2

Pre-Colonial Society and 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 Chapter 1, 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 a Micronesian perspective. No Micronesian has written a comprehensive account of the colonial and post-colonial periods 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 organising history,

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

society and nature that are 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.

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 history,³ 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. Subsequent chapters then trace how this identity and its organising principles came about over history and how this legacy will play out in the words and actions of young people.

2 See e.g. 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, DC, 1979; Ward Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk* (2nd edition), Archon Books, Connecticut, 1978; William Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia* (2nd edition), University of Victoria, British Columbia, 1977; Kirk Gray, 'Modernization in Micronesia: Acculturation, Colonialism and Cultural Change', PhD thesis, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1974, pp. 1–6.

3 Kerry R. Howe, *Nature, Culture and History: The 'Knowing' of Oceania*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 2000, pp. 55–57, 59–64; David W. Kupferman, 'On Location at a Nonentity: Reading Hollywood's "Micronesia"', *Contemporary Pacific*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2011, pp. 142, 162; Jane Landman and Chris Ballard, 'An Ocean of Images: Film and History in the Pacific', *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', *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 28, No. 1, June 1993, pp. 219–220; Kenneth E. Knudson, 'Resource Fluctuation, Productivity, and Social Organization on Micronesian Coral Islands', PhD thesis, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 1970, pp. 6–8; Howe, *Nature, Culture and History*, pp. 55–57, 59–64.

5 My personal experience has shown this to be the case. Academia has been slow to come to this realisation and only partially contested it.

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 Many scholars, for instance, refer to Micronesia as a dehumanised 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, modern Micronesian history and thus identity are 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* in 1979.⁹ Historians argue that all documents and perceived identities and affiliations are situated 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 their place 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 coexisting with each other.

The term 'Micronesia' is an externally imposed description of the scattered islands in terms of geography and as a cultural area, 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

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, 2006, p. 21; Howe, *Nature, Culture and History*, pp. 10–14.

9 It took almost 15 years after the Congress of Micronesia was established in 1965 for Micronesians to finally achieve a constitutional government (Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, p. 100).

10 Munro and Lal, 'The Text in Its Context', pp. 1–11; Penelope J. Corfield, 'All People are Living Histories—Which is Why History Matters', *Making History*, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2008, www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/why_history_matters.html.

11 Mortlocks oral history as told by my elders (hereafter *Mortlocks Oral History*). See also Francis X. Hezel, 'The Chuuk Problem: At the Foot of the Political Pyramid', *Micronesian Counselor*, No. 50, April 2004, www.micsem.org/pubs/counselor/frames/chuukprobfr.htm.

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

a unifying tool to fight the tyranny of colonialism.¹³ The outcome of this historical discourse is the reconfiguration 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 on the foundation of their unique historical past. Micronesians were part of this process but were only able to exercise significant control rather late 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 an example of European nomenclature based on the questionable association of the physical appearance of its inhabitants coupled with cultural similarities within a shared geographic location in Oceania alongside Polynesia and Melanesia.¹⁶ Geographic Micronesia encompasses many island nations: Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, FSM, Palau, the US territories of the Northern Marianas Islands and Guam. However, the FSM now assumes the name Micronesia by political design.¹⁷ Today, the FSM is recognised internationally as Micronesia, and the indigenous inhabitants are referred to as Micronesians, especially when framing themselves in political and cultural discourses. Micronesians 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

13 Robert Kiste, 'A Half Century in Retrospect', in *American Anthropology in Micronesia: An Assessment*, edited by Robert Kiste and Mac Marshall, University of Hawai'i Press, 1999, pp. 442–443.

14 Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, pp. 5–6.

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

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

17 Micronesia is now often associated with the FSM in many international forums. The people of Palau or the Marshall Islands identify themselves with the name of their countries—as Palauans or Marshallese, respectively. The disintegration of Micronesia can be blamed on the US as counter to the trusteeship agreement (Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p. 340).

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

that has shaped Micronesian 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) and *lang* (sky);²⁰ these are the sacred domains where the spirits of their 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 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 lang, tiro pwel, tiro saat*²³ and *tiro nganei ash samol*'.²⁴ This is a special acknowledgement to the Micronesian *saat*, *fonou* and *lang*. It is an invocation honouring both the natural spaces where their ancestors' dwell and their *aramas* (people) overseas.

Former Speaker of the Congress of the FSM Jack Fritz, like many esteemed traditional leaders before him, always began his oratory speeches with a passionate delivery of the aforementioned traditional line. It reveals Micronesians' deep connection to their oceanic environment, the land and the sky. Fritz's sentiment reflects the FSM's first president Tosiwo Nakayama's instructive dictum to his people where he impressed upon them to fully embrace their customs, traditions and the god-given

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

20 For a detailed discussion, refer to William Alkire, 'Land, Sea, Gender and Ghosts on Woleai-Lamotrek', *American Anthropological Association* (Reprinted from Special Publication, No. 25), 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 Lingenfelter, *Yap*, p. 80.

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

23 *Pwel* is the same as *fonou*. However, it is more appropriate to use the term '*pwel*' when delivering a speech during community gatherings.

24 *Samol* refers 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 these opening remarks, and these are still used today by people during all sorts of meetings.

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 brother of Tosiwo and a former FSM ambassador to the UN, echoed both the president's and speaker's comments when he explained what the sea means to Micronesians at the UN Convention on the 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, 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, '*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

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

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

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

28 Masao Nakayama and Fred Ram, *Traditional Native Approaches to Ocean Governance*, United Nations University, 1974.

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

30 David Marar (Wing Commander, Maritime Surveillance), Interview, Nett, Pohnpei, 13 January 2011; Simion Weitto (Captain, FSS Micronesia (FSM surveillance ship)), Interview, 11 January 2011. Simion is also the *makal* (traditional leader) of his island, Houk, in the northwest region of Chuuk.

Figure 3: A traditional fishing technique called *lalo*, used to catch bonito.

Note: This technique, which is still used today, involves using coconut fronds to trap fish near the beach.

Source: Photograph taken by Amanson Ansin on Lukunor Island in early 2014.

Figure 4: Another view of *lalo*.

Source: Photograph taken by Amanson Ansin on Lukunor Island in early 2014.

Joakim Peter, an academic from the FSM, summed up the 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 inhabitants' lifestyle depends on the sea. Anthropologist Lieber and historian D'Arcy discussed how the sea shapes island cultures, a theme that 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* focuses on the atoll of Kapingamarangi, where daily life and social structure depends on fishing activities. With changes in technology, new fishing practices arose as the people adapted to the 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 COM was the forum for elected leaders to discuss decolonisation and independence. The concept of one Micronesian identity was a top priority for the leaders. However, this identity was under constant threat by political elements that remained favourable to Americanisation. Americanisation was unpopular among the conservative elements of the COM, who perceived that Americanisation would mean American culture and values usurping those of the

31 *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*, Preamble; Peter, 'Chuukese Travellers', p. 261.

32 D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, ch. 7, pp. 146–155. See also Hau'ofa, *We Are the Ocean*, pp. 27–40.

33 Lieber, *More Than a Living: Fishing and Social Order on a Polynesian Atoll*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1994, pp. 179–180.

indigenous population. Consequently, Micronesians would be the new minority group and inevitably treated as second-class citizens. Proponents of Americanisation included Amata Kabua³⁴ and Nick Bossy,³⁵ as well as many who suffered during WWII. They considered the threat of Cold War hostilities being played out in the Pacific to be a more urgent danger and saw the continuation of a close association—perhaps even integration—with the US to be a safeguard of Micronesian security. The administrators were unimpressed with the new Micronesian identity; they thought the quest to de-Americanise the islands was too premature, citing Micronesian experience as inadequate to form and operate a government.³⁶ Despite the US's roadblocks to the issue of Micronesian independence, it did not fade away. The desire for independence instead gained momentum in the early 1970s. After a series of political negotiations between the Micronesian and American 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.

Towards a New Future

The ConCon 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 TTPI to determine whether to remain under US administration.³⁸ The ConCon was also the forum in which the differences between Micronesians within the American-administered TTPI emerged. For example, the districts of Palau, the 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.

34 Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, pp. 168–169.

35 Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, pp. 174–175.

36 Glenn Petersen, 'Lessons Learned: The Micronesian Quest for Independence in the Context of American Imperial History', *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, No. 1–2, December 2004, p. 53.

37 Hanlon, *Making Micronesia*, pp. 119–122.

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

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 their revenue—from the US test missile range in the Marshall Islands, and the proposed oil super port to be constructed in Palau by Japan and Iran—with the poorer districts. The Northern Marianas 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 US granted the wishes of Palau and the Marshalls to leave the TTPI to form their own political identities, later known as Paluan and Marshallese. The remaining districts of Ponape, Truk, Yap and Kusaie⁴⁰ decided to form the 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 for it to be embedded in everyday people's imagination. The Preamble of the FSM's 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 and country. 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 Micronesian heritage. The FSM passport validates the Micronesian identity when one travels to different jurisdictions internationally.⁴² The Constitution is also a shield⁴³ against outsiders' encroachment on this new identity.

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 enable the creation of the FSM (Meller, *Constitutionalism in Micronesia*, p. 9).

41 This is from my personal knowledge. In the 1970s, high school students were required to learn the preamble by heart. In my communications with many high school teachers during my fieldwork in January 2011, I found that students are still encouraged to have knowledge of the preamble.

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

43 *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*. The Constitution asserts Micronesians' rights to their islands as recognised in international law. See United Nations Human Rights, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Part I, Article 1, www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx; *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*, Article II, Section 1.

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 subregion of Mortlocks (Mortlockese) in the state of Chuuk (Chuukese) in the FSM (a Micronesian).⁴⁴ I am a Micronesian, an identity bestowed upon me by the *Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia* to inform others of what the indigenous Chuukese, Yapese, Kosraen and Pohnpeian's collectively refer to themselves in this age of globalisation.⁴⁵ This identity reclaims Micronesia's historical past from the colonial powers. I am 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 within the globalisation process.⁴⁸ Although the modes of travelling have changed, Micronesians have

44 My personal identity is based on my island clan and the region I came from, which are rolled into the broader Micronesian identity.

45 *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*, 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*, an honorary member of the *Sofa* clan. On clan associations and relationships, see Marshall, 'The Structure of Solidarity', pp. 50–66; Duane, *Clan and Copra*, pp. 59–63.

47 Marshall, *Namoluk beyond the Reef*, pp. 98–99, 134.

48 As a member of the Micronesian diaspora, I carry 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. Hou'ofa discussed the concept of movement of Pacific Islanders who are now part of a wider Pacific community in 'Our Sea of Islands', pp. 34–39. See also Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 12–19, 62, 64; Oha Uman, Ferdun Saladier and Anter Chipen, *Uruon Chuuk: A Resource of Oral Legends, Traditions, and History of Truk*, Vol. 1, ESEA Title IV Omibus Program for Social Studies, Cultural Heritage Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Moen, Truk, July 1979, pp. 1–7.

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, a Micronesian scholar, 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, anthropologist Lola Bautista's study of Micronesians from Satowan Island living abroad provided an insight into the 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 observations of my extended family's compound situated on what they referred to as the 'ranch' in Guam confirms Bautista's findings. My observations also indicated that my family's cultural identity remains strong despite its relocation. However, some features of cultural practices are eroding as the new generation born in Guam and elsewhere in the US are growing up in a new environment far from the centres of everyday cultural interactions.⁵⁵

49 Marshall, *Namoluk beyond the Reef*, pp. 98–99, 134. See also Hou'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', *City and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 1, June 2011, pp. 80–83.

53 Spaces are configured to reflect the gender avoidance between sisters and brothers. See social protocols in Marshall, 'The Structure of Solidarity', pp. 54–55.

54 Interactions between brothers and sisters are still seen as taboo and so both sexes have separate spaces for interaction. This is becoming problematic with the new generation born in the US. They seem not to observe this taboo (Marshall, 'The Structure of Solidarity', p. 54; Lingenfelter, *Yap*, pp. 44–45).

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

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: '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 the total loyalty of Micronesian citizens by prohibiting dual citizenship after a certain age:

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, though they may have no direct experience of Micronesia. The island culture, however, recognises their membership in the *ainang* system.⁵⁹ Although the 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

56 *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*, Article III, Section 2.

57 *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*, Article III, Section 3.

58 There is a clash between the rights afforded to citizens and nationals, especially regarding the issue of land or title inheritance. For example, inheritance is by tradition and nothing can interfere in that process, yet the Constitution bans traditional entitlements if one loses their FSM citizenship. This is a flaw in the Constitution that urgently needs addressing.

59 People who are culturally foreign but born with a blood connection to the islands are automatically members of their clan, either as an *afaker* or other designation, depending on the gender of the parent.

permanent membership of their parent's *ainang*.⁶⁰ 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 that designated 31 March as a national holiday known as Micronesian Culture and Traditions Day. 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

For 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 that include traditional dances, displays of traditional foods and handicrafts, and speeches from dignitaries. For example, in Yap, a state holiday called 'Yap Day' is celebrated on the first weekend of March every year. They display their island wares and stick and marching dances. A canoe festival is also on display, where Yapese showcase their canoes and sailing skills rooted in the *sawei* traditions. As recently as 2010, Carolinians sailed over 756 kilometres (643 miles) from Saipan in the Northern Marianas Islands

60 Marshall, *Namoluk beyond the Reef*, pp. 141–142.

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 honour the cultures and traditions of the FSM.

63 See the *sawei* system discussed in D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp. 146–150.

64 This is my personal experience. Other traditional celebrations are seen during individual state's constitutional days.

to Yap.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.

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, with the showcasing of traditional dances, local foods and 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 FSM. Perhaps this is so when viewed within the context of colonial discourse where external threats are always looming on the horizon, ready to rupture the nation at any moment. This discourse may be connected to the past partition of the TTPI, which saw the emergence of the various small island states out of that 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

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

66 I personally witnessed this while living in Pohnpei and teaching at the College of Micronesia, Pohnpei Campus. See Myjollynn 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, Pohnpei, FSM, 2011, pp. 9–11.

67 This is from my personal experience as a Mortlockese–Chuukese witnessing Chuuk Constitution Day. See also Kim, *Into the Deep*, pp. 9–11.

68 I have personally witnessed these, such as the Kosraen community celebration in Pohnpei. See also Kim, *Into the Deep*, pp. 9–11.

69 Glenn Petersen, ‘Regime Change and Regime Maintenance’, *Discussion Papers Number 12, Ethnicity and Interests at the 1990 Federated States of Micronesia Constitutional Convention*, The Australian National University, 1993, pp. 67–68. The Chuuk Commission has been established to manage any such disintegration in future. 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’, *People and Culture in Oceania*, Vol. 19, No. 41, 2005, p. 21.

However, Petersen's subsequent research led him to change his position.⁷⁰ He joined 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 common history. This historical connection has been stated in many scholarly studies of frequent canoe voyages between islands that 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 alliances.⁷² In Micronesia today, travelling between islands continues but with different means of transportation. Modern travelling continues to reproduce Micronesians' shared values and binds Micronesians closer together.

Oral traditions spoke 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 leflen [aramasan Maikronesia]. A tingei aewan Souariras [wisian epwe chok fori an epwe chok pwepweruk] nganei chuuk. Soukachaw [sou pwera] epe la mas on Kusae 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 the great warrior called *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

70 Glenn Petersen, pers. comm., Micronesian Australia Friends Association (MAFA) Workshop, The Australian National University, 12 July 2014.

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

72 The *sauwei* system is one example (D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp. 146–149).

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

74 My own translation of *Uruon Chuuk*, pp. 1–7, from Chuukese to English.

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 if people from *sou fal waa* needed to learn the art of medicine. As Joakim Peter commented, in the earlier days, frequent voyages between islands were vital to the extended *sou* system; it kept relationships alive and 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 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 and maintained skills within the extended family circle.

75 My own translation of *Uruon Chuuk*, pp. 1–7, from Chuukese to English.

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

77 I have experienced this firsthand; being an islander from Lukunor, I learned this from my elders. As a further example, I have also directly observed master canoe builders (*sou fal waa*) possess multiple skills and talents, like chanting, traditional measurement and religious practices. See also 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, *The People of the Sea*, pp. 90–91; Don Rubinstein, 'An Ethnography of Micronesian Childhood: Contexts of Socialisation on Fais Island', PhD thesis, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1979, p. 54.

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 allow the larger community to 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 retains their specific knowledge about *waa* building. There is also an 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, rely 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

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 and thus life, fertility and continuity.⁸³ The body of *maisuu* is painted in black and red to protect it from becoming waterlogged and the sun's heat, while *ioshol* is painted black in its entirety without the

78 *Wiieo* is a community gathering involving a 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, 2 January 2011; David Marar, Interview, Nett, Pohnpei, 5 January 2011.

81 *Mai suk* and *ioshol* are different canoe styles. *Mai suk* are bulkier and carry more weight on the sea. *Ioshol* are used for warfare, having greater agility, speed and manoeuvrability. On Lukunor, there was another type of canoe imported from Kapingamarangi called *sain Kirinis* (lit. 'the style imported from Kapingamarangi') (Kamilo Likichimus (master canoe builder from Lukunor), Interview, Weno, Chuuk, 20 June 2013).

82 Peter Sitan, Interview, 2 January 2011.

83 During one of my personal communications with Peter Sitan at The Australian National University on 29 April 2014, he sketched the 'V' shape and exposed it from all angles. When viewed from a distance, at a 90-degrees angle, there emerged a physical imagery of the female body, a sign of sea fertility.

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 are used primarily for transportation around the island itself rather than between islands. They do not see the need for long-distance canoes as they are well resourced agriculturally.

Figure 5: Maisuuk sailing canoe often used by some Mortlockese, people in the outer islands of northwest Chuuk and the atoll dwellers in Yap.

Source: Photograph taken by Donald Rubinstein on Yap in 2015.

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, and, most of all, a leader with courage and patience.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 practise their skills and are well regarded in island communities today. Their achievements are celebrated by *po* (admission to the exclusive club for master navigators),

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

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

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 1975.⁸⁷

Shaping of Identities

The FSM 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 and given social identity, and also how resources are consumed and conserved. The Micronesian archipelago is made up of three types of islands:⁸⁸ 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 standalone raised coral islands, such as Nama and Satawal. Typical atolls are encircled by coral reefs with a deep lagoon and enough vegetation to support its dwellers and biosystem, while standalone 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 that block moisture-laden winds off the sea, forcing them upwards to condense as rain clouds.⁹⁰ The different types of island environments have influenced varying community organisations and social identities.

Island communities are constructed and spread along the shoreline, allowing immediate access to the sea on both high and low islands. The sea provides food and sea life that can be utilised for their medicinal properties, as well as 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*.

86 James Naich, pers. comm. (online), 21 August 2013.

87 Jimmy Emilio, pers. comm., 5 January 2013. Jimmy is a descendant of one of the great *palou* of Ettal, Limiroch. However, *palou* Simen also 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 Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, p. 5.

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

The sea is also where rites of passage take place, especially for young males. In the past, an example of a rite of passage to enter manhood was a young male having 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* task. As Felix, 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 had to come from 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 to orient the young men about their place in the *ainang* diaspora and 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* (lit. '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 arts).⁹³ Steven Maipi, a former teacher from Lukunor, 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.

91 Felix Naich, or Felix as locals call him, was a historian of Lukunor Island. He was born in the early twentieth century and experienced all the changes on Lukunor Island from the German era to the US Trust Administration. 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*, University of Illinois Press, 1965, pp. 114–119; Hanlon, 'Micronesia: Writing and Rewriting the Histories of a Nonentity', pp. 7–8.

92 Felix Naich, *oral history*. Many of the activities were still practised when I was living on Lukunor, my island home.

93 The term '*sou*' is still used in the Mortlocks to refer to people with specialised skills (Felix Naich and Kamilo Likichimus, *oral history*). 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 29 April 2014. The term '*sou*' is also used in Pohnpei to refer to persons with high standing in the community.

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 placing pressure on 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.

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 and creates 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*. *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 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 facilitated many important activities; it created trade, enhanced religious practices 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) composed to attract the attention of the intended partner. Many items used during *apwarik* had to be sought from elsewhere. *Wa serek* (sailing canoes) were often sent to far-off destinations to trade for the desired goods and 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

95 Personal experience. It was explained to me that social behaviours distinguish man from woman, as well as 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 *Mortlocks Oral History*. *Apwarik* was one of the big events in island life as it brought together young people and, in the process, they formed romantic relationships. The event was also used for displaying 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 *auar* (magic/love potion) See brief comments by Thomas Gladwin, *East is a Big Bird: Navigation and Logic on Puluwat Atoll*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970, pp. 61–62. See also Goodenough, *Under the Heaven's Brow*, pp. 26–27.

98 *Mortlocks Oral History*. These Mortlockese economic activities were replicated across the Caroline Islands, especially in and among atoll communities. See e.g. Alkire, *Coral Islanders*, ch. 3, 'Daily Activities', pp. 41–68.

to increase the chances for one to capture the heart of a desired 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 provided 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, 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 level, 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 international consensus emphasises only the vulnerability of these Pacific communities. This book seeks to overturn the marginalisation of Micronesians' knowledge of their own environment and ability to self-sustain. Continued misrepresentation has practical and far-reaching contemporary consequences.

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 carbohydrates, which the sea complements with protein.¹⁰²

99 Alkire, *Coral Islanders*, ch. 3.

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

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

102 Islanders from the Mortlocks always need *salei* (protein, being meat or fish) to eat with taros and breadfruit, for example. A meal consisting only of carbohydrates is considered an impoverished meal.

Applying that concept to a Mortlockese perspective, it means the land provides *mongo* (the daily meal) and the sea provides *salei* (protein) to compliment *mongo*. One's identity is also tied to the land as it is where the *ainang* established its roots, meaning 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 continue 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 US. This has expanded Micronesian identity and continuity on a global scale.

Figure 6: A clan's *faal* on Lukunor Island.

Note: This style of *faal* is common throughout the Mortlocks region. It is used by men to perform their traditional activities and serves as the meeting place for the clan.

Source: Photograph taken by Amanson Ansin in 2012.

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

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

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, such as cooking, caring for children, gathering firewood and weaving. However, there are tasks shared by both the sexes such as scraping coconuts, gathering firewood and tending the gardens. In the western part of Chuuk, cooking, seashell gathering and collecting taros are female tasks. It is also noted that, in many of the outer islands, fishing tasks are specifically 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 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 differences in performance in the modern education system and 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 offspring). 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

105 Francis X. Hezel, Edwin Q. P. Petteys and Deborah L. Chang, 'Sustainable Human Development in the FSM. Chapter 2: The People and Their Cultures', 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*, pp. 19–29; Goodenough, *Under Heaven's Brow*, p. 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*, pp. 19–29; Descantes Christophe, 'Integrating Archaeology and Ethnohistory: The Development of Exchange Between Yap and Ulithi, Western Caroline Islands (Micronesia)', PhD thesis, UMI Dissertation Services, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1998, pp. 71–72.

pei lap (estate). Each island has different *ainang*, 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 dependent on the *ainang*'s own history. For example, in many parts of the FSM, each of these *ainang* link to 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), though 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 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 through 'family connection and commerce'.¹¹⁴

108 Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll*, p. 29; *Oral history* of Lukunor Island.

109 Clan connection is now more widespread within the FSM as people are allowed (or able?) 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. I personally experienced this 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 (Duane, *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; David Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar: A History of the Island of Pohnpei to 1890*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 1988, pp. 7–9.

113 Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, p. 42 (the clans called *Saur* in Yap and *Sor* in Chuuk); Marshall, *Namoluk beyond the Reef*, p. 35; Manuel Rauchholz, 'Notes on Clan Histories and Migration in Micronesia', *Pacific Asia Inquiry*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Fall 2011, pp. 57–59.

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

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 who, 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 central to the Micronesian sense of social identity. The *ainang* system is a security network that constantly dislodged foreign elements that purported to rupture the longstanding 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 sense of identity.

The inhabitants of the volcanic island of Pohnpei have developed a different social system in comparison to those 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 *Nanmwarkhi*.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 and maintain the specific structure of the social order. During *kamadhipw* (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 *Nahnmwarkhi* by contributing *sakau*, pigs, yams, fish and other items appropriate for the *kamadhipw*.

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

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*, p. 354.

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

117 Hezel, Petteys and Chang, 'Sustainable Human Development in the FSM', micsem.org/pubs/articles/economic/shd/frames/chapter03fr.htm.

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.

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*, 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 US.¹²³ Money was increasingly used as mode of exchange. Its power interfered with the existing reciprocal system, especially in the port towns where labourers were paid in cash rather than returning favours. Land, labour and Western commodities can also be bought with money, especially by the new, small business class. Money found its way into the local system during the colonisation period, but many people are mindful about its effect on communities.¹²⁴ For example, many people at the village level continue to work by the *ainang* system as it has proven many times over to be a safety net. Money does have its own value but is

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

121 My personal experience, which includes reciprocating in village activities such as *apwipwi* (working together in a team and taking turns working each team members' land) on the taro farms.

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

123 Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, pp. 73–83.

124 When I was growing up on the islands, dried copra were sold to 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. See also Marshall, *Namoluk beyond the Reef*, pp. 31–32; Labby, *The Demystification of Yap*, p. 8.

controlled by the external world. The Micronesian identity thus reflects the social dynamics of the FSM. It constantly negotiates itself in response to 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, both at the community level and through 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 testimony to how the people have reversed the image of the FSM as the suicide capital of the world.

The Environment

Fanou and *saat* provide the basis for identity and continuity. In the pre-colonial period, the management of resources was community-based, owned and jointly managed by members of the extended *ainang*¹²⁷ (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

125 *Micronesia Forum*, www.micronesiaforum.org/.

126 *Micronesia Forum*, www.micronesiaforum.org/.

127 *Ainang* is the clanship network system that has effectively been the foundation of Micronesian identity. It is one of the most important concepts to understand as we cannot comprehend the full extent of FSM history without it. Leaders continue to use this network to maintain socio-political connections (Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, p. 23).

a social unit.¹²⁸ *Ainang* is a large extended family identified by the physical space they 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*.¹²⁹ Micronesians have lived in close harmony with their *fanou* and *saat* for centuries, managing the resources to ensure continuity for future generations. Disharmony arose when the production and use of natural resources was out of kilter, for example, when recalcitrant clans sought to reorder the control of resources in territory they were not historically entitled to.

The economy and society are interconnected by the aforementioned principles, which in turn contribute to the conservation of resources. Traditional methods of environmental management are still in practice today. They include *pwau*, *otoul*, *mwannei* and *unupwel* (restriction and offerings of coconuts, breadfruit and taro). Many of these practices are also common (but with different terms) in the Micronesian region, such as in Yap, Pohnpei and Kosrae.¹³⁰ Moreover, conservation techniques varied as these are dependent on the topography and seascape of each island.¹³¹ For example, in the low-lying islands, *pwau* is the most effective method of conservation, restricting 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 have been 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 breadfruits are in abundance, members of each *mwalo* would band together to harvest them and store them underground where they ferment, preserving the breadfruit—called *mar*—for later use.¹³² Restriction of movement between villages was another way to ensure maintenance of a

128 Marshall, 'The Structure of Solidarity', p. 55.

129 *Eaealalilis 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.

130 Rubinstein, 'An Ethnography of Micronesian Childhood', p. 52; Knudson, 'Resource Fluctuation', pp. 194–195.

131 Lingenfelter, *Yap*, pp. 5–17; Margie V. Cushing Falanruw, 'Food Production and Ecosystem Management in Yap', *ISLA: A Journal of Micronesian Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 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, No. 1, Rainy Season 1994, pp. 49–64.

132 *Mar* is an important food item specially eaten during the *lefang* months. Relatives from the mother's side usually share the *mar*.

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.

According to oral history, coral rocks were arranged in such a way so as to facilitate the natural flow of currents and patterns of waves to minimise shore erosion. Planting of native plants such as *rakish* (seaoaks), *fash* (pandanus), *mosor* (*guettarda speciosa*) and *shia* (mangrove) a few feet from the shorelines was another method used, with rocks and heavy debris used to fill the gap between the shore and the native plants. This was a form of local adaptation and a mitigation strategy developed to strengthen the shorelines where they were susceptible to erosion and damage from currents and waves.¹³³ Since colonisation, the landscape has been altered to accommodate the needs of outsiders in the forms of docks and seawalls. This has created more problems in managing the seascape and shore erosion. Outsiders' lack of knowledge of the environment and their ignorance of local knowledge to facilitate the proper installation of the seawalls and docks are 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 industrialised countries in distant lands, yet its impact is felt in 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 being used as a defence mechanism to prevent breach erosion due to climate change.¹³⁴ Moreover, traditional methods have been combined with outside engineering methods. 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 of the FSM's territorial sea as recognised by international law. It also incorporates modern practices compatible with traditions. An example of this can be

133 Marion Henry (FSM Secretary of Resources and Development), Interview, Palikir, Pohnpei, 5 July 2013.

134 Between 22 and 26 June 2013, I travelled to Kosrae and observed a new seawall design. It promoted local adaptation to climate change using appropriate forms 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: The Federated States of Micronesia*, 14 December 2009, p. 2.

seen in the allocation of the nation's resources between the municipality, state and national governments. For instance, marine space between these respective jurisdictions is clearly defined; ownership of reefs by different clans is acknowledged in the constitutions of the states of Yap and Chuuk. Municipalities control the areas around the reefs, often using the traditional methods of *pwan* to conserve the sea and land environment, while the states are responsible for conservation outside the municipal border to the 12-mile zone. The national government has conservational jurisdiction from the 12-mile zone to the 200-mile EEZ.¹³⁵

Religious Practices

Lamelamen eoranei (traditional religious practices) are an integral part of Micronesian self-assurance, control and continuity. Religious practices formalised people's relationship with the environment and each other throughout history. For example, environmental conservation practices command people to treat and respect nature since it provides sustenance for life. Sacred places, such as designated special spaces, rocks, trees and places on the reef, have meaningful historical value,¹³⁶ as may be explained by the narratives of the different clans. For example, each designated space may honour 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 sub-clan).¹³⁷ 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 pwal neningeni*' (lit. 'one good turn deserves another').

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

136 Each clan sets the value and the significance of its designated spaces. It also demands that the public observe such significance. Conflict could arise from disrespecting a space's sacredness.

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

To seek assistance from the *leo* (ancestral gods), *waitawa*¹³⁸ (communication between the ancestors and the living that involved the spokesperson entering into a trance of spiritual possession) is used as a medium of communication between the people and their *leo*. The *leo*'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), *eoranei* (traditions), *anulap* (the big god) and *anukis* (the lesser gods) are integral parts of Micronesian religious doctrines as embedded¹³⁹ in each clan's history.

Offerings are part of religious practices 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 clan's chief, the living mediator between the clan and its *samol*. It also signifies the clan's appreciation of the public's respect in relation to the doctrine of *pwau*, which effectively allows the land or reef to recover.¹⁴⁰ The above connection between religious and conservation methods are still practised today. Reflecting the importance of religious practices, the Constitution recognises them as inherent fundamental rights¹⁴¹ of the Micronesian people.

The extent of 'Micronesianising'¹⁴² foreign religion can be well understood in connection to Christianity. Christianity is an alien religion, yet Micronesians have integrated it into their religious practices.¹⁴³ Micronesians inserted their own religious ideology into the

138 Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, p. 55. Note that Goodenough used different spellings of the word '*waitawa*' (his version is '*waitawa*') but it is the same religious concept. Similarly, he used different spellings for many Chuukese words, some of which are unfamiliar to me. See also Francis X. Hezel, 'Possession and Trance in Chuuk', *ISLA: A Journal of Micronesian Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1995, www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/socprobs/frames/posstranfr.htm.

139 Religion in traditional societies was patterned along *ainang*'s own *anulap* and *anukis*. This continues to be the case in many local communities in the modern FSM. See Alkire, *An Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp. 17–18; Francis X. Hezel, 'Spirit Possession in Chuuk: A Socio-Cultural Interpretation', *Micronesian Seminar*, Pohnpei, 1991, www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/socprobs/frames/spiritposschkfr.htm.

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

141 *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*, Articles IV and V.

142 'Micronesianising' refers to the process of incorporating outside influences into a Micronesian context.

143 Joakim Peter, 'Eram's Church (Bell)', pp. 282–285.

womb of Christianity and, over time, this gave birth to what I coin as 'Micronesianity'. Micronesianity is the appropriation of Christianity by Micronesians. Micronesianity perpetuates social cohesion through religious and community relations. For example, the use of *awosiwos*¹⁴⁴ is practised to receive favourable outcomes from both the traditional and Christian god in times of conflict or self-doubt. The gods share the same religious space.

Figure 7: An example of 'Micronesianity'.

Note: Here, a statue of Jesus Christ stands at the edge of Lukunor's channel, where the spirits of the ancestors continue to live in the environment—they are sharing the same space.

Source: Photograph taken by Jocelyn Rayphand 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 practices. This is recognised by the Constitution and the FSM's legal codes. As declared in Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution, 'no law may be passed respecting an establishment of religion or impairing the free exercise of religion'.¹⁴⁵ Section 207 of the FSM Code Title 42 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.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ *Awosiwos* 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.

¹⁴⁵ *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*.

¹⁴⁶ *FSM Code Title 42*, fsmlaw.org/fsm/code/index.htm.

Healing is part of Micronesian religious practices. It involves calling upon the *leoo* to assist in curing social and physical ailments,¹⁴⁷ 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-based unit usually translated as a clan designed to perpetuate both local and regional continuity; it centres on social relations. *Shon ainang*¹⁴⁸ (members of the clan) naturally inherited their identity first from the mother's¹⁴⁹ *ainang* and second by the father's *ainang*. In Chuuk, and in some parts of Yap and Pohnpei, matrilineality is more dominant, but one is also connected to the father's clan as an *afaker*.¹⁵⁰ This dual membership passes on rights and obligations to the next generation. This in turn maintains connection with one's relatives and allocates one's rank in the islands' *ainang* system.

The degree of obligation upon individual members depends on their social position in the clan. At a minimum, one is expected to be loyal in order to have access to 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 are most notable between volcanic and low-lying islands. This also affected the way islanders responded to each other within the Micronesian archipelagos. For example, islanders on the small coral islands do not share many of the customs practised by islanders on the mountainous islands such as Yap, Pohnpei and Kosrae, which are more socially hierarchical because of their comparatively large land mass and greater population.¹⁵¹

147 According to oral history, *ruup* (yaws skin disease) was common throughout the islands in the Mortlocks and beyond. It is not known what the remedy for this skin disease was. 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.

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

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

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

151 Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 130–132.

The *ainang* system is not confined to one locale but is spread across 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 interrelated families) and lineage (a common ancestor), as in the *Nahnmwarki*¹⁵² 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 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.¹⁵³ Disputes between opposing parties are referred to the social units within the local system or the larger social units between islands, depending on the complexity of the issues. For instance, stealing of coconuts would be dealt with by the heads of the village families, 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.¹⁵⁴ 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.¹⁵⁵ For example, for offences such as personal injuries and property damage, the recompense was measured in material dues proportionate to the pain and suffering experienced by the victim, or the extent of injury or damage. 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, the occurrence of a death was 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

152 *Nahnmwarki* is the paramount chief of the chiefdoms in Pohnpei. See Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p. 366.

153 Personal knowledge. This is enshrined in *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*, Article XI.

154 Michael Lieber, *Using Custom in a Court of Law*, Association of Social Anthropologists in Oceania (ASAO) Conference, San Antonio, Texas, 5–7 February 2012, pp. 1–12.

155 *FSM v Mudong*, 1 FSM Intrm. 135 (Pon. 1982), fsmlaw.org/fsm/decisions/index.htm.

escalating into a vicious cycle of violence.¹⁵⁶ The modern legal system may interfere to prevent further violence. Violence may be confined to a local area, or could spread to a wider geographical space by dint of families' extended relations on other islands by virtue of marriage or clan connection.

In the past, revenge could restore peace when one side acknowledged defeat;¹⁵⁷ 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 practices used to restore peace in the community.¹⁵⁸ 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 local community. It is my contention that the same deep-seated continuity in traditional Micronesian societies has served as both a stabilising influence in times of external disruption and a confounder for external commentators and administrators attempting to understand 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 island communities. *Allik* were expressed in religious activities and environmental conservation practices and reinforced by the different social organisations as in the clan system.¹⁵⁹ History demonstrates the overall modes of conduct embedded in traditions as being upheld by the leaders of the different clans and their people. For example, contests 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. Final decisions are rendered by

156 Duane, *Clan and Copra*, pp. 141–142; Stephen M. Younger, 'Violence and Warfare in the Pre-contact Caroline Islands', *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 118, No. 2, June 2009, pp. 144–146. I also have personal knowledge of this, being a member of my clan *Sor* and connected to other relatives on different islands in the FSM, for example, the Mortlocks, Chuuk and Pohnpei states.

157 Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, pp. 51–52.

158 Surrendering of land and/or reef to victims of violent death, called *shap* or *liwinen sha* (blood payment), is common in many Micronesian societies, and there are many oral histories that can attest to this. See also Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, pp. 52–54.

159 *Mortlocks Oral History*; Francis X. Hezel, 'Congries of Spirit: The Meaning of Religion', *Micronesian Seminar*, Pohnpei, 1995, www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/religion/frames/congspritsfr.htm.

the clans' historians, who are usually in a leadership role, and this system is often accepted as being the best mechanism of settling a dispute.¹⁶⁰ In my youth, I witnessed this form of dispute resolution. 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 this claim was put under historical scrutiny, most of the historians from other clans disagreed with it. 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 would also rely on 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 limited resources is foremost. *Pwau* (traditional law banning human activities) is an effective traditional conservation practice that restricts the harvesting of fish in certain areas of the reef.¹⁶¹ *Pwau* serves two purposes: to honour the death of an important person in the clan and conserve the reef's resources by way of public announcement.¹⁶² For example, when an important member of the clan who owns the reef dies, *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 community respects this form of conservation method as it benefits the island population 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 clans who imposed *pwau* and the violators and their relatives.¹⁶³ The violators suffered serious injuries. 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

160 *Lukunor Oral History*; Personal knowledge from direct observation; Lieber, *More Than a Living*, pp. 4–12.

161 *Lukunor Oral History*; Personal knowledge.

162 I have personal experience of this, having routinely accompanied my father when imposing such a restriction by planting a big branch of a tree on the reef belonging to his clan, *Sofa*. See also D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp. 98–100.

163 *Lukunor 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 Anaun Lengashu's sister for breaching *pwau*. It is claimed that the reef was approximately the size of the area where the currents had carried the blood of the victim.

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 above in relation to owners of a reef. These traditional methods are examples of the laws of the land recognised by the Constitution.

The FSM is a nation with many unique forms of custom and traditions¹⁶⁴ that differ between its geographical spaces.¹⁶⁵ 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.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, the *Shulapan allik* (Constitution) embodies the concept of unity in diversity.¹⁶⁷ It is the hallmark of the modern state of the FSM and provides the framework in which the country's institutions are linked to Micronesian values, identity and continuity.

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.¹⁶⁸

The preservation of heritage is protected by Article V: 'nothing in this Constitution takes away the role or function of traditional leaders as recognised by customs and traditions'.¹⁶⁹ Article XI, Section 11 reinforces Article V by declaring:

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].¹⁷⁰

164 'Custom and traditions' are called *fascin* in Kosrae, *tiabk* in Pohnpei, *eoranei* in Chuuk, and *yalen* or *kafal fuluy* in Yap. See Petersen, 'Regime Change and Regime Maintenance', p. 40.

165 D'Arcy, 'Cultural Divisions and Island Environments', pp. 217–218.

166 Mac Marshall, "Partial Connections": Kinship and Social Organisations in Micronesia', in *American Anthropology in Micronesia: An Assessment*, edited by Robert C. Kiste and Mac Marshall, University of Hawai'i Press, 1999, pp. 107–108.

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

168 *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*.

169 *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*.

170 *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*.

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–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.¹⁷¹ Articles VIII and IX limit the government's arbitrary power; inherent in this are the parallel powers of traditional leaders and those of 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'.¹⁷² Nevertheless, the Constitution, by definition, is the supreme law of the land.¹⁷³

Characterising FSM the Economy

Three theories have been proposed to describe the economic situation in the Pacific, including the FSM. 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 engagement, finance, insurance and taxation, and transportation). MIRAB emphasises foreign aid, transnational migration and remittances (where money and goods are remitted from metropolitan countries), often from the former colonial powers, to sustain small island economies like the FSM.¹⁷⁴ The SITEs model refers to tourism as having a dominant role in the building of island economies. SITEs aims to 'increase foreign exchange earnings to finance imports'.¹⁷⁵ The PROFIT model is geared towards shrewd immigration and cyclical migration policy. It aims

171 Dennis Yamase, *The Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia: The First Twenty-five Years*, FSM Supreme Court, Palikir, Pohnpei, 12 July 2006, fmsupremecourt.org/fsm/rules/FSMSupCt25YrsforPDF.pdf; *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*.

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

173 *The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia*, Article II.

174 Paul D'Arcy, 'The Nourishing Sea: Partner Guardianship of Fishery and Seabed Mineral Resources for the Economic Viability of Small Pacific Island Nations', *Sustainability*, Vol. 5, No. 8, pp. 33–48.

175 Riaz Shareef, *Small Islands Tourism Economies: A Snapshot of Country Risk Ratings*, Department of Economics, University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia, p. 2, www.mssanz.org.au/MODSIM03/Volume_03/B05/04_Shareef_Snapshot.pdf.

for domestic control of local resources through political processes to secure and control viable means of transportation, and through luring foreign direct investment by offering low or no taxes.¹⁷⁶ It thrives on the use of intensive diplomacy to achieve purposeful outcomes. It has low reliance on aid and remittances to sustain local incomes and focuses on strong financial management.¹⁷⁷

The FSM economy has been characterised as mirroring the MIRAB model. This is because the FSM lacks sustained tourism, has no mineral resources, has weak financial control and its diplomacy (especially as practised in the PROFIT model) is constrained by the terms of the Compact. In alignment with the MIRAB model, the Compact allows Micronesians to migrate to and work in the US. They subsequently remit money and goods to their families on the islands. The Compact also finances the FSM government bureaucracy, the main employer in the FSM.¹⁷⁸ In my field interviews with government officials, many had not heard of and did not understand the MIRAB model. However, those 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 data collection about the sending and receiving of remittances, and the Compact should not be seen as a form of foreign aid since it is a treaty, components of which stipulate Micronesia's right to receive money from the US.

Perhaps, one can argue that one of the best economic practices suitable to islanders is one that enmeshes the daily cultural life of 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.¹⁷⁹ 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

176 Geoff Bertram, 'Introduction: The MIRAB Model in the Twenty-First Century', *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, Vol. 47, No. 1, April 2006, p. 5.

177 Bertram, 'Introduction: The MIRAB Model', p. 5.

178 The Compact provides the main funds for the operation of the FSM Government.

179 I 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. Such an understanding could assist foreign consultants in working closely with Micronesians to design an economic model appropriate for the islanders. See also Marshall, 'The Structure of Solidarity', pp. 62–64; Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 19–23.

analysis as practised 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 a gross domestic product (GDP) abstraction, which then translates into the ranking of a country's wealth on the international economic scale. DAS is a homegrown ideology that has its own internal, self-supporting mechanism in the shaping, sustaining and positioning of the FSM in the contemporary world.

All three of the economic models discussed above are, at best, only marginally relevant in a Micronesian context. Perhaps Micronesia's future should start with its reclassification as a dual economy with the *ainang* system at its very core.¹⁸⁰ It has its own measures 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.¹⁸¹ It continues to underestimate the astute judgement 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.¹⁸² Micronesia is refining the DAS lifestyle as it suits its social, political and economic lifestyle.

The Geography of Contemporary 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.¹⁸³

180 Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 19–23.

181 Laurence E. Rothenberg, *Globalization 101: The Three Tensions of Globalization*, Occasional papers from the American Forum for Global Education, No. 176, 2002–2003, webpace.ship.edu/hliu/347/14global/3-tensions.pdf.

182 Hau'ofa, 'Our Sea of Islands', pp. 29–30.

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

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 by fleets from other nations, 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 that evolved.¹⁸⁴

The inhabitants of 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,¹⁸⁵ from visiting relatives, or remittance of food or funds.¹⁸⁶ 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 US 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 a modern diet high in refined ingredients and chemical additives.¹⁸⁷ The FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs is advocating a return to a more traditional diet to improve community health, which is also crucial in terms of maintaining the health of the nation. As a consequence, many islanders are replanting indigenous crops for the purpose of adhering to a healthy diet to slow down the consequences of non-communicable diseases, which have slowly spread beyond the major port towns.¹⁸⁸

The FSM forms the northwest part of the region of Oceania. It lies immediately above the equator between Papua New Guinea to the south, Guam to the north, Palau to the west and the Marshall Islands to the east.

184 Jeffery C. Marck, 'Micronesian Dialects and the Overnight Voyage', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 95, No. 2, June 1986, pp. 253–258.

185 Port towns are the hubs of politico-economic activities in each of the states within the FSM. They emerged during the colonial period and remain today.

186 Hezel, *The New Shape of Old Cultures*, pp. 152–154.

187 Marcus Samo (Deputy Secretary of the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs and Chuukese Historian), Interview, Nett, Pohnpei, 21 January 2011, Kolonia, Pohnpei, 9 July 2013; Gibson Susumu and Mark Kostka, *Federated States of Micronesia Food Security Assessment Report* (Final Draft), Palikir, Pohnpei, March 2011, pp. 18–19; World Health Organization, 'Micronesia, Federated States of', in *Western Pacific Country Health Information Profiles*, 2011, p. 219. iris.wpro.who.int/handle/10665.1/10522.

188 Kippier Lippwe, pers. comm., Department of Health and Social Affairs, 2 July 2013.

It consists of more than 607 islands¹⁸⁹ dispersed across a vast oceanic space. Only 65¹⁹⁰ of the islands are inhabited, varying in population from less than 100 in the low-lying islands to over 35,000 in the volcanic islands.¹⁹¹ The islands range from small atolls that barely exceed 4 metres above sea level to many volcanic islands.¹⁹² The total land area of the FSM is approximately 271 square miles.¹⁹³

Figure 8: Federated States of Micronesia in relation to the world.

Source: Map produced by ANU CartoGIS.

189 Susumu and Kostka, *Federated States of Micronesia Food Security Assessment Report*, p. 1.

190 Office of Statistics, Budget and Economic Management, Overseas Development Assistance and Compact Management, *Millennium Development Goals and Status Report 2010*, pp. 1–2.

191 Office of Statistics, Budget and Economic Management, Overseas Development Assistance and Compact Management, *Millennium Development Goals and Status Report 2010*, pp. 1–2.

192 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.

193 Kim, *Into the Deep*, p. 271.

The FSM has 2,978,000 square kilometres of EEZ.¹⁹⁴ According to the latest census published by the Office of Statistics, Budget and Economic Management, Overseas Development and Compact Management (SBOC), the FSM's population is estimated to be just over 107,000.¹⁹⁵ It is estimated that 49,840 of the 107,000¹⁹⁶ are living in the US as of 11 October 2012. Of these 49,840 living in the US, around 16,790 were born in the US¹⁹⁷ and are referred to as the 'Compact generation'.

There are four main native languages spoken in Micronesia: Pohnpeian, Chuukese, Kosraean and Yapese. Many linguists claim that these languages belong to the modern Trukic language, a derivative of the Malayo-Polynesian or Austronesian language family group.¹⁹⁸ Each of these languages has 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 Palikir 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 country. The temperature is usually around 26°C, with two seasons (the dry months or *lerak*,¹⁹⁹ generally from May to September, and the windy months or *lefang*,²⁰⁰ from October to April).²⁰¹ The FSM is located on the southern edge of the typhoon belt. Typhoons vary in intensity but usually cause severe environmental damage.²⁰² Climate change is also affecting the nation's environment. For example, local fishermen have observed that tropical depressions and

194 Paul D'Arcy, 'The Lawless Ocean? Voluntary Compliance Regimes and Offshore Resource Exploitation in the Pacific', *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2014, p. 3.

195 SBOC, www.s boc. fm/ (site discontinued).

196 Francis X. Hezel, 'Micronesians on the Move: Eastward and Upward Bound', *Pacific Islands Policy*, No. 9, East-West Center, Hawai'i, 2013, pp. 33–34.

197 Hezel, 'Micronesians on the Move', p. 34.

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

199 For an in-depth discussion, see D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp. 14–16, 152–153; Gladwin, *East is a Big Bird*, pp. 24–25; Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll and Inter-Island Socio-Economic Ties*, pp. 44–45.

200 *Lefang* (the windy season from October to April); D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, pp. 152–153.

201 Goodenough, *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, pp. 22–23. *Lerak* is referred to as the breadfruit season where an abundance of food is available. It coincides with the summer months of May to September. *Lefang* is referred to as the lean months or the windy months (October to April). Navigators called the windy months *meramen atilei fatel* (the months to rest the paddles).

202 Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll and Inter-Island Socio-Economic Ties*, pp. 17–20.

sea surges are occurring more frequently and with increased intensity.²⁰³ Studies on climate change conducted by Fletcher and Richard,²⁰⁴ Henry, Jeffery and Pam,²⁰⁵ Gibson, Wichap and Silbanuz,²⁰⁶ and Keim²⁰⁷ have confirmed the locals' observations. The studies indicated that rising sea levels are slowly eroding beaches and increasing saltwater incursion into wells and agricultural lands. The protection of the environment from external threats is central to the maintenance and continuity of the FSM. For example, the introduction of foreign agricultural practices not suited to local conditions, the environmental impact of WWII and now climate change increase the urgency for locals to implement traditional conservation practices in collaboration with Western technologies.

In May 1979, the FSM became a constitutional government in a Free Association transitional arrangement with the administering colonial power, the US. This transitional arrangement has been the source of increasing friction over governance and independence issues despite the close economic, migration and cultural ties between the two nations.²⁰⁸ The FSM comprises 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 processes 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 during the post-WWII decolonisation process.²⁰⁹

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

204 Charles H. Fletcher and Bruce M. Richmond, *Climate Management and Adaptive Strategies*, University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program, 2010, pp. 4–5.

205 Henry, Jeffery and Pam, *Heritage and Climate Change in Micronesia*, pp. 38–39.

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

207 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.

208 Edward C. King, 'Custom and Constitutionalism in the Federated States of Micronesia', *Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 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*, edited by Randall Abate and Elizabeth Warner, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, United Kingdom, 2013, p. 386.

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

The different island identities are based on given groups' perceptions of themselves in relation to the sea or land. For example, the term *shon metaw* is in reference to the Mortlockese people as being from the deep seas. In some islands in the state of Yap and the northwest part of Chuuk, the term is *re-mataw*. Today, identities are based on the sub-geographical areas of the FSM, 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. These identities continue the historical affinity between islanders.²¹⁰

Theories of Peopling the FSM

Micronesian identities and continuity are memorialised and celebrated in indigenous *uruon fanou* (history of the land), *pwarik* (dances),²¹¹ *pisakin eoranei* (material cultures), *kolin fonu* (local songs), *ngorongor* (chants), *titilap* (stories and legends) and *palou* (navigational knowledge).²¹² Oral history has enabled islanders to trace their places of origin and their connection to these 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,²¹³ Glenn Petersen²¹⁴ and Paul Rainbird²¹⁵ are proponents of this theoretical assumption based on archaeological, botanical, linguistic and migration interpretation.²¹⁶

Thomas Gladwin noted that the pattern of settlement of Chuuk and Yap originated from the Marshall Islands via Kosrae, Pohnpei then Chuuk.²¹⁷ However, anthropologist Ward Goodenough referred to *kachaw* as the world with layers of heavens in his quest to represent how some Chuukese

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

211 Glenn Petersen, 'Dancing Defiance: The Politics of Pohnpeian Dance Performances', *Pacific Studies*, Vol. 15. No. 4, December 1992, pp. 13–27.

212 Peter, 'Eram's Church (Bell)', pp. 275, 279, 283.

213 Alkire, *Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Micronesia*, pp. 5–13.

214 Petersen, *Traditional Micronesian Societies*, pp. 39–40.

215 Rainbird, *The Archaeology of Micronesia*, pp. 97–100.

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

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

perceived their origins.²¹⁸ Pohnpeian archaeologist and historian Rufino Mauricio referred to Pohnpeians as migrating from unknown islands from the east, west and south.²¹⁹ 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 and based on oral history of *Moyitigitig*, the island of Fais in Yap was fished up from the depth of the sea.²²⁰ 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 and fixing them in place from the hitherto unknown through navigational plotting.

However, Oha Uman, Ferdun Saladier and Ante Chipen, in a detailed and valuable collection of local traditions titled *Uruon Chuuk*,²²¹ spoke of oral narratives of inter-island migration within Micronesia. This *uruo* was written in the Chuukese language and was based on oral narratives recorded in the 1970s. Apart from a few English translations commissioned in the late 1990s by Paul D'Arcy, it remains largely untranslated and uncited within academia. My reading of these 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 *leo*, whose dwellings are situated at particular points in the sea. It pointed to Pohnpei and Kosrae as the point of origin of the Chuukese people.²²² Marshall confirmed the oral histories of contact between Mortlockese, Pohnpeians and the islands in the northwest of Chuuk lagoon before colonisation.²²³ Despite this *uruo*, each island always resorted to its own *uruo* to trace its origin and,

218 Ward Goodenough, 'Skyworld and This World: The Place of Kachaw in Micronesian Cosmology', *American Anthropology*, Vol. 88, No. 3, 1986, pp. 551–568. This idea of a heaven with layers was noted as originating from Nama Island in the Mortlocks. This confirmed how some Lukunorians perceived heaven during the 1980s. For example, when 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 where the wind comes from—*efong*, *eor*, *lotow* and *efang* (north, south, east and west)—and *lang* (heaven).

219 Mauricio, 'Ideological Bases for Power', pp. 2–7.

220 Rubinstein, 'An Ethnography of Micronesian Childhood', pp. 18, 21–22. See also Rawari Taonui, 'Polynesian Oral Traditions', in *Vaka Moana: Voyages of the Ancestors*, edited by K. R. Howe, University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, p. 30.

221 Uman, Saladier and Chipen, *Uruon Chuuk*, pp. 1–7.

222 Uman, Saladier and Chipen, *Uruon Chuuk*, pp. 1–7.

223 Marshall, *Namoluk beyond the Reef*, p. 19.

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.²²⁴ Likewise other low-lying islands in Chuuk claimed their origins in the same lagoon.²²⁵ The islands in the Chuuk lagoon in turn spoke of Yap, Pohnpei and Kosrae as their points of origin.²²⁶

Moreover, Pohnpeians traced their origins to distant shores over the horizon.²²⁷ Peter Lohn, the traditional *Wasai*²²⁸ of the chiefdom of Sokehs, noted that some of these distant shores are Tuvalu and Kiribati.²²⁹ Many inhabitants of the low-lying islands in Yap came from Chuuk, as evidenced by clan relationships and oral histories. Kosraeans point to the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Yap as some of the places where they came from.²³⁰ All in all, we can see that Micronesians perceive their origins as situated at different points within the huge area that encompasses the Micronesian 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.²³¹ 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.²³²

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

225 Peter, 'Chuukese Travellers', p. 258; Eve C. Pinsker, 'Traditional Leaders Today in the Federated States of Micronesia', in *Chiefs Today: Traditional Leadership and the Pacific Postcolonial State*, edited by Geoffrey M. White and Lamont Lindstrom, Stanford University Press, California, 1997, p. 163.

226 Uman, Saladier and Chipen, *Uruon Chuuk*, 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.

227 Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, p. 42.

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

229 Oral history also connects the Mortlockese and the people from Kiribati, for example, with the clan called *tuum*.

230 Gordon, *Kosrae*, p. 6; Uman, Saladier and Chipen, *Uruon Chuuk*, pp. 1–7.

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

232 See e.g. *Mailo v Atonesia*, 7 FSM Intrm. 294 (Chk. S. Ct. Tr. 1995), CA no. 73-92.

Conclusion

As discussed throughout this chapter, the modern Micronesian identity emerged as a consequence of the colonisation process. The colonial powers attempted to reorder 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 FSM's Constitution to ensure continuity. The Constitution represents the collective identities within the modern state of the FSM as deeply rooted in the nation's historical past. It also conveys resiliency and continuity.

In the globalised 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 external perceptions of the FSM, not from the inhabitants themselves. The Constitution perpetuates Micronesians' continuity in the modern world while also safeguarding the FSM's traditions and ensuring the integrity of the islanders' values, which are discussed in the next chapter.

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