THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

History, Culture and Communication

Ruth E. Runeborg

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I. Introduction[1]

Policy decisions about communication system resources are an important part of controlled development in any society. Informed decisions are better made with a thorough understanding of the society's existing patterns of communication and their interrelationship with political, social and economic factors in historical context. As an initial step in providing the necessary information with respect to the Marshall Islands, this paper will present a concise historical overview of Marshallese culture. The purpose is to provide the essential background, based on existing literature, for future field research projects that will explore communication behavior.

The first section presents sources of information external to the Marshalls that had an impact on the society, as well as a general historical overview. The ethnographic section of the paper offers a holistic view of Marshallese life, traditional and modern; the limited amount of information available on interpersonal communication is presented here. The final section describes existing forms of modern mass media in the Marshall Islands.

II. Geography, History and External Communication

Geography

The Marshall Islands are located in the Pacific Ocean, north of the Equator between 4°30' and 4°45' N. lat. and 160°50' and 172°10' E. long. The Marshalls are divided into two parallel chains of atolls which extend northwest to southeast: the Ratak or sunrise chain in the east and the Ralik or sunset chain in the west. "The islands occupy a total sea area of 375,000 square miles . . . (while) the total land surface constitutes an area of only 70 square miles" (Mason 1947:3). This land area is divided into 29 atolls and five islands, inhabited by an estimated population of 27,000 as of 1977 (Pacific Islands Yearbook 1978:427).

In addition to the Ralik-Ratak division which accounts for the minor linguistic differences and cultural variation, the Marshall Islands can be divided generally into the northern Marshalls and the southern Marshalls for ecological purposes. In both areas the primary land formation is the atoll, "a more or less continuous emerged or slightly submerged calcareous reef surrounding a distinctly deeper lagoon" (Wiens 1962:8). However, the northern Marshalls have a wet and a dry season with approximately 50" of rainfall annually, while the southern Marshalls have less seasonal variation with about 160" of rainfall annually. The annual mean temperature is 81°F., tradewinds are from the northeast and typhoons are not infrequent.

History

The history of the Marshall Islands is commonly divided into four eras, corresponding to the governing colonial powers. The Marshalls were

discovered in 1526 by Garcia de Loyasa and in 1529 by Alvaro de Saavedra, both of Spain. Between then and 1788 when the Marshalls were rediscovered and officially named by the English captains, Marshall and Gilbert, numerous explorers from different countries contacted some of the islands. Between 1788 and 1885, intermittent contact with explorers, whaling ships and traders increased. The first scientific exploration of the Marshalls was conducted by the Russian, von Kotzebue in 1816-1817 and 1824. The first Christian mission was established in 1857 on Ebon by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Congregationalists from the New England area. In 1878, Kabua Kabua and Letabalin, paramount chiefs signed a treaty with Germany granting exclusive use of Jaluit harbor and guaranteeing protection for German traders.

In 1885, the Marshall Islands became a protectorate of Germany, as "the Marshall islands were not under the sovereignty of any civilized state" (Pauwels 1936:13). During the German era, which lasted until 1914, the atolls were visited regularly by traders, missionaries and administrative officials. Administration of the area was carried out by the Jaluit Gesellschaft, a trading company, from 1887 on. This firm, which resulted from a merger of companies active in the area, Robertson and Hernsheim, and Deutsches Handels- und Plantagen-Gesellschaft (D.H.P.G.) (formerly Johann Godeffroy und Sohn), had exclusive trading rights in the Marshalls. Despite complaints about this monopoly by the Australian firm, Burns, Philp and Co., the New Zealand company, Henderson and MacFarlane, and others, the German government continued to act on the advice of the Jaluit Gesellschaft until 1902 when it assumed direct administration of Micronesia.

This form of administration, with primarily an economic focus, had little impact on the health and educational level of the Marshallese; in these fields, the missionaries were of greater importance. A select group of Marshallese were educated in the German language to serve as interpreters and the services of a doctor were available on occasion. Copra was the main product of the Marshalls and production was stimulated by taxes assessed through the traditional leaders as well as through the availability of Western trade goods. This form of indirect rule strengthened the traditional political ogranization of the Marshallese, while the German administration dealt mostly with conflicts between foreigners and between the iroij, chiefs.

In 1914, Japan peacefully occupied German Micronesia as part of World War I strategy. The Japanese military, through the South Seas Defense Corps, governed the Marshalls until 1918. From 1918 until 1922, a combined civilian and military government was in charge. In 1922, Japan was awarded Micronesia as a Class "C" mandate by the League of Nations. Japan agreed to

> (1) . . . promote the material and moral well-being and social progress of the local inhabitents; (2) to rule out slavery, traffic in arms and ammunition, and alcoholic beverages; (3) to refrain from building fortifications and military bases; (4) to permit freedom of worship and missionary activity; and (5) to submit an annual accounting to the League of Nations (Bryan 1972:207).

The terms of the mandate were upheld until 1933 when Japan withdrew from the League of Nations (although they continued to submit annual reports through 1937), and considered the Marshalls and the rest of their Micronesian mandate, an integral part of the Japanese Empire.

During the Japanese era, the administration had several goals: the economic development of Micronesia, the use of the islands as an immigrant settlement for Japan's rapidly increasing population, the Japanization of the islanders through education, language training and enforced cultural change, and eventually, the use of the islands for military bases in anticipation of World War II.

Economic development was encouraged through the introduction of scientific methods of copra production, the establishment of a quota system, and incentives for quality handicraft production. The immigration of numerous Japanese and Okinawans also stimulated economic development, as the immigrants constructed buildings, performed services and produced goods with which the Marshallese had little or no experience. The factors of economic development and mass immigration were balanced by improvements in health and sanitation, education and the active encouragement of missions.

However, for the Marshallese, improvements in health and sanitation were minimal. Medical care "became increasingly oriented to the health needs of expanding numbers of Japanese immigrants" (Shuster 1978:26). In addition, the "availability of adequate medical care was directly related to one's ability to pay" and despite a sliding fee scale, "the poorer and generally unhealthier native received less care" (Ibid).

Likewise, with an increased number of Japanese immigrants, education became segregated and of differential quality. The Japanese were offered a school system identical to the one in Japan; the Marshallese received three years of primary education consisting mostly of Japanese language instruction and ethics classes, with an additional two years for the promising students. After these five years, vocational education in woodworking or agriculture was available for a select few.

Japan encouraged religious missions, perhaps recognizing religion as a "civilizing" influence while at the same time concurring with the mandate agreement and the requests of the natives. The various Protestant and Catholic groups established in the Marshalls were encouraged to remain or return. However, once fortification of the islands began, the missionaries were strongly encouraged to leave. Marshallese-run church services, Sunday School and the like were suppressed and went underground.

The Japanese administration also attempted to make a number of changes in the Marshallese social and political organization. They appointed Marshallese leaders, contrary to the existing political structure, thus weakening the position of the traditional leaders.

> In the late 1930's, one Japanese authority recommended that the 'collective ownership of the land by clans' be abolished in favor of private property, by granting outright titles to the occupants of individual tracts of land, or compensating the chiefs for the loss of their feudal rights through a cash payment. World War II apparently interrupted any official action on this . . . (Bryan 1972:209).

Also, the Japanese attempted to change the Marshallese social organization of matrilineality to conform to patrilineality, more like their own system, yet with little success.

In the early 1930's, Japan began to construct fortifications on Kwajalein, Jaluit, Wotje, Mili and Maloelap. Marshallese were conscripted to labor on these buildings and were resettled on other atolls. World War II started in 1941. In 1944, U.S. forces concentrated on gaining supremacy in the Pacific. Kwajalein, Majuro and Enewetak were captured within one month. All of the other atolls except Wotje, Maloelap, Mille and Jaluit were checked for Japanese in the next two months. In those

bypassed atolls, the Marshallese escaped or were removed under cover of night and resettled temporarily on Majuro, Arno or Aur atolls; this involved only 3% of the total Marshallese population. The U.S. fortified Enewetak and Kwajalein atolls as military bases.

The U.S. continued to govern the Marshalls after the war's end, using military administration until 1947. In this year, the U.S. was awarded the Marshalls as a strategic trust territory[1] of the United Nations; the Marshalls became part of the larger unit, the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands which was composed of the Northern Marianas, Palau, Yap, Truk and Ponape (including Kosrae). The Department of the Navy continued to administer the Marshalls until 1951 when the administrative duties were transferred to the Department of the Interior.

As the administrator of a U.N. strategic trust territory, the U.S. agreed, in Article 6 of the Trusteeship Agreement,

> . . . to foster the development of such political institutions as are suited to the trust territory and shall promote the development of the inhabitants of the trust territory toward self-government or independence, as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the trust territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned . . . to promote the economic advancement and self-sufficiency of the inhabitants . . . to promote the social advancement of the inhabitants . . . (and) to promote the educational advancement of the inhabitants . . . .

The U.S. has attempted to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants. The Congress of Micronesia, with only advisory powers, was started in 1965. This body has given Micronesians a chance to participate in a Western legislative process. Currently, the Marshallese are negotiating their status of "free association" with the U.S.

Economic development, which may be necessary for political independence is lacking in the Marshalls. In the outer islands, copra and handicraft production is a primary source of income; this production however, is sporadic (because of the uncertainty of the field trip ship's schedule) and has decreased due to the number of people who have moved to the urban centers. In the two urban centers of Majuro and Ebeye (in Kwajalein Atoll), wage-labor jobs are available for a very limited number of people, most of whom perform unskilled labor on the U.S. Army base, Kwajalein Missile Range (KMR) or work for the Trust Territory government. The other source of monetary income is compensation payments by the U.S. to various groups of Marshallese, for land use, medical problems, etc. Finally, cooperatives for various work activities are in operation; a successful example is a Majuro fishing cooperative with a storage system. The ability to store the large catches of fish for later sale and distribution has greatly reduced dependence on canned fish. Other cooperatives are usually in the form of store or boat ownership or usage.

Until the early 1960's, the "educational advancement of the inhabitants" was in the hands of a few, poorly trained Marshallese and even fewer Americans, such as missionaries. In 1962, English became the only language of instruction for all school grades. This decision necessitated the recruitment of American teachers, most of whom were ill-suited for teaching in a non-Western classroom situation, and the intensive training of Marshallese teachers which could not compensate for years without such training. In 1966, the apparent solution was imported: Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV's), idealistic, ambitious American

youth. Many of them worked in the education system, while others worked in community development, health, communication and other fields. At one point there were about 800 PCV's in all of Micronesia or about one PCV for every 93 Micronesians (Ballendorf and Seay 1976:23). The experiment has since been greatly reduced in size and has received mixed reviews.

In such fields as health and sanitation, the PCV's also had an impact. On the outer islands, available health care is minimal; in the urban centers, often factors such as medical supplies and sanitary conditions complicate matters, though better trained health care personnel are available. For example, in 1962, eight years after the discovery of polio vaccine, there was a polio epidemic on Ebeye, spread by some recent American arrivals to KMR; the Marshallese, unprotected by vaccination, were highly succeptible to this and other diseases.

Examining these four issues of political, economic, social and educational advancement, it is clear that the U.S. has not done all that it could have to comply with the Trusteeship Agreement. However, further evidence along these lines can be marshalled when we examine the historical data on the atomic and hydrogen bomb tests, the relocations of various atoll populations and other episodes in the history of a limited, yet important number of the Marshallese people.

Relocations

Bikini--Enewetak--Rongelap

In February 1946, U.S. Navy officials informed the 166 inhabitants of Bikini Atoll that their homeland was required for the good of mankind and to end all world wars; the U.S. wanted to test its nuclear weapons on

Bikini. In March, the Bikinians were moved from Bikini, with 2.32 square miles of land and a 229.4 square mile lagoon, to Rongerik, with 0.65 square miles of land and a 55.28 square mile lagoon (Tobin 1953:5, 8). Within two months the Bikinians requested to be returned to Bikini, noting the atoll's meagre resources. In July 1947, a medical officer reported that the Bikinians were suffering from malnutrition. Plans were made to move the Bikinians to Ujelang, but in December, U.S. officials announced that Enewetak Atoll was also needed for nuclear tests and the Enewetakese would be moved to Ujelang. That same month the 147 Enewetakese moved to Ujelang, an atoll with 75% less land area that Enewetak and only 25 square miles of lagoon, compared to Enewetak's 390 square miles of lagoon.

In January 1948, a study by anthropologist Leonard Mason concluded that adaptation to and survival on Rongerik was impossible for the Bikinians given the size of the transplanted population and the available resources. A medical officer who examined the Bikinians declared their condition to be that of a starving people; they were evacuated to Kwajalein where they remained until November 1948. During this time, they recuperated and tried to decide where their next home would be. In November 1948, the Bikinians moved to Kili, a single island of 0.36 square miles of land with no lagoon in the southern Marshalls; most of them live there today, despite poor adaptation to their new location, for ecological and cultural reasons.

In 1968, an Atomic Energy Commission report declared Bikini safe for human habitation. In the early 1970's about 100 Bikinians were moved to Bikini to help with the clean-up and rehabilitation of the atoll. A 1975 report, released in its entirety in 1977, declared the atoll unsafe

for human habitation. The Bikinians were evacuated once again from Bikini in August 1978. Due to numerous radiological surveys of Bikini since the early 1970's, conducted by the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) and the Department of Energy (DOE), it has been suggested that the Bikinians were deliberately exposed to radiation for experimental purposes; this is, of course, denied by government scientists.

In 1969, the U.S. government decided they would need to continue using Enewetak for various purposes for many years. As the Bikinians had recently been permitted to return to Bikini, in 1971, the Enewetakese demanded to be allowed to return to their homeland also.

> In April 1972, the United States government surprisingly announced that Enewetak would not be retained, after all, but would be returned to the Trust Territory government, as soon as another series of military tests at Enewetak were completed (Barry 1976:49).

These military tests, Pacific Cratering Experiments (PACE) would detonate 5-, 20-, 100- and one 500-ton explosive charges to simulate nuclear test after-effects for the purpose of monitoring ground motion. One of these explosions had already been conducted. These proposed tests would further damage Enewetak Atoll and most likely, spread any remaining radioactive debris. In September 1972,

> the Enewetakese filed suit in U.S. District court in Hawaii to halt all activities associated with PACE . . . they charged that several of the provisions of NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) had been violated. PACE had been initiated before the environmental statement had been filed (Kiste 1976:66).

A court injunction ended PACE activities; it was accompanied by two public hearings in April 1973. By June 1973, it was announced that PACE would not be continued. The Enewetakese have still not been returned to their homeland.

The first test of a hydrogen bomb at Bikini on March 1, 1954 drew worldwide attention when an unpredicted shift in winds scattered significant amounts of radioactive fallout over a Japanese fishing vessel, Fukuryu Maru, or Lucky Dragon, contaminating the 23 crewmembers as well as 12,000 pounds of fish (Tate and Hull 1964:389). For this error, the Japanese government received $2 million in compensation.

However, this same test also affected several atolls in the Marshalls and their inhabitants. Rongelap's 82 inhabitants were most severely affected, being exposed to approximately 175 rems of gamma radiation.[2] A snowlike fallout formed a 3.75 cm. thick layer on the ground. Utirik's population of 154 was likewise exposed to about 14 rems of gamma radiation. Twenty-eight U.S. radiation monitoring personnel on Rongerik were also exposed to radiation, yet knew to take appropriate precautions. U.S. personnel were evacuated to Kwajalein 34 hours after the test, Rongelapese more than 58 hours after the test and Utirik's inhabitants, more than 3 days after the test. Marshallese from Ailinginae were also evacuated to Kwajalein.

These Marshallese remained on Kwajalein for three months under close medical supervision. The atolls of Utirik and Ailinginae were tested and declared safe for human habitation and their original inhabitants were allowed to return home. The Rongelapese were moved to Ejit Island in Majuro Atoll where they lived for a little more than three years (Hines 1962:197).

The initial contamination of these Marshallese occurred in three different ways:

> penetrating gamma radiation from the ground, trees, and houses resulting in whole body irradiation; skin contamination from fallout which resulted in spotty localized irradiation of skin and scalp; and internal contamination occurring from digesting contaminated food (Tate and Hull 1964:383).

In addition to the initial effects of radiation, i.e., itching and burning of the skin, eyes and mouth, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, whole or partial loss of hair, and beta skin burns, there have been long-range effects of the irradiation: a greatly increased number of stillbirths and miscarriages among exposed women, thyroid tumours both malignant and benign, especially among exposed children, growth retardation among a specific age-group of children, an increased incidence of cancer, and in 1972, the first death, directly attributable to the irradiation--the individual was one year old at time of exposure and died of acute myelogenous leukemia.

Although Utirik's inhabitants were exposed to a comparatively low amount of radiation, these illnesses are present in their population to the same degree as among the Rongelapese. In 1957, the Rongelapese were permitted to return to Rongelap Atoll, despite the "slight" contamination which remained. In addition, Rongelapese away from home during the 1954 evacuation also returned home. This unexposed group became contaminated from "leftover" radiation, thus also being exposed to radiation, with similar results. Thus, this exposure of a preciously unexposed group parallels events in the Bikinian's history, setting up an ideal test situation for studying the effects of radiation on different populations.

Kwajalein

In addition to those Marshallese affected by nuclear weapon tests, a larger number of Marshallese are directly effected by the presence of the U.S. Army Base, Kwajalein Missile Range (KMR), in Kwajalein Atoll. In 1944 and earlier under the Japanese administration, Marshallese were moved from Kwajalein Atoll, and especially from Kwajalein Island, to allow the development of a military facility. Until 1951, Marshallese workers employed at KMR resided on Kwajalein Island, at Kwajalein Labor Camp; as their numbers grew, to 559, with the importation of families and friends, they were moved to Ebeye, an islet with 0.1 square miles of land (Tobin 1954:3). A 1954 study pointed out the serious social, economic and health problems related to Ebeye's severe overpopulation of 981 people; in 1976, Ebeye's population was approximately 7600, with the same problems merely intensified (Alexander 1978).

In the early 1960's, it was decided to use Kwajalein Atoll as a target for inter-continential ballistic missiles (ICBM's) shot from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California and intercepted by anti-ballistic missiles (ABM's) from KMR, the debris left to fall in the lagoon or on nearby outer islands. Thus, it became necessary to re-settle the approximately 400 inhabitants of the mid-atoll corridor region on Ebeye. Compensation for loss of land only began in the early 1970's.

Ebeye has become a place of attraction for hundreds of Marshallese. It is the "big city," with better educational, health care and entertainment facilities. It is seen as a place of infinite opportunity, although

the U.S. employs only about 7% of the population as of 1976; private enterprise and Trust Territory government jobs are also few in number.

There are other "Ebeyes" in the Marshalls. Majuro, the District Center, has similar urban problems. In Kwajalein Atoll, Enelapkan or Carlos, is also the site of a small U.S. military installation and a place of job opportunity for the Marshallese (Tobin 1972). Also in Kwajalein Atoll, Enebör is the home for about 200 Marshallese who work on nearby Roi-Namur, site of a U.S. radar station, and an island used solely by the U.S., without compensation to its landowners (Barry 1976:55).

III. Ethnography

The following section on traditional Marshallese culture will present information on the economy, the social and political organization, the land tenure system, events of the life cycle, and the religious and education systems. Such ethnographic data have little historical depth prior to World War II; previous "knowledge of the Marshallese and their customs was derived from the accounts of explorers, travelers, traders, missionaries and administrators" (Mason 1947:6). These reports are generally not available in the English language and not widely accessible to the public. In addition, information will also be provided on the social and cultural effects of relocation in the Marshall Islands. The primary sources are Mason (1947, 1954), Spoehr (1949b), Kiste (1967, 1974) and Alexander (1978). Throughout the text, the ethnographic present will be used, qualified in specific cases in the Notes. Descriptions of the institutions mentioned above will be updated, to the 1970's when possible, immediately following the accounts of the traditional practices.

Traditional Economy

The traditional economy of the Marshall Islands is based on fishing, gathering and horticulture to varying degrees. In the northern Marshalls, horticulture is infrequently practiced due to infertile soil and inadequate rainfall. Instead, fishing is emphasized, especially where the lagoon is large and abundantly stocked. A variety of fishing techniques are used, including the use of nets, lines, traps, fish pounds and poison; marine life is also gathered from the reef. Over 150

different varieties of fish are recognized (Mason 1947:45).

In the southern Marshalls, the rich soil and abundant rainfall facilitate the cultivation of the many varities of taro, sweet potato, and arrowroot, and the growth of papaya and banana (Bryan 1972:126). Less time is devoted to fishing, due to the greater amount of time spent in horticultural activities. In both the southern and northern Marshalls, gathered fruit crops, such as coconut, breadfruit and pandanus, play a vital role in the diet, as well as the material culture of the Marshallese.

The division of labor is according to sex. The men build canoes, houses and make wooden implements. They sail the canoes and fish, and they gather food and cultivate the gardens. Sennit from coconut fibers is made by the men into rope, fish nets and lashings for canoes and houses. In the past, men were trained in navigation skills, rituals and tattooing. Now, a few men are medical officers, pastors and storekeepers. Women are responsible for preparing the preserving food, caring for the children and weaving all of the mats, baskets and, before 1885, clothing. Since the introduction of fabric to take the place of fine mat clothing, sewing, washing and ironing clothes has also become a woman's chore. In addition, the women collect coconut husks for fuel, and keep the house and yard neat by spreading fresh coral pebbles.

Men and women often work together doing different aspects of the same task. For example, in thatching a house, "the women cut and prepare the pandanus leaves, and make the thatch; the men then put the thatch on the houses" (Spoehr 1949b:148). In copra making, men husk and split open the coconuts, and women dry the meat in the sun. Other types of cooperative labor usually involve the formation of a temporary group, kumiai, to perform a specific task.

Since the beginning of the German era in 1885, the Marshallese have operated in, at least, a partial cash economy. Copra production was encouraged by the German traders and Western goods such as cloth, rice, flour, sugar and kerosene were obtained in return. This initial involvement with a money economy has increased to a visible reliance on imported goods in the outer islands and a near total dependence on Western foodstuffs and goods in the urban centers. For example, on Ebeye, nearly 95% of the food must be bought in a store. In the outer islands, to obtain imported goods, copra is produced and handicrafts are made. However, in the urban centers, such as Ebeye, copra and handicraft production is not possible due to an absence of the necessary materials; instead money is obtained from a variety of sources.

On Ebeye, only a small percentage of the population (approximately 14%) hold wage-labor positions, some of which are part-time. About half of these people are males employed at KMR. "Twenty percent of those people employed in wage labor are males working either for the Trust Territory Government or for the private sector on Ebeye. The remaining 30% of the wage earners are females working primarily as part-time domestics on KMR" (Runeborg 1978:14-15). Almost 40% of Ebeye's population lives on compensation payments made by the U.S. government for land use; most of these payments are made for Mid-Atoll Corridor land use.

Political Organization, Social Organization and Land Tenure

Traditional Marshallese political organization is linked to a division of Marshallese society into two social classes: noble (iroij) and common (kajur). The noble class can be divided into (1) iroij or

royalty, (composed of iroij laplap, paramount chief, iroij elap, chief, iroij erik, lesser chief, and iroij in til, leader); (2) bwirak or nobility (including bwirak elap, noble, and bwirak in egmouij, lesser noble); and (3) jib, or the fringes of nobility (Mason 1947:34-35). The commoner class is divided into atok, specialists; alab (translated as lineage head, household head and/or landowner); and rijerbal, workers.

Of all the members of the noble class, the paramount chief is accorded the greatest respect and has the greatest amount of power.

> The paramount chief was possessed of autocratic powers that were shared to a lesser extent by the nobility. The paramount chief and his nobles were the leaders in war and in sailing expeditions. They controlled the land and the fruits thereof. They provided the primary leadership of the community, and in turn enjoyed the privilege of being fed and supported by the commoners. (The paramount chief's) position involved the hereditary acquisition of magical power . . . . He was approached only in the most deferential manner . . . . In recompense for his inherited responsibility, he received the best of the food produced on the land or caught in the sea. He lived in the most favored location. His lineage had its own cemetary. No restrictions were placed on the number of his wives and he had access to all commoner women. Over his people he exercised autocratic powers (Spoehr 1949b:77).

Each paramount chief, noble, lineage head and common worker is associated with a bwij or matrilineage. Each matrilineage belongs to a particular class, and therefore an individual's lineage affiliation also signifies his social class.

Although categories of traditional political organization are known, little other information is available, except on the paramount chief. Through

missionary contact and colonization, the traditional Marshallese political organization was rapidly transformed into a non-viable system. Today, these detailed class distinctions are no longer meaningful: "the primary social contrast today is between the [paramount chief] and the other members of the [noble] class . . . and the commoners" (Spoehr 1949b:76).

The matrilineage has both political and social significance. The lineage head is an intermediary in the authority structure between the commoners and the nobles; the orders of the nobles are enacted through the lineage head who today acts as a representative of the matrilineage in village council meetings. The matrilineage is also a landholding group, and the leader has "authority over the use of the lineage's land" (Kiste 1974:54). Finally, the matrilineage is an exogamous kinship group, and operates as a unit on various occasions. At times, several matrilineages cooperate along clan lines (jowi/jou).[1] The clan is a matrilineal, exogamous group of related matrilineages with a common ancestor, and it provides its members with a wider network of relatives who are obligated to offer hospitality to one another.

Marshallese land tenure is also linked to the class structure. All land is considered to be the property of the paramount chief, who holds the primary right to the land. The lesser noble and his matrilineage have rights to the fruits of the land, while the commoners and their leader "also have a claim to the produce" (Spoehr 1949b:78). The land is worked by the workers, who give a significant proportion of the produce to the nobles; they in turn give the best to the paramount chief. Land is divided into strips which run from the ocean to the lagoon,

assuring the complete range of flora for exploitation. The island is also divided into districts, which are commonly leeward and windward sides of an island, though other district divisions are possible.

Land inheritance is usually related to the matrilineage. Most land is inherited matrilineally, although occasionally a father may give land rights to his children, and such land usually continues to be inherited patrilineally. The other type of land inheritance is gift land; it is given to a person who performed personal services for the paramount chief, especially in times of war. Gift land can either be kept in the matrilineage or it may be inherited by the recipient's children patrilineally.

Kinship

Marshallese kinship combines a generation or Hawaiian type kinship system with matrilineal features. In the Hawaiian system,

> ego classes both parallel- and cross-cousins with siblings; uncles and aunts are classed with the father and mother respectively; and the grandparental generation of collateral relatives is generally classed with the grandparents. In the descending generation, nephews and nieces are classed with one's own children; and the children of these are classed together as grandchildren (Spoehr 1949a:107-108).

Two exceptions to this Hawaiian system may be attributed to the matrilineal emphasis of Marshallese society. First, cross-cousins of the opposite sex are classed separately from cross-cousins of the same sex and from parallel cousins and siblings. Second, the mother's brother is distinguished from other relatives at this generational level.

The relationship between members of different kinship categories is communicated in the behavior that occurs between the two people involved. There are two categories of behavior: respect and familiarity; these categories can each be subdivided into three different levels.

1a) Respect: shown by child to parents, parents-in-law and classificatory parents, excluding mother's brother; shown between brother and sister.
1b) Greater Respect: shown between father and eldest son; shown by sister's child toward mother's brother (the mother's brother is usually the acutal lineage head or alab).
1c) Greatest Respect: shown between wife's brother and sister's husband; formerly also shown between brother's wife and husband's sister (the marriage brings two different lineages or bwij into contact).
2a) Familiarity: shown between two brothers or two sisters; shown between parallel cousins; shown between cross-cousins of the same sex; shown between younger and older same sex siblings with respect shown for the older sibling.
2b) "Easy and informal" (Spoehr 1949a:198): shown between husband and wife.
2c) Privileged Familiarity (joking relationship which permits sexual and excretory references): shown between cross-cousins of the opposite sex (potential marriage partners); shown between grandparent and grandchild, with respect for the grandparent also present.

(Mason 1954; Spoehr 1949b).

Residence patterns and adoption are related to kinship. Marshallese residence cannot be defined as either matrilocal or patrilocal. "Extended families often comprise the domestic residence or household group, but . . . . it cannot be said that residence is prevailingly patrilocal, matrilocal, or neolocal. All forms occur" (Spoehr 1949a:111). Residence is also said to vary according to wealth and prestige (Chave 1948:37).

Adoption may result in a change in residence, a shift in major responsibility for the adopted child, inheritance of land rights or just an agreement that an adoption has occurred. Rynkiewich (1976a:99-103) described six types of adoption: (1) kokajriri, the adoption of children, which generally occurs between kinsmen and initiates a parent-child

relationship; (2) kokajriri in raeleb, the adoption of adults which may formalize existing ties, such as a teacher-apprentice relationship; (3) a person may adopt another person as a parent; this is exemplified in the patient's adoption of the elderly curer as a parent; (4) a person may adopt another person as a sibling; this may be used to obtain land or a person to work the land; (5) jeraik, best friends may become as siblings for purposes of mutual aid; and (6) ninnin ibben, children who share a wet nurse as infants, become siblings as do the mother and the wet nurse.

"Adoptions function to realign or reemphasize kinship relations, to reciprocate a former adoption, to replace children lost through death or migration, and to provide children for childless adults" (Rynkiewich 1976a:103). Adoption may also occur to formalize a previously non-kinship relationship or to redistribute children and hence, future workers.

The Social Effects of Relocation

In many cases, relocated Marshallese have had to adapt to new or different ecological and economic conditions in their new location. In turn, changes may be made in the social organization. For example, while the Bikinians were on Rongerik they adopted a communal system of social organization as a response to shortages of food and other supplied. This system however, was only temporary. More permanent changes in social organization were adopted by the Bikinians on Kili. First, the Bikinians no longer recognize the paramount chief who has traditional political claim to Bikini. Secondly, a division of land according to households was instituted; these household units were called bamli (family). This new land holding unit in turn created additional alab, those with power over land. Because of ambiguities in the inheritance

of and succession to alab rights and the definition of bamli membership, there was an increase in disputes on these topics. Eventually, for many of the bamli, membership became defined patrilineally; this is quite different from what occurs in the rest of the Marshalls. These are some of the more tangible effects of relocation. Psychological and other effects will not be dealt with in this paper.

Events of the Life Cycle

On the outer islands birth occurs at home with a number of older women in attendance and perhaps an older man or the medical officer. Other relatives gather outside the house and wait. In the next few days after the birth, most of the island's population will visit the new baby, bringing a small gift. The child is named several weeks after birth. In the urban centers, birth occurs in a clinic with one female relative in attendance; the father-to-be waits outside with a few relatives. Several days later, small gifts are brought by relatives who visit to see the baby.

The kemen celebrates the child's first birthday. Relatives, nobles and important people in the community are invited to the feast. A gift of food is exchanged between the husband's and wife's sides of the family which emphasizes family solidarity.

Male-female love affairs and courtship commence with puberty. Initial interaction occurs with the help of a go-between. Two types of marriage exist: (1) koba, living together, and (2) church-sanctioned marriage (Alexander 1978). "In their youth men and women may be 'married' one or more times before settling down to a more permanent marriage"

(Spoehr 1949:214; quotes added). Adultery and divorce are common and marriage is described as "brittle" (Spoehr 1949b:214).

Death is marked by an over-night vigil in which close relatives and friends perform ritualized weeping. The next morning, a church service is held and the deceased is buried. Six days later, relatives and friends gather at the grave to place coral pebbles on it and present a gift to the family; this is followed by a solomn feast later in the day, concluding the death rites (Spoehr 1949b:219).

Interpersonal Communication

Within the Marshallese village several other cycles are found, besides the life cycle. The daily cycle of events differs for men and women. The men generally spend their morning doing harder manual labor such as agricultural tasks and fishing; after a mid-day break, they spend the afternoons on lighter chores such as collecting vegetable foods. The women also perform more vigorous activities in the morning and late afternoons, i.e., chores of cooking, washing clothes, gathering fuel, etc. Evenings are spent visiting, talking and sleeping.

Economic activities occupy most of the daylight hours. Interpersonal communication centers around these economic activities. Work groups may form for specific economic activities, but usually work is done alone or in small groups.

The daily work cycle is broken by Sunday, a day of rest and church activities. During the entire year the daily cycle is broken only by occasional holidays such as Christmas. Church and school have served to broaden the channels of interpersonal communication, while external

influences such as radio, newspapers and visitors such as PCV's, have increased and diversified the content of interpersonal communication.

Religion

The Marshallese today have a mythology which is primarily recalled by the older people and the storytellers. Any religious ceremonies which existed before missionary contact have since been either incorporated into Christian ritual or have been forgotten and are no longer practiced. An example of incorporation can be seen in the Christian funeral ceremony.

> According to traditional belief, on the morning of the sixth day, the spirit of the deceased will arise from his grave, and see the sun rising over the ocean to the east. The spirit will then walk down to the water and wash, and in so doing, disappear. The custom of the people is to hold a second ceremony at graveside on this day, attended by the pastor, the Iroij or his representative, and kin, as well as friends. Small, pure white stones are heaped on the grave, then levelled, symbolically smoothing over the troubles the deceased left on earth (Alexander 1978:111).

The Marshallese were first contacted in 1857 by Congregational missionaries from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. By the early 1900's the missionaries' teachings had become spread throughout the islands. Today, in the outer islands, this one sect predominates and community activities are centered around the church.

In the urban centers, however, the Congregational or Protestant church is unable to serve as a unifying force. This is primarily because of the presence of many other churches: the Roman Catholic Church, Assembly of God, Jehovah's Witness, Bahai, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) and others. The spirit of competition which

flourishes among these sects overrides any integrative function which the church may otherwise perform.

Education

The emphasis of traditional education is on learning by imitation. Children learn from their peers and slightly older children, as well as from their same-sex parent and relatives. "The process of learning . . . is largely one of imitation and absorption rather than formal instruction. The only really formal instruction is that given in the school" (Spoehr 1949b:212).

Formal education in the Marshalls began with the advent of Christianity. Mission schools concentrated on reading and religion. Schools run by the Japanese during their trusteeship period emphasized Japanese language and ethics. The U.S. through its trusteeeship period has attempted to educate the Marshallese as if they were participating in a rural American school system.[2]

Children are often sent to the urban areas to attend school or preferably, even to the U.S., especially for high school. Post-secondary education is available outside the Marshalls, at the University of Guam in Agana, Community College or Micronesia in Ponape, the Nursing College in Saipan and Micronesian Occupational College in Palau. Post-secondary education in Hawaii, California and elsewhere in mainland U.S.A. is also popular.

As in other "developing" countries, in the Marshall Islands, education is seen as a path to individual improvement (and national development). The ideal is secondary and post-secondary education that leads to the attainment of a (scarce) white-collar job. There are both

individual and national consequences. On the individual level, a child may be sent to a secondary school in Majuro to receive the benefits of the better resources available there. His parents either stay on their home island and work to provide him with the necessary monies for tuition and living expenses while he is separated from his immediate family, or they may move en masse to the urban area to seek wage labor jobs to earn the necessary cash income. In either case, the population of the urban area increases. Another result of further education on the individual level is the conflict between traditional values and "learned" aspirations; for example, the educated have little desire to return to agricultural labor in the outer islands. On the national level, these educated fill the few available white-collar positions and the large remainder are left unemployed, to emigrate to Western countries (with a resultant "brain drain"), or to remain in the Marshalls, ill-content, unsatisfied and marginal to their own society. One solution which many "developing" nations recognize, yet few are able to successfully implement, is technical-vocational and/or "cultural" education; its students may "fit" more closely into the existing society, while their knowledge fills a definite need.

IV. Modern Communication

Information on the history of the various forms of modern communication that existed and are present today in the Marshalls are, at best, incomplete. During Japanese times, a postal service, telegrams, wireless communication, telephones, radio, movies and newspapers were available for Japanese use (Mason 1947:61).

Newspapers

The Marshall Islands have had a number of newspapers in the recent past. In 1931 there were 10 magazines and newspapers in the Japanese mandated territory. All except three of these had a small circulation (Purcell 1967:226-227). Shipwreck, a monthly English language news sheet was distributed by the Department of Education between 1949-1951. The Marshall Islands Observer of 1960-1962 was a biweekly, bilingual newspaper also sponsored by the Department of Education. The Marshall Islands Journal was a weekly news sheet between 1965 and 1969, published by the Protestant Mission. Highlights, a semi-monthly English publication has been distributed throught the Trust Territory since 1966. The Micronesian Reporter is a quarterly publication in English available throughout the Trust Territory since 1951 under various titles from the Public Information Division of the Trust Territory Gevernment. The Micronesian Independent is a weekly newspaper from Majuro published in English, Marshallese and occasionally, Trukese, with a circulation of 1800 (Richstad, McMillan and Barney 1973:60). Pacific Daily News of Guam is widely read in the Marshalls. There have undoubtedly been other publications in the Marshalls, including publications by various Church missions but no further information on these publications was found.

Television

Cable television was introduced into the Marshalls in 1975 on Majuro and Ebeye. There are an estimated 450 receivers in use and broadcasts occur from 3 PM to 11 PM seven days a week (Takeuchi 1977:180).

Cinema

Movies are popular in the Marshalls, especially among people under 30 years of age. There are eight stationary theaters, with a capacity of 2275 people; they show secret agent, Westerns, kung-fu or crime/police movies once a day, seven days a week. Four theaters have floor seating, four have bench seats, four have balcony seats and one has individual seating. Sixteen 16 mm. projectors and two 35 mm. projectors are used. Most of the films are distributed through U.S. based companies in Guam, Saipan and California.

> There is no official film censor program in the Marshall Islands. However, community and church pressure has prevented theaters from screening films with explicit sex on a regular basis (Takeuchi 1977:181).

Radio

Radio transmissions in the Marshall Islands began in the early 1960's with the Majuro station, WSZO. Now the district radio station broadcasts 18 hours each day. News, educational/informational programs, entertainment and religious programs are broadcast; the number of radio receivers in use is steadily increasing.

Two-Way Communication

A short-wave radio system was started with the first influx of

Peace Corps volunteers in 1966. Since this time, it has been used for many purposes, among which are medical emergencies.

The Marshalls have a telephone system on Majuro and Ebeye/Kwajalein, but most Marshallese citizens do not have a telephone.

Satellite Communication

In 1978, the U.S. Department of the Interior established a satellite communication network in the Trust Territory. There are approximately 19 medium-power terminals which link with the ATS-1 satellite (which is also used by PEACESAT) and are placed in medical and administrative centers throughout the Trust Territory (Knudsen 1980). The network is primarily used to facilitate administrative communication between the various districts; it is hoped that the transmissions will soon include more health and education-related programs (Misko-O'Keefe 1979).

Modern, External Communication in the Marshalls

Aside from mass media, there are primarily five channels of external communication in the Marshalls today: volunteers from the U.S. (PCV's), expatriates, missionaries, Marshallese educated abroad and tourists/military. These five groups of people have varying impact on Marshallese culture. Some of these groups serve to integrate Western values with Marshallese culture; others tend to disregard or even destroy Marshallese culture while promoting Western values.

In general, Peace Corps Volunteers introduce knowledge into a village. This knowledge has been deemed desirable by the district

government and is introduced in accordance with their plans. The volunteers involved in such projects are supposed to live with the people, thus, it is hoped, minimizing the introduction of Western values. However, in Micronesia as a whole, initially the main purpose of the Peace Corps appears to have been rapid economic and social development of the islands.

Expatriates occupy positions in government and also perform skilled technical positions, for example, as physicians. Although the number of expatriates will most likely be decreasing, they are still influential channels of communication between the Marshallese and Western world, promoting both Western technology and Western values.

On the other hand, modern missionaries in the Marshalls introduce both Western values and their own religious values; these values are introduced into the society through the medium of educational institutions and through churches, religious functions and proselytizing. Some of these values contradict traditional Marshallese values while others uphold Marshallese values.

Marshallese educated abroad who return have a definite impact on Marshallese culture. In general, it is those Marshallese who return that become the political leaders of the present day.

Tourists are a significant channel for external communication. They have primarily an economic and a social impact on a country. However, tourist in the Marshalls is still a relatively small scale activity. Thus, its impact as yet is not great. Direct contact with members of the U.S. military and other related personnel present on Kwajalein is more or less limited to those people who live on Ebeye and work on Kwajalein during the day.

Transportation

Transportation is a facilitator of communication. The Marshalls are serviced by air, ship and motor vehicles. Continental/Air Micronesia connects Majuro and Kwajalein to Honolulu and the other district centers of the Trust Territory. Smaller scale inter-district air service is provided by Tradition Air Lines; this is primarily a charter service, although they also perform medical evacuations.

The Marshalls are serviced by several field trip ships which travel between atolls. They offer services, purchase copra and sell goods, besides providing transportation.

Land transportation is provided by 14 government and private buses which operate in Majuro on 15 miles of paved road. Trucks, sedans, jeeps and motorcycles are also used for transportation on Majuro, Ebeye and Kwajalein.

Appendix I

Marshallese Kinship Terms

jiman: his mother's father; his father's father; his male relative of the preceding generation (his great-uncle); his 'ancestor.'

jibwin: his mother's mother; his father's mother; his female relative of the preceding generation (his great-aunt); his grandchild (jibwin emman - grandson; jibwin kōra - granddaughter); his male or female relative of the succeeding generation.

jemen: his father; his father's brother (but not his mother's brother); his father's 'brothers' (jein and jadin); his parents' sisters' husbands.

jinen: his mother; his father's sister; his mother's sister; his mother's 'sisters' (jein and jadin); his parents' brothers' wives.

rikoren (Ralik), wuleben (Radak): his mother's brother.

jileben: his parents-in-law (infrequent).

jein: his older sibling (jein kōra - sister; jein emman - brother); his older parallel cousin (his father's brothers' children and mother's sisters' children); his older cross cousin (his father's sisters' children and mother's brothers' children).

jadin: his younger sibling (jadin lerik - sister; jadin larik - brother); his younger parallel cousin (his father's brothers' children and mother's sisters' children); his younger cross-cousin (his father's sisters' children and mother's brothers' children).

riligin: his cross-cousin (daughter of father's sister or mother's brother); her cross cousin (son of father's sister or mother's brother).

belen: his wife (lio belen); her husband (leo belen).

jimjān jimjadin: his 'brothers,' 'sister,' cousins; bretheren.

erro (Radak): his wife; her husband.

inen (Radak): his sister (his 'seed'); his father's brother's daughter; his mother's sister's daughter.

manen (Radak): her brother; her father's brother's son; her father's brother's son; her mother's sister's son.

nejin: his child (negin man - son; negin kōrā - daughter); his nephew (except sister's son); his niece (except sister's daughter); his son's wife; his daughter's husband.

māngōren: his sister's son (māngōren man); his sister's daughter (māngōren kōra).

(Mason 1947:19-20).

Notes

Section I

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Section II

1. The term, strategic, permits military use and fortifications as well as control of access to and observation of, the islands.

2. "A lethal dose is estimated at 300 to 500 rems in the absence of intensive medical care" (Johnson 1979:13).

Section III

1. Jowi is used in Ralik; jou in Ratak (Mason 1954:224).

2. Further information on the U.S. and Japanese school systems in the Marshalls is found in the History section.

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