that they could meet the same fate if they disobeyed their German masters.⁹² The rest of the perpetrators were deported to Palau and Papua New Guinea. After the 'Sokehs incident' Pohnpeians went back to their normal routine only to be interrupted a few years later when Japan arrived in Pohnpei as the new colonial master.

German experience in Yap contrasted the case of Pohnpei. Yap was considered a model colony. For example, the district officers realised that the best way to implement colonial objectives was firstly to win the hearts and minds of the Yapese people. To do so they needed to understand the cultural structure of the island. Social relationships were the foundation of Yapese culture and with that understanding the Germans were able to develop a cordial relationship with the Yapese, especially with the chiefs.⁹³ It was a policy of inclusion, one that mutually benefited both sides. The chiefs mobilised their people to assist in the development of colonial infrastructure such as roads, docks, offices, as well as law and order. In return the chiefs received material benefits, in particular recognition of their chiefly status. The personalities of the German overseers also played a crucial part in bringing both sides together.⁹⁴

One can argue that there was not much difference in the Spanish and German colonial policies. Both were caught up in their own pursuit as world-class powers in the Pacific using the islands, as Hezel claimed, as "the ornament"⁹⁵ of their colonial power.

⁹¹ The Sokehs Rebellion was caused by many factors both intra and inter-rivalries. Paul Ehrlich, *"The Clothes of Men": Ponape Island and German Colonial Rule, 1899-1914* (PhD Thesis), State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1973, pp. 159-167.

⁹² Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, pp. 140-141.

⁹³ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, pp. 264-265.

⁹⁴ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, pp. 105-106.

⁹⁵ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.xiii.

However, to the Micronesians their traditions continued to function as usual, but now with new ideas learned from the outside world. The lack of support from the motherland countries affected the manner in which colonial policies were implemented in Micronesia.⁹⁶ By and large the German administrators were left to finance the running of their administration of Micronesia primarily based on their personal view as to what benefits Micronesia offered to Germany. The Germans' over-ambitious plan for Micronesia and their political temperament brought complications as referred to above, particularly in Pohnpei.

Geography and resources dictated the way the Germans implemented their colonial policies. Violence was more pronounced in the high islands as in the case of Pohnpei, while low-key diplomatic tactics were the main norms of engagement in the low-lying islands.⁹⁷ Micronesians were not easy to dominate since they did not allow the colonisers to have a free hand on their islands, as in the case of Pohnpei. Also, they had seen the different demands by the outsiders who frequented their islands throughout the Spanish and German colonial times. The islanders' responses were framed within the context of survivability and continuity.⁹⁸ They understood that each colonial power had its own weaknesses and thus limitations. For example, the change of the colonial flags represented the unsettling politics of the external world, which also enabled Micronesians to frame their mode of cautious responses to the continuing colonial process. In the main Micronesians did not have to fight too hard as the external world was unstable and changing.⁹⁹ In the end Germany was too preoccupied with its WWI efforts. It was subsequently defeated by Great Britain who later supported Japan in the League of Nations to take over Micronesia after WWI.

Tolerating Japanese Colonisation

Japanese were not new in Micronesia as many traders were already in the islands during the German administration. Many were already familiar with the Japanese work ethic and general attitude towards islanders. Micronesia was annexed by Japan as a class C Mandate under strict order from the League of Nations (LN). Under the terms of the Mandate, Japan's responsibilities was framed in accordance with international terms to: (1) promote the material and moral well-being and social progress of the local inhabitants; (2) rule out slavery, traffic in arms and ammunition and alcohol beverages;

⁹⁶ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.136.

⁹⁷ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, pp. 81-82

⁹⁸ D'Arcy, "Spanish and German Colonial Rule", pp .5-6.

⁹⁹ D'Arcy, "Spanish and German Colonial Rule", p.1.

(3) refrain from building fortifications and military bases or from giving military training to Micronesians; (4) permit freedom and worship and missionary activity; and (5); submit an annual accounting to the LN, by way of its mandates and commission.¹⁰⁰

Yet again, Micronesia was passed to another colonial hand without Micronesian input in the process. Japan was mindful of the LN's mandates, but in practise basically only paid lip service to such obligations. For example, economic development was for the benefit of the Japanese rather than Micronesians, as was commented on by Walter in his assessment of the Germans during their occupation of Micronesia.

Lacking the local knowledge to form a coherent policy for the implementation of the LN's instructions in the class C Mandate, scores of Japanese scholars and technicians descended on the islands to conduct economic surveys as well as to study the cultures of the area. However, the hidden dimension was the old practice of incorporating the islands into a foreign political structure. Japan built their economic vision on the existing infrastructure left by the Germans. From 1917-1922 a basic system of education and health were established, and Christianity continued its course. The Japanese language became the new official language of the islands. Copra and phosphate extraction continued, while fishing and agriculture were identified as having future economic potential.¹⁰¹ However, to make these industries viable it required a large labour pool from Japan which also served as an outlet to relieve the over population in the country.¹⁰²

In 1922 Japan started its development plan of Micronesia on a large scale. Many more Japanese were sent to Micronesia, Towns like Kolonia in Pohnpei were referred to as little Tokyo¹⁰³. Japan upgraded the copra and phosphate businesses left by the Germans and at the same time maximised the production output of the fishing and agricultural industries.¹⁰⁴ It was estimated that the fishing industry during its peak in 1937 produced approximately six thousand ton of *katsuobushi* (dried tuna) and tuna was

¹⁰⁰ Gray, *Modernization in Micronesia*, p. 40.

¹⁰¹ Paul D'Arcy, "What Was the Impact of Japanese Rule on the Indigenous Population of Japan's South Seas Mandate", University of Hawaii, 1986, pp.10-12.

¹⁰² D'Arcy, *What Was the Impact of Japanese Rule*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰³ Development plan was to benefit Japanese where they outnumbered Micronesia and built Japanese commercial centres like little towns in Japan. Hezel, "A Brief Economic History of Micronesia" <<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/articles.htm>>

¹⁰⁴ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p. 195; Nason, *Clan and Copra*, p.216.

exported yearly. The tuna trade brought in around 3 million yen profit and tripled that amount by the end of the decade.¹⁰⁵ Most of the fish exports were produced in Chuuk.

Pohnpei was developed into an agricultural hub. Large tracts of land were cleared to plant crops such as tapioca, cotton, coffee, eggplants, cucumber and others. More than four hundred thousand yen was earned from the export of tapioca alone.¹⁰⁶ Phosphate production increased from sixty thousand tons before 1935 and reached 120,000 tons at the end of the decade. Copra production increased from 4733 tons in 1922, to 13,703 in 1935.¹⁰⁷ The economic “miracle” was expressed in the figures from 1935, where exports numbered 26 million yen and imports 15 million yen. The exports increased to 40 million yen by the end of 1930s.¹⁰⁸ Many Micronesians entered the workforce of their own accord to earn money to supplement their needs, or by Japanese demand.

By the 1930s Japanese outnumbered Micronesians in the islands. Japanese reaped the benefit of the economic boom reinforced by a racial policy that created a social division between Micronesians and non-Micronesians.¹⁰⁹ The Japanese occupied the upper echelon of the class structure, followed by Okinawans and others in the middle, and finally the *tomin* (Micronesians)¹¹⁰ at the bottom of the rung. This racial division ran deep in the educational system and the employment sector. For example, D’Arcy noted that in the phosphate industry Japanese earned between 5.7 to 6.5 yen whereas Micronesians received 1.2 to 1.5 yen per day.¹¹¹ In the public educational system Micronesians received three years of basic education in comparison to the six years required for Japanese children. Physical segregation continued in the classroom where Micronesian children were taught separately.¹¹² Likewise, in the health sector Micronesians occupied the lower levels in terms of employment and also received meagre health treatment in comparison with their Japanese opposites.

Micronesian responses to Japanese occupation continued. This was based on traditional social networking where circulation of material goods for survival operated and benefits were shared amongst families. Micronesians entered the workforce to supplement their

¹⁰⁵ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p. 197.

¹⁰⁶ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.197.

¹⁰⁷ D’Arcy, “What Was the Impact of Japanese Rule”, p.9.

¹⁰⁸ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p. 198.

¹⁰⁹ Hezel, *Strangers in their Own Land*, p. 204; D’Arcy, “What Was the Impact of Japanese Rule”, p. 12.

¹¹⁰ *Toming* a Japanese term referring to Micronesians. According to Mortlockese who survived the War, it was a derogatory term distinguishing between the so called “sophisticated” Japanese, and the low class Micronesians. *Kanaka* was another term used on similar line.

¹¹¹ D’Arcy, “What Was the Impact of Japanese Rule”, p.11.

¹¹² According to family history, some of my uncles attended the school catered for Micronesians which equivalent to elementary level. See Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own land*, pp. 172-173.

local life style. Their participation in the workforce enlarged their understanding of the new immigrants allowing them to strategize for the future. Such strategies became important when Japanese fortified the islands in preparation for WWII. The Japanese sense of superiority over Micronesians was soon to be shattered when they were humiliated and forcefully ejected from the islands at the hands of another outside power, the USA.

Japan and Its Iron Fist

The survivors of WWII described the Japanese occupation as “harsh”, “brutal”, and “unjust”.¹¹³ Infliction of cruel punishments, land appropriation, slave labour (which the islanders called *kinrosy*), unwarranted execution, and forced prostitution are some examples of Japanese brutalities. Japan’s misconduct was in defiance against the instructions of the League of Nations, which was to supposedly promote the welfare of the Micronesian people. Anthropologist Lin Poyer reminded us about such cruelties and brutalities. She noted that the Japanese used intimidation to force Micronesians to obey Japanese policy.¹¹⁴ It was a deliberate attempt to break the spirit of the indigenous people to serve the war agenda of Japan.¹¹⁵ The need to survive strengthened the extended family network that was itself the social net for survival. Gale noted that; “never before in Micronesian history had the transfer of authority from one regime to another been carried out by violence...the gradual build up in American naval strength led to the imposition of blockade that brought severe food shortages in its wake and in some places led to starvation and Japanese atrocities”.¹¹⁶

A German Missionary who was in Chuuk during the war also stated that, “even in plain view... Japanese soldiers commit the most gruesome atrocities against the islanders. During one of (many) air raids many women, most of who had to serve in forced prostitution for the imperial army, flee into a roofed-over trench close to the harbour. The commander in charge fears that the invasion of the American marines is just about to take place and he also fears that the island women he abused could speak out as witnesses against him. He therefore gives orders to kill the women. He calls three corporals to the trench. These fire their machine guns through the entrance into the deep

¹¹³ Oral history as told by my family members about the Japanese time. D’Arcy, “What Was the Impact of Japanese Rule”, p.19.

¹¹⁴ Lin Poyer, “Yapese Experiences of the Pacific War” in *ISLA: A Journal of Micronesian Studies*, Vol.3, No.2, Dry Season, 1995, University of Guam Press, pp. 223-224 and p.p.239-241; Suzane Falgout, Lin Poyer and Laurence Carucci, The Greatest Hardship: Micronesian Memories of WWII in *ISLA: A Journal of Micronesian Studies*, Vol.3, No.2, Dry Season, 1995, University of Guam Press pp. 210-211.

¹¹⁵ D’Arcy, *What Was the Impact of Japanese Rule*, p.12.

¹¹⁶ Gale, *Americanisation of Micronesia*, p.40.

darkness inside until the screams of the women are heard no more. With the help of a flashlight they then count about seventy bodies lying there in their blood”.¹¹⁷ In addition, starvation, enslavement of islanders, and cannibalism also began to emerge in Chuuk.¹¹⁸

The Japanese main naval base in the FSM was located in the Chuuk lagoon. The USA did not invade the lagoon instead; it unleashed its air force power by bombing the Japanese fleet, airports, and main installations. Many lives were lost during the bombardment. In the outer islands bombs were dropped on the Japanese installations, but with minimal damage. Most islanders in the outer islands escaped this nightmare as they had already been relocated elsewhere as part of Japanese security measures. The memories of such atrocities are still fresh in Micronesian minds today as the stories are told and retold by subsequent generations. Micronesians today ask the question, what did the innocent Micronesian civilians do to the Japanese, which warranted their massacre? Micronesian suffering was neglected or secondary to the sufferings of the combatants.¹¹⁹

Subsequent generations of Micronesians still possess the historical knowledge of the Japanese activities on their islands as passed down from their families who survived the War. In the low-lying atolls, islanders share stories of indigenous labour teams called *kinrosi*. Japanese organised these team wherein every morning islanders had to assemble for *antere*¹²⁰ to ensure all were ready to execute the daily tasks. People were beaten severely even if they had an authorised break, or stood up just to straighten their back from bending too long from cutting grass.¹²¹ Youth groups called *sainentang*¹²² were created to spread Japanese indoctrination. For example, the Japanese required islanders to bow in the direction of Japan as a show of respect to the emperor when

¹¹⁷ Käser, *Light in the South Seas*, p.116.

¹¹⁸ Falgout, Poyer and Carucci, “The Greatest Hardship”, pp. 203-222; Micronesian scholar Myjoylynn and local person Chero Erwin from Chhuk stated that Japanese cannibalism was true in regard to a person from the village next to Tunnuk, *Pers. Communication*, April 20, 2015 and February 2, 2014. Their accounts are based on family history and local connection.

¹¹⁹ Falgout, Poyer, and Carucci, *The Greatest Hardship*, pp. 204-205.

¹²⁰ *Antere* was a term used by Mortlockese referring to morning roll call before the *kinrosi* teams started work. Oral history indicated that if someone was absent, Japanese guards would look for the absent person and punished such a person with brutal force. Peter, “Eram’s Church (Bell): Local Appropriations of Catholicism”, p. 283.

¹²¹ My grandmother told me about Japanese treatment of islanders during clean up. She was one of the victims of brutality.

¹²² *Sainentang* a Japanese term adopted by Mortlockese referring to youth teams graded in terms of their skills and strength. See also Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.174.

passing particular Japanese symbols placed along the roadside.¹²³ If they forgot to bow, they were beaten severely.

Songs were recorded and sung on special occasions, which captured the collective imagination of the new generation about Japanese ill treatment of their parents.¹²⁴ People in the Mortlocks, the Chuuk lagoon, Kosrae, Pohnpei and elsewhere were removed from their homes to make room for the Japanese war efforts.¹²⁵ Today the end of Japanese occupation continues to be celebrated in the community as a holiday. For example, the people of Satowan celebrate their holiday as a reminder of the islanders' resilience under the Japanese regime. Despite the displacement of islanders and the slave labour system imposed by the Japanese, Mortlockese continue to live traditionally by way of the *ainang* system. It re-strengthens their identity and continuity as a people totally separate from the Japanese.¹²⁶

However, it should be remembered that islanders were not merely passive actors under the Japanese rule. Micronesians exercised discretionary measures in an attempt to neutralise the Japanese system of oppression and subjugation at least at the psychological level. For example, when food was in short supply by the American blockade, agricultural products were reserved for the Japanese soldiers only. Any islanders found taking food crops from their own land were brutally beaten. However, such brutality did not deter Micronesians' access to their land. They organised food-raiding parties at night with successful outcomes.¹²⁷

They devised an underground network based on kinship affiliation (or just being an islander bonded by their opposition to the Japanese) to share resources and to enable them to patiently sit out the war. They reinforced each other's self-esteem and spied on the Japanese activities to shield each other.¹²⁸ Micronesians knew that the war was between outsiders and it would eventually come to an end. Once the Japanese were defeated by the Americans, Micronesians regathered their life and continued to live in

¹²³ *Toming* was a Japanese term used by Mortlockese to refer to their status at bottom of the class structure during the Japanese era.

¹²⁴ Florian Seady "*Eshemeto papa mama ren ar riaffou*" is a song often sung by the Satowan people in reminding them of the hardship experienced during the WWII, and the day they finally returned to their island after being displaced by the Japanese military. November 1 is a special day for the people of Satowan to celebrate their freedom from the Japanese. Oral history of Japanese occupation of Satowan.

¹²⁵ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.p. 225-226.

¹²⁶ The author heard about Satowanese experiences during the Japanese administration from Krispin Carlos, an uncle, when he attended the Mortlocks Junior High School in the early 1970s.

¹²⁷ Kaiko Muritok, *Oral History Family Experience*. I heard this history when growing up in the Mortlocks during the 1970s about Japanese harsh treatment during the War. Japanese cruel treatment see also Käser, *Light in the South Seas*, pp.159-163.

¹²⁸ Oral History; Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p. 240.

accordance with their traditions and await the new world order this time with the USA as the new colonial power.

Engagement with the USA

Micronesians who survived the War spoke of Japanese harsh mistreatment, which came to an abrupt end when the US dropped the atomic bombs on Japan. It forced Japan to its knees and they surrendered. Some accounts of Micronesian experiences were recorded by non-Micronesians during the war, but by and large are still missing from the records¹²⁹. As in the past, oral history is relied upon to portray Micronesian perspective of the War. Micronesians were appreciative of Americans when they expelled the Japanese from their islands. The US was not a new stranger in Micronesia. Its interests in the islands dated back to Captain Truxton of the U.S.S Jamestown who signed a treaty in 1870 with the *Wasai* of Sokehs.¹³⁰ In addition, USA ideologies had already spread via the ABCFM missionaries who had earlier established themselves in Pohnpei, Kosrae, and later in the Mortlocks and the Chuuk lagoon.

Oral accounts record that the Mortlockese composed songs to welcome the Americans to their islands. The American flag was displayed as a symbol in many public spaces to represent the newly found freedom and peace. I remember clearly a song composed for the Americans which says, “*a urute ash filaik, filaik mi kirier o parapar*”(let us raise our flag in stripes and red) referring to the colour of the American flag.¹³¹ It was a time for islanders to rest, rebuild their life, and also to contemplate about their future. While the islanders rebuilt their lives, the US was planning how to acquire the islands as part of its forward strategies to defend itself in the Pacific.¹³²

The USA’s position changed when it realised Micronesia’s growing strategic importance during the WW II. This position led the USA to negotiate with the UN to place the islands under a strategic trust territory. It later became known as the US Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). This paved the way for the USA to have an exclusive free hand in the islands. Having experienced the WWII, Micronesians understood that independence and patience were the best possible survival approach to maintain their integrity and continuity. Colonialism was an antipathy to their future

¹²⁹ Käser, *Light in the South Seas*, pp. 162-168.

¹³⁰ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, pp. 202-205; Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization*, pp. 231-232

¹³¹ I learned the oral history of the War from my family members who experienced the War. I grew up listening and singing the song. During the Viet Nam War, Naval ships would stop by Lekinloch Island and entertained the people playing baseball and socialized with the people. We sang the song of the USA flag, but in retrospect I wonder whether the Americans understood the song.

¹³² Rinn-Sup Shinn, *Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*, pp. 303-304.

survival. The USA was in no hurry to improve the islanders' economic situation devastated by the War.¹³³ There were more pressing issues like using the Marshall Islands for nuclear testings and Saipan as the CIA training camp to subvert communist activities in China. Micronesian interests were put on the political back burner.

The thousands of American lives lost in the War and the close proximity of the Islands to Asia fuelled the Pentagon's desire to retain possession of the islands.¹³⁴ Since then, the Pentagon's interest has been one of the main drivers of USA policy in Micronesia. The Pentagon's interest has been featured in successive policies of the USA government by the following measures. The USA government required the US Navy to administer the islands immediately after the War. The Pentagon then imposed a wall of silence by sealing off the islands from the outside world as it was considered a sensitive military zone.¹³⁵ This policy denied Micronesians access to the outside world without the USA approval. When successive USA policies were no longer effective due to Micronesian political pressures, the USA's final tactic was the Compact of Free Association framed in USA military terms to have a foot in the FSM in "perpetuity".¹³⁶

The US Navy supplied free food, education, and health care and imposed a system of government based on what the USA thought appropriate. Inherent in this was the three layers of government as well as the three branches of government that were slowly instituted. At the grassroots level there were the municipalities, the districts were the next level, and finally the Trust Territory government. The branches included the executive, legislative, and judiciary. There were six districts, which made up the TTPI: Palau, Yap, Ponape, Truk, the Marshalls, and Mariana Islands. Each island in the district formed a municipality and each district was made up of a collection of municipalities grouped together on the basis of shared perceived cultural and language similarities.

At the municipal level, especially in the outlying islands, the inhabitants continued their traditional ways.¹³⁷ That is because the field trip ships that delivered supplies from the district centres were infrequent and therefore there was less reliance on them. Sailing canoes continued to be used to maintain connections between islands especially in Yap and Chuuk. Traditional social and religious practices were in the hands of the

¹³³ Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, p. 79; Gale, *The Americanization of Micronesia*, pp. 60-61.

¹³⁴ Gale, *The Americanization of Micronesia*, pp. 60-61

¹³⁵ D'Arcy, "American Administration of Micronesia", pp. 2-5.

¹³⁶ *Compact of Free Association Between the FSM and the USA: As Amended*, 2003, Title Three Article I, IV, V, Congress of Federated States of Micronesia, Palikir Pohnpei.

¹³⁷ D'Arcy, "American Administration of Micronesia", pp. 2-5.

traditional elders despite the presence of Christianity and the new system of American inspired government.¹³⁸ The land system was largely unaffected in the villages. Law and order was left to islanders to administer. Traditional agricultural and fishing remained the economic mode of production despite the occasional USDA assistance and the free lunch programs distributed throughout the far-flung islands.¹³⁹ In some ways the islanders adopted the newly introduced government model, but the substance of daily life remained largely Micronesian. The ongoing adaptation process to outside influences remained at the heart of continuity. That is, the re-articulation of relevant elements of the modern world was carefully crafted to suit the Micronesian context. Although Micronesians slowly entered the TTPI government structure at every level, political power remained in the hands of Americans. This portrayed the continuing feature of the colonial system whereby Micronesians were always rated as second-class citizens.¹⁴⁰

At the district level, the district administrators received their orders from the US High Commissioner in Saipan who in turn received his orders from Washington DC. The district governments ran on a shoestring budget, as infrastructure remained a problem for development purposes. People who worked in the port-towns began to derive benefits from the new post war activities, however, unevenly. For example, in the Chuuk lagoon, inhabitants of the islands close to Moen, the port town, began to receive benefits from working in the capital.¹⁴¹ This was not the case in relation to the far off islands in Yap, Pohnpei, and Chuuk. Naturally Micronesian cultures and identity were the foundation of continuity with these islands. The USA concentrated on its own interests leaving the Micronesians to think seriously about their own future.¹⁴²

Colonisation after all was about the self-serving interests of the outsiders, at the expense of the traditional inhabitants. Once again Micronesians were aware that the external world had undergone yet another re-configuration process after the War.¹⁴³ For example, decolonisation around the world had taken place. The offshoot of this made Micronesians think seriously about doing the same. Micronesians wanted their islands

¹³⁸ D'Arcy, "American Administration of Micronesia", pp. 4-5.

¹³⁹ Personal experience growing up in the Trust Territory era. Free lunch programs were provided to elementary schools and aftermath of typhoons. Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp. 65-66; Nason, *Clan and Copra*, pp. 266-267 and 276.

¹⁴⁰ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁴¹ Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, p. 26.

The author attended high school in Weno during the 1970s, at the village level. Most villagers relied on the principal of sharing traditional food and its production.

¹⁴² D'Arcy, "American Administration of Micronesia", pp. 1-2.

¹⁴³ Gale, *The Americanization of Micronesia*, pp. 60-61.

to also be free from outside control. They were not afraid to govern their islands under the new international order.

In response to the emerging decolonisation process, the US Department of Interior (DOI) took over the responsibility for the islands from the Department of Navy in 1947. This was to create an image that the USA was not another colonial power, but an administrator until the inhabitants chose their own political future. American policy under the DOI was slow and cautious; it was business as usual. DOI was oblivious to the political undercurrents gathering strength in unifying the islanders' voices in seeking an alternative to the status quo.¹⁴⁴ The policy of benign neglect was exposed in the 1960s when the USA was criticised about the dereliction of its duties under the trusteeship agreement by the Security Council.¹⁴⁵

Although that was the case, military interests remained influential in the formulation of policies regarding Micronesia's future. Micronesians after a period of long wait took matters into their own hands. They established the Congress of Micronesia (COM) in the mid-1960s as a forum for political dialogue between the respective districts in their efforts to consider different options for the future. When the USA realised that Micronesians were seriously considering their future, the USA pre-empted the issue by offering the Micronesians commonwealth status.¹⁴⁶ This offer was rejected outright, and after a series of negotiations the USA acquiesced to the fact that it could no longer stop the Micronesian leaders from pursuing independence.

However, in order to retain its strategic interests in Micronesia, a Compact of Free Association was created. Under the Compact the USA proposed to have "veto" power to override a future constitution should Micronesians push for independence. The veto power would mean continuing USA's colonization of the islands. The Micronesian side disagreed and as a consequence independence was left for consideration. Independence meant a break from its colonial past and a renewal of Micronesian freedom enshrined in international law and yet framed in Micronesian indigenous past.

The islands were sites of many fierce battles in the Pacific, where the USA lost many soldiers fighting the Japanese.¹⁴⁷ It was from this experience that the USA vowed to keep the islands as part of its security zone to avert future aggression from Asia. The

¹⁴⁴ Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, pp.161-162.

¹⁴⁵ D'Arcy, "American Administration of Micronesia", pp.1-2.

¹⁴⁶ Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, pp, 220-221.

¹⁴⁷ Bill Jeffery, *War in Paradise WWII: Sites in Truk Lagoon, Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, Chuuk Historical Preservation Office*, 2003, p.p, 3-8 <www.nps.gov>

Pentagon was at the forefront to keep the FSM under its military interest. Like before, the traditional inhabitants were not consulted¹⁴⁸ because they were considered too weak to resist the USA's wish. While the other trust territories were quickly decolonized, the TTPI was in a political limbo since the USA had its own plan for its future¹⁴⁹.

Micronesians were stateless people, in the sense that the USA controlled all matters concerning the governance of the territory. For example, the TTPI passport controlled movements of the inhabitants internationally. It said; "the rightful holder of this passport is a citizen or inhabitant of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under United States administration and is entitled, under Article Eleven of the Trusteeship Agreement between the United States and the United Nations Security Council...to receive diplomatic and consular protection of the United States of America. This passport is not valid for travel to the following areas under control of authorities with which the United States does not have diplomatic relations: Albania, Cuba, North Korea, and Vietnam".¹⁵⁰ This restriction on Micronesian travel could only be lifted if Micronesians achieved their independence as a nation state.

Displeasure towards the USA continued and as such the leaders of the TTPI banded together to inform the USA that they wanted to run their own government in accordance with their own political design.¹⁵¹ Micronesians demanded independence on the basis of the principle of inalienable human rights under international law. The question was not how Micronesians should achieve their independence, but rather what is the quickest way to achieve such goal.¹⁵²

To the USA the wish was laughable; they thought Micronesians were unsophisticated and therefore not capable of running their own affairs internationally having been cocooned politically by colonialism.¹⁵³ The downside of this assumption was that it was the Americans who did not bother to understand the Micronesian desire. The USA's resistance to the issue only hardened the Micronesian position, and in response the TTPI leaders rejected all USA offers that were short of independence. Feeling the pressure,

¹⁴⁸ Robert Kiste, "Termination of the US Trusteeship in Micronesia" in *Journal Pacific History*, Vol. XXI, No.3, 1986 (July), pp127-128.

¹⁴⁹ Robert Kiste, "Overview of US Policy" in *The Ninth Annual Pacific Islands Studies Conference Proceedings: History of the US Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*, (ed. Karen Knudsen) University of Hawaii, 1985, pp. 1-4; Gale, *The Americanization of Micronesia*, pp.60-61.

¹⁵⁰ Gonzaga Puas, *TTPI Passport, 1982*. I am still in possession of the passport, which instructed the writer not to enter the countries stated on the passport.

¹⁵¹ Glenn Petersen, "Differences, Connections, and the Colonial Carousel in Micronesian History" in *Pacific Asia Inquiry, Volume 2, Number 1, Fall 2011*, pp.14-16.

¹⁵² Petersen, "Lessons Learned", p.61.

¹⁵³ Petersen, "Lesson Learned", pp.17-18.

the USA gave in and thus the start of the negotiation process towards independence began.

To achieve independence, a constitution was required to attain Micronesian sovereignty as demanded by international law. In 1979 the Constitution was created became the law of the land and the basis for formulating relations with the external world.¹⁵⁴ Losing the islands again to a foreign power was unthinkable according to the leaders.¹⁵⁵ However, Micronesians were happy to retain some form of loose association with the USA in exchange for assistance regarding economic development and support for international recognition of Micronesian independence. After many years of Compact negotiations, the FSM finally gained its independence in 1986 after the UN Security Council terminated the Trusteeship agreement with the USA. This date is considered the end of colonialism in the Federated States of Micronesia.

With independence the Compact of Free Association has been used as leverage for the USA to remain in Micronesia by providing billions of dollars to sustain the Federated States of Micronesia's government. The Compact was renegotiated in 2001 whereby the Compact was extended to the year 2023 at which time certain Compact fundings will end. However, after 2023 the FSM will access its Trust Fund set up to replace the Compact funds agreed to by both sides to the Compact. It has been estimated that there will be a shortfall of USD \$600 million in the Trust Fund¹⁵⁶ and as such there will be a blowout in the future economy and a need for other sources of funding to run the nation.¹⁵⁷ As pointed out in the US Department of Interior's Release Report on the FSM economy dated November 16, 2011, "the most devastating conclusion of the report is FSM's 2023 estimated \$265-\$600 million Trust Fund shortfall of the \$1.82 billion target" to live off during the post Compact era.¹⁵⁸ The future challenges are discussed in chapter 4.

Conclusion

Colonisation of the FSM took many forms depending on the policy of the particular colonial power. Micronesian continuity relied upon the strength of their customs and

¹⁵⁴ Puas, "The FSM Legal System", p.3.

¹⁵⁵ John Haglelgam, *Interview*, College of Micronesia, Palikir, January 7, 2012.

¹⁵⁶ President Emmanuel Mori, "State of the Nation Address", Palikir, May 18, 2012

¹⁵⁷ *Personal Comm.* with many officials in the FSM government especially the Departments of Foreign Affairs and SBOC during field study in July 2013. President Mori's Speech, *President's State of the Nation Before the 18th Congress of the FSM*, May 29, 2014, Palikir

Pohnpei <http://fsmpio.fm/Speeches/mori/SN_message_2014.pdf>

¹⁵⁸ Tammy Doty, *Interior Releases Report on FSM economy*, November 16, 2011
<http://www.micronesiaforum.org/index.php?p=/discussions>

identity in their engagement with the colonial powers. For example, Micronesians survived by utilising their network via the *ainang* system. The colonists misunderstood this as well as the geography of the islands. Despite all the policies of the colonial powers to disempower Micronesians, colonisation was not successful. Micronesians also developed an understanding of the external world and the changing alliances within it as a result of their exposure to colonialism. The changing colonial masters in Micronesia were part of the bigger picture beyond the horizon. That is, the colonial powers continued to fight each other over control for the islands. The islanders understood that they had to wait and eventually political control would come full circle. Micronesian history is about a people with patience, respect for reciprocity, connectivity, and intellectual prowess. These values formed the basis of Micronesians identity and continuity as independent people, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: INDEPENDENCE

Introduction

Prior to colonial rule each island in the FSM governed itself. However, the islands were linked to an extensive inter-island network centered on the *ainang* system. This system survived four successive colonial powers because of the limited influence of colonialism, which was confined, to the port towns. In the 1970s Micronesians faced the prospect of independence framed in the image of a nation-state. This chapter discusses the processes that led to the shaping of the FSM's independence post-WWII, and also the issues arising post-independence.

There are three reasons that were associated with the people's desire for independence as promoted by the Micronesian founding fathers. The first reason arose from the US' adamant intention to fully incorporate the islands into its political sphere regardless of Micronesian wishes. Secondly, the leaders' own political consciousness stemming from their understanding of the new world order drove them to move towards independence. Thirdly, independence was driven by the indigenous notion of how independence should be shaped given historical and cultural imperatives rather than a form imposed by outside forces. These concerns increasingly seemed justified post-independence during the debate about the Compact of Free Association (Compact). A number of Micronesian leaders were especially concerned over the terms of the "permanent denial clause" sought by the USA as a restriction on the independence of FSM. Although initially agreed to by Micronesian representatives, this clause remained a concern and the Compact was amended in 2001.

Images of Micronesia Post WWII

Oral accounts from the Mortlocks recalled that immediately after the War the US warships rounded up the Japanese garrisons and deported them back to Japan. For example, on Satowan and Lukunor islands, Japanese soldiers were disarmed and taken to the docks where American naval crafts transported them to the warships anchored offshore to repatriate them back to Japan. In the process the islanders would call out, "*awlela Resepan auspaw shuan no liwin*" (go home Japanese do not come back)

and sarcastically bidding *saionara*¹ forever to the soldiers. However, the American soldiers were welcomed with open arms.

Mortlockese often communicate in a language of distortion called *afiel* (hidden meanings) about issues affecting them. This is an offshoot of a special language used between *itang*.² That is, messages were delivered in a secretive mode of communication only understood by an intended audience. For example, people of Satowan Island are famous for using *kapas apiliwek* (reverse psychology) when talking among themselves.³ To comprehend this special language, it requires a level of familiarity for one to be able to decipher the meaning of the language during conversation. *Afiel* and *kapas apiliwek* were used to communicate hidden messages between islanders against the Japanese during the War. This provides an example of how Micronesians maintained their connection with each other during the extended colonial period.

This metaphoric language is not only confined to the Mortlocks, but is also used in Yap and Pohnpei. For example, Glenn Petersen referred to a common practise in Pohnpei called *kanengamah* where the indigenous people use metaphoric language to conceal real meanings in their communication with each other. Peterson notes *kanengamah* means “deliberately concealing the truth about oneself or what one knows, and it is tempting to liken it to a lie. Pohnpeians do not perceive it as lying, however, concealment is different than distortion or outright falsehood”.⁴

Manipulation of the local languages was necessary to transmit information between Micronesians about Japanese activities without detection. Survival strategies also included using local knowledge to secretly harvest Micronesians’ own land at night. There were stories told by my elders about locals who were pursued by Japanese guards whilst tending the gardens at night. However, the islanders were not caught and Japanese attempts to identify the culprits floundered when they could not penetrate the solidarity of silence among extended family networks. Investigations by the Japanese of the raids were unsuccessful due to the solidarity of the Micronesian people.

¹ *Saionara*- an adopted Japanese term to bid farewell. Bidding farewell in Mortlockese is *aulela*

² *Itang* is a person with many talents, knowledge and skills. He can be an orator, manipulator, a warrior, a negotiator, and a historian, for example. People respect *itang* because of their wisdom and knowledge.

³ Okustino Mahina, a Tongan scholar referred to the same in inter-personal dialogue called *helihaki* (to speak one thing but mthree-to-teoean another). It demonstrated the extent of how communication can be manipulated in different Pacific Islands context. See “The Poetics of Tongan traditional History” in *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 28, NO.1, p. 113.

⁴ Petersen, *Kanengamah and Pohnpei’s Politics*, p.34; Hempenstall and Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific*, p.107. Hempenstall and Rutherford, referred to *kaningama* (different spelling) as “a poker-faced patience in the face of life’s adversities”.

My grandfather likened Micronesia after WWII to a fatigued elderly man slow in movement, but with a sharp agile mind; retaining his intellectual wit to maintain his personal integrity, although retired from physical labour.⁵ Having been a grandfather many times over, he was used to providing for his extended family with his bare hands; he did not need someone else's imposed charity. He was worried about the future of his children, and as such instructed them politely to rely on their own capabilities and to be productive if they wanted to survive. He believed that receiving charity from someone else's sweat should not be a part of their future. This personal recollection, whilst anecdotal, reflected beliefs common to my grandfather's generation. This chapter will suggest that this attitude of self-reliance prevailed at this time and indeed throughout Micronesian history, and the outsiders' failure to realize this was a significant reason for the failure of colonial regimes. The attitude of Micronesians was, however, often masked behind polite smiles of silence that outsiders mistook for compliance and consent.

My grandfather's rhetoric condemned outsiders' treatment of Micronesians.⁶ In his humble view, outsiders disrespected the indigenous population by reducing them to second-class citizens.⁷ Despite all the adaption, assimilation, and re-contextualisation of outside forces, he thought independence should be sought through islanders' intellectual wit, and built solidly on Micronesian integrity and identity.⁸ He believed that it was the only way forward to restore indigenous dignity. Coincidentally, his views resonate in different parts of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI), especially the leaders who fought for independence. Other Micronesians used similar rhetoric to put the wheels of independence into motion.⁹

Centuries of foreign rule had left Micronesians suspicious of outsiders. Their suspicions were expressed in various forms of local resistance against the colonisation process.

Memories of subjugation among Micronesians laid the foundation for Micronesian

⁵ Ring Puas was one of the leaders of Lukunor or Lekinioch Island post- WWII. He was a traditional chief as well as the magistrate of Lekinioch Municipality. He later became an Associate Justice of the state of Chuuk Supreme Court. Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, p.88; See also *Micronesian Reporter*, Saipan, July 1962, Micronesian Leaders Conference <001 19780700: 32 - Pacific Digital Library>; Micronesian Reporter <001 19570300: 19 - Pacific Digital Library>

⁶ David Hanlon, "Patterns of Colonial Rule in Micronesia" in *Tides of History: The Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century*, (Edited by K Rowe, R Kiste, and B Lal), University of Hawaii, 1987, pp. 93-94.

⁷ D'Arcy, "What Was the Impact of Japanese Rule", pp.6-7.

⁸ Personal knowledge, Ring Puas was a traditional leader and associate Judge in the Truk District Judiciary system.

⁹ *Oral history*, although Ring was a traditional Chief, his thoughts coincided with the objectives of the FSM leaders for independence. Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, p.88.

unity and political independence.¹⁰ Independence gained momentum after WWII when circumstances of the external world changed and the USA wanted outright annexation of the islands.¹¹ This was not acceptable to the Micronesian leaders.



Figure 10: War relics on Satowan in the Mortlocks Islands. Photo taken in October 2013. Supplied by Vince Sivas.

Micronesians' first priority was to continue to survive. The land and the sea remained the sources of sustaining their livelihood. Micronesians did not conceal their genuine appreciation of the USA who ejected the Japanese at the end of the War.¹²



Figure 11: Airplane wreckage on Satowan Island from the Japanese period. Photo taken in October 2013. Supplied by Vince Sivas.

¹⁰ Hanlon, "Patterns of Colonial Rule in Micronesia", pp. 93-96.

¹¹ Robert Kiste, "Termination of the US Trusteeship in Micronesia", p.127.

¹² Oral history of Lekiniokh Island. See also Hezel, *The New Shape of Old Island Cultures*, pp. 4-5.

Responses to the Trust Territory

At first Micronesians were curious as to what the US had planned for their islands after the War. The islands were soon classified as a strategic trust territory, later known as the US Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). Unlike the other eleven trust territories that existed after the War, which were under the UN Trusteeship Council, the TTPI was also put under the supervision of the Security Council.¹³ The reason was that the USA had a veto power in the Security Council and therefore could control the future of the TTPI. As Roger Gale commented, the USA “created a unique entity ...different from the other trust territories in that its political status cannot be altered without the permission of the administering authority”.¹⁴

Under the UN Trusteeship Agreement, the USA had responsibilities to develop the islands socially, economically, and politically before Micronesians could decide their future.¹⁵ Like the USSR in Eastern Europe, the USA drew its own iron curtain over the territory by sealing off the islands as a strategic area.¹⁶ Outsiders, including USA civilians, required permission to enter the Territory. The “iron curtain” years contributed to the slow process of economic development of Micronesia. That is because there was not enough exposure of islanders to the outside world. Similarly, the outside world had no opportunity to learn what Micronesians were experiencing under the USA. Micronesians were kept in the dark and isolated from the flow of international information. Like previous colonial practices, the inhabitants of the TTPI were not consulted about their future. It became apparent that the new administration was planning to remain in the islands just like the previous colonial powers.

Six districts were part of the TTPI: Ponape,¹⁷ Truk,¹⁸ Palau, Yap, the Marshalls, and Mariana Islands. Their function was to organise services for the municipalities as well as implementing the TTPI government’s objectives.

¹³ Gale, *Americanization of Micronesia*, pp, 61-62.

¹⁴ Gale, *Americanization of Micronesia*, p.12.

¹⁵ *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice*, Chapter XII, Article 76 (b), Office of Public Information, United Nations, New York, p.27.

¹⁶ Kiste, “A Half Century in Retrospect”, in *American Anthropology in Micronesia*, p. 461.

¹⁷ Ponape later changed name to its indigenous name Pohnpei.

¹⁸ Truk like in the case of Ponape changed its name to Chuuk.

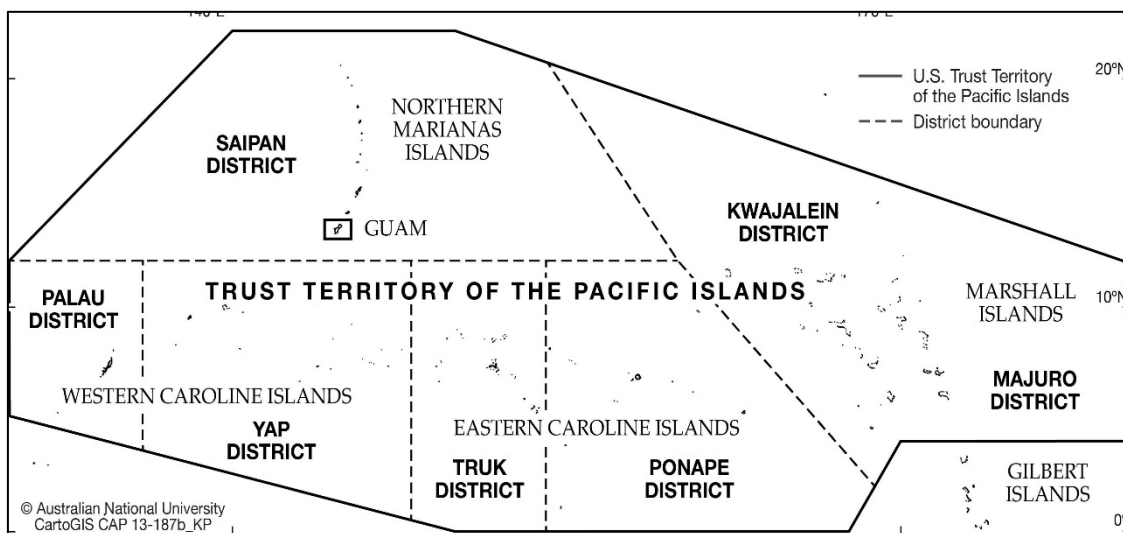


Figure 12: Map of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) before it broke up into different political entities in the 1970s. Courtesy of the Australian National University Cartography Department.

A High Commissioner was appointed by the United States' President to liaise between Washington D.C. and the Micronesian people. The Commissioner had the power to make decisions for the territory without Micronesian input. Before the creation of the Congress of Micronesia (COM) in 1965, the USA made little progress in developing the islands as required under the UN agreement.¹⁹ It only built and maintained a skeleton infrastructure necessary to achieve its own strategic goals, seemingly oblivious to the realities on the ground.²⁰ For example, the expenditure for the Territory was estimated at \$5.2 million per annum during the Naval administration. This increased to \$7.5 million²¹ by the time the Department of Interior (DOI) took over. This was insufficient to meet the costs of running the territory' and building effective infrastructure. As the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the world, the USA's financial commitment to the TTPI was dismal.

Public buildings such as classrooms and dispensaries as well as public homes in the district centres were rudimentary structures of corrugated iron and plywood, and whatever could be salvaged from the War.²² The road system was in disrepair and needed maintenance. The main docks were kept to minimum standards only to allow shipments in and out of the port towns.²³ There was also a discrepancy in salaries between the Americans and the local people. Americans were paid more than

¹⁹ Robert Kiste, "Overview of US Policy", pp.8-9.

²⁰ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp.135-139

²¹ Meller. *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, pp.15-16; Kiste, "Overview of US Policy", p.10.

²² Hezel, *Strangers in Our Own Land*, p. 324.

²³ I attended high schools in Weno and Pohnpei during this period and witnessed the docks.

Micronesians with the same qualification. Social interaction was almost non-existent as Americans had their own social spaces such as social clubs, houses, and offices.²⁴

In the outer islands, the inhabitants were virtually left alone. Traditional life styles remained largely unaffected by the American presence. The municipal governments, schools, churches, and the local health system were predominantly ran by the few elected officials who were also traditional leaders. Sailing canoes continued to be the main mode of inter-island transportation. Inter-island contacts remained vital as economic and social interdependency continued to be maintained.²⁵ Decisions made in a distant land had little impact on the daily life of the inhabitants of the atolls.²⁶ Colonialism and in particular the effects of WWII had interrupted their life style and the post-WWII was an opportunity to reassert traditional ways of survival adapted to the modern world. It was understood that Americans had their own agenda, just like previous colonial powers. The idea of political independence was not fostered by the colonial powers but reached a genesis at the discussion table in 1965 when the Congress of Micronesia was formed.²⁷

The ongoing importance of traditional institutions did not mean Micronesians were against change. Frustrated with the slow pace of development, Micronesians devised ways to be heard by the international community. Micronesians expressed their concerns to the UN visiting missions as well as appearing in the UN in the early 1960s. The Congress of Micronesia throughout the 1970s and the 1980s took up the cry for independence.²⁸ Micronesians push for self-determination later gained sympathy in the UN.²⁹ For example, the former USSR became a prominent critic of the USA's performance in the TTPI while the USA continued to present an image that it was working towards fulfilling its obligations under the UN agreement. The reality was different on the ground; it was business as usual with limited development or consultation with the locals.³⁰

²⁴ *Oral history* told by the people of Lukunor who worked in the port town of Moen during the Trust Territory days. The issue was more pronounced on the island of Ebye next to the military base in the Marshall Islands where the indigenous people lived in run-down squalor. See Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, p.188.

²⁵ Peter, "Chuukese Travelers and the Idea of Horizon", p.264; D'Arcy, *People of the Sea*, p. 166.

²⁶ Oral History. See also Hezel, *The New Shape of Old Island Cultures*, pp. 4-3; Kiste, "Overview of US Policy", pp.1-2.

²⁷ Oral History. Kiste, "Overview of US Policy", pp.1-3.

²⁸ D'Arcy, *American Administration of Micronesia*, pp.1-2.

²⁹ Gale, *Americanization of Micronesia*, pp. 98-99.

³⁰ Kiste, "Overview of US Policy", pp.2-4

Organising Micronesians

A UN visiting mission to the TTPI in 1961 reported that the USA “must end its neglect and undertake greater efforts to prepare the TTPI for self-government”.³¹ The visiting mission also revealed that the long presence of Americans in the islands had not contributed to serious development. A number of common phrases were used to describe the USA’s poor record in the TTPI, such as “benign neglect” and “the Rust Territory” of the “pathetic” islands, and the saying that Micronesians had “the trust”, but Americans had the territory.³² The USSR was highly critical of the USA following the release of the report by the UN visiting mission in 1961. The UN report criticised the USA for not fulfilling its obligations under the UN agreement. The USSR’s pressure echoed similar sentiments expressed by Micronesians who were invited to the General Assembly objecting to the USA’s failure to carry out its responsibilities in the territory.³³

The USA responded to the criticism by conducting a new study in the TTPI. The Kennedy administration appointed Professor Anthony Solomon from Harvard University to undertake a study of the TTPI. The purpose was to provide information to President Kennedy on how the USA should proceed in terms of the TTPI’s future in order to avoid further political embarrassment in the UN. The professor subsequently produced the famous Solomon Report. It strongly recommended rapid Americanisation of the TTPI in anticipation of full annexation of the islands.³⁴

Americanisation meant a structural reform to systematically indoctrinate Micronesians through education, law, politics, and economics to embrace things Americana.³⁵ To reinforce the reform agenda in the TTPI, American agents of change such as anthropologists, economists, educators, and lawyers were involved in targeting the new generation of Micronesians to embrace Americanism. The USA also increased its funding to the Territory to upgrade infrastructure and to further facilitate its future

³¹ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, p. 91; Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p.15.

³² During my contract work with the FSM Congress and the Department of Justice, the terms were often used by many of the FSM Government officials to blame the US historical record of the lack of development in the FSM; Peter, “Chuukese Travellers and the Idea of Horizon”, pp. 258, 260. Others took the opposite view claiming that the FSM should grow up and accept that it is also at fault. As Mariana Dereas, a senior lecturer in Micronesian Studies at the College of Micronesia said, “let’s get it right this time, and forget the old thoughts”. This seems to be the new motto for the new intellectuals who do not want to waste their energy on blaming others. I interviewed Mariana and her colleagues on January 11, 2011, Palikr, Pohnpei.

³³ Epel Illon, *Interview* on January 13, 2011 about his appearance in the UN in the early 1980s.

³⁴ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp. 93-94.

³⁵ Anthony Solomon, *Report by the US Government Survey Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*, Washington DC, 1963, vol. 2, p. 3.

objectives for the Territory. For example, the budget in 1952 was \$7.5 million. It was increased to \$25 million in 1967, and reached its peak in 1977 when it further increased to \$85 million dollars.³⁶ Jobs were created, new classrooms were built, free lunch programs were implemented, and the mass promotion of American culture in the public domain occurred through movies and music.

Such American action was ironically subverted when Micronesians began to attend tertiary institutions in the USA where they encountered the realities of things Americana including racism. These students started to question “American life style” compared to that of their island cultures. For example, many realised that Micronesians would suffer in an American system where indigenous peoples were to be found on the lower rungs of the societal ladder, should the islands become part of the USA political family. This arose from their direct observation regarding the status and treatment of minorities such as the Chamorros, Hawaiians and the American Indians.³⁷

Racism also affected Micronesian perceptions of the American system. As Bethwel Henry, former speaker of the Congress of Micronesia said to me during an interview, “my experience of racial discrimination occurred during my trip to the USA. I asked a taxi driver in Kansas to drive us to a hotel, but they dumped us at a hotel for coloured people only”.³⁸ Patsy Mink, a Hawaiian Congresswoman from Hawaii, who favoured incorporation of Micronesia declared in 1971, “It seems obvious that Micronesians will not be satisfied with anything less than independent status, and the longer a decision is delayed, the more insistent they will become”.³⁹

The first generation of Western trained intellectuals and leaders, like Bethwel Henry, Tosiwo Nakayama, Petrus Tun, John Mangefel, Jacob Nena, and Leo Falcam were already advocating for independence for Micronesia based on their own experiences in college⁴⁰. These leaders-in-the-making became a political force of considerable influence in Micronesia. They formed a substantial lobby group to arrest the rising tide of Americanisation in Micronesia. This new phase, which arose from the new educated

³⁶ Gale, *Americanization of Micronesia*, p.104. Sapuro Rayphand, *Interview* on the Internet, December 13, 2013. Sapuro was a qualified teacher with a Masters degree in education from Lakinioch who taught in many schools of the Trust Territory, including Saipan. He was told that the gap in pay between Americans and Micronesians was that the American teachers needed to pay for their own accommodation and food. This was not a good excuse. Why did he not receive such compensation on Saipan since he was away from home?

³⁷ Bethwel Henry, former speaker of the Congress of Micronesia, *Interview*, Kolonia, Pohnpei, June 28, 2012.

³⁸ Henry, *Interview*, Kolonia, Pohnpei, June 28, 2012.

³⁹ Gale, *Americanization of Micronesia*, p, 230.

⁴⁰ Henry, *Interview*, Kolonia, Pohnpei, June 28, 2012.

elite, contributed to the waning of full acceptance of Americanisation in the islands. The movement for annexation of the islands waned in varying degrees throughout the territory. There are a number of reasons including the following: Firstly, Micronesians were directly exposed to a greater level of Americanisation providing them with the opportunity to evaluate American values and culture and the differences compared to their own. Secondly, many of the American professionals who were exported to the TTPI to implement American objectives were still in their youth and full of ideals and empathy. Many became friends of the Micronesian movement for independence; they also exposed the weaknesses and hypocrisies within the USA's political system.⁴¹ Thirdly, the Micronesian leadership did not want Micronesians to become second-class citizens by losing their land if the islands became part of the USA.

Micronesian Dissatisfaction

In 1961 a UN report condemned the USA for not developing the islands to the level acceptable under the trusteeship agreement. The USA had breached its duties and obligations materially under the agreement, which imposed upon the USA the responsibilities to develop the islands economically, socially, and politically before the issue of self-determination could be decided.⁴² In 1965 the Congress of Micronesia asked the USA to produce serious plans to develop Micronesia economically and politically.⁴³ The uneven development throughout the TTPI and the lack of Micronesian input at the top echelon of the decision-making process were key elements driving Micronesian political frustration.⁴⁴ For example, Micronesians complained about the hiring practises in the public sector wherein at the top of the employment pyramid Americans still occupied the best paying jobs despite the fact that there were qualified Micronesians who could perform at that level. In a way it was the recycling of the past colonial practises where Micronesians were always at the bottom of the economic ladder. Many islanders wanted the top positions as they had the qualification.⁴⁵ For example, a former Micronesian teacher I interviewed said that he was receiving \$3,000 per annum in the 1960s which increased to \$5,000 in the mid -1970s, by comparison

⁴¹ Henry, *Interview*, Kolonia, Pohnpei, June 28, 2012.

⁴² Anthony Solomon, *Report by the US Government Survey Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*, Washington DC, 1963, vol. 2, pp. 3-10; Bethwel Henry, the first Speaker of the Congress of Micronesia, *Interview*, June 28, 2012.

⁴³ Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, pp.119-122.

⁴⁴ Henry, *Interview*, June 28, 2012.

⁴⁵ Gale, *Americanization of Micronesia*, p.126; Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, p.102.

American teachers were paid \$12, 000 annually.⁴⁶ In response the Congress of Micronesia legislated for Micronesians to be paid a salary based on the philosophy of “equal work, equal pay”.⁴⁷

The discrepancy in conditions between the district centres also became apparent. For example, Saipan where the headquarters of the TPPI was located, continued to benefit from the USA’s greater presence while in the other district centres such as Yap, Truk, and Ponape, underdevelopment continued to be the norm.⁴⁸ In the outer islands, life continued as usual. Visits to the outer islands by the field trip ships were infrequent. Health and educational programs were left to the locals to organise as they had always done in the past. They continued their traditional system of governance while adapting to the new American-styled municipal governments.

In the Mortlocks, for example, history remained largely taught by the elders, Christianity and local religious beliefs co-existed, and economic activities concentrated on taro farming, fishing, and breadfruit harvesting. Although there was meagre cash made from copra trading, it was often shared by the extended family.⁴⁹ It was the same pattern in the other low-lying atolls in the TPPI such as in the districts of Yap, and Ponape. News of local government activities and plans could be heard on the new radio stations such as WSCZ in Chuuk and WSCD in Ponape. However, the locals listened to radio for entertainment rather than listening to the district’s government policy.⁵⁰ The islanders preferred to engage in face-to-face meetings with their Micronesian leaders during field trips to the outer islands rather than listening to them on the radio.⁵¹ Such meetings were in accordance with traditional meeting practices, which aimed at building harmony within communities.

The economy of the TPPI was heavily subsidised by the USA, promoting a dependency mentality in Micronesia. The Micronesian leaders in the Congress of Micronesia began to analyse this situation and debated how to move away from an economic model based on dependency on the USA.⁵² The debate on dependency rose to prominence in the

⁴⁶ Sapuro Rayphand, *Interview* in Guam, December 13, 2013. Sapuro was a teacher during the Trust Territory days from the 1960s-2010. He holds a Masters degree in education from the University of Guam, yet he was paid less than his American counterparts.

⁴⁷ Bethwel Henry, the first Speaker of the Congress of Micronesia, *Interview*, June 28, 2012.

⁴⁸ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p.336.

⁴⁹ Personal experience.

⁵⁰ Personal experience. On Lekinioch people would work like husking coconuts while the radio was playing. When the news was on they would turn the radio off and had conversation. See details in Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p. 32.

⁵¹ Personal experience, traditions still prevailing and development remained neglected.

⁵² Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp.158-159.

1970s as a backlash against free market development agendas espoused in development agencies dominated by US-trained economists.⁵³ Dependency connotes a state of helplessness where Micronesians could no longer take care of themselves. This welfare theory was connected to the free feeding program (Mortlockese called *aikiu*) provided by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for schools, the elderly, and assistance after natural disasters.

There was also debate over the relative nutrient value of the food obtained from the USDA program, versus local produce. For example, new categories of diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and other illnesses arose that were believed to be associated with eating white rice, bleached flour, Spam, chopped meat, powdered milk, and shortening cooking oil. Some communities provided their schools with local agricultural products to supplement the rice and canned meat to increase the nutritional value of the meals. Many leaders such as Julio Akapito, a former congressman from Chuuk, challenged the intention of the free family lunch program as “racially and culturally arrogant” and self-serving.⁵⁴ He declared that he had lived in Chuuk, “for the past thirty years (and had) never gone hungry”.⁵⁵ He questioned the point of the free lunch program and the other welfare programs. Julio had his own critics since the USDA food continued to flow to the islands.

However, dependency theory, like colonialism, was a theory developed by outsiders and exported to the islands without any understanding of the structure of Micronesian economic life that had sustained them throughout history. Self-reliance is fundamental to the islanders’ survival and continuity. It is argued that Micronesian economic conditions should not be measured in terms of a foreign economic yardstick, as it has no bearing on Micronesian social reality.⁵⁶ Micronesians valued connection with their extended families; their total network output in terms of their wealth and mental health is not measureable. It should be remembered that Micronesians have been governing themselves for centuries without outside help and to be labelled as dependent on the USA is at best ignorant, ethnocentric, and arrogantly self-serving misinformation.⁵⁷

⁵³ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp.158-159.

⁵⁴ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, p.178.

⁵⁵ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, p.178.

⁵⁶ Personal view. See also Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp.1-2.

⁵⁷ Hezel, *Strangers in Our Own Land*, p. 274.

Independence on the Horizon

Despite the rising tension between Micronesian leaders and the USA over the political future of the TTPI, the indigenous population continued to transform their communities using their own historical skills in order to adapt to the new order emanating from beyond the horizon. Traditional socio-economic practices remained the mode of production to maintain the internal coherency of the communities. Few were willing to wait around, depending on “handouts”. Some Micronesians set up businesses, trading western goods in exchange for traditional goods. For example, copra was traded for items like cigarettes, candies and canned food.

However, their small businesses could not earn enough profit because of the inherent “*tumunu fengen*” (sharing and caring) principle embedded in Micronesian cultural structure.⁵⁸ For example, new businesses called *koap* (the co-ops) emerged, but after a few years in operation they collapsed as profits, and also goods, were withered away by relatives of employees calling on traditional obligations to receive goods without payment.⁵⁹ Interest in the products sold also faded as islanders preferred to fish and farm within the customary practises. This basic reality of doing business in Micronesia continues to be ignored by overseas’ consultants who regularly recommend beefing up the private sector as the best means for economic growth in FSM. Foreign consultants need to alter their foreign perspective of mass consumerism to understand Micronesian modes of production and thus survival. In that way both sides can collaborate to undertake new forms of community production to enhance islanders’ lifestyles with due consideration also towards business principles of credit ratios, capital reserves and earning sufficient to cover costs and reinvest into improving the enterprise.

Micronesians who embraced Americanisation argued that it was better to live under the USA because it offered a convenient way of living where individuals did not have to be accountable to the clanship system.⁶⁰ Individuals could acquire wealth and one could live as luxuriously as desired. The new wealth can ease the burden of the backbreaking

⁵⁸ Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity*, p. 62; Other leaders like Hans Williander advocated a small scale business model based on cultural roots. See Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, p.137.

⁵⁹ I witnessed two three co-ops virtually disappear within a year of inception. The co-ops ranged from financing of housing to small groceries stores. One of the stores was passed on to a new management but also folded within a year. It was called the Lazarus phenomena (referring to the Biblical person brought to life again by Jesus). The store went bankrupt instead. The question was why were the co-ops never profitable? Was it due to culture or lack of management skills? See Francis X. Hezel, “Is That the Best You Can Do? A Tale of Two Micronesian Economies: The Plea to Grow Economy”, MicSem <<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/economic/frames/taleoftwofr.htm>>

⁶⁰ Ignacio Soumwei, Teacher at Mortlocks Junior High School (MJH), 1974. He also coined the term chocolate cookie Micronesian.

traditional work like climbing breadfruit trees, farming in muddy taro patches, and the desire to have Western style housing, which could withstand the seasonal typhoons, for example.⁶¹ However, after a few years the Western houses collapsed due to lack of maintenance and USDA food ceased. Islanders suffering these experiences had to revert back to the traditional system as the best option for survival and continuity.⁶²

The debate between anti- and pro-independence movements could be heard during *sotang* (village meetings). For example, after typhoon Pamela hit the Mortlocks in 1976, USDA food and other forms of assistance were distributed to all the islands. On Lukunor during *sotang* many complained about the rice and chopped meat, which made them hungrier than before eating just a few hours after meals; the food also were considered tasteless.⁶³ Many preferred agricultural tools such as mattocks, shovels, bush knives, and fishing equipment since they had more application in sustaining local production. To others the USDA assistance portrayed a life that Micronesians could enjoy without exerting too much work on their land.⁶⁴ High school teachers and their students also engaged in the debate regarding the pros and cons of independence stemming from the dependency issue.⁶⁵ The ongoing debate led to the emergence of the fringe group labelled as “chocolate cookie Micronesians” referring to those individuals who looked like Micronesians, but think like Americans.⁶⁶

For those with higher salaries in the port towns, American materialism became very attractive. The power of money was limitless to them. It could buy whatever one desired including land and human labour to work the land while they lived in the new luxury. They had acquired the taste of immediate gratification from the power of money. Many from the new generation also fell into this economic trap since they had never experienced the harsh realities of life, for example, under the Japanese rule.⁶⁷ They wanted the USA to protect the islands from slipping into the hands of the new “evil empire” the USSR.

⁶¹ Ignacio Soumwei, Teacher at Mortlocks Junior High School (MJH), 1974. Personal experience after typhoon Pamela struck the Mortlocks in 1976.

⁶² Ignacio Soumwei, Teacher at Mortlocks Junior High School (MJH), 1974. Personal observation after typhoon Pamela struck the Mortlocks Islands in 1976.

⁶³ Personal experience during village *sotang*: See Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp.65-66; William Lessa, “The Social Effects of Typhoon Ophelia (1960) on Ulithi” in *Peoples and Cultures of the Pacific*, The Natural History Press, NY, 1968, p.59.

⁶⁴ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp.172-177.

⁶⁵ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p.318. Secondary schools like Xavier and Truk high schools were engaged in the debate for a new political status for Micronesia.

⁶⁶ Ignacio Soumwei; Teachers and village elders during *sotang*.

⁶⁷ Ignacio Soumwei; Teachers and village elders during *sotang*.

Security was foremost in their calculations and they wanted the best of the American system. This group of people was referred to as the sell-out or *sokon remirika*.”⁶⁸ They dreamt of an American life style, but had no means to convince others about how to achieve it. They included many politicians, returned college students, teachers, and the few petty capitalists who owned small retail outlets in the port towns.⁶⁹

Other supporters of the money economy who came from the outer islands flocked to the port towns to find work and send goods to their families on their home islands. This group contributed to the increased population in the port towns. For example, in Ponape, the capital Kolonia had a population of less than 2000 in 1963 and in 1970 it grew to 2,800.⁷⁰ In Moen, Truk the population was 5687 in 1967 and grew to 9562 in 1973. Yap (Rull-Weloy) had 1,741 in 1963 and increased to 2,482 in 1973.⁷¹

The Road to Independence

After the long decades of what many called the era of benign neglect, the issue of independence went public, driven by the leaders of the six districts who came together to create the Congress of Micronesia. The leaders petitioned the High Commissioner to create a nationwide forum where the Micronesian leaders could meet and discuss matters of concerns with respect to their islands. At first the USA was reluctant to recognise the Micronesians request. However, with constant pressure the USA relented and created the bicameral Congress of Micronesia consisting of twelve Senators in the Senate and twenty-one members in the House of Representatives.

The Congress became the voice of the people, signalling a new era in Micronesian political history. One of its prime purposes was to accelerate the process of decolonisation. This happened in 1966 when House Joint Resolution No.47 was adopted expressing that, “this generation of Micronesians should have an early opportunity to determine the ultimate constitutional and political status of Micronesia”.⁷² In 1967 the US President sent a proposal to the US Congress to study

⁶⁸ Ignacio Soumwei and his cohorts referred to “sokon remirika” as consisting of many of the students who studied in the USA, anti-Japanese people, and many big business owners who favoured the islands to be a part of the USA. John Haglelgam, *Interview* at the College of Micronesia, Palikir Campus, January 11, 2011. John gave example of pet projects by Congressmen and their cohorts who diverted funds into erection of sea walls but pocketed the rest. Many leaders benefited from the TTPI purse and advocated close relations with the USA.

⁶⁹ Personal experience regarding relatives who operated small stores to earn few dollars.

⁷⁰ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, p. 323.

⁷¹ Gale, *Americanization of Micronesia*, p.128.

⁷² *Summary of the Political Status Talks of the Joint Committee on Future Status*, Congress of Micronesia, Saipan, 1973, p. 1.

the future of the TTPI on how “to consult with the people of Micronesia”.⁷³ The US Congress did nothing. It made no recommendations and did not investigate the issue as requested by the Congress of Micronesia. The US Congress set up a committee and that committee produce no tangible result.

In response the Congress of Micronesia adopted Senate Joint Resolution No. 25 creating its own future political status without input from the United States. The resolution demanded the following: (1) that Congress of Micronesia develop a process for political education in Micronesia; (2) that Micronesians choose their future political status; (3) that Micronesians undertake “a comparative study of how Puerto Rico, Western Samoa, Cook Islands and other territories have achieved their self-government, independence, or other political status”.⁷⁴

The USA, having been pressed by the COM to come to the negotiating table, reluctantly participated in a series of negotiations with the Micronesians. Four options for Micronesians were proposed by Micronesian representatives during these negotiations: (1) independence; (2) free association; (3) integration with another sovereign power and (4) the status quo. The US in response offered commonwealth status, which meant becoming an unincorporated territory of the USA.⁷⁵ This USA counter-proposal failed on the grounds that it did not meet Micronesian expectations. The US was also criticised by the UN for not honouring the Trusteeship agreement, which allowed the people of the Territory the choice of determining their own means of self-determination. Micronesians were politically astute and angrier than Americans realized.⁷⁶ The central question thus became what sort of political independence would be suitable for all six districts. However, on top of this the Micronesian leaders also proposed that status of Free Association as an alternative to independence. The USA found this proposal acceptable, but operated on the notion that the Compact of Free Association should be negotiated on USA terms.

These issues were the subjects of the constitutional convention (ConCon) that brought the political and traditional leaders to Saipan in the early 1970s.⁷⁷

⁷³ *Summary of the Political Status Talks*, p. 2; Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p. 52.

⁷⁴ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp. 136-139.

⁷⁷ The issue was which type of government best suited the people of the TTPI

The Constitutional Convention

The Constitutional Convention brought together the educated elite and the traditional leaders of the six districts. It was a forum designed for Micronesians to discuss their political future. Norman Meller, the main advisor to the ConCon, described it as the forum where the TTPI leaders gathered to demonstrate both their differences and similarities. For example, the Palau delegation came to the ConCon with an arrogant attitude, demanding certain conditions and proclaiming that if the ConCon disagreed, then Palau would pull out from the ConCon.⁷⁸ Palau demanded that the capital should be situated in Palau, and each state should be allowed to withdraw from the proposed federation after 8 years of joining. Furthermore, Palau envisaged a more decentralised form of federation, where the central government acts only as a facilitator and that foreign aid should be divided equally between the states.⁷⁹ Palau's proposals were virtually ignored by the rest of the delegates in the ConCon.⁸⁰

Norman Meller also noted that Palau's position seemed to signal that the ConCon was destined to fail. Palau's aggressive stance related to their belief that Palauans were more sophisticated and politically astute than other Micronesians.⁸¹ The Palauan delegates also believed that they would be better off economically without the proposed federation. A proposed joint venture between Japan and Iran to build oil storage superport in Palau played a major role in their decision to separate. The Palauans thought that they would pocket millions of dollars from this port and did not want the other states to share in this benefit.⁸²

The Mariana Islands and Marshallese delegations had their own reservations about the federation. Like Palau, they considered that their own interests might not necessarily benefit from federation. The Mariana Islanders greater exposure to the outside world motivated them to continue the consumer culture and cash economy they had become accustomed to. Some viewed their position as being politically engineered by a minority elite.⁸³ The Marshallese on the other hand had experienced the economic benefits arising from the US military installation in Kwajalein. The chief architect of the

⁷⁸ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, pp. 351-353.

⁷⁹ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, pp.176-177.

⁸⁰ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, pp. 184-188.

⁸¹ Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, pp. 351-352.

⁸² Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, pp.175-176.

⁸³ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp. 220-221.

Marshallese separation movement was Amata Kabua, one of the paramount chiefs of the Marshall Islands.⁸⁴

Opposing factions of pro-federation and separatists dominated the political landscape in Palau, the Marshalls and the Mariana. Their own referendums were decisively in favour of separating from the TTPI. The disintegration of the TTPI was blamed squarely on the USA by some observers as it allowed the other districts to negotiate for separate political status contrary to the UN imposed requirement of deciding the political future of a single entity.

The delegations from the conservative states of Chuuk, Pohnpei and Yap, who favoured retaining much of their traditions while joining the international community of nations, would not allow the fragmentation to sway them from their objective of achieving an independent nation for the rest of the Micronesians. Their leaders were instrumental in ensuring they remained as a political unit. For example, the first President, Tosiwo Nakayama and his political cohorts, were instrumental in uniting the leaders of Yap and Chuuk. Nakayama belonged to an extended clan network, which spanned from Chuuk to the outer islands of Yap. Many of the islands are part of the traditional *sawei* system.⁸⁵

The only obstacle to the formation of the Constitution was to fulfil the requirement in the proposed Constitution that three fifths of the voters in a majority of the remaining four states approved the Constitution. Since half of the districts had already left the TTPI, a district of Kosrae was created for this legal requirement to occur and thus allowed the majority of the states to adopt the Constitution by referendum. That is, three fifths of the voters in the majority of the remaining four states approved the Constitution.⁸⁶ These remaining districts of the TTPI, now called the states of Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap and Kosrae became constituted as the Federated States of Micronesia in accordance with the majority vote of the people.⁸⁷ In 1979 the FSM declared itself an independent constitutional government. The Constitution as carried by the majority requirement affirmed the historic commitment of the common wish of the people to live in harmony with each other; it also legitimized the FSM as a new self-governing nation.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp. 220-221 and 226.

⁸⁵ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia* pp. 25-27.

⁸⁶ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, pp. 329-330.

⁸⁷ Meller *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, pp. 329-330; Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*; p.174.

⁸⁸ *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article I.

The Debate Over Disintegration

Some questions still remain unresolved about the legalities of US conduct surrounding the disintegration of the TTPI. In particular the question of whether the USA violated the terms of the Trusteeship agreement. The terms of Article 83 of the UN Charter as applied to a Strategic Trust Territory gave the Security Council: (1) All functions of the United Nations relating to strategic areas, including the approval of the terms of the trusteeship agreements and of their alteration or amendment which shall be exercised by the Security Council; (2) the basic objectives set forth in Article 76 shall be applicable to the people of each strategic area; (3) The Security Council shall, subject to the provisions of the trusteeship agreements and without prejudice to security considerations, avail itself of the assistance of the Trusteeship Council to perform those functions of the United Nations under the trusteeship system relating to political, economic, social, and educational matters in the strategic areas.⁸⁹

There is a strong case for arguing that USA's conduct contradicted the terms of the agreement. For example, section 1 of Article 83 indicated that any "alteration or amendment to the TTPI agreement shall be exercised by the Security Council". The USA did the opposite by facilitating the disintegration of the TTPI into four independent parts, Palau, Marshal Islands, the Northern Marianas Islands, and the FSM, without the Security Council's prior approval. Its conduct constituted an alteration of the TTPI agreement because it engaged in negotiations with districts within the TTPI rather than engaging with the TTPI representatives as a whole.

The fragmentation of the TTPI supported by the USA, violated the United Nations precedent in relation to the doctrine of territorial integrity of a non-self-governing territory.⁹⁰ One issue was whether the FSM was required to continue its negotiations with the USA given the TTPI had disintegrated. The FSM was no longer a constituted part of the Trust Territory as agreed to under the terms of the trust territory agreement.⁹¹ In hindsight perhaps the FSM could have taken a different path to ensure the realization of its economic goals, under a different political arrangement with or without the USA.

Anthropologist Robert Kiste argued that there were no specific procedures regarding the termination of the TTPI agreement and in the absence of such both the FSM and the USA ended it on their own terms. An alternative view is that the principles within UN

⁸⁹ *The UN Charter*, Article 83.

⁹⁰ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p. 325.

⁹¹ Personal argument.

Resolution 1514 (XV) could have been applied to terminate the TTPI agreement,⁹² rather than a simple agreement between the USA and Micronesia. The TTPI agreement specifically granted the Security Council the final power to terminate the agreement. One can also question why Micronesia was subject to USA approval to terminate the TTPI given the TTPI as originally formed no longer existed.

It can also be argued that there was a material breach of the trusteeship agreement on the part of the USA. That is because it failed repeatedly to satisfy the terms, which were to develop the islands economically and politically towards self-government or speed up the process of independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Trust Territory and its people before the Constitutional Convention.⁹³ Furthermore, the chief advisors to the Micronesian ConCon, Norman Meller, and Leonard Mason, an American anthropologist with deep knowledge of the islands, also advised the USA not to divide up the trust territory, as it would contradict the UN agreement. They were ignored.⁹⁴ As Petersen stated, “At the time of the 1975 ConCon the US was engaging in political status negotiations with individual (districts) as a means of overcoming the Congress of Micronesia’s resistance to American demands for the permanent control over Micronesian lands”.⁹⁵ Perhaps the USA should not shoulder all the blame since the Micronesian leaders should have been aware of the issue and responded to it legally. However, the above exercise demonstrated the contradictions in international law whereby the most powerful can ignore or manipulate the UN to suit their own purposes.⁹⁶

Independence and the Constitutional Convention

Various issues concerning independence continued to be raised during the Constitutional Convention. Questions such as what sort of independence was appropriate to the new State of the Federated States of Micronesia. What government structure should the leaders strive towards since Micronesia is a diverse collection of islands and cultures? While the Micronesian leaders debated the issues, the USA was

⁹² Ian Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law (5th edition)*, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 170-173. Resolution 1514 referred to the former South West Africa now Namibia which involved the Security Council to apply the provisions of the said resolution in relation to Article 83 of the UN Charter. The same principle could have also applied to the case of Micronesia.

⁹³ Summary of the Political Status Talks of the Joint *Committee on Future Status, Congress of Micronesia, Saipan*, 1973, p.1.

⁹⁴ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p. 324.

⁹⁵ Glenn Petersen, “Federated States of Micronesia” in *Pacific Ways: Government and Politics in the Pacific Islands*, edited by Stephen Levine, 2009, pp.47-48.

⁹⁶ Contradictions in international law the superpowers always circumvent.

studying the Compact. It emerged that there was a conflict between the proposed Compact of Free Association and the newly designed Micronesian Constitution.⁹⁷

The Compact, as perceived by the USA, should have overriding power over the Constitution.⁹⁸ That is, the Constitution should literally restate the language of the Compact with the Constitution having a secondary role. This position was seen by Micronesian leaders as a deliberate approach by the USA to undermine the sovereignty of the FSM people.

To respond to this USA tactic, the president of the ConCon Tosiwo Nakayama cleverly said, “it will be best to draft a constitution without knowing what is in the draft compact, because in working on the constitution, we are dealing with the interests of the people and we should not be concerned with trying to protect the interests of (an outside power) in Micronesia”.⁹⁹ The draft Constitution was sent to Washington DC for American comments. The USA responded by citing the inconsistencies between the draft Constitution and the Compact. The USA insisted on the Compact as having an overriding power in relation to the Constitution.¹⁰⁰ The Micronesian negotiators responded by saying that, “while the Constitution may be inconsistent with (the USA) interpretation of free association, it is not inconsistent with (the Micronesians)”.¹⁰¹

It took many more negotiations before the US finally succumbed to the fact that Micronesian independence could no longer be denied. Faced with this prospect, the US opened new rounds of negotiations focusing on the “indefinite denial clause” of the Compact giving the US unilateral power to refuse any third party from accessing FSM territories for military purposes as well as being responsible for the defence of the FSM.¹⁰² The FSM interpretation of the Compact is that US rights derive from the Compact and end when the Compact ends. The concept of the indefinite denial clause contravened FSM’s sovereignty as upheld in its Constitution.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp. 25-27.

⁹⁸ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p.p. 317-318

⁹⁹ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, pp. 317-318.

¹⁰⁰ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, pp. 317-318.

¹⁰¹ Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p. 319

¹⁰² Who are the Micronesian enemies that the USA wants to defend the FSM against?

¹⁰³ The “indefinite denial clause” in the Compact pertains to the principle of a permanent agreement between Micronesia and the US. Changes within could be negotiated, but the Compact remains as is. It is based on the philosophy that USA security in the Northwest Pacific should be protected forever; Stewart Firth, “Sovereignty and Independence in the Contemporary Pacific” in *The Contemporary Pacific*, Vol.1 No. 1&2, Spring/Fall, pp.79-83.



Figure 13: This is the flag of the Federated States of Micronesia. The stars represent each of the states. The blue colour represents the Ocean from where Micronesians derived their identity. Courtesy of the FSM government.

The Fifteen Year Life of the Compact

The FSM stood firm on refusing to recognize the indefinite denial clause, but agreed to an alternative where the denial clause would only survive the duration of the fifteen-year life span of the Compact and the Compact would be subject to renegotiation thereafter, depending on future circumstances. The negotiators did so because they saw that the Compact needed to be signed quickly so that the US could terminate the UN agreement.¹⁰⁴ The FSM could then join the UN in order to forge diplomatic relationships with other nations for the purpose of enhancing its economic and political position.

The Compact was then framed on the basis of a bilateral treaty with the USA providing \$3.4 billion dollars to the Micronesian government in exchange for the US being granted the right to exercise power to deny third party states access to the islands if such access was contrary to US interests.¹⁰⁵ The Compact was renegotiated in 2001 and was extended to 2023. However, the debate still remains as to whether the “deniability clause” has any validity after 2023.

Despite arguments by political scientists that the FSM has lost its sovereignty because of the security arrangements under the Compact, this dissertation argues that legally the denial clause does not and cannot usurp the FSM Constitution. The Constitution’s

¹⁰⁴ The Compact needed to be signed quickly to trigger the process of recognition by the international community. Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, pp. 317-318.

¹⁰⁵ *The First and Amended Compact of Free Association combined*
<<http://www.fsmita.com/world/micronesia.htm>>

preamble states that, “We, the people of Micronesia, exercising our inherent sovereignty, do hereby establish this Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia”.¹⁰⁶ Article II, Section 1, then reaffirmed Micronesian sovereignty by declaring that, “This Constitution is the expression of the sovereignty of the people and is the supreme law of the Federated States of Micronesia. An act of Government in conflict with this Constitution is invalid to the extent of conflict”.¹⁰⁷ Therefore an act of Congress, including the signing of a treaty, cannot be contradictory to the Constitution and if it is, then the act of Congress is made without power to the extent of that conflict with the Constitution. Congress is not empowered to sign away FSM sovereignty.

The USA accepted the Compact as “entered into force on November 3, 1986...based upon the International Trusteeship system of the UN Charter, and in particular Article 76 of the Charter...the people of the Federated States of Micronesia...and in the exercise of their sovereign right...have adopted a Constitution appropriate to their particular circumstances...(however) the people of the Federated States of Micronesia have and retain their sovereignty...”¹⁰⁸ Title One, Article I, Section 3, then reaffirmed such by stating that, “The people of the Federated States of Micronesia, acting through the Government established under the Constitution, are self- governing”.¹⁰⁹ It is thus clear by comparing the language of the two documents that sovereignty rests in the hands of the Micronesian people. Nothing can usurp such a power except by constitutional means—that is by a referendum.¹¹⁰ In sum the US has recognised that the Constitution of the FSM is superior to that of the Compact.

The Micronesians accelerated the process of approving the Constitution by sidelining the debate on the Compact. The people approved the Constitution in 1979 by a referendum without delay. Tosiwo’s tactic worked as the Compact would then be derived from the Constitution. The USA had no choice, but to acknowledge the superiority of the Constitution over the Compact.¹¹¹

The Compact has been perceived as creating problems for the nation, which is affecting the bilateral relations between the FSM and the USA. At the heart of the problem are the issues of sovereignty and dependency. Since the implementation of the amended Compact in 2001, Micronesian observers and leaders have expressed their

¹⁰⁶ *The Constitution of the FSM, Preamble.*

¹⁰⁷ *The Constitution of the FSM, Article II.*

¹⁰⁸ *The Compact of Free Association as Amended*, 2003, Palikir, Pohnpei, p.55

¹⁰⁹ *The Compact*, Title I, Article I Section III, p. 55.

¹¹⁰ *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*, Article XIV

¹¹¹ Gale, *The Americanization of Micronesia*, p. 241

disappointment in the way the USA has been meddling with the internal affairs of the FSM. For example, the Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO), which consists of 5 members (3 of whom are Americans), is now becoming the “fourth branch” of government by controlling how Compact funds are to be utilised. An example of JEMCO’s heavy-handed tactics was the US-delayed implementation of the education sector grant to Chuuk State in 2008 when Chuuk disagreed with the United States on priority needs in its education system. The USA refused to budge when the Micronesians vehemently objected to the decision made by JEMCO, asserting that as the Compact funds are paid for by US taxpayers, it has the right to interfere in FSM internal affairs to ensure the funds are implemented as allocated.¹¹² The FSM Congress has questioned this approach but their concerns have so far been ignored. By setting up an absolute three-to-two US majority, JEMCO has effectively become a tool for the United States to pressure the FSM government to conform to US demands or suffer the financial consequences of not doing so.¹¹³ The issues surrounding the Compact are yet to be settled before 2023 when USA financial assistance to the FSM dwindles.

Discussion on the Compact and Economic Development

It can be argued that the Compact should be viewed only as a transitional vehicle or an experimental tool to allow the islanders to measure the success and failure of the various economic strategies advocated by foreign experts.¹¹⁴ Others see the Compact funds as rent money paid by the USA for wanting to maintain the islands exclusively as part of its security zone in the Pacific-Asia region. As such Micronesians then have the right to use the rent money as they desire because such a rental is an implicit

¹¹² Carl Apis, *Personal Comm*, FSM Foreign Affairs, Nett, Pohnpei, 2012. I also discussed the issue with Epel Illon who was one of the negotiators from the FSM side. He noted that the right for the USA to interfere in the implementation of the Compact funds in the FSM was agreed to from the start. The USA left the FSM to do the implementation for the first fifteen years. However when the Compact was amended the USA saw the need to interfere to ensure the funds are appropriately implemented. He also said that it was agreed to that the US Department of Interior was granted the right by the FSM to audit the funds in the FSM. That means the question of sovereignty includes the right of the FSM to forgo some of its rights, according to Epel Illon, *Interview*. Also see *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article IX, Section 4, for approval of treaty-delegating power to another sovereign power. This section seems to be deliberate when the Compact and the Constitution were drafted and negotiated concurrently in the 1970s and 1980s.

¹¹³ Joint Economic Management Compact (JEMCO) has 2 members from the FSM and 3 from the USA. The FSM always is outvoted on issues the American members do not want to implement.

¹¹⁴ The Compact is considered as a transitional economic vehicle to test whether or not it would satisfy Micronesian development circumstances. For brief discussion see John Fairlamb, Office of Compact Negotiations U.S. Department of State Compact of Free Association Negotiations: Fulfilling the Promise, A Paper Originally Presented to Island State Security Conference Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies Honolulu, June 2001 <http://www.fsmgov.org/comp_per.html>

acknowledgement of sovereignty.¹¹⁵ The supporters of this position have questioned the mindset of the tenant in believing they have the right to tell their Micronesian landlord how to spend the rent money. They argue that Micronesians should stand up and move forward in devising their own economic plan by paying lip service to the USA's economic strategies.¹¹⁶ Why should they be pushed by someone else's demand?¹¹⁷

Since the termination of the Trust Territory in 1986, FSM's development programs have been restricted by the terms of the Compact. The Compact's main premise is to stimulate economic activities on a scale where Micronesia would be able to sustain itself economically in the future. In the first fifteen years of the Compact the USA provided around \$1.5 billion to the FSM Government.¹¹⁸ The funds were used for general government operations in health and education, economic development, capital improvements, and other special purposes.¹¹⁹ Sixty per cent of this amount was spent on operational costs and the remaining forty per cent was spent on capital investment.¹²⁰ Micronesians looked forward to an improvement in their living standards as measured by economic indicators. It was likened to the *lerak* season, the season of plentiful food, where money was in abundance. The perception was that Micronesians were bathing in a new wealth and not worrying too much about the future, since the money is coming from somewhere else. However, this ray of economic sunshine was grossly insufficient for its stated purpose of establishing an independent economic base beyond the Compact era for this nation of over 103,000 citizens whose multi-island distribution made the provision of services problematic. For example, the sixty per cent earmarked to implement needed infrastructure at the state and municipal government levels, were siphoned off by politicians and their cohorts. Congressional appropriations were used for pet projects¹²¹ to appease their electorates by providing them with community halls, motorboats, fishing gears, cars, and foods. Municipal monies were squandered on

¹¹⁵ James Naich, *Sustaining the Spirit of the Compact Partnership: Comments on the US Report on the First Five Years of the Amended Compact of Free Association*, Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia, Washington DC, October 2010, pp.1-10.

¹¹⁶ The USA has been suggesting various models of economic development and none has been very successful. The debate continues as to why? See The Micronesia Forum, Hanlon p.p, Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp.146-148.

¹¹⁷ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp.146-148.

¹¹⁸ *Report to Congress on the Compact of Free Association With the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) For Fiscal year 2006*, Washington DC, p.3.

¹¹⁹ *Report to Congress on the Compact of Free Association*, p.3.

¹²⁰ Francis X. Hezel, "Rough Seas Ahead: The FSM Economy During Compact II, *Micronesian Counselor No.44*, January 2003, <<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/counselor.htm>>

¹²¹ William Cook, U.S Department of State Diplomacy in Action: Executive Summary, p.8. <<http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2014/228576.htm>>; Henry Asugar, *Congress Bill No. 13-76, A Bill For an ACT*, "To grant amnesty to certain classes of people who are now being accused, or yet to be accused, or who have been prosecuted of certain types of crimes against the sovereignty of the Federated States of Micronesia but not yet convicted, and for other purposes", January 20, 204.

meaningless projects that could not be sustained like purchasing inter-island ferries that were not seaworthy. Many spent monies just on looking for boats outside the FSM where it was called holiday trips.

In 1987 the amount of Compact money equated to around \$1351 per person per annum. In 1993 this figure decreased to around \$996 per person per annum. The decline in relative per capita funding has continued in subsequent years. It is predicted that per capita funding will decrease to \$562 by 2023 under the amended Compact.¹²² These figures did not mean much to many citizens, who did not benefit directly from the pet project appropriations. Each congressman and cohorts control the funding of “infrastructure projects” in their states and municipalities. This has led to allegations of corruption. In the mid-2000s, investigations and subsequent criminal action was taken against three powerful congressmen who were later convicted of corruption. They have since been pardoned and they are permanently banned from running for Congress. Other politicians who were also considered corrupt escaped prosecution and continued to run for the FSM Congress. Corruption continues to be a major problem as discussed by the Chuuk Reform Agenda public forum,¹²³ as well as in the report by the Office of Public Auditing (OPA) in 2014.¹²⁴ To deny that corrupt practices continue, the Speaker of Congress responded to the OPA report by stating that the auditor intentionally engaged in politics and recklessly misled the public.¹²⁵

The issue of corruption raises the question of how Micronesians will sustain themselves with the decline in living standards after 2023. It is within this context that the USA has encouraged the FSM government to fill in the shortfall by tapping into different revenue sources outside of the Compact. The FSM is engaging with China to explore opportunities to expand its revenue base. It is unclear as to whether China will be receptive to FSM’s overture. If so can China match the magnitude of assistance by the USA under the Compact? Otherwise it is not known how the \$600 million shortfall will be met.

¹²² David Gootnick, Micronesia Faces Challenges to Achieving Compact Goals: Testimony Before the Insular Affairs Subcommittee, House Resources Committee, U.S. House of Representatives: Attachment III: Estimated FSM Per Capita Compact Grant Assistance, Fiscal Years 1987-2023:United States Government Accountability Office: Washington DC, June 10, 2008.

¹²³ Chuuk Reform Agenda, <<http://www.chuukstate.org/>>; CFSM Public Projects and Social Programs: 1.6 Million Approved Without Clear Criteria Audit Report Number 2015-04. <<http://www.fsmopa.fm/files/onpa/2014/Audit%20Report%202015-04.pdf>>

¹²⁴ Vid Raatior, “Audit Confirms That FSM Congress Misuse of 1.6 millions of Public Funds,” <<http://www.chuukstate.org/audit-confirms-that-fsm-congress-misuse-1-6-million-of-public-funds/>>; Ibid, Audit Report 2015-04.

¹²⁵ The Fourth Branch, Speaker Halbert Responds to Audit Report, <<http://www.tfbmicronesia.com/articles/2015/2/16/speaker-halbert-responds-to-audit-report>>

The pessimists perceive the Compact as nothing more than a vehicle for facilitating the US recolonization in Micronesia. Although the objectives of the Compact are well intended at least at the theoretical level, its application can be seen as undermining FSM's sovereignty.¹²⁶ Some observers have claimed that the USA is using the Compact as a power by proxy through a backdoor approach to reassert its dominance over the FSM.¹²⁷ For example, JEMCO, which has a majority of American members, dictates how the funds should be used despite Micronesian objection. JEMCO is effectively pressuring the FSM to conform to an American vision as to the FSM's future, with the implicit threat of withholding funds should its objectives be ignored. For example, President Mori objected to two resolutions by JEMCO that demanded "an incremental (of) \$700,000 annual reduction of Compact funding to the College of Micronesia (COM) beginning in 2013 until the College's funding is peaked at \$1 million per year...and by 2023 approximately \$25 million will have been subtracted" by this change. The same resolution rejected \$8.4 million for improving infrastructure for the College for the next four years.¹²⁸ JEMCO demanded a reduction in scholarships by \$1.8 million, which would wipe out an amount of \$18 million over the remaining Compact period.¹²⁹ In the state of Chuuk, the government asked JEMCO to spend money on improving the physical structure of classrooms, but the USA said that improving teacher qualifications along with the purchase of new textbooks was more important and therefore should be the priority for new expenditure.¹³⁰ This has created friction between Chuuk and JEMCO, leading to a resurfacing of old colonial tensions regarding America's paternalistic attitude towards Micronesians. In my interview with the current chairman of the Chuuk Education Committee, Mr. Walter, said, "let the USA push its own agenda as we know 2023 is not that far" away.¹³¹ These measures exemplify the extent to which the USA is prepared to demonstrate its power over Micronesian financial affairs under the Compact, and the shortsightedness of this policy in not anticipating local opposition. The FSM President has demanded that JEMCO

¹²⁶ JEMCO's is controlled by the American members often made decision based on the perception of what development ought to be. Fabian Nimea, *Federated States of Micronesia, National Assessment Report Support for the Formulation of National Sustainable Development Strategies in the Pacific Small Island Developing States*, June 2006, p.34

¹²⁷ A popular issue is often raised in the public as to whether or not the FSM experiencing the same treatment by the USA like in the Trust Territory days?

¹²⁸ FSM Information Office, "President Mori Expressed Serious Concern Over JEMCO Draft Resolutions, Press release No.0911-04, Palikir, Pohnpei, September 6, 2011, p.1.

¹²⁹ FSM Information Office, "President Mori Expressed Serious Concern Over JEMCO Draft Resolutions, p.1

¹³⁰ Fabian Nimea, *Federated States of Micronesia National Assessment Report*, p.35.

¹³¹ Inos Walter, *Interview on the Internet* April 3, 2013. His comments alluded to 2023 when the FSM will be changing the way it conduct business internationally.

formally and publically consult all funded public programs before implementing new measures that could be seen as being against Micronesian interests. Unfortunately the President's request has been ignored. The Micronesian leaders can protest against JEMCO's action, however, legally there is nothing much they can do if JEMCO's decision as to the "best interests of Micronesians" differs from the Micronesian leadership.¹³² It remains to be seen what the FSM leaders will do in the few years left before 2023.

Supporters of the Compact welcomed US interference as it stops the misspending of funds earmarked for relevant sectors such as the private sector, social programs and public infrastructure.¹³³ The USA is taking its promise seriously in auditing the Compact funds, and will continue to withhold funds until the FSM puts its house in order. For example, according to David Gootnik, Director International Affairs and Trade, United States Government Accountability Office, indicated that "prior to the annual awarding of compact funds, the FSM must submit a development plan that identifies goals and performance objectives for each sector"¹³⁴ such as education, health, and private and capacity building programs. There have been repeated failures on the part of the FSM government to comply with JEMCO's demands. Again Gootnik claims, "Numerous factors have negatively affected the use of the compact grants for FSM development goals. The FSM's grant allocations have reflected compact priorities by targeting education, health, and infrastructure. However, as of April 2008, the FSM had completed only three infrastructure projects and approximately eighty-two percent (80%) of the \$82.5 million in infrastructure funds remained unexpended. Lack of progress in this sector can be explained by entrenched disagreement between national and state governments over infrastructure priorities, problems associated with the project management unit, and Chuuk's inability to secure land leases".¹³⁵ Other problems with the FSM's development programs include the inflated public sector, limited tax revenues, reliance on external finance assistance, which amounted to 65 per cent of FSM's gross domestic product (GDP), lack of expertise, and lack of

¹³² Fabian Nimea, FSM National Assessment Report, pp. 34-35.

¹³³ Francis X. Hezel, How Much is Enough? US Aid and Free Association, MicSem Articles, <<<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/economic/frames/howmuchfr.htm?http&&&www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/economic/howmuch.htm?http&&&www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/economic/howmuch.htm>>

¹³⁴ David Gootnick, Director International Affairs and Trade, *United States Government Accountability Office Testimony Before the Insular Affairs Subcommittee, House Resources Committee, U.S. House of Representatives Compact of Free Association Micronesia Faces Challenges to Achieving Compact Goals*, June 10, 2008, p. 6.

¹³⁵ Gootnick, *United States Government Accountability Office*, p.3.

development in the fishing and tourism sectors.¹³⁶ It seems as though Gootnick, the Asian Development Bank and their cohorts look at FSM's future as particularly dim especially in light of the eight years period remaining until 2023. It remains to be seen whether the Compact will be renegotiated for a third time and if not what new form of engagement will develop between the FSM and USA.

The optimists perceive the Compact as a means of maintaining a very important connection between the two countries. The FSM should not "cut its nose off to spite its face", even though the Compact's goals have not been met.¹³⁷ The Compact, so they argue, is a safety valve; it has assisted in the building of the nation's political and economic capacity despite the slow progress. The FSM's association with the USA has brought stability to the nation and regional security. Furthermore, the Compact provides access for Micronesians to live, work, and seek education in the USA. It has provided excellent opportunities for increasing numbers of Micronesians who migrate to the USA. An offshoot of this has been the economic benefit provided to Micronesian families through remittances.¹³⁸ The reduction in FSM citizens' living standard under the Compact has caused massive emigration to greener pastures in the USA. However, the question is if the Compact restricts emigration in the future, what opportunities will there be in the FSM¹³⁹ for its citizens who have come to expect a more Western life style.

Dependency and the Economy

Dependency theories are many and dominate the public debate. Advocates of dependency theory characterize Micronesians as relying too much on the USA's generosity. It perpetuates the previous era of USA influence and stifles the urgency of seeking alternative funding sources.¹⁴⁰ Dependency is seen as synonymous with the Compact and necessary to enable Micronesians to survive. There has been much statistical data generated over the past 20 years that indicates that billions of dollars have been poured into the islands without a significant return as judged by the economic

¹³⁶ Gootnick, *United States Government Accountability Office* p.6; Asian Development Bank (ADB), *Federated States of Micronesia Partnership Strategy* <<http://www.adb.org/countries/micronesia/strategy>>

¹³⁷ Nimea, *FSM National Assessment Report*, p.p.34-35.

¹³⁸ James Naich, "Sustaining the Spirit of the Compact", p.5.

¹³⁹ Petersen, "Routine Provocation and Denial From the Tonkin Gulf and Hainan to Kyoto and the Pacific Islands" in *Security in Oceania in the 21st Century*, edited by Erie Shibuya and Jim Rolfe, 2003, pp. 210-212; Lorin Robert also confirmed Peteresen's point on FSM as the "hole in the donut" referring to its strategic value, *Interview*, January 7, 2011, Palikir, Pohnpei.

¹⁴⁰ It is known to many Micronesians that "Dependency" is not a real economy.

modelling favoured by economic statisticians.¹⁴¹ There have been many workshops and economic summits where there have been discussions about economic strategies that could be appropriate for Micronesia, however, positive results have yet to be produced.

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Part of the FSM's unsuccessful economic development has been directed against Micronesians themselves. This has stemmed from the reports regarding Micronesian leadership which said that top Micronesian leaders are not well equipped with economic knowledge to competently develop Micronesia successfully.¹⁴³ For example, during my fieldwork and discussions on the Micronesia Forum, many participants blamed the Congressmen and the executive of misappropriating the Compact funds to serve their own interests.¹⁴⁴ Others blamed the lack of expertise on the part of Micronesians to scrutinize¹⁴⁵ advice provided by foreign consultants who have also benefited from the Compact funds. It is also based on the belief that the FSM continues to emulate economic strategies that are unreachable. That is because growth is limited due to the small domestic market to build up business, limited access to large markets, transport costs to market, and limited stock output to satisfy demands of big markets.¹⁴⁶ Some observers seriously question whether the FSM negotiators involved in Compact negotiations undersold the islands, as the funding level was only enough to build a skeleton infrastructure.¹⁴⁷

Micronesians have seen the rise and fall of all the colonial regimes and the various business models brought to their shores. Businesses were set up for the benefit of outsiders. To the local people it is a cycle of economic antagonism in view of island lifestyle wherein outsiders exploited the lands, the sea, and at the same time use islanders as labourers to benefit outsiders. Scores of consultants descended on the nation proposing new ideas of what economic development ought to be. The ideas

¹⁴¹ *Personal Comm*, with many citizens during field research in 2010-2013.

¹⁴² Nimea, *FSM National Assessment Report*, pp.13-14.

¹⁴³ Chuuk State Reform Audit Confirms that FSM Congress Misuse \$1.6 Million of Public Funds <<http://www.chuukstate.org/audit-confirms-that-fsm-congress-misuse-1-6-million-of-public-funds/>>

¹⁴⁴ Bill Jaynes, "Cabinet Member to Stand Trial on FSM Criminal Charges", *Kaselelthie Press*, April 13-26, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ Gootnick, *Director: International Affairs and Trade: Compact of Free Association: Testimony Before the Insular Affairs Subcommittee, House Resources Committee, U.S. House of Representatives: United States Government Accountability Office, Compact of Free Association: Micronesia Faces Challenges to Achieving Goals*, GAO, June 10, 2008, pp.1-4; Bill Jaynes, "GAO Official Says Compact Impact reporting is not Reliable or Consistent", *Kaselelthie Press*, Kolonia, Pohnpei, 29, 2013<<http://www.kpress.info/>>

¹⁴⁶ Nimea, *FSM National Assessment Report*, p. 17.

¹⁴⁷ There is a section of the public criticising the FSM negotiators for accepting the composition of the JEMCO when it was initially created. Nimea, *FSM National Assessment Report*, pp. 34-35.

ranged from cooperative models, to the creation of both public and private corporations, to individual trading stores, and partnerships with outsiders. The main emphasis is on stimulating the private sector; a familiar concept deeply entrenched in the idea of capitalism. It should be remembered that Micronesians continue to practise their traditional economic mode of production, which has served them well for centuries and they have used the introduced foreign economic system to enhance their lifestyle and continuity.

Globalization

Globalization is becoming the new economic mantra in the FSM yet the term is elusive because it connotes many things, which islanders need to comprehend before acting upon it. Globalisation can be defined in many ways, but this chapter adopts the idea that it is “a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology. This process has effects on the environment, on culture, on political systems, on economic development and prosperity, and on human physical wellbeing in societies around the world”¹⁴⁸.

Micronesian leaders believe that opening up the FSM to global influences is the economic road to prosperity. However, there are dangers in rushing to embrace this idea. For a start, the FSM must diligently study what globalization entails and what consequences it may have on Micronesians.¹⁴⁹ For example, what are the costs and benefits of integrating Micronesia into the global structure? Will the benefits outweigh the costs? Historically, Micronesians have always looked beyond the horizon as their world is connected within a large region with its own mini-globalization before colonisation. The region had its own communication and trade routes where goods and ideas were often exchanged.¹⁵⁰ This historical past must be understood to enhance Micronesian engagement with each other and outsiders. For example, is globalization a new idea or a re-conceptualised notion of the colonial past dressed up in modernity? What historical lessons can islanders learn from the past in terms of colonization before jumping on the globalisation bandwagon? This question may enable Micronesians to

¹⁴⁸ Op. Cit, Levin Institute.

¹⁴⁹ The debate is ongoing and discussion can be found in the Micronesia Forum <<http://www.micronesiaforum.org/>>

¹⁵⁰ Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p.3.

frame their future because globalization has the propensity to erode island lifestyle faster than one can imagine.¹⁵¹

It is no longer a secret that the world is divided unevenly in terms of economic distribution of wealth. To the West, which incorporates elements of Marxism, social democracy, and the free market systems, the best solution for advancing the standard of living is through the creation of wealth measured by individual and corporate acquisition of materials and money.¹⁵² This is possible by the utilization of the capitalist mode of production wherein individuals pursue their own objectives at the expense of the masses. Profit is the main goal and success is measured by the size of individual bank accounts.

Human exploitation is part of the system.¹⁵³ For example, in order to maximize profit, the few owners of wealth will require more workers to create more wealth for them. In return workers received wages from the owners for their labour. This created a cycle of dependency between the wage earners and the owners of wealth.¹⁵⁴ As owners became richer they gained control of the labour market, which the wage earners were dependent upon. Since the owners control the labour market, they are also selective as to who and how many workers they will employ or make redundant¹⁵⁵. This is the heart of the idea of dependency, not the kind that characterised by Micronesians relationship with Americans through the Compact. The issue is that workers in the capitalist system will not survive without wages when the labour market suddenly collapses because of the downturn in the economy as has been seen before throughout the 20th Century and early 21st Century.

This is not the case in the traditional Micronesian economic model as the *ainang* system is the basis of individual survival. Micronesians are well aware of the changing circumstances in their islands caused by the introduction of capitalism. The USA will continue to inject more funds into the FSM under the Compact to buy Micronesian

¹⁵¹ Globalization is an ongoing debate in the FSM especially among the educated elite. See *Micronesia Forum* for some of the current debates <<http://www.micronesiaforum.org/>>

¹⁵² James M. Boughton, "Globalisation and the Silent Revolution in the 1980s" in *Finance and Development*, March 2002, Volume. 39, No.1
<<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2002/03/bought.htm>>

¹⁵³ Chrisoula Andreou, *Philosophy of Economics: In Defense of Marx's Account of the Nature of Capitalist Exploitation* <<https://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Econ/EconAndr.htm>>

¹⁵⁴ Albert Einstein, "Why Socialism"? in *Monthly Review an Independent Socialist Magazine*, 2009, volume 61, Issue 01(May) <<http://monthlyreview.org/2009/05/01/why-socialism/>>

¹⁵⁵ Art Perlo, *Capitalism and Unemployment*, October 17, 2011 <<http://peoplesworld.org/capitalism-and-unemployment/>>

loyalties to follow American economic practices.¹⁵⁶ The key question is how does one measure the standard of living under the Compact compared to the traditional model that has been the provider of Micronesian continuity and predated colonialism.

Micronesians are separate and independent category of people different from Americans as based on their deep historical connection and unique identity. The answer lies in Micronesian understanding of their history and how to exploit the lessons of their past to engage in the larger sphere of international relations which is the subject of subsequent chapters.

Conclusion

Independence from colonial rule did not come easily to Micronesians. Autonomy and respect for the sovereignty of local social and political entities has always been part of Micronesian history, prior to, during, and after colonisation. Successive poorly resourced colonial regimes left many communities beyond administrative centers relatively free to pursue their own priorities and objectives, which continued to revolve around *ainang* solidarity and support. Micronesian's political astuteness and negotiation skills saved them from falling into the USA attempt to retain control without thinking through the legal dilemmas this posed to US international credibility. This was expressed by the FSM leaders in ensuring that the Constitution was ratified first so as to lessen the relative position of the Compact and thereby promote Micronesian priorities ahead of American interests. Upon the ratification of the Constitution, the USA's argument could no longer be sustained legally as the Constitution rules supreme. It was already established as the law of the land and no other set of documents could usurp its power. This was clearly explained to the US by the FSM leadership, led by Tosiwo Nakayama, who later became the first President of the FSM. Today Micronesians continue on their historical path to ensure the existence of their identity and continuity. These are essential to the management of superpower rivalries in FSM's territory, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁶ Discussion with many Micronesians who asked about the \$2.5 Billion USD provided to the FSM under the Compact as yet the FSM remains economically stagnant. Why so they wonder?

CHAPTER 5: ENGAGEMENT WITH CHINA AND THE USA AS FELLOW NATION STATES

Introduction

Independence has meant that the Federated States of Micronesia's external relations have moved from essentially bilateral relations with colonial powers to multilateral relations with the international community at large. The world's two largest economic powers, which are also military superpowers, China and the USA, are potentially heading towards a battle for influence in the western Pacific. The challenge FSM now faces is managing and engagement with the USA and China under the new global regime in order to promote its own interests. Building upon the argument in earlier chapters of this dissertation, this chapter will demonstrate that FSM has handled this challenge in a skilful and considered way that has served its best interests.

Far too often scholars have falsely argued that since the colonization period, islanders have been largely lost to the overwhelming forces of outside powers, almost to the point of extinction.¹ For example, it has been claimed that local religious practices have been absorbed into Christianity, traditional social organization has transformed into a Western style of government, codified laws have replaced common laws, and land has been appropriated by a capitalist mode of production. A litany of misguided comments have also added to this misinterpretation, suggesting that Micronesians have succumbed to the "first taint of civilization" which reduced them to "strangers in their own land" because they can no longer withstand "the winds of change" in their "broken canoe" as a result of the four successive waves of "civilizations" brought by outsiders.² These assertions of collapse fail to address the question of how one then accounts for the rich and dynamic Micronesian cultures which continue to survive over the hundred years of colonisation until today?

¹ Hanlon, "Micronesia: Writing and Rewriting the Histories of a Nonentity", pp. 1-3; Roland W. Force, and Maryann Force, "Political Change in Micronesia", in Roland W. Force (ed.), *Induced Political Change in the Pacific: A Symposium*, (Honolulu, 1961), 1-16, 8-10. Glenn Petersen, "Lesson Learned", pp. 45-63.

² The titles are from Francis X. Hezel's books, and Ann Nakano's who wrote *Broken Canoe*. The titles connote ethnocentrism as still part of Micronesian scholarly discussion.

The FSM Under Spotlight

The FSM is shaping up as the next potential flashpoint in China-US relations in the northwest Pacific because of its strategic position in the Pacific-Asia region. Currently, it is going through an intense economic and political transition in preparation for the scaling down of the Compact of Free Association (Compact) in 2023. The Compact is a bilateral treaty between the FSM and the US forged as a result of their common historical experience and interests post-WWII. It was first implemented in 1986, renegotiated in 2001 and extended to 2023. The US provided just over USD \$7 billion to the FSM Government in return for the US having exclusive use of the islands for military purposes.³ Already the US is scaling down its Compact assistance. As a consequence, questions have been raised about FSM's ability to survive economically in the post-Compact era. China, some observers argue, is likely to partially fill the gap by increasing its engagement with the FSM due to its own interests in the region.⁴

Located in close proximity to Asia, the US military base in Guam and the Kwajalein Missile Range in the Marshall Islands, the FSM must tread cautiously in its foreign relations because of its geopolitical position, and exercise due diligence. In order for FSM to maintain its position of strategic importance it must learn from the lessons of WWII and balance the presence and scope of influence of each of these superpowers in this region. China's increasing presence in the FSM raises concerns over China's long-term objectives according to some political observers. The FSM has stated on many occasions that its relationship with China is based purely on economic terms. Notwithstanding this, the USA may decide to invoke its right to deny certain external relations under the Compact if it perceives its interests are under threat.⁵

The undermining of Chinese activities in FSM has already been attempted. For example, China proposed to loan the FSM government \$22 million to fund the overhaul and refurbishment of Micronesian fishing facilities. A US fishing company called

³ Paul D'Arcy, "The role of the Tuna Fishery in the Economy of the Federated States of Micronesia", *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, Vol. 21(3), 2006, pp.75-87. Also in my interview with FSM Government officials they accepted the fact that the US will use the Compact to curtail FSM in dealing with countries that threatens US' interests in the FSM. An incident occurred when a Congressional resolution expressed FSM interest for only China to fish in FSM EEZ. It was speculated that the USA expressed its displeasure to the resolution and as a result the FSM Congress quiet down. Additionally, the public at large complained about the resolution especially the supporters of the USA, both in FSM and the USA.

⁴ My work in Congress in 2010 and subsequent interviews with many of the Congressmen and the subsequent adoption of resolutions (will be discussed in this chapter) are good indications of positive engagement with China based on Micronesians' own understanding of the new global order. Lorin Robert, *Interview*, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Palikir, Pohnpei, January 7, 2012.

⁵ Carl Apis, *Pers Comm.* on the Internet July 3, 2012.

Oceania then attempted to undermine this offer. In its letter of memorandum to the FSM Congress, Oceania complained about China's move to overhaul the fishing facilities in the nation. The letter said in part that the PRC (Peoples Republic of China) fishing infrastructure proposal "does nothing to create additional industries, promote economic projects, or even guarantee a sustainable revenue basis. The difference between [the] Chinese proposal and Oceania's detailed comprehensive plan is the latter includes university economic study...Oceania's plan also comes with its own financing; there are no loan requirements or guarantees incumbent upon the FSM".⁶ It went further in asserting that, "PRC participates only in projects that benefit (itself); and maintain its interests only to the extent the needs of PRC is met."⁷ The question of what benefits FSM will continue to receive once loan monies have been exhausted is unclear.⁸ As yet, there has been no government-to-government confrontation between China and the USA over the FSM.

The FSM and Pacific Region

In 2007, University of the South Pacific academic, the late Ron Crocombe, noted the fast-growing influence of Asia in the Pacific and strongly suggested that Pacific nations should take serious notice of this influence.⁹ The rippling effect of the economic influence wielded by emerging powers like China, Japan and South Korea would mean positioning Pacific interests to optimise engagement with these countries.

Political scientist Terence Wesley-Smith has observed that China's growing engagement in the Pacific region is part of its own rise as a new economic and political global power, reaching out to the developing world with similar initiatives in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.¹⁰ It is a new opportunity for Pacific Island nations to explore new possibilities instead of being trapped in an old system, which often undermines their own interests.¹¹ The Pacific consists of many independent nations, and they possess the right to exercise their choice as to which countries they engage with.¹²

⁶ Bob D. Rosen, *Oceania Memorandum* to Speaker of the Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia, Isaac Figir, January 7, 2011, p. 2; Nick Solomon, Chief Executive Officer, National Fisheries, *Interview*, Kolonia Pohnpei, January 17, 2011.

⁷ Rosen, *Oceania Memorandum*, p. 2; Solomon, *Interview*, January 17, 2011.

⁸ Rosen, *Oceania Memorandum*, p.3; Solomon, *Interview*, January 17, 2011.

⁹ Ron Crocombe, *Asia in the Pacific Islands: Replacing the West*, IP publication, USP, 2007, pp. 213-220.

¹⁰ Wesley-Smith, "A Regional Power by Default", in *China in Oceania: Reshaping the Pacific?*, edited by Terence Wesley-Smith and Edgar A. Porter, Berghahn Books, USA, 2010, pp.60-61.

¹¹ Smith, "A Regional Power", pp. 60-61.

¹² Peter Christian, "Patriot Games: Island Voices In a Sea of Contest" in *Pacific Institute of Public Policy*, Discussion Paper No.21, June 2012, p. 2.

The FSM is conscious of other Pacific Island nations' engagement with China and the resulting re-configuration of Oceania's collective engagement with the rest of the world. For example, former US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, during her trip to the Pacific Forum meeting in the Cook Islands in 2012, said that the United States would remain active in the South Pacific for the "long haul" as the region is big enough for all interested parties, including China.¹³ Beneath this diplomatic rhetoric lies genuine American concern about the threat of China's growing influence in the Pacific. Australia and New Zealand's heavy-handed response to the Fijian coups made the island nation move closer to China. It is seen as an example of US apprehension about the Pacific becoming a non-Western lake.¹⁴ Moreover, Clinton's comments were one-sided as the tone did not include the perspective of the Pacific nations and neglected to consider how Pacific Island nations play an important role in maintaining stability in their own region.¹⁵

The FSM is learning from other Pacific Island nations to better position itself in regard to relations with China without offending the USA. Its diplomatic relations with China have been maintained for more than twenty years, while its long-standing relationship with the USA is under review. Its relationship with China has been a subject of debate over the years, with critics claiming that China is using the FSM as part of its moving frontier into the northwest Pacific. This is not so according to supporters of China as the FSM has a Constitution that defines its foreign policy; China is a part of this policy by Micronesian design.¹⁶ Moreover, the FSM has been benefiting from China's assistance, so this relationship remains firm particularly in view of the scaling down of the USA's Compact monies since 2003. Many Micronesians are suspicious of China's foreign aid programs; they perceive China as slowly gaining ground in the Northwest Pacific.¹⁷ The USA may exercise the option under the Compact to unilaterally dislodge China should it perceive China as a threat. However, such an action would raise the issue of violating

¹³ Jenny Hayward-Jones, "China No Rival in the Battle for Island Influence", May 17, 2013 <<http://m.lowyinstitute.org/publications/china-no-rival-battle-island-influence>>

¹⁴ Fergus Hanson, "Don't Ignore the New Big Player in Fiji" in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 9, 2008, p.p. 1-2 <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/05/08/1210131163040.html>>

¹⁵ Jenny Hayward-Jones, "Big Enough For All of us: Geo-strategic Competition in the Pacific Islands", May 16, 2013 <<http://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/big-enough-all-us-geo-strategic-competition-pacific-islands>>

¹⁶ *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article II, Section 1.

¹⁷ Bill Jaynes, "FSM Congress Pushes For Exclusive Fishing Rights: Single Foreign Country Would Have Access to Grounds", in *Kaselehlle Press*, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, July 26, 2010, p.1.

the supremacy of the FSM's Constitution,¹⁸ and relevant international laws of non-interference in the sovereign affairs of other nations.

Contact with China

FSM's initial contact with China dates back to the days when it was still part of the USA-administered Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). The traditional inhabitants had waited patiently for the transition to independence following the decolonization of the other trust territories around the world. However, the USA was not in a hurry to forgo its interests in the islands. China, as a member of the Security Council, was aware of the USA's tactical move in slowing down the process of terminating the trusteeship agreement.¹⁹ In an effort to gain support in the Security Council for the purpose of ending the Trusteeship Agreement, the FSM contacted Chinese diplomats in the UN. To demonstrate its support for FSM's anticipated independence, China invited the leaders of the FSM to Beijing for political discussions and to initiate diplomatic relations. A delegation from the FSM headed by its first President, Tosiwo Nakayama, and the first Secretary of the Department of External Affairs (now Department of Foreign Affairs), Andon Amaraich, visited China in the early 1980s to gain more knowledge about China as a developing nation.²⁰ According to former FSM President John Haglelgam, the USA was not fully aware of all the discussions that had taken place between the FSM and China.²¹ At the time, Haglelgam perceived the trip as a sign of the FSM leaders' growing confidence to engage in the international arena.

The Road to Control

The transition to independence remained slow as the USA was still studying the details of its relationship with the FSM under the Compact. However, China and the USSR reminded the USA of its obligations under the Trusteeship Agreement to honour the demands of the FSM people to pursue their goal towards self-determination. Again, Haglelgam noted; "the Americans and Europeans were too legalistic in their approach

¹⁸ *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article II, Section 1.

¹⁹ John Haglelgam, Professor at the College Of Micronesia and the second President of the FSM, who had direct contact with Chinese diplomats during his term in Congress and as the second President, *Interview* Palikir, Pohnpei, January 11, 2011. Epel Ilon, *Interview*, Special advisor to SBOC and former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Palikir, Pohnpei, January 11, 2011. Lorin Robert, *Interview*, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, *Interview* in Palikir, January 7, 2011.

²⁰ Haglelgam, *Interview*.

²¹ Ilon, *Interview*; Robert, *Interview*.

to strictly follow the text of the decolonisation process”²² which would take time to unfold, whilst China often opted for more flexible diplomatic dialogue in dealing with the issue. China's support for the FSM struck a chord with Micronesian leadership. In response, the FSM pledged to honour the “One China Policy” when it became a member of the UN in the future.²³ Since then the relationship between both nations has been built on trust, respect, and mutual cooperation.²⁴ The One China Policy remains at the heart of the diplomatic relationship between the FSM and China.

China's presence in Micronesia, however, has lately been under scrutiny by critics. They question China's sudden interest in the FSM, a region it never showed interest in before. They speculate that China is positioning itself to become a major influence in the Pacific area.²⁵ China's intention, according to these critics, is to create a climate of mistrust, which is likely to evolve into a new Cold War front in the Pacific. This China-phobia may be a new phase in Micronesian politics, but many see it as a continuing legacy of the Cold War period when the former USSR and the USA were at each other's throat, politically.²⁶

In the case of the FSM this underlying fear of China is externally derived; it is connected to the colonial history of the islands. This antagonism towards China is part of a concerted effort by the former colonial powers of the Pacific, who remain leading aid donors, to continue their dominance in the Pacific, including FSM. Micronesians were indoctrinated to support the Western style of political philosophy through their successive Western colonisers and the entrenchment of Western governance.²⁷ However, when one takes a closer look at Micronesia, one can discern some socialist features present in the island's traditional superstructure. For example, the inter-island extended family, which has socialist elements based on the principle of *eaea fengan* is the foundation of Micronesian continuity.

The undermining of socialism as alien to island social superstructure has been facilitated by Christian and colonial agencies. These twin forces attempted to dissuade

²² Haglelgam, *Interview*; Illon, *Interview*; Robert, *Interview*.

²³ Haglelgam, *Interview*; Illon, *Interview*; Robert, *Interview*.

²⁴ Haglelgam, *Interview*; Illon, *Interview*; Robert, *Interview*.

²⁵ Rachel Reeves, “China Not Threatened By U.S. Presence At Pacific Forum Vice Foreign Minister Clinton's Visit Not Attempt to Override Influence”, *Pacific Scoop*, Sept. 2, 2012
<<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/>>

²⁶ Personal experience when growing up in the FSM, Communist countries like Russia and China are frowned upon by many Micronesians as untrustworthy and should be feared because of its undemocratic practises.

²⁷ Gonzaga Puas, “Is China a Threat in the Pacific? The Case of Micronesian Experience”, Paper delivered in the Pacific Islands Political Science Association, Apia, Samoa, 2012, p. p. 20-21.

islanders from getting too close to socialism.²⁸ Islanders were taught that democracy, and Christianity was precursors for a tranquil world instead of the antagonistic and godless socialism. They were also taught that any doctrine that undermined the fundamental principles of democracy and Christianity is inherently bad and not conducive to the sustainability and survivability of Micronesians. For example, the author remembers his high school years when the discussion on the future political status of the FSM was in full swing in the Mortlocks. The students were taught that if they rejected American democracy an evil empire would take over the islands and impose its evil wrath on Micronesians, worse than the Japanese during WWII. This was supported by the Catholic faith, whereby the fear of socialism was propagated as naturally evil because of its opposition to the biblical scriptures. Non-Christians would be slaughtered by the socialist states should they allow the socialist ideologies to be propagated on their islands.

Anti-Chinese sentiment is part of the contemporary socialism-versus-capitalism debate in the FSM. For example, many Micronesian soldiers who serve in the US military strongly support American democracy and have spoken against China's growing influence in the nation.²⁹ They claim that the FSM is treading on dangerous ground in allowing Chinese influence to rise in the region and is undermining US interests in doing so. To date however, the Chinese have been extremely cautious about challenging or upsetting US interests in the Western Pacific. In the author's interview with the Chinese ambassadors to the FSM in Pohnpei in 2011 and 2013, they both emphasised China's support for the FSM as a developing country, like China.³⁰ China wants to learn more about Micronesians as a people: their cultures and history.³¹ On these points they expressed their frustration at not being able to locate written materials written from a Micronesian perspective.³² They also emphasised the point that they are not in the FSM to antagonise the USA, but to assist the FSM in whatever capacity possible.³³ However, it remains to be seen at what point the USA will object to the diplomatic relationship

²⁸ Florian Seady, *Church Song: Moun Russia*, Satawan Island 1974. Crocombe, *Asia in the Pacific*, p.340.

²⁹ Haglelgam, *Interview*. Professor Haglelgam explained that the Micronesians who joined the US military forces are the promoters of USA in the FSM. He referred to them as the fifth column, the Micronesian superpatriots of Americanism. No statistics are available yet on the number of FSM citizens in the US armed forces.

³⁰ Yongjin Zhang, Ambassador of China to the FSM, *Interview*, July 13, 2013, Palikir, Pohnpei. Zhang Weidong, Ambassador of China to the FSM, *Interview*, Palikir, Pohnpei, 19 January 19, 2011. Both Ambassadors commented on the Compact of Free Association as a major part of FSM foreign policy.

³¹ Zhang, *Interview*; Weidong, *Interview*.

³² Zhang, *Interview*; Weidong, *Interview*.

³³ Zhang, *Interview*; Weidong, *Interview*.

between Micronesia and China, especially in relation to “the end” of the current Compact in 2023.

This dissertation argues that Micronesians have always adapted successfully to foreign influences, and have managed and lessened the impact of such incursions through a number of strategies. Currently, the emergence of the Internet and globalisation have enabled FSM citizens to learn more about the outside world for the purpose of contextualising such externalities from their own perspective. Secondly, Micronesian educational institutions have heralded a new period of intellectual discourse to respond effectively to the major foreign players who are trying to control their islands. At the forefront of this discourse are the challenges the FSM needs to consider in relation to its future development in search of an economic model that complements its present social order. Thirdly, the FSM diaspora has been growing tremendously over many decades and their economic knowledge of the outside world has contributed enormously to the development of the FSM. Fourthly, the FSM has a Constitution, which outsiders need to respect if they want to retain their interests in FSM's jurisdiction. Finally, under its Constitution the FSM has the right to forge relations with any country of their choosing, including China.³⁴

The FSM and USA Connection

The FSM-USA connection was forged post-WWII when the USA took control of the islands as the last colonial master. As noted in the last chapter, the USA consolidated its power by registering the islands in the UN as the US strategic Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). The TTPI was the only trust territory placed under the jurisdiction of the Security Council, where the USA holds veto power, because of its strategic value to the USA pursuant to Chapter XII, Article 83 of the UN Charter.³⁵

The process of independence took a long time as the parties negotiated between themselves in their efforts to get for the best possible outcomes for their respective interests. The key issue for Micronesians was why was FSM press for political independence first while the economy was so poorly developed?³⁶ In weighing the options, the leaders decided that the economic part should be negotiated under a Compact of Free Association and kept separate from political issues. Political

³⁴ *The Constitution of the FSM.*

³⁵ *The UN Charter*, Article 83 of Chapter XII

³⁶ Congress of Micronesia, it was a response to USA foot dragging approach towards Micronesian independence. Political freedom was a priority. See Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, p.95.

independence was therefore sold to the Micronesian people and was accepted in 1979. However, formal termination of the UN TTPI agreement awaited US signature in the Security Council.

The UN Trusteeship agreement came to an end in 1986 and immediately the Compact was formalised, although not without controversy.³⁷ At the heart of this ongoing controversy is the “denial clause”, which is interpreted as providing the USA with permanent and exclusive rights to use the islands for military purposes. Many supporters of this interpretation confirm this view claiming that although the financial assistance ends in 2023, the security provision remains in American hands indefinitely. This particular view has been rejected by most FSM government figures in interviews conducted during my fieldwork as without basis and thus invalid. The “denial clause”, they argued, only survives for the duration of the Compact. Furthermore, the Compact can be unilaterally terminated as subject to Title IV, Article 4, Sections 441, 442 and 443.³⁸ However, section 443 must be scrutinised closely because it requires a constitutional process (i.e. a referendum) for final termination of the Compact by the FSM.³⁹ This place the burden of terminating the Compact on the Micronesian side as holding a referendum is costly and time-consuming to administer across all the islands. It is obviously designed to make the Compact difficult to be terminated by the FSM. However, the USA cannot prevent the FSM from terminating the Compact by other means if provided for by the Micronesian Constitution; it has overall power in the governance of the FSM, not the Compact, as subject to Article 2, Section 1.⁴⁰

Dishonouring the Compact

A political outburst by Senator Dan Inouye from the state of Hawai’i, and his supporters in the US Congress, exemplified the continuing paternalistic attitude of many US officials towards Micronesians. In 2012 the Senator wrote a letter to the US Secretary of State expressing dissatisfaction over the influx of FSM immigrants to Hawai’i and Kansas as well as the territories of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. The senator claimed that immigrants from the FSM were draining the states’ and territories’

³⁷ Lorin, *Interview*.

³⁸ *The Compact of Association As Amended*.

³⁹ *The Compact of Association As Amended*.

⁴⁰ Personal interpretation as a lawyer; Robert, *Interview*. Robert said that the Compact derives from the Constitution as so it is secondary to the Constitution. There has been an ongoing debate that only the financial parts of the Compact are subject to renegotiation. The military part of the Compact remains in perpetuity.

financial resources despite the Compact impact money to compensate their costs.⁴¹ This has led to tension and resentment between the new immigrants and many US citizens of the states referred to above. Senator Inouye was advocating that all Micronesians should be screened before entering the USA to determine whether or not they are able to support themselves independently. However, such a demand ignores a basic feature of Micronesian social organisation – they are not individualistic; they rely on the support of the family system so that individual assessment at entry masks kin support networks in place upon arrival. Such demands also ignore the tax Micronesians inject into the US economy. As taxpayers, they are surely entitled to receive medical attention and social welfare.

The Senator's letter was also sent directly to the President of the FSM. His action was seen by both the FSM people and leaders alike as disrespectful, and lacking the courtesy to uphold international protocols. For example, Senator Inouye is not the President of the US, and he should not have dealt directly with the head of the State of the FSM. Inouye's action was perceived as nothing more than a continuation of the belittling of Micronesian leaders as being inferior to their US counterparts from the TTPI days.⁴² This attitude needs to be curtailed by the top level of the USA government as the Compact was negotiated between the sovereign governments of the FSM and the USA, not with the states of Hawai'i and others.⁴³ Micronesia is an independent nation with its own identity. It is not part of the USA's domestic jurisdiction.

The FSM's Congress Resolution no.17-61⁴⁴ was tabled in response to the US Senate Committee for Appropriations, chaired by Senator Inouye, directing the Department of Homeland Security to implement "all legally allowable grounds of inadmissibility under the Compact which apply to nationals from the (FSM)...to establish...advanced permission for prospective travellers from the (FSM) to enter the United States."⁴⁵

⁴¹ Giff Johnson, Carreon, Bernadette, "Micronesia's Access to U.S Under Review" in *Marianas Business Journal*, July 18, 2011, posted on Micronesian Seminar <<http://www.micsem.org/forum/comments.php?>>; Giff Johnson, "US Lawmakers Seeks Limit on Micronesian Migrants: Marshall Protests, Cite Compact Terms", *Marianas Variety*, May 23, 2011 <<http://pid.eastwestcenter.org/purport/2011/May/05-23-01.htm>>; Bill Jaynes, Senate Appropriations Committee Takes Concrete Steps to Begin Barring Some FAS Citizens From Entry to the United States", *Kaselehlie Press*, September, 19, 2011 Vol. 11 Issue No. 21, p.1.

⁴² Reactions to Inouye's comments were widespread on the *Micronesia Forum* <<http://www.micsem.org/forum/comments.php?>>; Also Inos Walter, Chuuk State Legislator, *Interview*, December 10, 2012.

⁴³ Walter, *Interview*.

⁴⁴ *FSM Congress Resolution, No. 17-61*. It was introduced by Senator Peter Christian of Pohnpei to terminate the Compact by 2018.

⁴⁵ Bill Jaynes, "Senate Appropriations Committee", p.1.

Many Micronesians regard Senator Inouye's action as the branding of FSM citizens as terrorists.

The FSM response to Senator Inouye's letter was swift and deliberate, with strong overtones expressing FSM's dismay towards the US Senator. The new generation of FSM leaders like David Panuelo responded to the letter expressing outrage about Inouye's insensitivity in treating Micronesians as scapegoats in Hawai'i, which could impact on the historical relationship between the USA and the FSM. In his letter, Congressman Panuelo (and like-minded colleagues) stated that, "the U.S. can no more unilaterally create a bottleneck for FSM citizen's right to freely travel and work in the United States, than the government of the FSM can revisit the defence provisions of the Compact. Aren't the veto powers over the waters and air space of the FSM that the two countries agreed to in the Compact a security and strategic lifeline for the U.S.A?"⁴⁶

These comments were supported by many leaders in the nation, and also reflected the sentiment of educated members of the public. For example, the Micronesia Forum website received many comments from the FSM diaspora reminding the USA that if it changed the terms of the Compact unilaterally to the detriment of FSM citizens, the FSM might also terminate the USA's interests in its territorial jurisdiction.⁴⁷ The political tension between the two opposing Congressmen may produce negative consequences, but in a way it effectively demonstrated the extent to which the FSM has come of age and is able to deal with matters of international concern on its own terms. Congressman Panuelo represents a new style of leadership that puts the FSM first, and sincerely articulated the Micronesian perspective without fear of political repercussions.⁴⁸

Two resolutions introduced by the two longest serving FSM Congressmen, Peter Christian and Dohsis Halbert, provided good examples of how the FSM was considering terminating the Compact. Christian's Congressional Resolution No.17-61 asked the FSM President to terminate the Compact earlier, in 2018 rather than 2023, while Halbert's Congressional⁴⁹ Resolution No. 16-89 proposed China to be the sole country to fish in the FSM's EEZ. In return FSM sought higher fishing fees from China

⁴⁶ David Panuelo, "Where Did Our Real Friends Go?", *Honolulu Civil Beat*, April 5th, 2012 <<http://www.civilbeat.com/posts/2011/08/29/12669-where-did-our-real-friends-go/>>

⁴⁷ Panuelo, "Where Did Our Real Friends Go?", <<http://www.civilbeat.com/posts/2011/08/29/12669-where-did-our-real-friends-go/>>

⁴⁸ Personal reflection based on analysis of his background as he held many positions in the FSM and Pohnpei Governments.

⁴⁹ Jaynes, "Senate Appropriations Committee", p.1.

and that its fishing vessels would also effectively patrol its EEZ, and arrest ships not displaying the flag of China.⁵⁰

China also expressed its interest in redeveloping the FSM fishing facilities as well as increasing the numbers of its fishing vessels in FSM waters through a \$30 million soft loan and other assistance packages aimed at filling the gap in FSM's fishing capacity. As noted previously, an American company, Oceania, torpedoed the plan.⁵¹ The USA objected to the resolutions and cautiously reminded the FSM about its obligations and duties under the Compact. The response from the FSM Congress was that the resolutions were economic in nature, and fell outside the realm of the Compact's "denial clause" thereby rendering the USA's claim as being without legal effect.⁵² The above concerns have prompted the FSM to seriously reconsider its foreign policy in adherence to the Compact.

The action of the US-dominated Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO) has also raised questions about the USA's intent to continue to honour the Compact in good faith. Critics perceive the Compact as nothing but a vehicle for facilitating re-colonisation of Micronesia.⁵³ JEMCO, which has a majority of American members, dictates how funds should be used despite Micronesian objections. In the state of Chuuk, for instance, the government asked JEMCO to spend money on improving the physical structure of classrooms, but the USA said that improving teacher qualifications along with the purchasing of new textbooks was more important and therefore should be the priority for new expenditure.⁵⁴ This has created friction between Chuuk and JEMCO, leading to a resurfacing of old tensions regarding the US exhibiting a paternalistic and arrogant attitude by asserting that it knows what is best for the Chuukese community. In my interview with the current chairman of the Chuuk Education Committee, he said; "let the USA push its own agenda as we know 2023 is not that far." ⁵⁵

As the financial agreement under the Compact is dwindling, the FSM has to find ways to sustain itself. The US Ambassador to the Marshall Islands, Martha Campbell, noted earlier in 2010 the grim reality wherein she stated that there is a "dangerous belief that

⁵⁰ Hers, US Congress Pushes For limits On FAS Entry to the US. April 2011. <www.micronesiaforum.org>

⁵¹ Hers, *US Congress Pushes*, <www.micronesiaforum.org>

⁵² Sitan, *Interview*.

⁵³ Peter Christian, *Congress Resolution No.17-61* <<http://www.fsmcongress.fm/>>

⁵⁴ Report of the First Quarterly Meeting of the Chuuk Advisory Group on Education Reform, Weno, Chuuk, February 20, 2013, p.p., 3-16.

⁵⁵ Walter, *Interview*.

the U.S. will extend more aid when the current Compact of Free Association grant package ends in 2023.”⁵⁶ She further claimed “that there is no intention on the part of anyone anywhere in the government of the U.S. to extend (the) Compact funding past 2023.”⁵⁷ This stance poses two key dilemmas for the US and FSM: will the US allow increased Chinese funding to replace its own diminishing funding in the FSM leading up to 2023 and beyond? And if not, what other means will it use to persuade FSM to circumvent China’s rise in the Micronesian region and Oceania if it determines not to extend its rent for influence? These issues are increasingly germane in view of FSM's close proximity to Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and the Marshall Islands where the US has military installation and bases.⁵⁸ The question of influence will escalate before 2023 while the FSM is calculating its future economic interest and viability.

Managing the USA and China

The FSM’s diplomatic relations with China and the USA remained essentially bilateral and non-overlapping until 2006, when China’s foreign aid to the FSM increased, particularly in light of the watershed announcement of President Hu in Fiji in April 2006 of a dramatic increase in Chinese assistance to Pacific Island nations.⁵⁹ President Hu announced a package of \$300 million in preferential loans and other aid to expand trade, investment, and infrastructure development.⁶⁰ The FSM will secure a significant increase in Chinese aid with less care for antagonizing the USA.

Chinese assistance has resulted in the construction of a series of infrastructure projects, especially public buildings, development projects in farming and fisheries, and a series of smaller targeted grants to assist local community project infrastructure.⁶¹ These projects have largely been based in and around the state capitals like Kolonia in Pohnpei and Weno in Chuuk. For example, in 2006, the use of Chinese aid money resulted in the construction on Pohnpei of the Western Pacific Tuna Commission headquarters, official residences for the nation's President, Vice President, and the Speaker of Congress. School buildings have been constructed for Kosrae State, while Yap and

⁵⁶ Giff Johnson, “No More Compact for the RMI” in *Pacific Islands Report*, November 5, 2010 <<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/>>

⁵⁷ Johnson, “*No More Compact*”, <<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/>>

⁵⁸ Robert, *Interview*.

⁵⁹ Olivier Wortel, “China Increasing Its Presence in FSM in Big and Small Ways”, *The Kaselehlle Press*, February 7, 2007 <http://www.fm/news/kp/2007/feb07_3.htm> The following details on China's aid programme based on Wortel's extended interview with Ambassador Liu Fei.

⁶⁰ Wortel, “China Increasing Its Presence in FSM”, <http://www.fm/news/kp/2007/feb07_3.htm>

⁶¹ Weidong, *Interview*.

Chuuk states have benefited from the delivery of two custom-built cargo-and-transport vessels for the far-flung islands. The Chinese are also keen to further assist each of the four state governments in their future infrastructure projects.⁶² Although Chinese assistance is well received by the FSM, the USA remains the major contributor to Micronesian development programs.⁶³ However, China's policy of political non-interference in FSM's governance, unlike the USA as exemplified by their involvement in JEMCO, has led to FSM leaders embracing China's presence in the FSM.

China's consultative approach in providing infrastructure as requested by national and state governments are a dramatic contrast to the American domination of the budget and aid allocation of Compact monies, as discussed earlier. Chinese Ambassador Liu Fei has had a number of Pacific postings and has earned a reputation for being sensitive to local needs and respectful of Micronesian aspirations as a developing nation. The Ambassador notes that China is also a developing nation, and characterizes her country's aid policy as "very open and practical."⁶⁴ She notes that as well as providing requested infrastructure, China's aid is aimed at assisting economic ties, trade and investment between China and FSM, and giving people a better and more positive understanding of China.⁶⁵ The latter objective figures prominently in small-scale aid projects for individual institutions that are below the level of national and state governments, such as providing libraries with books on China. Another example is that the first wave of these small-scale aid projects included providing new computers for the FSM Congress, a donation of over 200 books on Chinese subjects to the Pohnpei Public Library and the College of Micronesia. Chinese library collections are available for many other educational institutions such as Kosrae and Xavier High School.⁶⁶

Educational exchange programs for students and high-ranking officials are also an important part of China's policy of enhancing understanding of its culture and intentions in the Pacific Islands in order to counter the generally negative reporting in Western media and academic analysis. Examples of this include collaboration between Zhejiang College in southern China and FSM's tertiary institution, the College of Micronesia-FSM on learning exchanges and scholarships in marine science. Scholarships from

⁶² Personal notes on wikileaks documents. China's assistance to the FSM since it opened diplomatic relation with the FSM is estimated to be more than 170 million USD compared to the 7 billion plus USD provided by the USA. See also Philippa Brandt, *The Geopolitics of Chinese Aid*, <<http://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/geopolitics-chinese-aid>>

⁶³ Personal Notes, *China's Assistance*.

⁶⁴ Wortel, "China Increasing Its Presence,"

⁶⁵ Wortel, "China Increasing its Presence". The Ambassador of China said the people of FSM should know more about China than what is reported in the media.

⁶⁶ Wortel, "China Increasing Its Presence".

China jumped from 2-3 per year before 2006, to 17 in 2006, and 12 in 2007 and have continued to increase since then. In April 2014, the Chinese ambassador Zhang Lianyuen stated that, “over 200 government scholarships to study in China and over 100 FSM students [were] granted the full government scholarship to study in China.”⁶⁷ In the health sector, two groups of Chinese medical experts have visited FSM and offered precious services to local people “...China will continue to offer its sincere assistance within its ability to help FSM achieve sustainable development and enhance its people’s living standards.”⁶⁸

China is increasingly involved in FSM's agriculture and fisheries sectors as an aid donor, trainer, and participant. China has developed a large pilot farm in Madolenihmw municipality on Pohnpei growing a large variety of vegetables. A large tuna-fishing fleet and operation, Luen Thai, from Hong Kong is also based permanently in Pohnpei, with plans to significantly increase the number of fishing vessels.⁶⁹ China also assists the FSM trade schools on Pohnpei by offering training in trades such as carpentry, plumbing, washing machine repairs, and electrical repairs. The Chinese acknowledge the merit of developing primary industries that add value to locally-produced foods such as noodles made from taro, breadfruit, or banana flour, which Ambassador Liu notes are 'healthy, balanced, cheaper', than imported foods.⁷⁰

China has been sensitive to American perceptions as well as its Micronesian critics. China is at pains to emphasize that its aid programme is far smaller than that of the US, Japan and Australia in the Pacific Islands. China’s aid to the Pacific Islands amounted to USD \$850 million in 2006-2011⁷¹ in comparison to Australia, which gave USD \$ 4.8 billion in the same period.⁷² China desires collaboration with other donors, and denies it is ratcheting up aid in direct competition to other donors. Ambassador Liu emphasizes that China sees itself as filling a supporting role to the big three aid donor nations. As she notes, "We are very keen on helping the education, private, and infrastructure sectors, as well as trade and investment and the other areas that have been outlined in the country's Strategic Development Plan. We are very much the same in focusing on the key sectors here...we actually are on the same policy with the U.S. Government in

⁶⁷ Zhang Lianyuen, “25 years’ Run Toward Amity and Prosperity Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relationship Between China and FSM”, *Kaselehlle Press*, March 24-April6, 2014, p.8.

⁶⁸ Lianyuen, “25 years’ run toward amity, p.8.

⁶⁹ Peter Sitan, President of the FSM National Fisheries Corporation, *Interview*, Micronesian Symposium, Australian National University, April 28, 2014.

⁷⁰ Lianyuen, “25 Years” Run Toward Amity, pp.8-9.

⁷¹ Philipa Brandt, *Chinese Aid in the Pacific*,”

⁷² Brandt, “Chinese Aid in the Pacific, ”.

this regard", adding that "If the U.S., Australian, and Japanese Embassies want to work with me, I always welcome them."⁷³

The Exhibition Travel Group

A new tourist project proposed by the business group Exhibition Travel Group (ETG), however, seems at odds with Ambassador Liu's statements. The project is massive and has deeply divided local communities. The company is still negotiating with the Yap Government and landowners. Initially, ETG planned to build a mega-tourist resort with 10,000 hotel rooms with associated infrastructure like expanding the airport, and constructing docks, golf course, roads, hospitals, shopping centres and beaches.⁷⁴ The company anticipated direct flights to the FSM and big dollars, although tourism is a fickle market dependent on the buoyancy of the home economy of travellers and jet fuel prices. The ETG project will not compete with the nearby tourist industry of Guam, and Saipan in the CNMI, since it is anticipated direct flights from China will become the norm, sidestepping the US security checks and delay in Guam due to Travel Security Administrative procedures.⁷⁵

However, there has been controversy about the scale of this mega tourism project prompting voices of concern both within the nation as well as from the international community. Many have condemned the size and the impact it will have on the pristine Yap environment. A recent study conducted by anthropologist Donald Rubinstein and attorney Clement Mulalap indicated the polarisation of views in the Yapese community. For example, anti-ETG proposal citizen groups such as the state legislature, Yap Women's Association and the Catholic Church are at odds with the pro-ETG proposal lobby such as the executive branch of government, the business community, and certain traditional leaders and remain at loggerheads over ETG's mega proposal.⁷⁶ The anti-ETG forces claim that the proposal is unrealistic and unsustainable, while the pro-ETG forces argue in favour of the development on the basis of the enormous financial windfall that the project could bring to Yap. Rubinstein and Mulalap raised two important questions of ETG's intentions. Firstly, "what is China's real purpose in building a billion-dollar resort complex in Yap"?⁷⁷ Furthermore, why is Yap still considering the project in light of ETG's Chairman Deng Hong being remanded in jail

⁷³ Gonzaga Puaas, "Micronesia and the Rise of China: Realpolitik Meets the Reef", Paper delivered in the Pacific History Association, Taiwan, December 3, 2014, pp. 20-22.

⁷⁴ Rubinstein and Mulalap, "A proposed Chinese Mega-Resort in Yap," pp. 8-10.

⁷⁵ Rubinstein and Mulalap, "A proposed Chinese Mega-Resort in Yap," pp. 8-10.

⁷⁶ Rubinstein and Mulalap, "A proposed Chinese Mega-Resort in Yap," pp. 8-10.

⁷⁷ Rubinstein and Mulalap, "A proposed Chinese Mega-Resort in Yap," pp. 11-12.

in China for alleged corruption since March 2013? ⁷⁸ Despite the above, China's government has no plan to slow down its diplomatic relations with the FSM; although there is no evidence that the mega-resort has any political motive behind it. If the Yapese people approve the project, the FSM will become a tropical playground for Chinese tourists and other Asian nationals, as well as those from the US and Europe.

It is anticipated that Micronesian scholars and professionals trained in Chinese higher educational institutions will add benefits to FSM's future. An association between the citizens of China and the FSM, called the Micronesia-China Friendship Association (MCFA) was also established in early 2011. ⁷⁹ Its first president was the highly esteemed Micronesian scholar, Professor Haglelgam. He possesses a vast wealth of knowledge of China due to his previous position as the second President of the FSM. MCFA's aim is to promote greater contact between the citizens of both countries through education and cultural programs. ⁸⁰ Direct business contact between the citizens is also encouraged as it is anticipated that in the future FSM citizens will increase their business contact with China. ⁸¹

In 2009 the FSM and China celebrated the twentieth anniversary of their friendship. The Chinese President Hu Jintao and the President of the FSM, Emmanuel Mori, exchanged congratulatory notes praising the hard work of their countries in maintaining their ongoing friendship based on a model of mutual respect. President Hu indicated that China and FSM have maintained "a good momentum of reciprocal cooperation" that has "delivered real benefits" to both nations and which has "promoted stability" and prosperity in the region. ⁸²

In response, President Mori's speech highlighted the "growing bonds" that exist between the two nations and noted that the FSM is "looking to the challenges ahead." ⁸³ The FSM will continue, "to count on the strength of the partnership and friendship" between the two countries. He further noted that the FSM has "greatly benefited" from the assistance provided by the government of China. ⁸⁴ Although China is a recent actor in FSM politics, the island people consider China as a new addition to Micronesia's list

⁷⁸ Rubinstein and Mulalap, A proposed Chinese Mega-Resort in Yap, " pp. 8-10.

⁷⁹ Haglelgam, *Interview*.

⁸⁰ Haglelgam, *Interview*.

⁸¹ Haglelgam, *Interview*.

⁸² "The FSM President Hu and President Mori Exchange Congratulation Letters to Celebrate the 20th Anniversary of China-FSM Relations, *FSM Information Service Press Release*, Palikir, Pohnpei, September 1, 2009.

⁸³ "The FSM President Hu and President Mori Exchange Congratulation Letters".

⁸⁴ Lianyuen, "25 Years' Run Toward Amity, p. 8.

of diplomatic friends. This is part of FSM's diplomatic adaptation to the external world to assert its identity and continuity.⁸⁵

On March 24, 2014 the Ambassador of China to the FSM again reinforced China's growing relationship with the FSM. He noted that:

“China and FSM offer each other unfailing support in their own capacities and with sincerity. In the past 25 years, the bilateral trade volume between our two countries rose from nearly nothing to 15 million dollars last year⁸⁶. The pilot farm donated and constructed by China has successfully run for 18 years and quite a number of biogas generators have been set up in local farmers' homes. The 2 cargo-passenger vessels donated by China are playing vital roles in Chuukese and Yapese people's daily life. The fruitful outcome of our practical cooperation can also be easily seen around us, like China-FSM Friendship Sports Centre in Pohnpei and High School Building in Kosrae. More and more FSM people begin to appreciate Chinese culture and see China as a genuine friend... China will continue to offer its sincere assistance within its ability to help FSM achieve sustainable development and enhance its people's living standards. And there are more exciting new projects under detailed discussion and are making important progress. Great potential also lies in tourism, infrastructure, transportation and fisheries etc”.⁸⁷

Epel Ilon, a former negotiator for the Compact, ex-secretary of Foreign Affairs, and currently a senior advisor for SBOC commented on how China can deliver benefits to the FSM. He said, “China can buy up all FSM exports overnight and that will be a great benefit to the FSM.”⁸⁸ Can you imagine that?” he commented.⁸⁹

Is China a threat?

China's growing influence in the FSM has been met with optimism at the top level of Micronesian government. However, others continue to speculate that China is using the FSM as a means to develop its strategic presence in the region.⁹⁰ China dismisses this

⁸⁵ Lianyuen, “25 Years' Run Toward Amity”, p. 8.

⁸⁶ Lianyuen, “25 Years' Run Toward Amity”, p. 8.

⁸⁷ Lianyuen, “25 Years' Run Toward Amity”, p. 8.

⁸⁸ Ilon, *Interview*. He said China is important to the FSM economically. For example, it can buy up all FSM export commodities in one hour. The private sector can benefit with China's assistance

⁸⁹ Ilon, *Interview*.

⁹⁰ The FSM is the only country, which has diplomatic relation with China in the Micronesian region. There is a speculation against China's presence in the FSM. My personal communication with many government officials and diplomats stated that China is not in the FSM for future military planning. Many of them support the idea that the USA should engage with China rather than fearing it. Many do not want to be identified fearing repercussion from their superiors for making comments outside government policy. The two China's ambassadors I interviewed explained to me that there is a strong relationship

claim, stating that its presence in the FSM is based on mutual respect and common interests as developing nations. In my interview with the China's ambassador to the FSM on July 15, 2013, he cited the preamble of the FSM Constitution as part of China's foreign policy. It states; "We extend to all nations what we seek from each: peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity."⁹¹ China shares this goal with the FSM.⁹² The FSM is part of the Pacific region - a region of competing interests between external powers - and so too is China because of its strategic interest. China has been demonised as the red dragon ready to create disequilibrium in the region.⁹³

FSM seeks friendship with all powers in order to develop its own best interests. This principle will be tested by circumstances where friendly powers act in ways contrary to FSM's perceived interests. For example, a Chinese fishing vessel *Ping Da 7* ran aground on Nankapenparam Reef on Pohnpei Island in December 2013. A state of emergency was declared out of concern for the environmental threat to the reef and its marine life posed by leaking fuels and chemicals from the *Ping Da 7*. The ship's owner, Jianghai Ping, had indicated that he had no intention of taking full responsibility for salvaging the boat, much less collaborating in undertaking preventive measures against environmental harm.⁹⁴ This kind of arrogant response will jeopardise relationships between the two nations. The bottom line is for Micronesia to decide its own future as to which countries to associate with, or disassociate itself from. China is not immune from such a decision-making process.

Conclusion

The FSM does not believe that it will sink into oblivion without the Compact's funding.⁹⁵ The economic wealth of the FSM is yet to be tapped because of the vastness of its EEZ and the lack of technology for harvesting the sea, and deep-sea exploration. Many have suspected potential minerals and marine resources exist in its EEZ. The FSM has been bleeding economically because much of its fishing harvest has been

between the USA and the FSM. China is in the FSM because of other reasons "for example" to assist each other diplomatically and culturally.

⁹¹ *The Constitution of the FSM, Preamble.*

⁹² Zhang, *Interview*; Weidong, *Interview*.

⁹³ Terrance W. Smith, *China in Oceania: New Forces in Pacific Politics: Pacific Islands Policy 2*, East-West Centre, 2007, pp, 13-19.

⁹⁴ FSM Updates, President Mori declares "State of Emergency" as Ping Da 7 Post greater Threat sitting on Nan Kepkepin Param Reef in Pohnpei, January 23, 2014
<<http://myfsm.blogspot.com.au/2014/01/president-mori-declares-state-of.html>>

⁹⁵ Interviews with many FSM officials during my field work in 2011-2013. They did not believe that the FSM would sink into oblivion without the compact funds. The question is how do Micronesians survive for centuries? Did they need the Compact?

stolen due to the illegal fishing activities of distant countries or harvested by foreign fleets paying a mere fraction of the sale value for fishing licenses.⁹⁶ Exploitation and profits from the FSM's marine resources in terms of fish and minerals will depend on their understanding of world business practices and diplomatic relations with the global community.

Already many Pacific nations are forming new regional organisations to protect their potential economic wealth in their EEZs, as happened at a meeting of Pacific Island leaders in the Cook Islands in May 15 2014.⁹⁷ Harmonising environmental laws and a bigger share of profit from future seabed mining are top priorities for the Pacific Island States. This emergence of Big Ocean nations in the Pacific to control their potential wealth will bring about a new perspective on the Pacific. The FSM is taking the same step to exploit its potential wealth in its EEZ to become self-reliant and ensure its continuity.

Roger Gale has noted that Micronesia will always be in someone else's strategic plan.⁹⁸ This comment sums up why the FSM must be mindful of its history and identity. The FSM's future security will depend on the understanding of how valuable it is to the outside world, and how empowered it is to engage in mutually respectful dialogue in the present environment of competitive bidding for engagement.⁹⁹ Much of that value lies in the natural resources still at home in the sea and on the seabed, as well as great danger there in the form of typhoons and rising sea levels as will be discussed in the next chapter. The greatest immediate threat to the FSM derives not from superpower strategic rivalry in the Western Pacific, but rather in the climatic consequences of the race to modernize by means of industrialisation and its polluting residue.

⁹⁶ D'Arcy, "The Lawless Ocean? Voluntary Compliance Regimes and Offshore Resource Exploitation in the Pacific" in *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies*, Vol.1, no.2, **pp.4-5**; Peter Wilson, "A Tuna Industry in Micronesia?" *Micronesian Counsellor No.66*, Micronesian Seminar, Pohnpei, FSM, April 2007, 1-4.

⁹⁷ Ben Chapman-Smith, "Income From Sea Bed Mining In Cooks Could Eclipse Tourism and Cook Islands Has World Class Resource Worth 'a Vast Sum'" in *Pacific Islands Report citing Cook Island News*, May 15, 2014.

⁹⁸ Gale, *Americanization of Micronesia*, p.vi.

⁹⁹ Paul D'Arcy, "Leading by Example: Micronesians and the Sea as world's best practice", paper delivered at the *Micronesian-Australian Friends Association (MAFA) Conference* at the Australian National University, April 28, 2014.

CHAPTER 6: MANAGING CLIMATE CHANGE

Introduction

This chapter deals with climate change, and its impact on Micronesia's food security, health, territorial integrity, and adaptation policies. Effective management of the impact of climate change may be possible if future scenarios are modelled properly. To this end the low-lying islands in the Mortlocks will be used as a case study since they are already suffering the consequences of rising sea levels due to climate change. Their experience will be extrapolated to the other low-lying islands¹ in the states of Yap, Pohnpei and the coastal areas of Kosrae. The detailed traditional environmental knowledge revealed here is being used to counter the impact of climate change, but is also an example of the persistence, strength, and ongoing relevance of Micronesian ways of organizing and interacting with their environments.

Micronesians derive their livelihood from the oceanic environment. The ocean occupies a larger space than their land. In that respect land must be integrated with the ocean in terms of managing its resources to create balance in nature. For example, specific types of agricultural production must be in sync with the seasons of the year. *Lefang* is the season when food is scarce. Breadfruits are harvested and stored away in *mar* pits. Catching fish is also easier and they are salted and dried in the sun for the lean *lefang* season. Taro production is left to allow the taros to grow. When the *lefang* season begins, people survive from what they stored during the *lerak* season while supplemented by taro farming. The rhythm of nature is crucial to islanders' environmental conservation practices. It also dictates the type of social activities on each island as well as inter-island events. The reliance on the integrated social and environmental practices adopted by islanders prior to colonisation, has endured to the present day. The Mortlockese are part of this social endurance.

The Mortlock Islands

The Mortlock Islands are situated in the southern part of Chuuk state and are all low-lying atolls. The distance between Weno, the capital of Chuuk, to the southern tip of the Mortlocks is roughly 170 miles. It takes around 12 hours on the typical cargo ship to reach the southern end. The Mortlocks are divided into three sub-regions: the Upper,

¹ For descriptions of low-lying islands in the FSM, see William Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp. 44-48; Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity*, pp.12-20. For the names of low-lying islands in Yap and Chuuk see D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp. 151-152.

Middle, and Lower Mortlocks. The Upper Mortlocks is near the port town of Weno and consists of three islands: Nama, Losap and Pis. Namoluk, Ettal, Kuttu and Moch islands make up the Mid-Mortlocks area. The islands of Satawan, Ta, Lekinioch and Oneop comprise the lower Mortlocks sub-region. They range from less than a mile to five miles in circumference.²

Their elevation is around 3-4 metres above sea level.³ Because of their vulnerability to the rise in sea level, they will be among the first to be submerged if climate change-induced sea level rise scenarios eventuate. Relocation will be the last option, but many islanders have stated that it is not an option for them at all. For example, during my field interviews many cannot foresee living in a different environment even if it is on another island where their life will be subject to someone else's dictates. They prefer to remain on their islands and die, rather than subject themselves to an alien space somewhere beyond the horizon.⁴

Identity and Natural Disasters

The islands are located on the southern edge of a typhoon belt where typhoon usually causes severe damage to the environment and threatens human life. Two patterns of typhoon are common in the FSM. The first one usually originates in the southern part of the Mortlocks region and slowly intensifies as it moves westward towards Yap and the Philippines. The other pattern is usually generated in central Yap and moves northward towards Guam and Japan.⁵ However, regardless of the origins of any typhoons, they have often inflicted colossal and unforgiving injuries to human life and the environment in the Pacific. They have also left significant scars on Micronesian history.⁶ However, natural disasters have taught Micronesians how to be resilient and enhanced their adaptation skills. **The recent looming threat to Micronesia is climate change.** Recent studies have indicated that typhoons and tropical depressions are more frequent and have been increasing in their intensity as a result of global warming.⁷ The rise in sea

² Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity*, p.14. Description of Namoluk Isles by Marshall shared similar features with other islands in the Mortlocks.

³ Henry, Jeffery, Pam, *Heritage and Climate Change in Micronesia*, p. 7.

⁴ Many elders from Lukunor islands said they would rather remain on the island and die. Notes from *Interviews* during field work in 2011-13.

⁵ Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp. 6-7; D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.15.

⁶ Dirk H.R. Spennemann, *Melime: The Good Friday Typhoon of 1907 and its aftermath in the Mortlocks, Caroline Islands*, Albury, NSW, 2007, pp.15-18.

⁷ Johannes Berden, Manager of the Weather Station in Chuuk, *Interview*. June 21, 2013; Local fishermen such as Tonio Muritok, Lewis Estep, and Kauten Kandy *Pers. Comm.* on different occasions in Palikir,

level is also presenting new sets of challenges for Micronesians. Adapting to climate change as resiliently as possible is urgent, since without their islands the prospects of continuing their identity will be in question.

Like other Micronesians, Mortlockese are natural conservationists; they have a deep understanding of their fragile environment having made the islands their home many centuries ago. They understand that their environment demands constant care to conserve the islands' natural resources. For them, conservation means having a holistic understanding of human behaviour towards the physical environment, an intricate knowledge of the weather system, and an ability to utilise the best available practices compatible with the survivability of Micronesians. Adaptation to climate change has once again required Micronesians to resort to their traditional knowledge of conservation. Current government policies at the national level are supporting local strategies to form the frontline of climate change defences.⁸

Historically the Mortlockese divided their atoll islands into common zones, from the ocean side to the middle of the lagoon or vice versa. The zones, however, differ slightly from the volcanic islands and stand-alone islands because of their topography.⁹ See Figure 14 below for an outline of the different zones:

Pohnpei, Weno Chuuk and Lukunor Island 2001, 2008, 2013. All stated that it has been getting difficult to predict the seasons now due to the changes in weather patterns.

⁸ *Nationwide Climate Change Policy 2009: The Federated States of Micronesia*, December 14, 2009, pp. 1-7.

⁹ This was taught to me on the atoll where I grew up and learned about the zones and their relationship within the ecosystems from my uncles. I also learned from my elders the importance of knowing the zones. For fishing zones in the low-lying islands in Pohnpei see Lieber, *More Than a Living*, pp. 51-59. For Yap see Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll*, 19-22; For Yap Island see Samuel T. Price, *The Transformation of Yap: Causes and Consequences of Socio-Economic Change in Micronesia*, (PhD Thesis), Washington State University, Ann Arbor Michigan, 1975, pp.54 and 57-60. For a general outline of the Pacific Islands see D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp. 21-23.

Name of zones	The Environment	Activity
<i>Lematau</i>	The deep ocean near the horizon	Deep water fishing trawling
<i>On mong</i>	Behind the crashing waves	Underwater spear fishing
<i>Likin ounou</i>	The exposed reef system	Shell fish finding
<i>Fan ounou</i>	Where the waves crash	Pole and net fishing
<i>On alang</i>	Shellfish area	Shell fish and sea crab gathering
<i>Fan Net</i>	Beach at the ocean side	Gathering plants for medicines and picnicing
<i>Ilik</i>	Inland breadfruit trees	Breadfruit farms
<i>Lenunu</i>	Where tall coconuts grow	Build gardens
<i>Lepwel</i>	Taro farms	Taro farming
<i>Imor</i>	The edges of taro farms	Coconut planting and gardening
<i>Leal</i>	The lagoon side road system	Inter village road system
<i>Roro</i>	The foreshore	Small-scale gardening
<i>Leppei</i>	The beach	Beach for leisure activities
<i>Lemoshiset</i>	Swimming zone for children	Spear throw fishing
<i>Lein imwmwimw</i>	The sea grass zone	Line throw fishing
<i>Wenen</i>	The exposed lagoon side	Path for canoe transportation
<i>Lepweshepwesh</i>	Swimming zone for adults	Spear fishing
<i>Mesenpal</i>	The sloping part of the lagoon	Underwater spear fishing
<i>Lelol</i>	The first deep part of the lagoon floor	Bottom line-fishing turtle hunting
<i>Lekung</i>	Invisible depth of the lagoon	Deep bottom line-fishing
<i>Lenomw</i>	The centre of the lagoon	Big fish trapping

Figure 14: An illustration of the common zones in the Mortlock Islands as part of cultural maintenance. This chart can also be used to monitor climate change impact on the total environment in the low-lying islands.

The purpose of such zones is for cultural maintenance, conservation, and communication. The zones are vital for everyday communication between the residents of each island because they pinpoint space, events, and time; that is, zones specify where people are during the day in terms of work and leisure activities. For example, a person may be working at the *lepwel* (taro farms) or fishing in the *lenomw* (lagoon centre) and remain there until the sun reaches the height of *lenunu* (i.e. tall coconut trees). Communication with the ancestral gods is an important part of island life as it provides vital information to resolve particular problems, or predict likely future events. As Victor Puas, former mayor of Lekinioch municipality alluded, “environmental zones are like our traditional library as they provide useful information about nature and our relationship with it.”¹⁰

Moreover, the zones are crucial environmental references to those who have specialised skills, for example, *sou safei* (traditional doctors), *sou set* (fishermen) or *sou fal waa* (canoe builders) to locate the resources that their professions require. For example, *sou safei* only need to locate specific zones to collect the ingredients for medical remedies, or to train students as to what particular fauna or flora grow in each zone to treat specific ailments. Island priests also rely on the zones to determine which ancestral gods to pray to, or direct their *waitawa*¹¹ to when the need arises.

Islanders have developed deep knowledge of the zones, and have understood the interdependency between the species in the food chain hierarchy. Changes in any of the zones may be a warning sign of a threat to certain species, which would in effect have an impact on the food chain system, or the entire environment the islanders depend upon. It would therefore require islanders to react quickly and implement remedies to curtail such a threat. The zones provide information regarding the habitual behaviour of species, allowing the indigenous population to locate them easily for food sources.¹² Likewise, knowledge of the thirty stages of the moon such as *sikauru* or *wereian anu*

¹⁰ Victor Puas, Personal Comm. July 2, 2013, Palikir, Pohnpei. See Segal, *Kosrae: The Sleeping Lady*, pp. 212-215 and 218-220. Andrew L. Debuze, *Cultural Change in Horticultural Practices on the High Island of Kosrae- Micronesia*, University of Oregon, 1996, pp. 58-59.

¹¹ This is according to the oral history of Lekinioch Island. *Waitawa* means channelling in order to communicate with the ancestors. See Joakim Peter, *Chuukese Travellers and the Idea of Horizon*, p. 264.

¹² This is based on my own personal experience. For zones in the volcanic islands as in Yap see Margie V.C Falanruw, “Food Production and Ecosystem Management in Yap”, pp. 5-22. For low-lying atolls see Nason, *Clan and Copra*, pp.28-33. For specific fauna and flora see Marshall, *The Structure of Solidarity*, pp.16-19.

(visible to ghosts), *eling* (visible to human) and *meseling* (all can see)¹³ are also crucial to the ecosystem as they influence the behaviour of species. For example, during a full moon in the Mortlocks, land crabs migrate en masse to the beach to lay their eggs. The islanders only need to go to the beach and wait for them at midnight when the high tide is in to collect them for food.

Certain schools of fish like *momishik* (island sardines) and *kish* (squirrel fish) are caught only at certain time during *lefang* and *lerak*. Moreover, *souset* have developed a sophisticated regime in calculating when and how to harvest the fish. Religious rituals in the form of *ngorongor* are also part of fishing activities to lure other types of fish like *angerap* (bonito or skipjack) close to the beach for *lalo* (encircled traps made from coconut fronds) or *maaii* (fish weir). *Ngorongor* are chanted before, during, and after the fishing activities to pay respect to the ancestral gods. Each clan has a particular system of *ngorongor*, which is passed down from one generation to the next for the purposes of continuing the clan's history as well as safeguarding its reputation.¹⁴

A climate change impact on these zones has been affecting the livelihood of islanders over the years. For example, salt-water incursion on land due to ocean surges is changing the dynamic of both the fauna and flora ecosystems. Islanders are devising ways to adapt to the threat by studying the new life dynamics in the zones system. Only time will tell as to whether or not they will find new solutions to maintain the health of the environment, hopefully by collaborating with climate change experts from the international community.

Climate Change Background

Climate change is a complex phenomenon with numerous different causes and associated impacts varying from country to country, and from region to region of the world.¹⁵ It is a worldwide phenomenon that is slowly affecting humankind. It is no longer defensible to blame natural process as the main causes of climate change. Increasingly scientists from all around the world have identified anthropogenic

¹³ Kamilo Likichimus, master canoe carver and oral historian from Lekinioch Island. See also Uman, Saladier and Chipen, *Uruon Chuuk*, p.p.359-361.

¹⁴ Being a member of an *ainang* means you are permanently locked in it and demands your total loyalty. Emotional attachment to one's *Ainang* is strong as it is about personal identity and history.

¹⁵ Christopher B. Field, (USA), Vicente Barros, (Argentina), Abdrabo Mohamed A.K. (Egypt) et.al, *IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: Climate Change 2014, Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability Summary For Policy Makers* <http://ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/images/uploads/WG2AR5_SPM_FINAL.pdf> , pp. 4-9. This report is authored by more than 50 experts world wide; *Climate Change Institute, Oceans and Sea Level Rise: Consequences of Climate Change on the Oceans* <<http://www.climate.org/topics/sea-level>> Washington D.C.

activities as a significant accelerator of climate change impact.¹⁶ The rise in sea level is one of the consequences of climate change, and has already affected islands and coastal regions around the globe.¹⁷

Since data collection on climates began in 1880, the temperature of the earth's surface has increased over the decades, accelerating from the 1970 onwards. For example, satellite images indicate that the ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica are melting faster than predicted, especially from April 2002 to February 2009.¹⁸ Such acceleration has been largely caused by the amount of greenhouse gases that are collectively produced by industrialized economies,¹⁹ and which get trapped in the earth's atmosphere.

It is a slow process, but the steadily increasing volume of water in the ocean caused by ice melting is causing the rise in the sea level. This is having tremendous consequences on the low-lying islands of the Mortlocks, which are 3 meters above sea level. Climate change is also affecting the dynamics of the Pacific Ocean in terms of weather patterns regarding El Niño²⁰ and La Niña²¹ as well as marine life due to the increased level of acidification.²² It is hoped that the advanced economies will reduce their greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to keep the earth's temperature below 2 degrees Celsius so as to slow down the impact of climate change on the low-lying islands in the Pacific and elsewhere in the world.

A study conducted in the FSM, the Marshall Islands and Palau over a sixty-year period (1951-2010) provided convincing evidence that temperature has increased throughout most of the Micronesian region. For example, these islands have experienced a significant-to-moderate rise in temperatures and a decrease in rainfall over the sixty-

¹⁶ Field et al, *IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel*, pp.4-9

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Fletcher and Richmond, *Climate Management*, p.6.

¹⁹ Gillian Cambers and Paul Diamond, *Sandwatch: Adapting to Climate Change and educating for Sustainable Development*, United Nation, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Revised and Expanded Edition), France 2011, p.15.

²⁰ D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp.16-18.

²¹ Ibid., p.17; Hezel, "High Water in the Low Atolls" in *Micronesian Counselor*, Issue, p. 2 <www.micsem.org>

²² Radio Australia (Melbourne), "Fish Losing Survival Instinct Due To Climate Change: Study Research on PNG Reefs Says Fish Behavior Becoming Riskier, reported in *Pacific Islands Report* on April 15, 2014 <<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/>>

year span.²³ It confirms that the temperature of the earth's surface is rising, which is causing droughts and the rise in sea levels.

The increase in the earth's temperature is impacting the atolls as witnessed in the unusual sea surges witnessed by Micronesians in 2007 and 2008 respectively (see figures 15 and 16).²⁴ Sea surges have occurred before, for example, in the 1970s²⁵ to the 1990s in varying degrees, but these earlier events were nowhere near as devastating as the events in 2007 and 2008. The 2007 and 2008 events affected between 50-75 per cent of the land for food production.²⁶



Figure 15: *Puron sat* (sea surge) on Lukunor Atoll in 2007.

The first National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1999 noted the increase in “the frequency, duration and intensity of El Niño droughts, and the need to enhance capacity to address El Niño and

²³ Maria Ngemaes, Berdon, et al, Republic of Palau, The Federated States of Micronesia, and Republic of the Marshall Islands, *NOAA Presentation in Noumea Chart*, June 17-118, 2013. Johannes Berden, *Interview*.

²⁴ Hezel, “High Water in the Low Atolls”, pp. 2-3; Fletcher and Richmond, *Climate Management*, pp.8-9. Gaynor Dumat-ol Daleno, “High Seas Flood Tiny Lekiniok, Chuuk” *Pacific Daily News*, Guam May 3, 2007. Kauten Kandy and Paulis Chol, *Interview*, July 21, 2013, Sokehs, Pohnpei. These two fishermen were amongst many from Lekiniok who witnessed firsthand the sea surge and its impact on March 5, April 2007.

²⁵ I personally witnessed the sea surge circa 1971 (which was not caused by a typhoon). It destroyed almost half of the taro farms in my village called Rewow. Other surges happened afterwards but on smaller scale, which only affected the shoreline. Unfortunately there are no existing documents about the events.

²⁶ Gibson Susumu and Mark Kostka, *Federated States of Micronesia Food Security Assessment Report*, p. 22; Fletcher and Richmond, *Climate Management and Adaptive Strategies*, p.9.

La Niña events. Accelerated sea level rise was identified as a concern over the longer-term...[other] concerns were noted as being [the] coral reef ecosystems, coastal zones, waste management... agriculture and water supply”²⁷.



Figure 16: *Puron sat* (sea surge) in Kosrae 2007. Photo supplied by Simpson Abraham in 2013.

Territorial Integrity and Climate Change

Micronesia’s territorial integrity and sovereignty are defined by its Constitution in compliance with international laws. Article 1, Section 1 of the FSM Constitution states that “The waters connecting the islands of the (Micronesian) archipelago are internal waters regardless of dimensions, and jurisdiction extends to a marine space of 200 miles measured outward from appropriate baselines, the seabed, subsoil, water column, insular or continental shelves, airspace over land and water, and any other territory or waters belonging to Micronesia by historic right, custom, or legal title”.²⁸ Its islands and surrounding waters, however, are being slowly affected by climate change. Both local people and climate change experts have noted the impact of climate change in

²⁷ Clement Mulalap, “Islands in the Stream”, pp. 382-383 and 386.

²⁸ *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article 1, Section 1.

Micronesia.²⁹ The legal implications of submerged islands for territorial sovereignty have still not been seriously considered.

Like colonisation, climate change can be considered a result of foreign state actors, particularly the industrialised nations of Japan, China, India, Brazil and the USA which figure prominently in contemporary climate change literature. Their industries have large rates of fossil fuel consumption and are largely dependent on these resources. One of the consequences of this is the trapping of heat in the atmosphere, which continues to melt the ice caps and ice sheets at the poles causing the rise in sea level.³⁰ The resulting damages have already affected many Micronesian communities and they have started to adapt to this new phenomenon as best as they can. However, new studies need to be conducted to further Micronesians' understanding of climate change in order to adapt effectively.

The FSM government has adopted a policy that places survivability as an uncompromising priority. In its official policy statement the national government states its role is "to mitigate climate change especially at the international level, and adaptation at the national and (local) levels to reduce FSM's vulnerability to climate change's adverse impacts."³¹ In this context, FSM reaffirms its rights to exist as a nation under international law, particularly in view of the debate on sovereignty as a result of possible reconfiguration of island territories when some islands may become totally submerged in the future.³²

For the FSM government, mitigation means, inter alia, the promotion of a "post Kyoto carbon dioxide emission reduction that will maintain temperature rise as advocated by the "Tuvalu Deal" ³³ at the Copenhagen climate summit. For adaptation purposes, the national government has required all development activities to take into account new recommendations for project design³⁴ in compliance with its strategic development

²⁹ This is according to my personal observations and communication with the local people on Kosrae in 2012. I also interviewed people from the various low-lying islands in the FSM. See also Henry, et al, *Heritage and Climate Change in Micronesia*, pp. 7-9 and 37-38; Hezel, "High Water in the Low Atolls", pp.1-3; Fletcher and Richmond, *Climate Management*, pp.8-10.

³⁰ Oerlemans, R. Warrick, and P. Beaumont, et. al; *Sea Level Rise*, pp.263-267
<https://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/far/wg_I/ipcc_far_wg_I_chapter_09.pdf>

³¹ *Nationwide Climate Change Policy*, p.1.

³² *Nationwide Climate Change Policy 2009*, pp.1-2.

³³ The Tuvalu Deal refers to maintaining less than 1.5 degrees Celsius of world temperature increase to ensure the survivability of the low-lying islands in the Pacific; *FSM Nationwide Climate Change Policy*, pp.1-2; Masao Nakayama Statement before the Committee of Religious NGOs and the United Nations, *The Last Push Before Copenhagen: Defining Positions Strategies and Goals on Climate Change*, New York November 10, 2009. <<http://www.trinity.net/ngo/resources/view/143270/>>

³⁴ Fletcher and Richmond, *Climate Change in the Federated States of Micronesia*, p. 17; Henry et al, *Climate Change and Cultural Heritage in Micronesia*, pp.38-39.

plan; to use ecosystem-based approaches to encourage and strengthen the application of (local) knowledge and conservation practices; and to implement strategies as soon as possible to improve food production.³⁵

Climate Change Impact in the Mortlocks

Mortlockese have already anticipated changing their agricultural practices and fishing techniques to adapt to the processes of climate change.³⁶ The islands are very small in land size and completely flat. One can stand on the beach and survey the islands from one end to the opposite end.³⁷ There are no forests, but only dense bushes and a few gigantic breadfruit trees and coconuts. *Nu* (coconuts), *fash* (pandanus tectorius), *rakish* (sea oak tree), along with a variety of waterfront bushes usually surround the beach areas and along the shorelines especially at the ocean side. Further inland, islanders' houses are built with their usual surrounding household gardens. Swampy taro patches, breadfruit trees, coconut trees and thick bushes are located in the interior of the islands.³⁸

Mortlockese do not have massive agricultural lands suitable for methane-producing large-scale rice cultivation or cattle rearing, thus their greenhouse gas emissions are negligible. Deforestation is not applicable in the Mortlockese context either. Moreover, FSM as a whole does not have large-scale factories or heavy coal-burning industries, and cars are largely confined to state capitals. What the islanders are aware of is that the emissions from the above activities as caused by the 'West' and the emerging economic powers from the developing world, which accelerate the process of climate change that affects their traditional economic and ecological systems.³⁹ The combined impact of economic practices of the outside world on the earth's climate, which has caused drought and sea rise, is forcing Mortlockese to find effective adaptation strategies to grow traditional crops.⁴⁰

Climate change is one of the biggest threats the FSM is facing now. It is posing severe risks to health, agriculture, water and food security, and political relations. It is also

³⁵ Hezel, "High Water in the Low Atolls", pp. 18-19.

<<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/counselor/pdf/mc76.pdf>>; Susumu and Kostka, *Federated States of Micronesia Food Security Assessment Report*, pp. 5 and 27.

³⁶ Susumu and Kostka, *Food Security Vulnerability Assessment Report*, p. v.

³⁷ Gonzaga Pual. "How could the Agricultural Sector Become More Conducive Towards Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation?" Paper presented to CliMates International Student Organisation, Paris, France, April 2012, p.5

³⁸ Pual, "How Could the Agricultural Sector", p.5.

³⁹ Mulalap, "Islands in the Stream", pp. 382-383 and 386.

⁴⁰ Local adaptation strategies are being utilized including assistance from the national government. *Nationwide Climate Change Policy*, pp. 1-3.

eroding coastlines, destroying corals, coastal fisheries, and taro patches and breadfruit trees. If there is no significant reduction in the greenhouse gases in the next 15 years, the Mortlocks and the low-lying islands in Yap and Pohnpei will be underwater within half a century.⁴¹ As noted by Barry Pittock, a climate change researcher, “climate models predict that low lying islands in the Pacific may become uninhabitable within the next 50 years”⁴² or towards the turn of the century.

Sea Walls

In the late 1960s sea walls were seen as the best approach to fight shoreline erosion in the Mortlocks.⁴³ However, many local elders were against their erection. They opposed their construction because sea walls required the clearing of native trees and bushes on the shorelines, which naturally prevent coastal erosion.⁴⁴ Many sea walls fell apart within a few months due to changing near-shore currents as predicted by the local elders. In response, the government officials claimed that the sea walls were not installed properly. A new engineering approach was recommended and so the sea walls were once again erected. After the completion of the so-called “well-engineered sea walls”, local people started to complain again about the changes in the seascape around the shorelines. For example, usual habitats for certain schools of fish were disturbed, causing their migration to different parts of the islands. This has caused tension between clans as certain fish belong to particular clans by tradition, and the sea walls forced fish into different shoreline zones owned by other clans.⁴⁵ This is a sensitive cultural issue caused by climate change. It needs to be resolved to bring the communities back together.

This has resulted in the shifting of some beach sand to different parts of the shorelines. It has confirmed the elders’ suspicion about the sea walls. It was not until the late 1970s when super typhoon Pamela hit the Mortlock Islands that the folly of sea walls was

⁴¹ Barry Pittock, cited in Rosita Henry et al, *Climate Change and Cultural Heritage in Micronesia*, p.7.

⁴² Ibid., p.7

⁴³ Sea walls were built based on a model erected at the channel by the Japanese. Unfortunately, they were not successful in preventing shoreline erosion.

⁴⁴ This is according to Ring Puas and Alfonis Buluay who were present at the debate on sea wall erection in 1972-1973 during *sotang* (village meeting) in Relong village. See also Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p.68.

⁴⁵ I watched village elders debate the issue during the early 1970s. It became apparent in later years that the sea wall was politically motivated and so many called the sea wall the “political wall”. Today sea walls are still required due to clearing of vegetation near the coast, but they must be with designed differently to comply with the topographical features of the coastline.

extensively exposed to the public.⁴⁶ The typhoon completely destroyed the sea walls and salt water soon found its way into the taro patches with devastating impact on the livelihoods of the people.



Figure 17: Old style sea wall on the island of Lukunor constructed in the 1970s. It fell apart shortly after its construction due to lack of the elders input into the project.

Many local people suspected that the erection of the sea wall was politically motivated.⁴⁷ It was alleged that the sea wall project was part of several municipalities capital improvement projects used to disguise corruption. The process of allocating funds was controlled by powerful political figures, which then channelled down to relatives at the local level. The construction of sea walls was therefore not properly planned and lacked professional engineers.⁴⁸ The funds earmarked for these walls were thus used for political reasons, rather than to properly safeguard the shorelines.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Typhoon Pamela destroyed many sea walls in the Mortlocks. Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p. 68.

⁴⁷ I observed this public reaction, and discussed it with Haglelgam during my fieldwork interviews. Haglelgam, *Interview*.

⁴⁸ Salt water was mixed with cement, gravel and sand. When the concrete dried it took only few days to crack and fall into the water. A similar experience occurred in the Solomon Islands according to Terry Brown, *Small Island States and Global warming*, June 5, 2014 <<http://www.anglicannews.org/>>

⁴⁹ Haglelgam *Interview*; Congress of the FSM, *Public Law No.3-12, First Regular Session, 1983*.

Today, the debate over the issue of sea wall construction is still dividing the island communities.⁵⁰ In my interview with Marion Henry, a traditional leader from the island of Oneop, and also the National Secretary of the FSM Department of Resources and Development (R&D), he stated that, “sea walls contradicted traditional wisdom because they interrupt the natural flow of ocean currents around the islands which deposit sand on different shores and thereby increase beach erosion rather than preventing it”.⁵¹ He argued that native bushes and trees should have been left alone.

More people are becoming receptive to this traditional wisdom propounded by Secretary Henry. However, others dispute it and believe sea walls are still necessary, but that their design must be compatible with the topographical configuration of the islands.⁵² In Kosrae, for example, a new design of sea wall has been implemented with some success in preventing beach erosion. The sea wall was built on a beach where solid concrete blocks were lined along in a pattern that hugs the natural configuration of the local foreshore area (see figure 18). In my discussion with some of the locals, they said the sea wall has prevented beach erosion, and withstood big tides and strong storms.⁵³ To this end it should be up to each island to adopt specific designs that suit their local areas with the support of the national government.

⁵⁰ Elders and Officers of Lukunor Municipality, *Interview*. This is an ongoing debate.

⁵¹ Marion Henry, *Interview*, the FSM Secretary of Resources and Development. He is also a local *samol* from the Island of Oneop, Kolonia, Pohnpei, July 18, 2013; Haglelgam, *Interview*; Congress of the FSM Public Law No.3-12, First Regular Session, 1983; Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p.68.

⁵² Personal observation of sea wall in Kosrae in June 22, 2013.

⁵³ Personal observation of sea wall in Kosrae in June 22, 2013.



Figure 18: New sea wall design in Kosrae to prevent beach erosion. Picture taken by Zag Puas on June 23, 2012.

Sea wall technology is a modern form of defence that could assist the islanders in their fight against the impact of climate change. However, collaborative approaches using locals and outside experts are required for the purpose of implementing the appropriate technology to suit local requirements.⁵⁴

Traditional Foods

The main food staples in the Mortlocks and the low-lying islands in Yap and Pohnpei are taro, breadfruit, coconut, banana, and the resources obtained from the sea. Farming activities involve land clearing and planting of traditional crops such as taro, breadfruit, coconuts, papayas, and pandanus for consumption. Taro is available all year around, whilst breadfruit is in abundance during the summer months usually from May to September. Preservation of food such as *mar* (preserved breadfruit) is still in practice but is done using new methods.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *Nationwide Climate Change Policy 2009*, p.2.

⁵⁵ *Mar* (preserved breadfruit) is now stored in big iron cooking pots called *kama* above the ground and kept in the outdoor cooking house. It is now more accessible and can be eaten anytime of the year rather than waiting for the lean months where it has to be dug up from the ground. See D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.155.

Resources from the sea are also in abundance and are harvested all year round. Meat sources are from coconut and land crabs as well as pigs, dogs, and chicken. Imported food products such as rice, flour, canned food, sugar, and salt are also consumed along with the traditional diet. Mortlockese who are employed in the port towns also send foreign products to their families.⁵⁶ These traditional food crops are constantly under threat from the impact of climate change. The low-lying islanders are improvising their traditional practices to limit the intrusion of salt water onto agricultural land along with new methods of preserving food.

Vulnerability to Climate Change

While advanced economies abroad accelerate the process of climate change, Mortlockese are constantly studying ways to adapt to the changes in their environment. The National Government has required “all development activities ...to take into account projected climatic changes ...in compliance with its strategic development plan ... use ecosystem based approaches, encourage and strengthen the application of (local) knowledge on conservation practices, and implement strategies to improve food production”.⁵⁷ It is yet to be translated into specific defence strategies by the national government.

National legislation⁵⁸ was adopted in February 2013 to further reinforce the policy on climate change. Its purpose is to provide “Nationwide Integrated Disaster and Climate Change Policy”, and obligated relevant departments such as the Department of Resources and Development (R&D); Office of Environment and Emergency (OMA) Management; Department of Transportation (D&T), to implement the national climate change policy. It demands that, “every year ... the President of the Federated States of Micronesia shall submit a report to Congress on the progress of the implementation of the Climate Change Policy, and recommend additional legislation where applicable and necessary”.⁵⁹ This illustrated the seriousness of the FSM government’s resolve to tackle climate change by creating a legal framework for the nation to actively measure its adaptation strategies. As the policy stated, “in order for the FSM to successfully achieve its objectives the policy “requires...[the] support of all levels of governments in

⁵⁶ It is an established custom that relatives send assistance to those in trouble during natural disasters. See Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, p.p, 26-27; Dirk H.R Spennemann, *Melimele, The Good Friday Typhoon of 1907*, p.6; Lessa, “The Social Effects of Typhoon Ophelia”, p. 369.

⁵⁷ *Nationwide Climate Change Policy*, 2009, p. 2.

⁵⁸ The Congress of the FSM, *Public Law No. 18-34*, Second Regular Session 2013, Palikir, Pohnpei.

⁵⁹ The Congress of the FSM, *Public Law No. 18-34*, Second Regular Session 2013, Palikir Pohnpei.

the FSM, the civil societies, the private sector, [local] communities and traditional leaders”.⁶⁰

Furthermore, the FSM is seeking assistance and support regionally and internationally to ensure that its adaptation goals are systematically implemented with positive outcomes. Geologists Charles Fletcher and Bruce Richmond suggested that adaptation within the FSM may be “facilitated by a two-step approach: forming international partnerships to aid adaptation efforts; and continuing the development of internal policies focused on building resilient and sustainable communities.”⁶¹ International partnerships will adhere to local needs based on discussions from both sides, but within a domestic policy framework, which will lead to appropriate decisions. For example, planting more pandanus, sea oaks, and mangroves around island shores as has been done in other Pacific Islands. Well-designed sea walls should be part of the adaptation strategies. Although there are new concepts for creating floating and artificial islands and barrier reefs, many are too costly for Micronesians. Perhaps they will become a reality if resources from the nation’s EEZ are exploited to finance such concepts.

Observations of Ecosystem Alterations due to Sea Level Rise

Mortlockese fish behaviourists have deep knowledge of the sea environment. Since the 1990s they have noticed changes in the behaviour of certain kind of fish.⁶² They no longer reside in specific habitat zones due to changes in the weather patterns that have affected water temperatures. Fishes with low tolerance of temperature variation such as *angarap* (bonito), *momoshik* (island mackerel), and *sarikai me til* (anchovies), are now hard to locate. Their migratory habits have become difficult to predict, and islanders have difficulties catching them in schools using *lalo* (coconuts fronts to trap the fish) or *maii* (fish weirs).⁶³

During one of my visits to the islands in the summer of 2001, the fishermen informed me that the low tide no longer exposed the reefs where fish used to congregate in abundance. I used to join the fishermen of my village on the reefs where I learned about fish behaviour. I can no longer predict their movement based on my past knowledge. Despite all these changes, the indigenous people are readjusting.⁶⁴ They are developing new observation strategies to understand the new behaviours exhibited by

⁶⁰ *Nationwide Climate Change Policy*, 2009, p. 4.

⁶¹ Fletcher and Richmond, *Climate Management*, pp. 11-12; *The Nationwide Climate Change Policy*, p.2.

⁶² Interviews with many fishermen from the Mortlocks Islands during my fieldwork.

⁶³ Interviews with many fishermen from the Mortlocks Islands during my fieldwork.

⁶⁴ Interviews with many fishermen from the Mortlocks Islands during my fieldwork.

fish as they adjust to the new circumstances in the sea environment. I hope to learn from my villagers about the new adaptive knowledge soon. For instance, *sarikai* have moved to different depths and zones along the shorelines. *Momoshik* (owned by my father's clan) now appear in different months, making it harder to pinpoint when to catch them in weirs.⁶⁵

In recent years, islands in the Micronesian region have suffered serious damage due to wave surges, saltwater inundation, and drought. Traditional methods are being utilized to minimize their impacts, particularly saltwater incursion into taro farmland. New canals are being dug to allow the release of saltwater from the land following the topographical terrain of the land.⁶⁶ Barriers to resist the flow of salt water to gardens are also constructed. Just as in the past, Micronesians continue to adapt to seek new methods to prolong their survivability and continuity.

There have been a handful of studies conducted in the Mortlocks about the impact of the sea level rise and its impact on the ecosystem. Most noted that the real vulnerability of beach erosion due to high tides is an ongoing issue.⁶⁷ The intrusion of saltwater into the taro patches is also becoming a major problem. In 2007 the Mortlocks was inundated by saltwater caused by king tides.⁶⁸ The saltwater found its way into the taro farmland and also in the drinking water wells. Other crops such as bananas, papayas, pumpkins and sweet potatoes were destroyed.

On Lekinioch Island, for example, more than half of the island taro farms were decimated by saltwater incursion in 2007.⁶⁹ It took approximately two years for taro to regrow. Youth groups from the island were organised into groups to dig canals to release the saltwater from the taro patches and other affected areas. People survived because of the extended family system, which is always relied upon during natural disasters as in the past. Other relatives from throughout Micronesia and the new

⁶⁵ Personal experience. Elders from *Sofa* and *Soumosh* ainang complained about *momoshik* appearing in different places.

⁶⁶ When an ocean surge hit Lukunor in 2007-2008, the youth groups dug canals to let salt water out from the taro patches.

⁶⁷ Inos Walter, Mayor of Lukunor, *Interview* February 2011 who assessed the damage of the sea surge during his term; Kauten Kandy and Paulis Chol (witnesses), *Interview*.

⁶⁸ Other witnesses were also interviewed, December 2011; *Op.Cit*, Keim, E. Mark., "Sea Level Rise Disaster in Micronesia: Sentinel Event for Climate Change", National Center for Environmental Health, Agency for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia, USA <<http://healthandcultureinoceania.wikispaces.com/file/view/sea+level+rise+in+Micronesia.pdf>>

⁶⁹ This was told to me during interviews with many people from Lukunor including the Mayor of Lukunor who assessed the damage of the sea surge, and also Kauten and Paulis who witnessed the event. See also Mark, "Sea Level Rise Disaster in Micronesia" <<http://healthandcultureinoceania.wikispaces.com/file/view/sea+level+rise+in+Micronesia.pdf>>

diaspora in the USA also remit assistance to their families. The quick action by the youth groups saved further destruction of the taro farms, prevented further destruction of the taro farms and reduction of food supplies. The islanders continue to observe wave patterns and signs of nature that will alert them of oncoming events. New adaptive strategies are being monitored and islanders must adopt new methodologies for farming to protect their taro farms against further saltwater intrusion.⁷⁰

Some have suggested hydroponics and vertical farming. Others have recommended the erection of high hollow soil holders well above the ground.⁷¹ They can be filled with soil, and perhaps enhanced with the use of fertilisers, where food crops can be grown and harvested more frequently all year round.⁷² New plant species, for example salt water-resistant taro,⁷³ have been experimented with to supplement the anticipated reduction in food supply. New varieties of crops that can be rotated throughout the year and harvested in a shorter period are also being explored.

Recent Research on Climate Change

Research undertaken on climate change in the Mortlocks reconfirms what the islanders have already witnessed or experienced. For example, a study conducted by Australian academic Rosita Henry and her team on Moch Island demonstrated that many Mortlockese are aware of climate change. The islanders were questioned about the causes of the rise in sea level. As one local person claimed, “to my own understanding and word by mouth from some people, the ice berg at the North and South Pole start melting and cause this sea level rise.”⁷⁴

Others linked the concept of global warming with global issues and human activities such as pollution, airplane smoke, and greenhouse gases. These responses are not confined to the island of Moch, but are widespread views held by islanders throughout the Mortlocks region. Their awareness of climate change is heightened with the recent installation of Internet access, announcements on the radios, networks of students in the diaspora, and engagement with officials at the national level.⁷⁵ Indeed Micronesians are

⁷⁰ Hezel, “Highwater in the Low Atolls”, p.18.

⁷¹ Hezel, “Highwater in the Low Atolls”, p.18.

⁷² Gibson Susumu, *Interview*, Palikir, Pohnpei, July 13, 2013.

⁷³ The State of Kosrae is experimenting with salt water resistant taros. Other islands in Chuuk and Yap are also in the process of experimenting with this new type of taro. Ibid.

⁷⁴ Henry et al, *Heritage and Climate Change in Micronesia*, p. 21.

⁷⁵ This is based on personal observation and interviews with Micronesians at home and abroad.

placing responsibility for global warming on the larger economic structures of the bigger nations.⁷⁶

Another study conducted by Fletcher and Richmond noted that in 2007 and 2008, FSM

“Communities were flooded by large high tides... that eroded beaches, damaged roads, intruded in aquifers and ...and inundated communities. Seawater flowed into coastal wetlands and surged up through the water table killing taro, breadfruit, and other food crops. Fresh water (wells) turned brackish and (have not fully recovered). Crop sites in use for generations were physically and chemically damaged or destroyed on approximately sixty percent of inhabited atoll islets. Again, food and drinking water were in short supply. A nationwide state of emergency was announced on December 30, 2008, and food security was declared the top priority in the nation”.⁷⁷

An additional study of the same event by a medical doctor, Mark Keim,⁷⁸ on Lukunor and Oneop Islands also corroborated Fletcher’s and Richmond’s views. However, Keim went further to caution authorities to be mindful of health issues that can arise from climate change because of water and food shortages.

The FSM government has appointed a team of field observers to collect information to assist in the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of observable impacts from storm surges, beach erosion and salt water inundation in the taro patches.⁷⁹

Furthermore, the observers are also charged with the proper education of the local people in relation to the newly adopted national government policy. Fundamental to the observers’ task is to detail local knowledge of adaptation strategies to be integrated into the western methods of research studies. In my interview with one of the project coordinators, Gibson Susumu, he commented on how the local people resorted to traditional food items that were only eaten during drought.⁸⁰ Documentation of these strategies is required as the first line for survival before assistance arrived.

Food Production Strategies

A food security vulnerability assessment authored by two of FSM’s agricultural specialists, Gibson Susumu and Mark Kostka, indicated that agricultural production is declining due to poor soil conditions caused by saltwater. They stated that, “the biggest

⁷⁶ Henry, et al, *Heritage and Climate Change in Micronesia*, p. 21.

⁷⁷ Fletcher and Richmond, *Climate Change in the Federated States of Micronesia*, p.9

⁷⁸ Keim, “Sea Level Rise Disaster in Micronesia”. See his detailed study and analysis at the website <<http://healthandcultureinoceania.wikispaces.com/file/view/sea+level+rise+in+Micronesia.pdf>>

⁷⁹ Susumu, *Interview*.

⁸⁰ Ibid. Drought foods include parts of the coconut and banana trees, shrubs as well as small land and sea creatures.

threat to food security is the impact of climate change. Over forty-five atolls in the FSM continue to be affected by the sea level rise.”⁸¹ Taro patches are the major problem as the local inhabitants are either abandoning them because they become unproductive, or waiting for rain to dilute the saltwater before re-farming the land (which takes a long time to return to full production).⁸²

The government has set up a national food security committee called the *FSM Food Security Steering Committee* (FSSC). The FSSC’s role is to enhance coordination and cooperation of food security for the nation, and to oversee the effective implementation of future initiatives.⁸³ In my interviews with Susumu, he noted that during a recent trip in 2012 to the low-lying atolls in Chuuk, many people were close to starvation due to the failure of food crops affected by salt water. He estimated that close to 70% of all the islands he visited in Chuuk alone, food production stood out as the main challenge for the islanders. Many of the low-lying islands in Yap and Pohnpei were experiencing the same difficulty.⁸⁴

The FSM government has been working hard on its adaptation policies with regard to food security and environmental management. They have suggested the following strategies to sustain food production:

- Switch to different cultivars;
- Improve and conserve soils;
- Increase water supply by using groundwater, building reservoirs and rain catchment;
- Improving watershed management-desalination;
- Improve or develop water management;
- Alter system operating rules, e.g. pricing policies, legislation;
- Improve coastal zones and marine ecosystems;
- Protection, including building sea walls, and beach nourishment;

⁸¹ Susumu and Kostka, *Food Security Vulnerability Assessment Report*, p. v.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Australian Aid, *Food Security: Securing Food Resources in the Federated States of Micronesia*.

<<http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/pages/5cc039af-04d4-4b44-8e58-d26961096181/files/4pp-securing-food-resources-federated-states-micronesia.pdf>>

⁸⁴ Susumu and Kostka, *Food Security Vulnerability Assessment Report*, pp. iii-v.

- Research/monitor the coastal ecosystem.⁸⁵

According to Susumu and Kostka, new “concept projects” have been put to the national government to consider.⁸⁶ If the government accepts the proposals, they will be shared with both the state and local governments. The concept projects will include the following recommendations:

- Household food security- to create awareness in the community about the importance of food security and the need for people to eat more indigenous food. This will involve the re-strengthening of food production systems through the supply of root crops with vegetables, breadfruit, coconut and fruit trees to be integrated into the agroforestry system;
- Integrated atoll farming system and capacity building- This will involve planting of traditional food crops, home gardening, establishment of plant nurseries, hydroponics, and hands on technical training;
- Integrated coconut development- this project targets the rehabilitation and replanting of coconuts;
- Fisheries and aqua culture- to carefully assess locations suitable for the production of fish, seaweed, sea cucumber and other sea food resources;
- On the atolls, traditional practices such as restricting fishing activities on the coral reefs for a number of months or even years have been explored. This practice will allow further observation of the reef ecosystem and allow population of fish to regenerate at a healthy rate;
- Fishing- building of fishing weirs to farm fish in the lagoon;
- Breadfruit ground pit- this is a hole dug in the ground to store preserved breadfruit for future use. Many islanders have gone above the ground using large cooking pots to preserve breadfruit and other crops;
- Reducing family size- population growth will impact on the islands. Climate change threatens to reduce available farmlands and thus food supply will not satisfy population growth;

⁸⁵ Susumu and Kostka, *Food Security Vulnerability Assessment Report*, pp. iii-v.

⁸⁶ Susumu and Kostka, *Food Security Vulnerability Assessment Report*, pp. iii-v. A saltwater-resistant taro farm project in Kosrae was trialed as mentioned by Susumu during my interview with him in Palikir, Pohnpei, July 13, 2013.

- Use of traditional fishing canoes- canoes are less harmful to the marine environment compared to motorboats that use fuel and pollute the water.⁸⁷

I noted other food production strategies during my fieldwork in the islands that can also be included in the above list. They include:

- Utilising *peiel* (coconut fibre)⁸⁸ to absorb water as well as constructing stone-walls, and digging canals using the land topography to deviate water flow. This has been done on my island Lekinioch⁸⁹.
- Small family farms for coconut and land crabs. This will involve locating appropriate inland areas where both species can survive and thrive⁹⁰.
- Barter- this will encourage local people to concentrate on planting traditional crops and reduce the importation of junk food, which is causing all kinds of health problems for the local population⁹¹;
- Develop marine farms for octopuses and clams as well as reintroduction of traditional weirs that can be used for both growing and catching of specific fish species.⁹²

The rapidly growing body of evidence documenting the adverse impact of global warming on small island states has prompted the FSM government to undertake an active role in the international arena to call on industrialised nations to cut greenhouse gas emissions.⁹³ The FSM has signed international agreements that are related to climate change. They include the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, the Vienna Convention and the Mexico City Pact. It has also signed and ratified other major conventions regarding environmental issues.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ Susumu and Kostka, *Food Security Vulnerability Assessment Report*, pp. iii-v; Gibson, *Interview*.

⁸⁸ *Peiel* is the fibre enclosing the copra. The fibre is separated from the copra by way of using a sharp big stick called *anget*. The fibre is used in piles to encircle crops slowing down water to reach the crops.

⁸⁹ Personal recommendation based on experience growing up learning the traditional methods of environmental conservation.

⁹⁰ Personal recommendation based on experience growing up learning the traditional methods of environmental conservation.

⁹¹ Personal recommendation based on experience growing up learning the traditional methods of environmental conservation.

⁹² Personal recommendation based on experience growing up learning the traditional methods of environmental conservation.

⁹³ *Nationwide Climate Change Policy 2009*, pp.2-3.

⁹⁴ Jackson Soram, Head of Climate Change Advisory body to the FSM Government, *Interview*, January 21, 2011.

The FSM is also a part of a sub-regional agreement called the “Green Micronesia Initiative.” This sub-regional agreement, which is spearheaded by the chief executives of the various regional governments in Micronesia, seeks to increase energy efficiency by 20%, increase energy conservation by 20%, and expand renewable energy to achieve 30% power generation from renewable technologies.⁹⁵ The proposed date for achieving these targets is 2020.⁹⁶ Moreover, Mr. Soram, the spokesperson on climate change for the national government, also said that the FSM was not committed to the COP15 (Copenhagen) agreement; it has signed the COP16 (Cancun) agreement but is still in the process of studying the agreement before implementation. As for COP17 (Durban), the FSM is still considering some of the issues before committing itself fully.⁹⁷ However, the FSM’s participation in international climate change forums cannot solve all its local issues.

Initiating Environmental Strategies

The FSM environmental strategy began in 1999 during the nation’s second economic summit calling for the establishment of “a network of effective, community managed, ecologically sustainable agricultural practices, in order...to safeguard the nations’ precious natural heritage”.⁹⁸ This strategy was refined further in different action plans over the first decade of this century. They include the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (2002), the Blueprint for Conserving the Biodiversity of the FSM (2003), the state-specific Biodiversity Action Plan (2004), the FSM Strategic Development Plan (2004-2023), and the National Environment Sector Plan (2009).⁹⁹ The biodiversity reports identified the state of both the nations’ and the states’ biological resources and the current biological and anthropogenic threats that are affecting their continued existence;¹⁰⁰ while the development plan looks at strategies to optimise economic output in light of future threats and the scaling down of the United States Compact Agreement.¹⁰¹ The report on the national environment identifies strategies to protect the nation’s environments on which economic output relies upon.¹⁰² The national

⁹⁵ *Millennium Development Goals and Status: Report 2010: The Federated States of Micronesia*, Prepared by Office of Statistics et al, December 15, 2010, Palikir, Pohnpei, 2010, p. 74; Benadette H. Carreon, “Pacific Leaders Launch Green Initiative” in *Marianas Variety*, 11 August 2010 <<http://www.mvariety.com/cnmi/cnmi-news/local/29204-pacific-leaders-launch-green-energy-initiav>>

⁹⁶ *Millennium Development Goals and Status Report 2010*, p, 74.

⁹⁷ Jackson Soram, *Interview*, October 10, 2012.

⁹⁸ *Millennium Development Goals and Status Report 2010*, p.72.

⁹⁹ *Millennium Development Goals and Status Report 2010*, p.72.

¹⁰⁰ The Blueprint for Conserving the Biodiversity of the FSM (2003), p.p.iii-iv

¹⁰¹ The Blueprint for Conserving the Biodiversity of the FSM (2003), p.8.

¹⁰² The Blueprint for Conserving the Biodiversity of the FSM (2003), pp.3-5.

government is seeking funds in order to implement the recommendations of these reports. It remains to be seen how long it will take before the implementation of the recommendations occurs.

In 1994 the FSM prepared a baseline assessment of greenhouse emissions. It noted total emissions as expressed in CO₂ equivalents, were 246.01 giga grams per year.¹⁰³ Almost all of the emissions (98 per cent) came from the energy sector with only a small contribution from the agricultural sector. It is important to note that these emission volumes are minute when compared to the global scale. However, as a member of the international community, FSM is committed to reducing its domestic emissions.

Nonetheless, industrialised countries need to commit themselves to reducing their own emissions if humanity is going to survive the impact of climate change in the future. The FSM is a supporter of the “Tuvalu Deal”¹⁰⁴ which advocates the reduction of emissions to keep the rise of the planet temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius, so as to keep the sea level from rising further.¹⁰⁵ Other considerations involve getting the major international “emitters” to adhere to their suggestion to set aside funds, which could be used by vulnerable countries in the Pacific and Indian Oceans for immediate adaptation projects in order to safeguard their future.

Saving the Environment

Ensuring a sustainable environment rests on the nation’s development goals, which are ultimately geared towards improving adaption techniques. Development to the Mortlockese may be measured in terms of the application of local-based knowledge coupled with skill-based imported technology that could be used to enhance islanders’ adaptation strategies.¹⁰⁶ For example, the main food supplies for islanders are from the sea, and the breadfruits and taros they harvest from their land. Islanders have designed new methods to preserve breadfruits by putting them above ground in large pots instead of preserving in underground pits to prevent saturation from seawater floods.

Modern technologies are also used such as refrigerators, freezers, and ice plants to prolong the storage of fish and other perishable local foodstuff. Solar panels have been introduced especially on the low-lying islands for the same purpose and also to connect

¹⁰³ *Millennium Development Goals and Status Report 2010*, p. 74.

¹⁰⁴ The Tuvalu Deal emerged during the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference where it was put to the member states attending that Tuvalu will not be able to maintain itself if global temperature rise above 2 degrees celsius over the next decades. See also Masao Nakayama, “*Statement before the Committee of Religious NGOs*”.

¹⁰⁵ *Climate Change Policy*, p.1.

¹⁰⁶ *Climate Change Policy*, p, 2.

to the international community through the use of computers, radios and television and other forms of technological means.¹⁰⁷ These have also enhanced the islanders' understanding of climate change issues.¹⁰⁸

The adaptation policy published by the national government has not filtered down to the local level sufficiently to have a comprehensive local impact. Part of the problem is the lack of trainers to educate the local population on policy issues. The Mortlockese are doing the best they can to protect their land, waiting for further research findings and welcoming scientists and international aid. Local communities have implemented certain programs based on local knowledge like planting of native plants with big roots such as *shia* (mangroves), *fash* (pandanus), and *rakish* (sea oaks) that have the ability to prevent soil and beach erosion. Adaptation remains a matter of life and death to the Mortlockese and has a higher priority than economic development on a large scale.¹⁰⁹

Development and Climate Change

A 2006 report called "Federated States of Micronesia: National Assessment Report" discussed sustainable development strategies. Written by FSM economist and financial expert, Fabian Nimea, it indicated that there is not a single comprehensive national sustainable development strategy (NSDS) for the nation. However, there are disparate pieces of information and plans that need to be put together to formulate an overall NSDS plan. In doing so, any such NSDS should be accompanied by supporting mechanisms for the purpose of implementation and reinforcement.¹¹⁰ This will include policy development and legal frameworks. As Nimea noted, "sustainable development planning [will]...better manage the process [of] development, implementation and improvement."¹¹¹ However, missing in this report is the specific economic model that Mortlockese can utilise to sustain their livelihood instead of perpetuating outsiders' perceptions of development, which are often unsuitable to island lifestyles.

¹⁰⁷ Larry Bruton, "Successful Renewable Energy Projects in the FSM", *The 26th Pacific Islands Environment Conference*, June 22-25, 2009, Saipan, CNMI.
<<http://www.epa.gov/region9/islands/conf09/Larry-Bruton.pdf>>

¹⁰⁸ Stephen J. Winter, "Water for an Island", The FH Foundation, Long Beach, California, 1995.

¹⁰⁹ According to a local source in the atolls, the most important thing in their lives is maintaining local production to sustain their livelihood as they have been doing for many centuries. However, imported goods are shared to supplement local diet. See also Puas, "How Can Development be Linked to Climate", pp. 4-5.

¹¹⁰ Nimea, *Federated States of Micronesia: National Assessment Report*, p. iii.

¹¹¹ Nimea, *Federated States of Micronesia: National Assessment Report*, p. iii.

Ten key objectives ranging from establishing a comprehensive system of environmental law and good governance to strengthening the knowledge base of the local people were key factors in formulating sustainable development strategies “that will be evolutionary, adaptable, and sustainable for all generations”, according to Nimea.¹¹² Despite all the suggested frameworks identified in the report, the Sustainable Development Strategy Plan still fell short of “linking and integrating them with socio-economic priorities” for the FSM.¹¹³ In 2009 the FSM government produced its own “Nationwide Climate Change Policy” document, which further incorporated the objectives of Nimea’s report.

The “Nationwide Climate Change Policy” document identified some major issues that the national government needed to inform its people about, such as the importance of combating the impact of climate change within the framework of sustainable development. This report was compiled using mainly international adaptation instruments. It needs input from the local inhabitants to ensure the complementary policy of “act locally, think globally” is practised. Thus the overall statement of the policy should be for the FSM government to participate globally in the mitigation of climate change while at the same time promoting adaptation at the domestic level to ensure the survivability of its people into the future.¹¹⁴

At the international level, the FSM government is actively involved in lobbying the largest economies to be mindful of their practices that are impacting on the livelihoods of Micronesians. The FSM is also part of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) organisation, and also regional organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) whose purposes include promoting their collective interests against the impact of climate change. At the domestic level, local knowledge should be the main driver, whilst at the same time forging new partnerships with the international scientific community. Partnership means ensuring the preservation of natural heritage and natural resources in all the islands.¹¹⁵ It also means requiring all development activities to take into account “projected climate change design and implementation of (the) strategic development plan, such as the use of eco-based approaches, and the implementation of strategies to sustain food production.”¹¹⁶

¹¹² Ibid., pp. iii-iv.

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. ii-iv.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 35-36.

¹¹⁵ Nimea, *Federated States of Micronesia: National Assessment Report*, pp. 35-36

¹¹⁶ *The Millennium Development Goals and Status Report 2010*, p.3.

Self Reliance

Food security presents one of the main challenges to the FSM Government. The “Food Security Vulnerability Assessment” report (authored by agriculturalists Susumu and Kostka in 2011) gave a snap shot of what the FSM may look like in the future. The authors characterised the FSM economy as aid dependent wherein the FSM relies primarily on money provided by the US under the Compact Agreement and as well as from other donor countries like Japan, China and Australia. The authors found that the Compact’s funding provides about sixty-five per cent of revenue for the national government and seventy-five per cent of revenue for the states. The FSM economy remains in negative growth today.¹¹⁷ A shift to local thinking is required to ensure self-sufficiency remains an objective for the nation especially in the coming years when climate change impacts become more severe.

Additionally, appropriate construction of public buildings and private dwellings needs to incorporate the changes in the local environment, such as the variation in temperature and topography as caused by climate change.¹¹⁸ The best possible design for these buildings is one that implements designs that use local knowledge and materials, in addition to the weather-resistant imported materials and engineering models. For example, *shoon fash* (pandanus leaves) and *shoon nu* (coconut leaves), *sopon mei* (breadfruit trunks) and *sopon nu* (coconut trunks), and *shia* (mangrove), *mosor* (*Guettarda speciosa*) and *shokis* (*pemphisacidula*)¹¹⁹ are best suited to the island environment. They can withstand the tropical weather longer than the materials imported from China or Japan, for example. Moreover, local products are cheaper than the inflated prices charged for imported materials. Also, local knowledge should be incorporated into high school or post-secondary trade qualifications to encourage sustainable building practices.

Sustaining the Seas

The fishing industry has been targeted as part of FSM’s self-sufficiency blueprint for survival in the future. The FSM EEZ is about 2.9 million square kilometres of ocean area, and it is considered one of the most productive tuna fishing areas in the world. It is

¹¹⁷ Susumu and Kostka, *Food security Vulnerability Assessment*, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ Islanders observe temperature caused by climate change to give them ideas about their fishing activities, for example; Walter, *Interview*.

¹¹⁹ *Shokis* is a very strong tree that is grown in salt water on the shoreline. Branches are used in traditional house construction, especially for pillars. It is also used for fish traps as it can last for many years.

estimated that the FSM is capable of sustaining a yield of well over 100,000 tons annually; however, it lacks the capabilities to participate in its full exploitation.¹²⁰ Its fishing industry benefits outside countries like Japan, Korea, and Taiwan who pay a fishing license fee to the FSM Government that is less than 10% of the sale value of the fish caught. Aquaculture can be a productive exercise and the government is looking into this option. For example, aquaculture and marine farming have already started in Pohnpei but require skilled workers to maintain them. The National Fishing Corporation is also involved in a joint venture to maximise the EEZ's potential. Already, there has been an increase in NFC's profit as reported in 2013 and confirmed by the President of the FSM Fishing Corporation.¹²¹

Local agricultural production for domestic consumption is another priority for food security and self-reliance. However, the budget set aside to encourage the local people to engage in agricultural programs has been disappointing. For example, Susumu and Kostka noted that in "2004 to 2005 only 1.8 per cent of the national budget (the budget was USD 63 million in total)¹²² was set aside for agriculture."¹²³ Many argued that the lack of interest on the part of the locals to engage in agricultural activities stemmed from the following: Firstly, the younger generation considers agriculture to be a "dirty" business, and so it is not a priority for them. They prefer to engage in white-collar employment where the pay is higher than other local options; Secondly, agriculture is not widely promoted in the educational curriculum; Thirdly, the younger generation does not see the need to enlarge the scope of agricultural activities as they consider it for local consumption only, rather than commercial sale in order to attain large profits.¹²⁴

With the onslaught of climate change, the attitude of many of the younger generation is that if the soil cannot be saved from erosion and the impact of sea level rise, then what is the point of agriculture if it is a doomed enterprise? Why concentrate on agriculture if many people will likely be leaving their homes in the future because of climate change?

¹²⁰ According to Peter Sitan, *Personal Communication*, during the Micronesian Australian Friends Association Research Symposium, Australian National University, April 29, 2014. Peter Sitan is the president and Chief Executive Officer of the National (FSM) Fishing Corporation. The shortcomings in the FSM's capacity to maximise its fishing potential is also discussed by D'Arcy, "The Lawless Ocean?", pp. 3-5.

¹²¹ Peter Sitan, "The Development of the Tuna Fisheries in the Federated States of Micronesia", Paper delivered at the *Micronesia in Focus* Symposium at the Australian National University, February 28, 2014.

¹²² FSM Public Information Office

<<http://www.fsmcongress.fm/CFSM%20news/18thCFSM/CFSM%20News%20No.13-13.html>>

¹²³ Susumu and Kostka, *Food Security Vulnerability Assessment*, p.3.

¹²⁴ Susumu, *Interview*.

There is an urgent need for education about options for climate change mitigation and adaptation for young Micronesians so they do not abandon hope.¹²⁵

Policy Formulation

The mobilisation of government field officers to collect data to provide an overall picture of the impact of climate change on the nation is ongoing. Evidence suggests that there is a heightened awareness shared by islanders in relation to soil erosion and the rise in the sea level, most notably the intrusion of salt water onto farmland.¹²⁶ Some islanders have expressed their anxiety in relation to the gloomy prediction about their possible early relocation, which seems to be more certain as the years go by. Already there are people moving to join their relatives on the volcanic islands. However, others have accepted the risks of climate change, and so they are determined to “keep up the battle” to ensure that the future generations will have homelands where the ancestral ways are preserved.¹²⁷

To complement its climate change adaptation policy, the FSM government in 2010 produced yet another document called “Millennium Development Goals and Status Report”. This report was in response to the UN’s eight “Millennium Development Goals” (MDG), alternatively known as the “Millennium Declaration” which is supposed to be finalised in 2015.¹²⁸ In 2003 the FSM completed a twenty-year Strategic Development Plan (SDP) that reflected the input of over four hundred participants representing a broad range of perspectives including government, traditional leaders, industry, and civil society.¹²⁹ The report identified priorities for the promotion of sustainable development objectives.

The objectives included good governance, coordinated nationwide sustainable economic development with inputs from the grassroots and state governments, encouragement of private sector led economy, development of technical know how by merging traditional and outside knowledge, investment in relevant infrastructure to combat the adverse effects of climate change, and the implementation of long-term environmental

¹²⁵ Marcus Samo, *Interview*, The FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs, Palikir, Pohnpei, June 21, 2013.

¹²⁶ Gibson Susumu, John Wichap, Marlyter Silbanuz, *Preliminary Damage Report Assessment (PDA) Report Federated States of Micronesia: Agriculture Damage Report*, Palikir, Pohnpei, 2011, pp.14-16. For further assessment and discussion see Fletcher, and Richmond, *Climate Management*, pp.4-5; Henry et al, *Heritage and Climate Change in Micronesia*, pp. 5-15; Hezel, “High Water in the Low Atolls”, *Micronesian Counselor*, Issue 76 <www.micsem.org>

¹²⁷ Interview Mortlocks people during field research in Pohnpei January 5-12, 2011.

¹²⁸ *The Millennium Development Goals*, pp. 8-9.

¹²⁹ *The Millennium Development Goals* p.7.

protection and sustainability. The report declared that the link between the MDG and the SDP could be achieved by a coordinated approach between the national and state departments, offices and agencies, the private-sector-led NGOs and civil society organisations that ultimately promote the eight-millennium development goals.¹³⁰

While the report identified the areas of development priorities for the nation, it remains to be seen how this will translate into concrete action. Take for example goal number 7. Its objective is to “ensure environmental sustainability to integrate the principles of sustainable development into...policies and programs; reverse loss of environmental resources by 2015,”¹³¹ To achieve this objective by 2015 is unrealistic because the FSM government does not have the capacity to implement it. Perhaps, it should be left to each country to set its own implementation deadlines. Alternatively, the FSM should not be obliged to implement a UN goal that is outside its capacity. There are inherent flaws in the FSM government policies as it is paying too much attention to dictates from outside. The report is therefore a symbolic statement on paper, which does not reflect the realities of Micronesian modes of production, their environment, and their social system.¹³² These are the backbone of their identity and continuity.

Resiliency and Local Communities

The FSM must continuously explore its economic potential in terms of its own resources to deliver important services to its people.¹³³ The national government advocates all development activities which take into account projected climate change design and implementation of its strategic development plan such as the use of eco-based approaches, and the implementation of strategies to improve local food production as fundamental to the nation’s adaptation policy.¹³⁴ Adaptation is therefore about the maintenance and preservation of Micronesian cultures through locally based education, and combined efforts with outside agencies as a model of preserving the history of Micronesia, which will be threatened by the impact of climate change.

Capacity building and training involve developing a coordinated system of training programs, in order for the FSM to be able to respond to the impact of all climate change

¹³⁰ *The Millennium Development Goals*, p. 2

¹³¹ *The Millennium Development Goals* p. 2

¹³² See Rich Harris and Clare Provost, “The Millennium Development Goals: Big Ideas, Broken Promises?”, *The Guardian*, 24 September 2013 <[http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/interactive/2013/sep/24/millennium-development->](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/interactive/2013/sep/24/millennium-development-)

¹³³ Nimea, *National Assessment*, pp. 1-10.

¹³⁴ *The FSM Climate Change Policy*, p.2; Susumu, Wichep, Silbanuz, *Preliminary Damage report Assessment (PDA) Report Federated States of Micronesia: Agriculture Damage Report*, pp.15-16.

issues as they arise. The first priority is to implement local knowledge as a first line of defence.¹³⁵ In order to deliver effective programs the national government has teamed up with its state counterparts in the designing and development of strategies to ensure that people at the grassroots level are aware of new information about climate change. Human resources for the purposes of collecting and analysis of data for enhancing adaptation policies are already in place, but require more personnel. Of course many foreign governments and institutions are present in the FSM, but they are there to assist in the implementation of policy practices and community-based climate change projects, which are initiated locally, rather than being the main drivers of the initiatives.¹³⁶

Adaptation and Island Development

Mortlockese have adapted to their local environment and utilised local knowledge to provide for their needs for centuries.¹³⁷ When one speaks about development in the Mortlock Islands, the islanders often react by asking, “development for whom?” Such a reaction reflects the long history of colonialism in the FSM and Mortlockese suspicion of outsiders’ influence in their attempts to reshape the region according to foreign plans or models. The Mortlockese are always aware of their economic circumstances due to the limited modern technology they have. Furthermore, the Mortlockese consider that developing their islands should be done according to how locals envisage their island, and at their own pace.

The inter-connection between extended families, which has been in place for many centuries, acts as the safety net for islanders’ ongoing survival. It maintains the fabric of the islands social wealth, which feeds into the larger economic system.¹³⁸ Today this infrastructure continues to be at the heart of the islanders’ continuity. The extended family model has increased its connection globally by virtue of the new diaspora under the Compact. Islanders continue to adapt to the new globalisation system to ensure the survival of the Mortlockese future generations.¹³⁹

Micronesians understand the benefits that derive from retaining their connection within the diaspora. They also understand the benefits that can derive from engaging experts

¹³⁵ *The FSM Climate Change Policy*, pp. 1-3.

¹³⁶ *The FSM Climate Change Policy*.

¹³⁷ Oral history; Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 3-5.

¹³⁸ Oral history; Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 3-5.

¹³⁹ For specific discussion on Micronesian global movement see Marshall, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef*, pp. 113-130.

from a variety of international channels in designing unique local-based economy for proper conservation in anticipation of climate change challenges. Educational curriculum should also play its part to teach the young generation about local knowledge so that they can appreciate their environment, and at the same time transmitting traditional skills and relevant skills from the outside world to the next generation.

Adaptation is a priority not just to the Mortlockese, but also elsewhere in the FSM and the Pacific Islands. Individual scientists and groups are partnering with the community-based groups in the FSM to collaborate on the best options to fight the impact of climate change. The national climate change policy's overall objective is to harness all traditional practices from all the low-lying islands nation-wide as well as the volcanic islands to form the basis of Micronesian first line of defence against the encroaching sea rise. Field officers are monitoring environmental changes and educating the islanders from low-lying atolls. In Pohnpei, for example, the island of Pakin has just recently planted pandanus trees on its shorelines by borrowing the idea from Mokil and Pingelap islands, which have had successful projects in that area. Likewise many islands are circulating new ideas regarding the first line of defence by utilising new engineering projects like the sea wall in Kosrae and above-ground farming like in Yap. Islanders will continue to adapt as they always have done historically.

Conclusion

Climate change issues are the responsibility of the three stratas of government in the federation. However, each level of government works within its own jurisdiction as defined by the nation's constitution. The President, the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Resources and Development, and the Office of the Environment and Emergency Management are working together with their state counterparts such as the Environmental Protection Agencies (EPA) and the historical preservation offices.

Climate change adaptation ranks as one of the top priorities of the nation, and newly introduced laws have been enacted to support the government policies. The national government officials have been conducting field studies and discussions with the population in all the islands where support for climate change adaptation is strongly

felt.¹⁴⁰ While it can be acknowledged that the FSM climate change policy is still evolving it still seems to be facing a number of obstacles.

These problems include lack of human resources development, infrastructure building capacity, and funding.¹⁴¹ However, at least the people of the FSM understand that their government is trying as best as it can to link the issues of development with its climate change adaptation policy. In the Mortlocks region, economic development emphasised sustainability practices, and discouraged reliance on foreign assistance except in the use of new technologies to fight climate change impacts.

The rise in sea level is not only affecting the islands' fragile arable land, but it is also disturbing fishing activities. Beach erosion and intense sea currents that circulate around the islands are interrupting the flow of nutrients to the feeding grounds. Oral testimonies from fishing communities indicated that many species of fish are migrating to different parts of the shorelines or lagoon. Schools of fish such as *sarikai* (anchovies), *umulo* (rabbit fish), and *iketor* (mullet) that were once in the shallow water have disappeared and it is not clear whether they will return to their original habitats, especially with the changes in the shoreline zones due to climate change.¹⁴²

From the 1970s to the mid-2000s the lower Mortlocks were hit by unusual tides.¹⁴³ However, people have observed the increase of saltwater inundation in the taro farms and on other food crops as a result of king tides. Because of the volume of the saltwater, it remains in the farms for many weeks. Lukunor Islanders have had to dig new canals to let the saltwater out. They have even caught fish in the taro swamp, and it was also claimed that they were new fish species never seen before.

This is a grim reminder of what the islands will experience in the future without effective adaptation strategies in conjunction with the international community. Micronesians' first priority is to maintain self-sufficiency to ensure continuity. The land and the surrounding seas sustain livelihoods for Micronesians. They must be prepared to face this challenge as a priority, at the least to slow down the impact of climate change in order to continue as a people with a distinct history in a unique place where past generations lie buried. The future is unpredictable and challenging, but so too have

¹⁴⁰ Suzumu, *Interview*.

¹⁴¹ Susumu, *Interview*.

¹⁴² This was due to my personal experience growing up on Lukunor listening to local fishermen discuss issues about fishing.

¹⁴³ Kandy and Chol, *Interview*. My interviews with many Mortlockese confirmed the unusual weather patterns in the Mortlocks.

Micronesians faced climatic obstacles in the past. How Micronesians might best face this uncertain future is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

Introduction

This chapter deals with the challenges currently facing the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Such challenges are multiple, but in the main they include the reduction in funding from the Compact of Free Association (Compact), climate change, promoting economic development to increase the sources of funding, education, health, the Constitution, foreign relations, customs and traditions, the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and leadership issues. I will discuss these challenges within the context of how Micronesians have dealt with and are continuing to respond to these issues. For example, what sort of self-reliant practices and external assistance will the FSM require in order to overcoming these challenges? Should there be a particular time frame to address these challenges in light of the dwindling of funds post-2023? Is the *ainang* system strong enough to be able to withstand the increasing impact of the globalised world?

Situating Micronesia in the Contemporary World

On May 11, 2015, controversy surrounded Emmanuel Mori when he left the office of the Presidency of the FSM in 2015. Specifically, in the last days of the presidency, he used his constitutional power to pardon nine felons who were prosecuted for criminal offenses while in public office. Amongst the pardoned felons were ex-congressmen, most of who were from Chuuk, Mori's resident state.¹ Mori's action was seen by many citizens as a conciliatory gesture to put the nation back in order.² However, others were sceptical about the move. They considered the gesture as politically motivated as it seemed that Mori needed the support of the pardoned congressmen in order to secure votes in the event he chose to again run for the national Congress.³ His ambition was not to be realised, as there was no vacancy in Congress. The senator from Chuuk remained in Congress to take up the vice presidency seat in the executive. This was seen by many observers as a deliberate move to prevent Mori from having the opportunity to

¹ "President Mori Granted Pardon to Ten FSM Citizens", FM Updates, May 9, 2015

<<http://myfsm.blogspot.com.au/2015/05/president-mori-grants-pardon-to-ten-fsm.html>>

² President Mori left office in May 11, 2015. It has been speculated that the reason for the pardon was to solicit assistance from the convicted ex-congressmen. See debate "Convicted Felons Cannot Run For Public Office" <<http://www.micronesiaforum.org/>>

³ "Convicted Felons Cannot Run For Public Office" <<http://www.micronesiaforum.org/>>

return the Congress.⁴ Many Micronesians have welcomed the new president, Peter Christian, with his vision of moving the nation forward with a new political and economic optimism.

Recent debate in many Micronesian public forums indicates that President Christian has declared his strong desire to work cooperatively with the Congress towards a better future.⁵ The President was formally one of the longest-serving congressmen in the nation. He has served in many capacities, including the Speaker of the Congress, chairman of many of the congressional committees, and the chief negotiator of the FSM Compact renegotiation team in 2001. President Christian is also a prominent businessman, and his skills in this area combined with his public service experience may assist the nation to face the challenges of the future. However, his past legacy is not without criticism. For example, he has been criticised for allowing the USA to have a controlling vote in JEMCO when that entity was originally formed.⁶ However, he has been an advocate against USA's demand for the FSM government to be more accountable to the US in relation to the Compact funds, which he sees as a breach of FSM sovereignty. For example, in 2011, he tabled a congressional resolution requesting former President Mori to terminate the Compact in 2018.⁷ This resolution was in response to a proposal to screen FSM citizens before entering the USA post-September 11 2001 terrorist attack. In his eyes the USA broke the spirit of the Compact and as such the FSM should move forward without depending on the Compact funds. It remains to be seen how his administration will deal with the ongoing challenges of FSM's relationship with the USA under the Compact.

Compact of Association or Is It Disassociation?

The FSM is going through an intense economic and political transition in preparation for the reduction in Compact funds post-2023. Since the implementation of the Compact, in 1986, the United States has provided over \$2 billion dollars to the FSM

⁴ *Micronesia Forum*, under the heading "22 days Left- Peter President and Simina Vice President Who Will Run in Their Places"?

⁵ "22 days Left- Peter President and Simina Vice President Who Will Run in Their Places"?

⁶ Peter Christian was the chief Micronesian negotiator of the amended Compact. Many Micronesian citizens blamed Mr. Christian for giving in to the Americans regarding the composition of the Joint Economic Management Compact Office (JEMCO) which now the Americans control (3 Americans and 2 Micronesians) in the exercise of the Compact funds implementation. See *Micronesia Forum* under the thread Negotiations of Compact II<Micronesiaforum.org>; Statement By Deputy Assistant Secretary David B. Cohen, *Before the Joint Economic Management Committee Meeting in Pohnpei*, August 13, 2005, pp.1-7.

⁷ Seventeenth Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia, Second Regular Session, 2011, C.R.No.17-60.

Government in return for allowing the US power to deny access to the islands to third parties over the islands, ostensibly to preserve regional security but, in reality, a strategic denial to potential enemies of US national interests.⁸ The scaling down of financial assistance to the FSM may open up opportunities for other regional powers to extend their influence in the region. A trust fund was set up for the FSM under the Compact supposedly to replace the Compact funds post-2023. However, it is uncertain whether the proceeds from the trust fund will be enough to sustain the federation.⁹ There is speculation that China is likely to pay more attention to the FSM post 2023 due to its own interests in the region. As was noted in the previous chapter, China has been assisting the FSM in many areas such as the building of infrastructure, providing educational scholarships and training for FSM citizens to learn the Chinese system, providing concessional loans, and small-scale grants for community development.¹⁰ For the FSM, the key concern will be preserving and extending its autonomy in these circumstances. The Compact has been the major source of FSM government funds to run its bureaucracy since 1986. It is often referred to as the double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is seen as a saviour in that it prevents the FSM from bleeding to death from economic collapse, while on the other hand it is seen as handicapping FSM's progress both internationally and domestically by creating dependency on Compact monies. Despite this, Micronesians are aware of the fact that reliance on someone else's money is not economically viable in the long term. The nation is embarking on a balancing act to ensure its future economic survival.¹¹

The supporters of the amended Compact (2004) have welcomed US oversight of the distribution of funds with the hope this will put a stop to the misspending of funds that have been earmarked for essential sectors such as the private sector, education, health, and public infrastructure.¹² JEMCO has been conducting serious auditing of the Compact funds, and has withheld certain funds until the JEMCO is satisfied that the necessary checks and balances have been put in place by the FSM Government. With

⁸ Since WWII, US interest in the FSM is always strategic military interest. The Compact was negotiated in relation to such an interest. *The Compact of Free Association Between the Federated States of Micronesia and The United States of America as Amended*, 2003, pp.93-101.

⁹ It is predicted that there will be a shortfall of the trust fund by 2023. This has put stress on the leaders of the nation, which instigated Chuuk to seek independence to handle its own financial affairs. President Mori, *State of the Nation Address*, May 18, 2012, p.8.

¹⁰ Weidong, Chinese Ambassador to the FSM, *Interview*.

¹¹ Debate on the Compact whether has been beneficial is an ongoing issue. Ilon, advisor to the President of the FSM, *Interview*, Palikir, Pohnpei, January 13, 2011. Lorin Robert, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, *Interview*, January 7, 2011.

¹² See debate on the Compact on Micronesia Forum under the heading "The Compact is a Done Deal-Our Leadership Should Statr Thinking About Economic Development < <http://www.micronesiaforum.org/>>

this new auditing measure, both sides are studying their next move before the year 2023. It remains uncertain as to whether the Compact will be renegotiated for the third time.

The optimists perceive the Compact as a means of maintaining the important connection between the two countries. The FSM should not “cut its nose off to spite its face” even though the USA has been wrong on many occasions. The Compact, so they argue, is a safety net as it has provided the financial means to enable the building of the nation’s political and economic capacity.¹³ The US presence in the FSM has brought stability to the nation and also regional security. Moreover, it has allowed Micronesians to live, work, and seek education in America. These are good opportunities to release the population pressure through emigration--an offshoot of which has also benefited Micronesian families through remittances.¹⁴

The FSM is weighing its options to tap into alternative sources of funding to replace the Compact dollars. Many observers have predicted that the FSM is heading towards economic hardship in the years ahead with a reduced living standard compared to that currently enjoyed under the Compact. Many Micronesians I have interviewed over a two-year period (2011-2013) are expressing concerns as to what will happen after 2023. Some want to resort back to the sea and the land from which they have been sustained historically. Others have expressed the desire to look for employment overseas or to join their families who have already established themselves in the USA.¹⁵ The challenge is whether the FSM will genuinely survive politically without the economic assistance from the USA.

Facing Climate Change

The leading threats that arise from climate change are: coastal erosion, the rise in sea level, fresh water pollution, crop destruction due to salination-caused storm surges and the rise in the sea level. The ability of Micronesians to sustain environmental resources for future generations depends upon careful stewardship that reinvigorates traditional conservation practices and merges these with modern scientific principles. Most of the islands in the FSM are low-lying islands. A further rise in the sea level by two meters would have the effect of overwhelming the islands and require the relocation of the

¹³ Naich, *Sustaining the Spirit of the Compact*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴ Naich, *Sustaining the Spirit of the Compact*, pp. 5-6. *Ibid*

¹⁵ Naich, *Sustaining the Spirit of the Compact*, pp. 5-6 ; Elizabeth Grieco, *The Federated States of Micronesia: The “Push” to Migrate*, July 1 2003 <<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/federated-states-micronesia-push-migrate>>

people. “The “Tuvalu Deal”¹⁶ is seen as a lifesaver for islanders if it is adopted by the major international polluters.

Climate change is an ongoing challenge for the FSM. As was detailed in the previous chapter, this new threat is already impacting on the nation especially on the low-lying atolls. For example, strong storms, typhoons, sea surges, and drought have become major events. From the 1960s to the 1990s¹⁷ these events have been of concern, but remained on the margins of political debate. The reason was that climate change has not been well understood by a large number of Micronesians especially at the local level. For example, information about climate change was only accessible to a few government officials who attended conferences overseas in relation to the topic. Until recently there were no major studies undertaken on climate change events in the FSM. The only relevant information provided to the public was the daily reports regarding weather forecast.

The atolls in the FSM are far from the major port towns and so there have been no face-to-face educational programs provided to the atoll communities to enable them to better understand the issues relating to climate change. For example, when I was teaching at the College of Micronesia in the late 1990s, Mortlockese were complaining about serious foreshore erosion, especially on the ocean side of the lagoons. A team of assessors was dispatched to the Mortlocks, however, the assessors could not stay long to conduct in-depth studies as the only means of transportation available, the inter-island field trip ship, had to be shared by the many islands which inevitably requires that trips were short and infrequent.

Many Mortlockese have heard about climate change, but they do not understand the process fully, such as the causes of the extreme sea surges, although they may see the effect of their devastating impact. What they know is that they have witnessed unusual changes in their environment. For example, changes in weather patterns are not as predictable as they have been in the past. Summer months have come late, or in some years too early. This has affected the pattern of their fishing activities and the cultivation of their agricultural crops. They have also witnessed that breadfruit trees (one of the main staple crops) are producing less fruits and this has affected their food supply. The Mortlocks region is not an isolated case as the same experience is shared with its neighbouring islands and in other parts of Chuuk and the atolls in Pohnpei and

¹⁶ See “The Tuvalu Deal” for further details.

¹⁷ Oral history and personal experience. Transportation between Weno, the capital, and the outer islands was infrequent and as such studies were not properly conducted.

Yap.

On the volcanic islands there have been changes as well, although with lesser impact due to the elevation of the islands. The Federated States of Micronesia government is slowly developing policies to engage the public about how to respond to climate change. The policies are ad hoc owing to the lack of expertise in the field. The National Government is still amassing resources to deal with climate change impact. From the mid-2000s, major studies began to appear detailing the causes of the sea surges and the changes in the seasonal cycle that is impacting the outer islands in Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Kosrae.¹⁸ Today many local and national organisations have been established for the purpose of educating the public, and monitoring the progress of climate change in the FSM. Historical knowledge is also integrated into the educational programs such as traditional food storage, building materials, and methods of protecting the shorelines from saltwater incursion.

Education and Health

Education and health are major challenges particularly in terms of non-communicable diseases. The national government is mindful about its responsibilities and obligations to provide quality education and health services to its citizens. This is in compliance with the Constitutional mandate in relation to Article XIII, Section 1, which states; “ the national government of the Federated States of Micronesia recognizes the right of the people to education, health care, and legal services and shall take every step reasonable and necessary to provide these services.”¹⁹

According to the FSM government there have been improvements in these two areas. For example, total youth literacy was 95%, according to a report in 2000.²⁰ However, it remains to be seen the relevance of the type of education offered to youth. For example, is education targeting the development of individuals to be good citizens, or is education about acquisition of skills and knowledge for the competitive job market both at home and overseas. The College of Micronesia (COM) has dealt with this issue, and has offered both academic degrees and vocational certificates for students to choose

¹⁸ Some reports are Fletcher, and Richard, *Climate Management*; Henry, et al, *Heritage and Climate Change in Micronesia*; Susumu, and Kostka, *Federated States of Micronesia Food Security*; Keim, *Sea Level Rise Disaster in Micronesia*,

¹⁹ *The FSM Constitution Article XIII, Section 1.*

²⁰ Office of Statistics, Budget and Economic Management, Overseas Development Assistance, and Compact Management (SBOC)

<<https://www.spc.int/prism/Country/FM/stats/Social/Education/Yliteracy.htm>>

from, which allows the students choice in determining their educational direction.²¹ Many students have attained qualifications and have either moved to the USA to work where the wages are more attractive or to continue their education. Many have followed their families to start their high school years in the US and have then continued on to college.²² Those who chose to remain behind sought employment in the domestic market. They continue to live a more traditional life style. The educational challenge is therefore for educators to implement the best practices in education for the nation's future.

A report entitled “*Health Progress Report: 2008-2011*”, authored by the assistant Secretary of the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs (DHSA), Marcus Samo, indicated a marked improvement in DHSA's capacity to collect and analyse data for the purposes of monitoring and responding to the emerging health issues during the three-year period under review.²³ Samo's report further acknowledged an increase in the availability of medical, pharmaceutical, and biomedical assistance to the hospitals in the FSM.²⁴ An increase in funding was also noted as essential for DHSA's achievements. It should be noted that there is a need to improve the health of the population especially in the areas of non-communicable diseases (NCD) such as diabetes, hypertension, and lung cancer, which require special equipment.²⁵ It must also be remembered that a healthy nation depends heavily on the enhancement and enforcement of its laws, policies, and regulatory regimes governing the delivery and maintenance of both its social and health protection programs. Health and education responsibilities are shared between the states and the national government. They are thriving on the philosophy that a healthy nation depends on the quality of social services provided and also the quality of education of its population. Traditional lifestyles and diets can significantly reduce these NCDs. New programs for the purposes of educating the population on the benefits of local foods are in progress.²⁶ However, its ongoing success depends on local

²¹Personal knowledge as the Program Coordinator and Curriculum Designer at the College of Micronesia, Pohnpei Campus in 1998-2001. Henry H. Kellam, *Social Sector: Education, Part I: Education: Background Analysis: Understanding the Educational System in the FSM*, September 2001, pp. 10-12.

²²Personal knowledge as the Program Coordinator and Curriculum Designer at the College of Micronesia, Pohnpei Campus in 1998-2001; Kellam, *Social Sector: Education, Part I*, pp.10-12

²³ Marcus Samo, *Health Progress Report: 2008-2011*, Palikir, Pohnpei, January 1, 2012. Gonzaga Pua, *Review of the current Health Protection Practises in the FSM: Law, Regulation and Policy Regimes*, Palikir Pohnpei, July 30, 2013.

²⁴ Samo, *Health Progress Report*, pp. 32-33.

²⁵ Samo, *Health Progress Report*, pp. 32-33.

²⁶ Island Community Food Community of Pohnpei, *Let's Go Local: Culture, Health, Environment, Economy and Food Security* <[http://www. Islandfood.org/index.html](http://www.Islandfood.org/index.html)>

attitudes as Western foods are seen as a sign of prosperity and monetary wealth. This is a big challenge in the areas of education and health at the grassroots level.

Foreign Relations

Foreign relation is one of the key indicators of FSM success. That is because it will define the extent to which Micronesia interacts with the outside world and the benefits that flow from such interaction. For example, opportunities for capacity building, which are provided by other governments particularly in the areas of technology and economic development assistance, need to be maintained. However, Micronesia will only deepen its relations with countries that are empathetic to Micronesian causes such as the impact of climate change on the islands, respect of FSM's EEZ and air space, and a commitment to the principle of non-interference in FSM's internal political affairs.

At this stage there are still some outstanding legal issues that need to be resolved before the FSM can conduct itself effectively on the international scene. The ongoing debate between the US and FSM leaders over security issues of the US in the Pacific-Asia region under the Compact will remain a challenge.²⁷ However, in spite of that it needs to be noted that the primacy of the FSM Constitution over the Compact has not been fully articulated by the FSM officials when the Compact is at issue. Furthermore, the FSM Congress at times usurps the function of the executive branch in terms of foreign relations. For example, the Congress was involved in the renegotiation of the Compact which was seen as the function of the executive branch. The executive branch relinquished this function to Congress. The function of the executive branch is expressed in Article X Section 2 (a) and (b) which stipulate that the President is assigned "to faithfully execute and implement the provisions of (the) Constitution and all national laws"; and "... to conduct foreign affairs and the national defence in accordance with national law."²⁸

It has been argued that the sections contradicted the provisions of the Compact. For example, Article II, Section 123(a) of the Compact, states that, "in recognition of the authority and responsibility of the Government of the United States under Title Three (Defence and Security Relations), the Government of ... the Federated States of Micronesia shall consult, in the conduct of their foreign affairs, with the Government of

²⁷ Naich, *Sustaining the Spirit of the Compact*, pp.1-6.

²⁸ The FSM Constitution < <http://fsm.supremecourt.org/fsm/constitution/index.htm>>

the United States.”²⁹ Section 123(a) is being used by the US to assert its rights to veto decisions by the FSM Government in relation to the conduct of its foreign affairs if the decisions are not seen to be in the interests of the US. This is an area of significant debate and tension between the two governments.

In the Constitution it states that a “treaty is ratified by vote of 2/3 of the members of Congress, except that a treaty delegating major powers of government of the Federated States of Micronesia to another government shall also require majority approval by the legislatures of 2/3 of the states.”³⁰ The Compact is a treaty delegating major authority over defence of the FSM to another government, the USA, which has been permitted under the Constitution. It is within this legal context that the US asserts the primacy of the Compact over the Constitution and in particular the US right to veto decisions by the FSM Government in relation to third parties that are perceived to affect US security. However, one can argue that the USA cannot blindly rely on the Compact to pursue its objectives at the expense of Micronesian sovereignty and national interests. That is because the Constitution can limit the power of Compact if the Compact exceeds the power bestowed by the Constitution. Should there be a need to terminate the Compact Article XIV, Section 1 may be invoked.³¹ The FSM Foreign Affairs Department will have to monitor its duties under the Constitution and takes issue when any violation arises to ensure Micronesians stand firm on the issue of sovereignty. Micronesia’s image in the international community will be judged on how it conducts itself based on self-respect and also respect of others.

The Economic Exclusive Zone

The FSM’s economic exclusive zone (EEZ) remains the hope for the nation’s future, particularly at the end of Compact funding in 2023. The EEZ covers an area of 2,978,000 square kilometres.³² It has significant wealth in marine biota and likely mineral resources under and on its seabed. For example, in 2007 Peter Wilson, a fisheries expert whose consultancy work includes work for the governments of Papua New Guinea and the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, conducted a study of the tuna industry worldwide. He estimated that approximately 60% of the total tuna

²⁹ Refer to the (original) Compact of Free Association Between The Federated States of Micronesia and the United States of America

<<http://uscompact.org/files/index.php?dir=FSM%20Publications%2FCcompact%20Documents>>

³⁰ *The FSM Constitution*, Article XI, Section 4.

³¹ *The FSM Constitution*, Article XI, Section 4.

³² D’Arcy, “The Lawless Ocean”, p. 3; *Commercial Fisheries in the Federated States of Micronesia* <<http://www.fsmgov.org/nfc/>>

harvest in the world comes from the Western Pacific nation-states of FSM, Nauru, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.³³ The FSM contributes 28% to such harvest. Wilson noted that the main beneficiaries of the fishery harvests were Japan, the Philippines, Taiwan, US, and South Korea, while the European Union (EU) market is a growing beneficiary

The tuna fishing industry, according to Wilson, continues to grow on a yearly basis. Russia and the Arab League are also expressing interest in the Pacific Islands, commercially, particularly to access the tuna industry, and diplomatically, by fostering new relations with the Pacific nations.³⁴ Like many Pacific Islands countries, the FSM faces problems of illegal fishing in its EEZ by foreign fishing vessels. To combat this problem, the FSM has joined with the Marshall Islands and Palau to pool their resources in order to more effectively patrol their waters. The Australian government has provided patrol ships and has been involved in the ongoing training of maritime surveillance activities with the three nations.³⁵

According to the President and Chief Executive of the National Fisheries Corporation (NFC), Peter Sitan, the fishing industry is the main resource that could replace some of the financial shortcomings in the Compact.³⁶ Tuna fishery licensing fees are being adopted but those fees need to be increased substantially in order to maximise profit for the nation. It is argued that there should be a correlation between the license fees and market value of the fish caught in the FSM EEZ.

Micronesian fishing analyst Paul D’Arcy agrees with Sitan and suggests that another way of developing the indigenous fishing industry is value-added processing in the country.³⁷ However, the FSM requires partners to assist with technical knowledge and capital in order to develop a viable fishing processing industry. This could be achieved by entering into joint ventures with outside fishing nations so that FSM can maximise its earnings from fishing resources.

Notwithstanding the possible future directions, illegal fishing remains an ever-present financial drain on FSM’s limited resources both in terms of policing and lost marine resources. Surveillance needs to be strengthened in order to deny foreigners the

³³ Wilson, *A Tuna Industry in Micronesia?*. <<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/counselor.htm>>

³⁴ *Pacific Islands Report*, June 24 2010, p. 1.

³⁵ Marar, *Interview*.

³⁶ The Fishing industry in the FSM has the potential to replace most of the funding under the Compact. See Sitan, *The Development of the Tuna Industries*, pp, 17-19.

³⁷ D’Arcy, “The Lawless Ocean”?, pp.3-4.

opportunity to steal from Micronesian waters.³⁸ In addition, there needs to be more effective enforcement when vessels are caught in the EEZ including confiscation of the vessel and its haul. As D’Arcy noted, “Offshore fishing fleets from larger and wealthier Pacific Rim nations regularly violated Pacific Island EEZs in the absence of local monitoring. The same lack of resources to monitor offshore waters also meant that Island nations could not develop effective fishing fleets and were forced into fishing access agreements that returned a mere fraction of the value of the catch at market”.³⁹ Foreign fishing companies haul in hundreds of billions of dollars worth of fish caught in the Pacific Islands EEZ; yet, only a fraction of their profits finds its way to the island states. D’Arcy conservatively estimated that in 1998 Pacific Island nations received approximately USD \$ 60 million in fishing access fees from fleets which declare an annual catch sale price of approximately USD \$ 1.3-1.9 billion.”⁴⁰ This shortfall between actual and potential income for the host country is staggering.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III 1982) established the legal regimes that protect the rights of coastal nations, like Micronesia, from unscrupulous illegal harvesters.⁴¹ The regimes cover the exploitation of economic resources within the designated EEZ, which covers 200 nautical miles or 370.4 kilometres from the shores of the islands that form the outer limit of the archipelagos. The economic resources include fishing and extraction of mineral resources both on and beneath the ocean floor, bearing in mind the sustainability of the resources.⁴² Notwithstanding these international legal principles, illegal fishing by foreign fleets continues. Palau is in the process of exploring for oil in its EEZ, and if it is successful, the FSM may also do the same. Perhaps mineral extraction activities will be easier to monitor compared to fishing activities because the activity will occur within designated zones. It will be easier to observe the amount and manner of extraction to ensure adherence to restrictive environmental laws.⁴³ With these challenges and potential benefits looming, the FSM needs to seek new international partnerships for the purposes of expanding its capacity to build its future economic and social programs.

Leadership Issues

Unified leadership is fundamental to the integrity and the future development of the

³⁸ D’Arcy, “The Lawless Ocean”?, pp.3-4.

³⁹ D’Arcy, “The Lawless Ocean”?, pp.3-4.

⁴⁰ D’Arcy, “The Lawless Ocean”?, pp. 3-4.

⁴¹ D’Arcy, “The Lawless Ocean”?, pp. 3-4.

⁴² D’Arcy, “The Lawless Ocean”?, p. 1.

⁴³ D’Arcy, “The Lawless Ocean”?, pp.7-8 and 14-15.

FSM. Leadership comes in many forms in the FSM. Traditional leaders are confined to specific localities of the nation; however, their roles in the national political process needs to be revisited. Political leadership spans all three levels of government: national, state, and municipalities. There is often a conflict between leaders of these respective jurisdictions over decisions made by the national government. One area of great conflict is the power relationship between the leaders of the legislative branch versus the executive branch of the national governments.⁴⁴ The basis of this conflict is constitutional in nature. For example, the President is selected by the members of Congress rather than by the voters of the whole nation. This has caused much public discord whereupon many citizens have claimed that the President is basically the puppet of Congress since the Congress installed the President. The President is elected by the thirteen members of the Congress instead of by the people because of Article X, Section 1 of the Constitution, which states: “ the executive power of the national government is vested in the President of the Federated States of Micronesia. He is elected by the Congress for a term of four years by a majority vote of all the members. He may not serve for more than 2 consecutive terms.”⁴⁵

The lack of participation by women in the highest decision-making process in the nation is another issue of concern in the leadership of the national government.⁴⁶ Many advocate that women should be a part of the decision making process because they have different perspectives than men. Moreover, Micronesian communities are largely based on “matrilineality” and so it is only natural that women should be involved at the highest levels of government. This is not only true in Micronesia, but also in other Pacific nations. To address this concern, a Congressional Bill, C.B. NO. 16-10, January 2010, was introduced to bridge the gap between the genders. The bill states; “to propose an amendment to the Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia, for the purpose of increasing the representation of women in Congress by increasing the number of at-large seats in Congress, and reserving said seats for women, and for other purposes.”⁴⁷ This bill was defeated for many reasons ranging from sexism, limiting choices of candidates based on only one gender, to outside intervention and outright

⁴⁴ Francis X. Hezel, “Chuuk Independence: Why and How”? in *Pacific Institute of Public Policy*, March 2, 2015 < <http://pacificpolicy.org/2015/03/chuuk-independence-why-and-how/>>

⁴⁵ *The Constitution of the FSM*.

⁴⁶ Fifteenth Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia: *5th Special Session 2008* <<http://www.fsmcongress.fm/#>> under the heading Measures.

⁴⁷ Sixteenth Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia, *First Regular Session 2009*, C.B. No. 16-10 <<http://www.fsmcongress.fm/>> under Measures.

discrimination.⁴⁸ The response of those against the bill was that the Constitution already provides for women as well as men to run for Congress and the bill was unnecessary. The field of federal politics is dominated by males, a post-colonial construct that does not take into account the role of women in traditional communities, and elsewhere in the other government branches and departments. Many have claimed that the old-fashioned male chauvinistic attitude still reigns, however, under a different guise. Others claim that the Congress is not the venue where gender balance should be addressed.⁴⁹

However, anecdotal evidence suggests that increasing numbers of women are in key government positions such as ambassadors, head of departments, and agencies. Women's associations in some states, and an office in the national government have been created to monitor women's right for the purpose of improving their participation in the political process. It is in the best interests of the nation that women should be involved in the decision-making process, as their contribution to their communities is significant as rooted in Micronesian traditions. There is an emerging view that the FSM has been suffering from lack of leaders representing the new generation. The old leaders continue to rotate the government seats. They are not in tune with the latest best practices in governance, which assist in taking the nation into the future. Retiring older leaders may provide opportunities for the next generation "including women" to take up future challenges.

Constitutional Issues

The Constitution is under pressure to accommodate changes evolving since independence that threaten to impact FSM's integrity and continuity. Micronesians must continue to cooperatively harness their strength to deflect such pressures from rupturing the nation's unity. Micronesian unity is framed and promoted by Article XIII, Section 3 of the FSM Constitution, which states that "it is the solemn obligation of the national and state governments to uphold the provisions of this Constitution and to advance the principles of unity upon which this Constitution is founded."⁵⁰ It is only proper that the maintenance of this constitutional philosophy should be taken seriously

⁴⁸ Chairman Peter Sitan, *Judiciary and Government Operation, Standing Committee Report No.16-10*, January 2010.

⁴⁹ Bill Jaynes, "Special Seats For Women", *Kaselehlle Press*, September 25, 2012
<<http://www.kpress.info/index.php/site-map/239-special-congress-seats-for-women>>

⁵⁰ *The Constitution of the FSM*.

otherwise Micronesians will be once again subject to outside dominance like the colonial past.

The Constitution is the legitimate source of power and also a form of reference for the citizens to look upon when confronted with complex issues from both within and outside the nation. It is expected that differences in opinions between the states and the national governments will continue for some time, maintaining the old political wounds over jurisdictional issues. The various secession movements since independence continue to threaten the federation especially over the allocation of national funds. The secessionist movement in Chuuk State is the latest threat, which may rupture the federation. It is driven by leaders from the Trust Territory days and centres on their belief in allocating the budget between states on the basis of population, noting Chuuk is by far the most populous state.⁵¹ These older leaders also blame Chuuk's lack of funds on other states for draining the nation's purse by chronic mismanagement. The consequence of this is that the new generation is increasingly disillusioned by this political rhetoric used by many of the leaders to score points in order to maximise their votes.⁵²

The Chuuk State Legislature recently introduced Bill No.11-12-08, which later became a law, creating the Future Status Commission "to review and recommend possible political status suitable for long term financial survival of Chuuk State after the economic assistance provided under the amended compact between the FSM and US expires in 2023, and for other purposes." This particular move is in contradiction to the spirit and language of the FSM Constitution. For example, the Constitution promotes the concept of unity in diversity, and the Compact should not be seen as the source of Micronesian survival since Micronesians continuity is dependent on the *ainang* system. It binds people together and survives on the principles of reciprocity and sharing as deeply rooted in Micronesian traditions and cultures, like the *sawei* system in Yap. To divide the federation would mean disaster. The FSM could become a softer target for transnational crime as law and order will be compromised.⁵³ Political observers see Chuuk's move as a teething problem, a typical symptom of a young nation finding its

⁵¹ Hezel, "Chuuk Independence Why and How"?

⁵² The ongoing political fight amongst the political leaders on all level is impacting the new generation in terms of their future as the year 2023 is not too far off. Heather Jarvis, "Voices of Young Women Need to Be Heard, Says Micronesian Youth Leader", Interview with Lucille Sain on *ABC Radio Australia*, March 11, 2014 < <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2014-03-07/voices-of-young-women-need-to-be-heard-says-micronesian-youth-leader/1265114> >

⁵³ Michael Yui, *Border Security: Transnational Crime in Micronesia (Part-3 Final)*, March 6, 2012 < <http://www.asiapacificdefencereporter.com/articles/216/Border-security-Transnational-crime-in-Micronesia> >

way to maturity. Moreover, those in the secessionist movement need to understand that to secede it has to jump through many complex hurdles. One of the hurdles is compliance with the Constitutional process that protects the nation's political integrity. Splitting the federation is subject to Article XIV, Section 1, which says; "an amendment to (the) Constitution may be proposed by a constitutional convention, popular initiative, or Congress in a manner provided by law. A proposed amendment shall become a part of the Constitution when approved by 3/4 of the votes cast on that amendment in each of 3/4 of the states. If conflicting constitutional amendments submitted to the voters at the same election are approved, the amendment receiving the highest number of affirmative votes shall prevail to the extent of such conflict." ⁵⁴

Domestic debates are fundamentally important steps towards developing FSM's social and political health; they provide opportunities for self-evaluation, and thus the resolution of complex issues. The political discourse between the federal government and its constituents is subject to Article VIII, Section.1, which states; "a power expressly delegated to the national government, or a power of such an indisputably national character as to beyond the power of a state control, is a national power".⁵⁵ The state governments have been arguing *abinitio* that anything that is not specifically provided for in the Constitution should be left in state jurisdiction. Lawyers and academics have been exploring specific measures to pre-empt arising jurisdictional rifts between the disputants. One suggestion is for the respective disputing jurisdictions to negotiate outside the Constitutional Court on the basis of Micronesian cultural principles of fairness and equity.⁵⁶ That is because if the national government continues to assert control over matters that are not clearly defined, it may in effect antagonize the states and thus undermine solidarity. Rather, the issue should be premised on striking a balance based on mutual interests to strengthen national unity.⁵⁷ Traditional leaders may therefore have a role to play in the undefined legal areas.

Political and Economic Challenges

Since colonisation, economic goals for Micronesia were always set by outsiders and designed to benefit themselves. For example, during the Japanese period, economic

⁵⁴ *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article XIV, Section 1.

⁵⁵ *The Constitution of the FSM*, Article VIII, Section 1.

⁵⁶ Personal Opinion as no literature exists on this particular topic. Many leaders rigidly follow the constitutional process and the law to solve their differences. Unfortunately, no one has bothered to look at negotiation outside the constitutional process to settle their difference based on FSM traditional principles of fairness and equity.

⁵⁷ Personal Opinion.

development in Micronesia was seen as very successful although such success did not benefit Micronesians. The USA, under the UN Trusteeship Council, was tasked to develop the islands, but failed to carry out its mandate. After Micronesians' pushed for a new political status, the USA poured millions of dollars into Micronesia to compensate for the years of neglect.⁵⁸ This sudden injection of money resulted in the creation of the classic model of economic dependency. This model characterises Micronesians as incapable of fending for themselves due to the lack of an economic infrastructure and with a social system that hinders capitalism. The model has an unfriendly legal system, which discourages foreign investment necessary to stimulate economic activities to promote the trickle-down effect principle.⁵⁹ The problem with this analysis is that it applies a neoclassical economic model, which is better suited to the big economies, not Micronesia. It is therefore not surprising that the trickle-down effect principle has not been very effective in Micronesia. The Micronesian social system, which is the backbone of Micronesian survivability, was not well understood by outside economists. It should be remembered that the implantation of any economic philosophy that requires the dismantling of the central pillar of indigenous life as in communal and kinship support, is doomed to fail. The contradictory nature of the Micronesian economic system against wholesale capitalism should be subject to further studies to ensure the development of a suitable economic model to sustain continuity.

In his State of the Nation address in 2012, President Mori expressed the need for Micronesians to change their mindset. He said, (...) "our governments need to prioritize and align development efforts with its development plan. Our governments must always ensure that the allocation of our financial resources adheres to our development plans. Our governments must formulate sound policies and regulations that are business and development friendly in order to attract more foreign investments and improve related ratings by the World Bank. We must also facilitate the privatization of our government-owned enterprises. These steps are essential to promote economic growth."⁶⁰ It emerged from this speech that there is no clear message on how the national government was taking steps to improve the economic situation of Micronesians.

Decades of development rhetoric have not translated into anything concrete so as to

⁵⁸ Existing body of literature has been portraying the US record as neglecting the FSM since WWII. See Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp, 90-91.

⁵⁹ FSM has been characterized by many reports by outsiders as lacking infrastructure, and unfriendly laws for foreign investment. See for example, Asian Development Bank, *Federated States of Micronesia Development Framework 2012 Looking to the Future: A Foundation for Discussion at the FSM Development Partners Forum* <<http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cobp-fsm-2014-2016-oth-01.pdf>>

⁶⁰ Emmanuel Mori, *State of the Nation Address* May 18, 2012, p.9.

benefit the people. Development theories are elusive concepts that have been fed to the public routinely for political purposes rather than for economic benefits.⁶¹ By and large they have never filtered down to capture the public's attention and support.

From the writer's perspective, development means devising and implementing processes that allow a country to utilise knowledge, skills, and attitudes that sustain desired lifestyles. It means sustaining self-sufficiency and adapting one's mode of production in conjunction with global forces to suit local context. A wholesale import of economic models designed to overwhelm Micronesian unique circumstances are not conducive to development for the FSM.⁶² Micronesians have tried to grapple with what development entails ever since the traditional social system came into contact with the colonial economic system. The theories of economic development are remote to the realities of day-to-day life for most Micronesians.⁶³ What they know is that their subsistence lifestyle provides sustenance and keeps the extended family together. By comparison, Western economic development seems abstract and unrelated to the life they have been accustomed to since their ancestors made the islands their home. Those that do move into the wage economy and remit money are often on the margins of this system and still rely, in part, upon *ainang* for support.

The Western mode of economic production based on mass commercial consumerism is not suitable because of lack of appropriate technology, infrastructure, the size of the islands, and the social structure.⁶⁴ Development to Micronesians is about protecting and sustaining their subsistence life, and safeguarding the traditional practices with small-scale technology that may complement their lifestyle. For example, small outboard engine for fishing, the Internet allow distance communication, solar energy to provide electricity for household appliances and to operate electrical equipment for handicraft and food production would enhance islanders lifestyle. To this end, "development" may

⁶¹ Political rhetoric on economic development has been fed to the public since the beginning of the Compact of Free Association in 1986. However, in reality nothing much came from the successive economic plans. See Giff Johnson, "Ad Hoc decisions Don't Make It In An Increasingly Complex World" in *Pacific Institute of Public Policy*, October 9, 2013 < <http://pacificpolicy.org/2013/10/ad-hoc-decisions-dont-make-it-in-an-increasingly-complex-world/>>

⁶² Since the ideas of development entered Micronesia, they seem to suggest that the Micronesian lifestyles have problems. Micronesians somehow believed this suggestion and want to imitate the capitalists' way of life. The question remains why? For some explanations see Francis X. Hezel, "Reflection of Micronesia's Economy" < <http://www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/economic/frames/reflectfr.htm>>

⁶³ My encounters with many people at the grassroots level during my field study suggested that the language of development such as statistics, evidence, and gross national product are foreign concepts not yet fully understood by many Micronesians despite my attempt to explain in the simplest form possible. Planting taros, gardening, and fishing dominated our discourses. Pohnpei, January 2011 and Chuuk, June 2013.

⁶⁴ The geographical conditions and cultural system are incompatible with the ideas of capitalism, which consultants often misunderstood as not the way for the future development of the FSM.

then be defined as the capacity to accommodate changes in maintaining a healthily lifestyle while sustaining the extended family system particularly in the low-lying islands.⁶⁵ The idea of importing small-scale technology suitable to the low-lying could be fed into the larger economy in the volcanic islands to encourage economic trading activities between the islanders. Appropriate technology and infrastructure could enhance Micronesian own brand of development by using their own local resources.⁶⁶

Revisiting The Traditional System

Traditional economic practices are premised on a network system, patterned along socio-cultural lines in terms of labour relations, resource management, and the inter-connection between families, clans, villages, islands, and regions. This system remains central to Micronesia's economic sustainability and is intrinsically linked to Micronesians' identity deeply rooted in the nation's history. It is about assisting each other when the need arises, for example, in agricultural and fishing activities, construction of houses, and canoe building and the maintenance of local knowledge and the clanship system.⁶⁷ For example, the *sawei* system in Yap, and clanship connections in Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Kosrae maintain the flow of ideas and goods and help equalize inequality throughout Micronesia today.

The Micronesian labour system has been modified to adapt to the new economic circumstances in response to colonialism and the globalisation process. Today labour relations have two major aspects- voluntary and paid works.⁶⁸ For example, in the low-lying islands many people continue to volunteer their labour in exchange for a particular item from the other person, or may be obliged to assist due to familial ties. The volunteer in return expects the recipient of such labour to reciprocate when the need for future work arises, thus triggering the obligation-and-response cycle.⁶⁹ The inter-connection and voluntary model underscores the foundation of the economic mode of production in traditional Micronesian societies. It also protects members of the community from exploitation. This practice has continued through successive colonial

⁶⁵ Francis X. Hezel, "Sustainable Human Development in Micronesia: Origin and Meaning of the Term", Micronesian Counselor No. 21, March 1998
<<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/counselor/frames/sushumdevfr.htm>>

⁶⁶ Hezel, "Sustainable Human".

⁶⁷ Gonzaga Puas. "Labour Standards in the FSM", written for the FSM Department of Justice, Palikir, Pohnpei, April 12, 2005, pp. 2-5.

⁶⁸ Puas, "Labour Standards", pp. 2-5.

⁶⁹ Puas, "Labour Standards," pp. 2-5.

periods until today. In some instances labour can be repaid with items like cigarettes, alcohol, and other western items that are considered temporary, but a luxury.⁷⁰



Figure 19: People of Rewow village, in 2014, on Lekinioch work together to replace pandanus sheets on foeng the *ainang faal of Sopunpi*. The principle of *alilis fengen* is noted here.

Many observers like historian Hezel noted that the rise of the cash economy is weakening the very foundation of Micronesian family structure.⁷¹ It has ruptured the family connection and many wage or salary earners are forming what sociologists refer to as nuclear families. Nuclear families by and large manage their own family affairs and depend on money they earn as self-contained and self-supporting economic units. They can afford luxuries in life and buy many things they want without sharing with their extended family.⁷² Hezel's observation may be true in a few cases; however, Micronesians prefer to remain within the extended family system as it provides security, certainty and social acceptance. One can argue that the cash economy is not threatening traditional Micronesian foundation, but rather has reinforced its structure. The strength of the traditional system rests with how Micronesians rearticulate the forces of the cash system to suit their contemporary life style. Some examples can be illustrated by the

⁷⁰ Puas, "Labour Standards", pp. 2-5.

⁷¹ Hezel, *The New Shape of Old Island Cultures*, pp.1-10.

⁷² In the Trust Territory period, a nuclear family was formed when people migrated to a new place and had no relatives especially when working for government, for example. It was not from a deliberate move to be separated from the rest of the extended family. Today, nuclear family does not exist in the FSM as may be seen by the extended family structure.

way money has been absorbed and distributed like a commodity itself within the extended family structure.

Money is not new to Micronesians since it appeared during the colonial period. It has been used by Micronesians to buy Western commodities to supplement one's lifestyle. For example, when food items are bought, they are distributed to close relatives who live nearby. In return, traditional foods are also shared with the members who earned the cash.⁷³ Furthermore, when a member of the extended family needs money to satisfy a community obligation, the members of the extended family pool their money together to assist the member who sought assistance. For those who cannot assist, they can volunteer their services to perform the tasks required. Funerals and family meetings naturally oblige extended family members to contribute. Family members who have the earning capacity cannot operate outside the extended family system; as to do so would bring social stress upon them. As my grandfather once said, "people do not eat money, but food." This is in reference to WWII where money was worthless. It is also about the fact that a person may have money, however, what could a person do when people refuse to sell their food to him? Or to put it simply, what can money earners do when facing sudden unemployment or become sick? Would they eat the money they earned? Who would provide care like the members of the extended family? Even those families who are now living in the heartland of the cash economy, the USA, continue to maintain connections with each other, especially when important social events arise which require pooling of financial resources.

Conclusion

There are many challenges that Micronesians are facing today, which range from economic development, constitutional issues to education, health and leadership roles. Maintaining the fluidity of the traditional system is the foundation for Micronesians' future survival. It is an evolving system that has been at the heart of Micronesian history. It has adapted, transformed, and rearticulated itself even under the stresses caused by ongoing engagement with the outside world and the current tides of globalisation. Successive waves of colonial regimes have attempted to undermine the traditional system by the insertion of their own brands of development and different regimes of governance, but have largely were unsuccessful. Micronesian counter-

⁷³ Personal experience. On weekends the extended family worshipped together and shared and exchanged food while visiting each other. Money is also circulated at this time through food shopping and by request from relatives.

measures been adopted through the process of adaptation, which arrested alien practises that could not be assimilated into its indigenous cultural practices. That is, Micronesians only accepted the essential elements of colonialism that ensured Micronesian cultural continuity. The new Micronesian government has the task of ensuring that its modern legal, political, social, health and economic institutions perpetuate relevant traditional historical doctrines that define how Micronesian future should be shaped.

CHAPTER 8: FUTURE OUTLOOK

Introduction

The future is unpredictable and complex, and as such the Federated States of Micronesia needs to prepare itself for such a future. The purpose of this chapter is to speculate on the future outlook of the Federated States of Micronesia based on information gathered by the author in the field. Much of Micronesia's future will be premised upon internal cohesion, and how Micronesians engage with the outside world. As history is a repertoire of knowledge, these issues will be analysed within the context of FSM historical processes so as to ensure Micronesians continuity. The question is: is there a master plan to which the leaders of the FSM should adhere to ensure the nation's future progress?

In the FSM's Strategic Development Plan of 2004-2023, two main economic development considerations were proposed as the nation's prime future objectives. They include "a moderate growth strategy", and a "sustained growth strategy."¹ These are explained in terms of sustaining certain levels of income to avoid future brain drain. To do so it called for fiscal discipline and a new tax regime to stop the expected brain drain and also to maintain essential services.² Moreover, the FSM also needs to implement reform programs to create a friendly environment conducive to foreign investment.³ These objectives are in response to the decline in Compact funds, which necessitates the tightening of FSM's economic belt.

The report also identified tourism and the fishing industry as potential sources for the future. However, both sectors also have constraints.⁴ Absent from the report are specific economic models⁵ to facilitate both the moderate growth and sustained growth strategies, and also to exploit the fishing and tourism industries. For example, there are

¹ *The Federated States of Micronesia Strategic Development 2003-2023: The Next 20 Years Achieving Economic Growth and Self Reliance*, Vol. I: Policies and Strategies For Development, p.vi.

² *The Federated States of Micronesia Strategic*, pp. vi.

³ *The Federated States of Micronesia Strategic*, pp. vi

⁴ *The Federated States of Micronesia Strategic*, p.192.

⁵ I argue that economic strategies cannot be successful without a model to achieve the targeted objectives. The model should form as the theoretical base while the strategies are the concrete vehicles towards the objectives. It is like the marriage between theories and practice. However, Hagelegam claimed that the key to economic success is to resolve the political rifts between Congress and the executive branch. See John Hagelegam, "Federalism and Multiculturalism: Federalism in the Federated States of Micronesia, Asian Resource Centre for Decentralisation" <<http://localgov.up.edu.ph/federalism-and-multiculturalism-hagelegam-federalism-in-the-federated-states-of-micronesia.html>>

no discernable means to maintain essential public services as well as attracting foreign investment.

Another report produced by the FSM Development Bank Partners Forum in 2012 entitled “Looking to the Future”, emphasized collaboration between outsiders and Micronesia’s “to develop the skills, knowledge, time and financial resources to [facilitate] development planning within four broad areas: growing the local economy; developing economic infrastructure – transport, communications and power; supporting health and education services; [and] mainstreaming responses to climate change and mitigating threats to the environment.”⁶ The above two reports emphasized the development of a productive workforce and the financial means to ensure Micronesians future continuity. However, how does one translate the reports’ recommendations to reality?

According to a Micronesian banker, Fabian Nimea, “there is little evidence to show that economic planning objectives outlined in government plans have been achieved.”⁷ He further stated that, “the FSM does not have a single clearly stated vision with respect to sustainable development towards the future. The closest vision it has are more stated targets for specific actions or objectives as opposed to a vision...(.).”⁸ A report from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) also observed that, “the economy of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has stagnated from 2001–2013”⁹ and in need of an overhaul to better plan for the future.

In the absence of a concrete road map concerning FSM’s future, three alternative points of discussion are considered in this chapter to safeguard Micronesian self-preservation and continuity. The first option considers an approach whereby the FSM should concentrate on expanding its relations internationally in the building of its future. This is premised on the idea that globalization will benefit the nation by allowing it to integrate itself into the global economic structure. Its emphasis is on continuing the current trend of doing business based largely on the advice of foreign consultants such

⁶ “Federated States of Micronesia Development Framework: Looking to the Future: a Foundation of Discussion at the FSM Development Partners Forum,” Pohnpei, October 2012. p. 3.

⁷ Nimea, *The Federated States of Micronesia National Assessment Report*, pp. 12.

⁸ *Ibid*, p.18

⁹ ADB, *Country Operation Business Plan Federated States of Micronesia 2015-2017*, October 2014, p. 1 <<http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/110928/cobp-fsm-2015-2017.pdf>>

as the ADB, the Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).¹⁰

The second option is in reference to the traditionalist approach where it calls for restrengthening Micronesian internal connections first before venturing out internationally. This is in response to the ongoing secessionist threats that have been part of FSM's political history since it became a constitutional government in 1979. Such a political rift has the potential to rupture the political integrity of the nation and as such threatens its future.¹¹ Finally, the third option advances the idea that FSM's future should be built on the first two points since Micronesians inhabit both the past and the present while at the same time looking ahead to the future.¹² Each option has its own merits and limitations. However, the options could contribute to FSM's own self-assessment for the purpose of improving its economic and political standing in the future.

The First Option

The Compact of Free Association is at the centre of the first point of discussion referred to as the contemporary discourse. This discourse has its origin in the post-WWII era when the USA took control of Micronesia under the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). The USA implemented a policy in line with its strategic interests to ensure its security in the Pacific-Asia region. As a consequence, Micronesia was dragging its feet both politically and economically; it was a case of the "let us wait and see" attitude.¹³ The development of Micronesia was in the USA's hands as mandated by the UN Trusteeship Council. The new designation meant that rival external powers were kept away from the islands at the discretion of the administering authority.¹⁴ In this

¹⁰ The ADB, JEMCO, and IMF have been involved in advising the FSM on issues of economic development. For example, See United States of America and the Federated States of Micronesia, *Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO)*, August 11, 2004 Pacific Guardian Center Honolulu, Hawaii, p. 2; ADB *Country Operations*, pp.1-2; International Monetary fund, *Federated States of Micronesia-2008 Article IV Consultation Concluding Statement*<<https://www.imf.org/external/np/ms/2008/112108.htm>>

; Micronesian local economists are pushing the same trend proposed by the three external institutions as observed by the author during the "FSM Third Economic Summit" discussions held in Palikir, 2003.

¹¹ In 2014 Chuuk reignited the old debate of secession since it wants to split from the federation. See also Micronesia Forum Debate Thread *Chuuk Independence* <<http://www.micronesiaforum.org/>>; Eleventh Chuuk State Legislature, *First Regular Session Second Special Session*, ACT No.11-18.

¹² Personal speculation based on discussions with Marion Henry, Secretary of the FSM Department of Resources and Development, Palikir, July 11, 2013.

¹³ Gale, *The Americanization of Micronesia*, p.p.59-63; Robert Kiste, "Termination of the US Trusteeship in Micronesia" in *Journal Pacific History*, Vol. XXI, No.3, 1986 (July), pp.127-128.

¹⁴ Kiste, "Termination of the US", pp. 127-128.

context it was virtually impossible for Micronesians to solicit assistance from the international community to assist in the mapping of its future.

The UN had legal obligations to review the US performance in the TTPI as outlined in the relevant UN documents. However, in reality it could not be expected to dictate to the USA what development ought to be for its strategic territory. This stemmed from the fact that the US had become a superpower with many allies in the Security Council, as well as the major financial contributor to the UN purse. For Micronesians, retaining ownership of their islands was the prime concern, and to do so required pre-empting the American military from gaining control.¹⁵ Land ownership became one of the main drivers for independence and it was actively pursued without delay.¹⁶

The Micronesian leadership also understood that to wait around and let the Americans dictate the pace of economic development would only weaken the momentum towards political independence.¹⁷ Independence would mean a new era of opportunities for Micronesians to engage with the modern world as they wished.¹⁸ Although independence was the desire for the Micronesian leaders, some pertinent questions remained unresolved. Firstly, what sort of independence did the people genuinely desire? Secondly, how would Micronesians sustain their independence once it was achieved? Thirdly, could Micronesians have political independence without economic development? According to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Lorin Robert, political independence has been achieved. However, the FSM is still working on achieving its economic objectives. The mantra is therefore to expand FSM's economic diplomacy.¹⁹

¹⁵ Congress of Micronesia, *Summary of the Future Political Status Talks of the Joint Committee on Future Status*, October 1973, p.6; Gale, *Americanization of Micronesia*, p. 249.

¹⁶ Congress of Micronesia, *Summary of the Future Political Status*; Petersen, "Routine Provocation", pp. 205-207.

¹⁷ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp.13-14.

¹⁸ The FSM can engage in matters of foreign affairs without the Compact under the authority of the Constitution of the FSM, which specifically outlines the power of the executive branch of the national government to engage in international affairs (see Article X); Robert, *Interview*; Gonzaga Puas, "The Evolving Relationship Between the Federated States of Micronesia and China", in *Asia-Pacific Relationships In Resource Development*, edited by Paul D'Arcy, Patrick Matbob, Linda Crowl, Divine Word University Press, Madang, 2014, p.168.

¹⁹ Robert, *Interview*.



Figure 20: Working together (L-R) Governor of Chuuk Wesley Simina, President of the FSM Manny Mori, and Mayor of Lakinioch Municipality Abraham Rayphand. Picture taken in 2011 during Catholic Centennial Anniversary.

Lessons learned from centuries of engagement with the outside world have enabled Micronesians to maintain their own interests. Today economic development remains a challenge as the debate of what development means to Micronesians continues to be controversial.²⁰ For example, the language of development does not purely revolve around statistical analysis and dollar signs. The roots of Micronesian values must also be considered. Micronesians should therefore ultimately decide what economic development means to them.

The Second Option

The second point of discussion concerns the traditional approach to development. Various development strategies have been attempted in Micronesia, but none of those experimented with have managed to produce fruitful results.²¹ Why are Micronesian officials following development theories imported from abroad, knowing well in advance that they are not working? This question has been raised repeatedly, but it seems that no one wants to respond to it. Perhaps the prime reason is that not many contemporary leaders understand Micronesia's traditional past and now are stuck with a Western mode of predicting the future driven by statistical analysis and the value of the dollar.

²⁰ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp. 10-12.

²¹ The FSM National Assessment Report, p.14.

Micronesians, particularly at the grassroots level, are still embracing their mode of economic production as rooted in the sub-clan and clanship structure. To abruptly alter such a structure would mean deterioration of their traditional identities and survival.²² The model has served them well throughout the course of history. It should be remembered that the basic building blocks of Micronesian societies are at the community level.²³ Historically, decisions were usually made at the island level, and if required at the regional level, as in the clanship diaspora. This hierarchy now approximates the current municipalities and the states. This historical reality has not been well acknowledged by the leaders at the national government. The national government is more like an external element, alien to the traditional system. The national leaders have been too preoccupied with the external world and thus its ideas of development.

Many observers have argued that the national government is somehow detached from reality. The leaders see themselves as not obligated to tow the traditional line like their state and municipality counterparts. It follows, therefore, that the national leaders are becoming too powerful because of their position at the apex of the government structure. They are somehow abandoning the fundamental principles of sharing and reciprocity as embedded in Micronesian traditions. Their power has led to the squandering of resources to maintain that power.²⁴ There is a strong belief that the national government is creating more problems by imitating the imported federal system wherein all conflict resolution must comply with Constitutional provisions, which ignores customary practices.²⁵ They have forgotten that traditional conflict resolution can play a role outside the Constitution. No attempts have been made to use traditional dispute mechanisms.

The Congress of Micronesia has been heavily blamed as being the main culprit in destroying the confidence of the citizens. For example, the congressional power to override the President's veto has been used abusively, too often, and without just cause to pass congressmen's pet projects.²⁶ Transparency, accountability, and good

²² Given the geography of the islands and the population size of each island, it is almost impossible to emulate a capitalist level of production. The traditional models of production are still ideal, but may be complemented by compatible ideas from the outside world.

²³ The Constitution of the FSM acknowledges the municipalities as the guardians of the social system with the support of the state governments. See Articles I, V, VII.

²⁴ Vid Raaitor, "Commentaries on Chuuk Political Status Public Hearing in Hilo", December 13, 2014 <<https://chuukreform.wordpress.com/>>

²⁵ Dirk A. Ballendorf, "Federated States of Micronesia", p. 221 <<http://www.forumfed.org/libdocs/FedCountries/FC-Micronesia.pdf>>

²⁶ L. Sohnel Johnson, "The Federated States of Micronesia's Presidential Election System and Proposed

governance are virtually non-existent when it comes to the legislature's financial practices.²⁷ The President has called for the members of Congress to be more transparent in the discharge of their public duties. However, such a call has been perceived by the Congress as a violation of the separation of powers doctrine. Additionally, the call for a constitutional amendment to neutralize the Congress' power has fallen on deaf ears. As journalist Johnson noted "the old style, ad hoc decision-making based on little more than how leaders feel about situations — or which 'fire' is burning brightest — is a continuing obstacle to good governance based on planning (and) research."²⁸ Congress' behaviour is threatening the existence of the FSM. This is a major challenge that the traditional model advocates against before the nation can be seriously engaged internationally. That is to say, what is the point of going international if internally the nation is bleeding?

The Third Option

The fluid discourse is the third point of discussion which advocates the notion that FSM's future should combine the essential elements of the above two discourses for the purpose of building its future. That is because Micronesians inhabit both worlds--that of the past and of the present. There is enough politico-economic space for both discourses to be employed concurrently. However, the issue is how does one combine the two for deep public discussion for the purpose of framing the future? Perhaps the first step is to look at the current circumstances and ask the historical question of how has the nation arrived at this point in time. The answer is to look deeply into the past, in terms of the process of continuity. That is, continuity is a process of forward motion that ensures survivability of a given people into the future. Survivability depends on social cohesion and solidarity in their adaptation to change. The study of the future is to understand the past. It is the first step to understand the process and mechanism of continuity. To this end, I wish to divide the history of Micronesian continuity into three parts (pre-colonisation, colonisation and post-colonisation) in order to understand the process to Micronesian survival and continuity.

Constitutional Analysis", The University of the South Pacific<<http://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=13223>>

²⁷ Haser Hainrick, Office of the National Public Auditor Federated States of Micronesia, "CFSM Public Projects and Social Programs \$1.6 Million Approved Without Clear Criteria", February 9, 2015 <<http://www.fsmopa.fm/files/onpa/2014/Audit%20Report%202015-04.pdf>>

²⁸ Many are rushing to develop Micronesia like economists and technocrats but have no specific idea in what shape or form. See Hanlon, "Micronesia: Writing and Rewriting", p.p.11-12; Johnson, "Ad Hoc Decisions".

First, prior to colonisation survivability depended on the indigenous people's understanding of their oceanic environment, and their relationship with it. The environment provides sustenance and Micronesians developed strategies to preserve the environment in order to perpetuate their existence. These strategies are expressed in the way their communities were organized; giving rise to the clanship system reinforced by its religious, social, legal, and political activities. Religion defined people's relationship to the natural world while political and social activities governed how Micronesians interacted with each other. For example, social rules were set and taboos were created to maintain equilibrium in the communities. Any violations of these rules and taboos were subjected to the elders of the different clans' deliberations. Sometimes war was necessary to settle a given dispute to reinforce such equilibrium.

Secondly, during colonisation Micronesians continued to cherish their traditions despite the onslaught unleashed by the colonial powers. To withstand colonisation, Micronesians continued to use the clanship network. This network was hard for the outsiders to understand. Because of that, the colonisers were unsuccessful in implementing their colonial policies. The indigenous population was able to perpetuate their continuity according to their own traditions. Adaptation to the forces of colonization, and patience were effective strategies for the islanders to recontextualise the ideologies of colonialism to suit local circumstances. This process continued until WWII when the new world order emerged. During this period decolonisation began around the world. In order to join such an order the Micronesian identity arose. Independence was achieved in 1986; this represented the pinnacle of Micronesians' reassertion of their identity and continuity.

Thirdly, post-independence is the period of empowering Micronesians to map their own future. However, the future must look at historical lessons to understand how the nation came into being. Questions such as "what were the adaptation strategies that sustained Micronesians to get to where they are today?" must be asked and answered. I argue that the main strategies were the retainment of the clanship system, Micronesianisation of outside influences, and the recognition that the new Micronesian identity perpetuates continuity in the globalised world.

The three elements of historical processes can be employed in the framing of the future outlook regarding the Federated States of Micronesia. That is, the local level remains the epicentre of economic and political activities. This is where the circulation of goods and ideas based on the principles *eaea fengen* and *alilis fengen* continue to be the

mainstay of social and economic solidarity as they have survived circumstances of change brought by colonisation. Today globalisation has widened the Micronesian diaspora to different global spaces. It has allowed the extended family system to flourish as they adapt to the technological world. Circulation of goods and monies on this scale has benefited Micronesian families. The Remittances have assisted families to move within the diaspora and contribute to both the local and the national economies. This new global model of the extended family system demonstrates the level of Micronesian resiliency and adaptability to changes. While Micronesians are enlarging their connection to the global world, their cultures and identity remain at the core of their being.

Economic diplomacy, effective management of the EEZ, and exploitation of the tourism sector are crucial to FSM's future. The FSM has joined relevant regional organisations in order to protect its interest through collective efforts.²⁹ Its fishing industry needs to reflect the realities of the world market to increase their share of profits, much of which has been siphoned off by foreign fishing companies. For example, foreign companies raked in around Two billion US dollars per year from the Pacific Islands' EEZ.³⁰ By comparison, the Pacific Islands receive only slightly more than 6% of the USD \$2 billion referred to above.³¹ The FSM in turn received a fraction of that 6%. This economic discrepancy needs to be addressed immediately.

To increase its share of profits the FSM must overhaul its regulatory regime regarding its EEZ. New measures are required to cease illegal fishing by considering the following: (1) How will new regulations be implemented? (2) How are policies going to be measured in relation to outcomes for improvement purposes? (3) How are achievable outcomes going to be monitored to ensure sustainability of the results? Policing the EEZ is an ongoing challenge, so the FSM government should be looking at partnering with outsiders for that purpose, as this will bring mutual benefits. For example, the US Coast Guard is already partnering with the FSM government based on the concept of ship rider agreement.³² This is a joint maritime surveillance operation between the FSM

²⁹ The author is suggesting that regionalism is the strength of the FSM

³⁰ Puas, *The Evolving Relationship Between China and the FSM*, p.170.

³¹ Puas, *The Evolving Relationship Between China and the FSM*, p.170.

³² Shiprider is when a member(s) of the FSM maritime force is on board of a USA Coast Guard vessel to patrol the EEZ. In some cases arrested vessels are subject to selected Courts. The settlement is shared by the USA and the FSM. See Hofschneider, E. Freddy, "US Coast Guard Completes Western Pacific Maritime Patrol 40 Day Mission Monitors FSM, RMI, and Palau's EEZs", in *Marianas Variety*, Saipan, CNMI May 12, 2014<pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport.2014/May/05-12-08.htm>

and American governments for the purpose of policing the FSM's EEZ.³³ This exercise has the potential to improve "effective management and surveillance operations to avoid the over-fishing of highly migratory fish stocks within the (FSM)."³⁴ Perhaps the FSM should negotiate with the USA under the security agreement in the Compact. That is, the USA should also be responsible for patrolling the FSM's EEZ during specified periods of the year.

Competition in the world market is fierce and so small economies like the FSM should create niche products for the world market. For example, the state of Kosrae recently exported its first shipment of cultured giant clams to Moscow, Russia. At the national level more public corporations like the National Fishing Corporation (NFC) should be established to ensure that its citizens in accordance with a new distribution formula share the benefits of their economic activities. Proper planning for profitable seabed mining should be established. A sustainable and eco-tourism experience should be systematically implemented to attract nature lovers.³⁵

The local economy should be dominated by small businesses like co-ops and small-scale partnerships to stimulate competition in the local economy, with a regulatory regime to ensure their competitive edge.³⁶ Local agricultural production should focus firstly on feeding families, with any surplus to be sold on the domestic and inter-state market.³⁷ Strengthening policies in all areas of development based on Micronesian needs and desires should become a permanent practice of the Micronesian government. The current "business as usual" model should become a thing of the past if the FSM is serious about its citizens' expectations. New teams of skilled professionals with this mindset should be integrated into the structural monitoring processes.³⁸

The fundamental principle of the fluid discourses model rests on its ability and flexibility to adapt to arising circumstances that embrace the appropriate ideas in the

³³ Freddy, "US Coast Guard".

³⁴ Freddy, "US Coast Guard".

³⁵ For fisheries see Peter Sitan, *The Development of the Tuna Fisheries*, pp. 3-23; *The Federated States of Micronesia Strategic Development*, pp.155-212 and 213-271 for tourism.

For seabed mining see European Union, *Achievement of the SPC-EU Deep Sea Mineral Project: Strengthening the Management of Deep Sea Minerals in the Pacific* (March 2011-March 2014) <<http://www.sopac.org/dsm/public/files/brochures/Achievements%20Brochure%20FINAL.pdf>>

³⁶ Personal Opinion. The new generation expect that a new policy will be formulated to drive the local economy.

³⁷ "Moscow-Russia, the New Market place for the National Aquarium Center (NAC)", Kosrae, *FSM Press Release #1402-09*, Palikir, Pohnpei, FSM Information Services, February 20, 2014 <http://www.fsmpio.fm/RELEASES/2014/feb_14/02_09_14.html>

³⁸ Personal Opinion, The FSM government is seen as aneeding new generation of leaders as the old ones need to retire soon.

marketplace, and yet are driven by local ethics and cultural nuances. That is, Micronesians must adapt appropriately, using their knowledge of history in the mapping of their future outlook for the purpose of maintaining their continuity.

Discussion

The future prospects for Micronesia to be a self-sustaining nation will depend largely on the type of economic model the leaders wish to adopt. The language of development is crowding the international scene with its own discourses. Economic development has always been an issue since Micronesia achieved its independence in 1986. Development has been framed in the images of the advanced economies with their own measures of key indicators in health, education, life expectancy, and earning capacities. The Micronesians leaders are expected to follow this norm. It is failing because of the inconsistencies between outsiders' and Micronesians' economic philosophies.

Development experts have characterised the FSM as a MIRAB economy since it primarily depends on the Compact of Free Association. For example, mass emigration to the USA has now become the norm, as its for citizens search for economic opportunities. Remittances are supposed to flow back, but they remain weak due to the lack of high earning capacity on the part of Micronesians living overseas.³⁹ This lack of remittances is also attributed to the fact that earnings have been retained in the USA as many extended families are setting up homes to live there permanently. However, many Micronesians view the Compact as an entitlement rather than a social welfare program for Micronesians to depend upon. This is because it is a quid-pro-quo program in return for the USA to retain its military interest in the FSM. The Compact does not fit the MIRAB model.

Micronesians remain cautious about their future and very selective of foreign ideas and their application to a Micronesian context.⁴⁰ For example, some leaders wanted to be a part of the globalisation idea, however, warning signs are appearing and are forcing them forced them to evaluate the idea carefully. They have come to the realisation that globalisation is like colonisation under different name. It is a new method where the big economies seek to absorb the less developed economies, like the Pacific Islands, for outsiders' benefit. Micronesians are establishing relations with the international

³⁹ International Monetary fund, *Federated States of Micronesia-2008 Article IV Consultation Concluding Statement* < <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2015/pr15224.htm>>; Emil Friberg, Kendall Schaefer and Leslie Holent, "US Economic Assistance to Two Micronesian Nations: Aid Impact, Dependency and Migration" in *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, V. 47, No.1, April 2006, pp. 123-133.

⁴⁰ Locals need to get involved in the FSM's development process.

community so as to further explore options for the future, while at the same time maintaining their collective strength through the extended family network; it is the bedrock of their socio-economic life that has sustained them for centuries. Future development therefore must be based on this economic model and Micronesia's unique historical context for the purposes of managing and controlling Micronesian values and future continuity.

Conclusion

Micronesia's future is uncertain. The three options of discussion could assist in creating a future roadmap for the country. Each option has its own limitations and merits. It is hoped that Micronesians will consider these options to enlarge their awareness on how to survive the future by looking into their past. From these discussions it has emerged that Micronesians, like other colonised people in the Pacific, are highly resilient and adaptable people. History has taught Micronesians how to respond to new challenges emanating from beyond the horizon. The impact of colonialism essentially developed a shared identity for Micronesians, which has been embodied in the Constitution. The perpetuation of this identity rests on Micronesians ability to manage their affairs in the rapidly globalising world by utilising the lessons of history.

The FSM's future economic wealth lies with the nation's EEZ in terms of its pristine environment, fisheries, and possible mineral resources under its ocean bed coupled with its cultural practises to preserve their unique identity. However, this will require leaders with great vision. For example, successful national corporations, like the National Fishing Corporation (NFC), could be used as a model to duplicate its success across the board.⁴¹ At the state level the governments should be active in promoting community businesses based on new ideas of the past cooperative models. At the municipal level, the governments should maintain the best practices of preserving the environment with the use of sustainable legal instruments. On this note, I argue strongly that despite the centuries of colonisation, Micronesians have been very successful in preserving their cultural values, identity, and continuity throughout history. It contradicts the popular belief that the indigenous Micronesians are merely footnotes of history, forever lost to the changes brought upon them by the outside world. As noted by D'Arcy, Micronesians are always "ready to respond to challenges and opportunities from beyond the horizon."⁴² D'Arcy's comments resonate the values contained in Micronesia's

⁴¹ Sitan, "The Development of the Tuna Fisheries in the Federated States of Micronesia", pp. 14-15.

⁴² D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, p.174.

Constitution, which embodies the essence of Micronesia's history and the new identity; it acknowledges Micronesians as the rightful guardians of their islands now and into the future.⁴³ As the Constitution states, "With this Constitution we (the people of the Federated States of Micronesia), who have been the wards of other nations, become the proud guardian of our own islands, now and forever".⁴⁴ In the words of my progenitors, "*kish shon fanuash, esap kish shon liken. Met popon sipe pwal apurur sap mine sike menau sangir*".⁴⁵ That is, "we are islanders with our own home, why should we emulate foreigners since we have been surviving historically with our own wisdom and knowledge".

⁴³ *The Constitution of the FSM, Preamble.*

⁴⁴ *The Constitution of the FSM, Preamble*

⁴⁵ Steven Maipi, speech delivered to high school students, Summer, Lekinloch Island, 1974.

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