**Modernization in Micronesia**

Modernization is a process of change that began long before the arrival of the US in Micronesia after World War II. But the tempo and intensity of social change has greatly increased since the early 1960s when US altered its policy in Micronesia.

***The Rise of the Cash Economy (1960s and 1970s)***

* In the early 1960s, after long years of minimal funding, US subsidies to the TTPI began to increase sharply. (US subsidies to TT, 1960-1978)
* With the increased subsidies and expanded government, many more Micronesians found wage employment. (Micronesian wage-earners, 1960-1978)
* The total wage earnings from those employed formed a huge new cash resource for the island economy. (Micronesian income through wage earnings, 1960-1978)
* The average cash income rose steadily through this period, finally reaching a level that was capable of feeding a person and his family. (Growth of per capita income, regular and inflation-adjusted)
* The new cash economy and subsistence economy, based on the land, coexist today. This breakdown of FSM’s economy gives an idea of how strong the cash economy is today. (Cash and Subsistence Economies: An FSM example)
* Village and outer island life reflect the land-based economy, while town life shows the impact of the cash economy. (shots of town life and village life)

***Effects on the Family***

* In the traditional society, land and kin were shaped to one another. The large family group worked the land to produce for all its members. The land fed all the members of the extended family. [show plot of land with households, meeting house and cookhouse]
* In island societies, sharing food is an important way of defining the kin group. “Our relatives are those we can eat with.” [shot of people distributing or preparing food]
* As more and more get jobs, a significant number of people now have the ability to support themselves–not from their land but from the food they purchase.
* Household ties with the lineage weaken, as the heads of the households take responsibility for feeding their own members. [show lines being drawn between households, and households splitting from the lineage on the map]
* The brings about a change in authority, with a power shift from the head of the lineage to the household heads. [shrinking lineage head, expanding household heads]
* Hence, disputes within the family (eg, between brothers) are not settled as easily as in the past. Nor is there a visible authority figure to represent the lineage vis-a-vis other extended families.
* Childrearing becomes concentrated in the mother and father. Each family is responsible for its own children. Discipline by other relatives that would have once been regarded as assistance is now looked on as interference. A multi-parent family is narrowed down to a two-parent family.
* The maternal uncle, who once had a role that counter-balanced the father, loses his responsibility. Authority becomes concentrated in the father.
* The protective cover of the extended family is breaking down, so that children no longer find their main friends in those of their own larger family circle. Why? Because the extended family doesn’t associate as closely with one another any longer. Because boys and girls go off to school more frequently and for longer periods of time. Because households move more readily to distant places in search of jobs.
* Since the same thing is happening in other families, the community is growing more fragmented and more heterogeneous. [same colored shapes fly off, with different colored ones entering the page]

***Net Results on the Household***

* The smaller family takes on a larger role in childrearing, and it also must do without the protective support of a united village.
* The smaller family lacks the resources it once had to resolve conflicts:

between parents and children

between older members of the extended family

* The small family must provide its own resources–ie, parents spend more time away working for cash
* An authority gap grows between the father and sons since he is spending little time with them (unlike mother and daughters).
* The nest is smaller, so adoption becomes more of a problem–even adoption of a daughter or son’s children.

***Effects on Women***

* The relationship between married sisters and brothers is redefined since they no longer share the same resource base. The husband assumes fuller authority over his wife. Hence, the former controls in the case of wife-beating or child-beating weakened.
* The controls become even weaker as women and their husbands move away. The distance reinforces the autonomy of the nuclear family.
* Women lose authority they once exercised within the lineage (eg, control of the land) as the lineage weakens. Their role in the family devolves more and more on domestic work.
* Women’s domestic workload increases as they must do without the help of their extended family and as their husbands take jobs that keep them away all day long.
* When women seek employment, they are seen as competitors with men for jobs. This means a radical redefinition of the male-female relationship in society.

***Effects on Land Practice***

* Land in a traditional society rooted the people who lived on it and gave them their identity (and sometimes even their name). People had mystical ties with their land, symbolized by the burial of the umbilical cord at birth on their lineage land and their burial there at death.
* But today, many are born in the hospital, sometimes in Guam or Hawaii. Burial also frequently occurs elsewhere, as with their wife.
* Land has become commodified; it is bought and sold for cash. It is no longer the sole resource of importance in the island economy.
* Land ownership shifts from corporate to individual control.
* Land inheritance patterns are changing–from matrilineal passage to a father-son pattern. This results in increasing conflicts within the family and a greater number of cases reaching court. Such cases exacerbate tensions within the extended family.

***Effects on Political Authority***

* Traditional chiefs–“the voice of the land”–held power based on their authority over land.
* Chiefs are without this same power inasmuch as their real authority over the land has been curtailed over the years under colonial rule (eg, Pohnpei).
* Chiefs suffer a further loss of political authority as money rather than land becomes the dominant resource. Modern elected leaders, not chiefs, control the cash resource.
* Chiefs retain their prestige, however, even if not their power. They are looked to as a buffer agains the power of elected officials and a protection against the monopoly of authority by the modern government.

***Effects on Health***

* Malnutrition becomes high among infants due to less breastfeeding and more store-bought goods. (Vitamin A deficiency in Chuuk and Pohnpei is an example).
* Adult dietary problems abound–especially hypertension and diabetes due to lifestyle changes (lack of exercise and high-fat foods).
* Population rates grow rapidly as the traditional practices that led to the spacing of children are dropped and as death rates decrease.

***Migration***

* Despite the ties to the land, search for jobs for a cash income has propelled a great wave of emigration since the beginning of the Compact. [Show figures since 1986. The population increase is small in RMI and FSM, non-existent in Palau.]
* New forms of community are developing abroad, as with Samoans, Tongans and others. The local church is often the community center.
* A new relationship develops between those living abroad and island residents. Exchanges of resources to reaffirm these ties take place.
* Nations extend beyond the islands over the globe.

***Individualism***

* Finances, buried in bank accounts, come to be managed out of the view of even family members. Although sharing is still important, the control of money is in the hands of the head of the household.
* The choice of spouse, which was formerly subject to the veto of the family, is done at times without any consultation.
* The choice of career and the terms of work is increasingly in the hands of the individual rather than agreed upon by the family.
* Persons have greater freedom to choose a lifestyle to suit the individual (emergence of the single mother household, the gay lifestyle).