Largely as a result of their influence, the social models drawn from American and European sociology that had been previously used to analyze Micronesian societies were discarded as inadequate.

Anthropologists and those with a anthropological orientation initiated a culture-specific approach to the problems studied, emphasizing the meanings and values given to behavior by the local culture.

This has yielded a more satisfying understanding of these social problems, as the work on delinquency, drinking, suicide, and child and spouse abuse attests.

In the future the same anthropological methods will no doubt be applied to a number of other social issues in Micronesia, even as the involvement of anthropologists in this research promises to grow.

There is a final paradoxical lesson to be drawn from this research. The study of social problems from an anthropological perspective over the past two decades has been an exercise in social change that has, nevertheless, revealed the inherent stability and continuity of the Micronesian cultures.

The epiphenomena of modernization Micronesia has undergone in recent years are alarming and seem to portend a total collapse of the culture. In fact, however, each of the social problems we have analyzed illustrates the remarkable persistence of basic cultural structures and values.

The alcohol problem among youth, far from being an abandonment of all societal norms, can be viewed as a rather controlled strategy by youth to find expressive outlets in a society that mandates restraint.

A close look at youth delinquency reveals the final triumph of socialization processes over free-spirited youth; for youth, no matter how wayward, return to the fold virtually without exception by the time they reach adulthood.

Child abuse is not without damaging consequences, but it is also a vivid indication of how food and material goods continue to be valued as a measure of love in a Micronesian society.

Even suicide, perhaps the most destructive of all these social problems, testifies in its own way to the strength and perdurance of the culture.

Suicide today is an assertion of traditional values—the sacredness of family ties and respect for the senior status of elders—even as it demonstrates the importance of the age-old strategies of withdrawal and self-abasement to display emotional pain.

The same structural changes, particularly in the extended family, that have brought about the problems surveyed in this chapter will probably create further problems in years to come.

But we may expect that they will provoke less anxiety than the earlier set of problems, if only because they will be viewed more clearly in their cultural context and not as signs of the imminent ruin of the society.

In this respect as in many others, social problems research in Micronesia has been changed once and for all.

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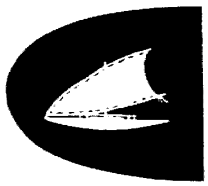

to be established.

Two anthropologists, Karen Nero and Larry Carucci, have recently looked into the issue of domestic violence. In her article on wife-beating in Palau, Nero suggests that the seeming increase in the frequency and intensity of beatings may be explained in part by the nuclearization of the Palauan household today.

The physical isolation of the nuclear family from a larger kin circle permits the married couple to spend much more time alone than they would in the past, even as it denies the presence of "the elders whose very presence mediates against domestic violence." Something similar may be responsible for the severe spouse abuse in Chuuk.

The relatives of a married woman, who formerly were expected to protect the woman from excessive beatings, are much more hesitant today to intervene in what they consider a domestic squabble to be settled by the husband and wife.

The growing problem of wife-beating, like many of the other issues discussed in this chapter, would seem to be attributable in great part to changes in the structure and functioning of the family.

Directions for the Future

Research into social problems can be expected to continue expanding into new areas of Micronesian life today. The mounting evidence that family changes are a key factor in many recent social problems suggests that a serious study of the evolution of the family in Micronesia is long overdue.

Six years ago, the Micronesian Seminar, financed with a grant from Misereor in Germany, undertook a study of changes in the family on Pohnpei and Chuuk. The study was based on interviews with key informants and focused on the differences in the family between 1950 and the present.

Although by no means an unqualified success, the project produced papers on the changing features of the Pohnpeian and Chuukese family. The topics treated included resources, food distribution, family labor, child rearing, and adoption.

Another potential area for research lies along the gender divide in Micronesia. The sexes seemingly face very different types and degrees of stress in their day-to-day life, and they certainly manage this stress very differently.

As discussed, young men in Micronesia are notoriously prone to release tension by getting drunk or, in some situations, even by committing suicide. Young women, who are culturally denied those outlets, have one or two forms of release of their own.

The most notable is spirit possession, in which the woman is possessed by the spirit of a dead relative and speaks with the spirit's voice.

Because the woman is not held responsible for what comes from her mouth, she may freely express feelings about the conflict situation in the family that usually gives rise to her "illness." An analysis of spirit possession in Chuuk was recently published and work on this phenomenon on other islands is well underway.

The question of whether males are under more stress than females in Micronesia was raised years ago by some of the CIMA anthropologists such as Thomas Gladwin.

Gladwin's ethnographical material on the Chuukese life cycle and Sarason's psychological studies of Chuukese subjects indicated that men seemed to bear greater social pressures and enjoy fewer supports than women.

A recent epidemiological survey of serious mental illness in Micronesia, showing male rates to be between three to four times higher than female rates, raises the question once again.

A conclusive explanation for the disparity in rates of mental illness is not offered, but some possibilities are suggested. The disparity might be due to drug use, which is fairly common among males but rare among females, or a social environment that seems to protect women and punish males.

Conclusion

American anthropology has played a key role in social problems research in Micronesia since the late 1970s, when field workers first turned their attention to the social problems that had become increasingly apparent after more than a decade of rapid modernization.

granted to the rest of the children.

Sometimes the family might badger a child, hounding him or her over the most trivial of matters, until the child simply left home and found shelter with other relatives or friends.

One man, who disliked his daughter from birth, wilfully neglected her for years until he finally decided to be rid of her completely and sold her to a neighbor for five dollars.

There also came to light sordid tales of what could only be called physical abuse of children, even by the relatively lax Micronesian standards.

One girl was thrown into a well by her aunt when she would not do the laundry. Other parents were reported to have beaten with sticks and metal rods children who had been trussed and suspended from a tree.

Now and then there was the report of a father who, in a drunken rage, flung a baby onto the cement floor of his house or out a window.

Not infrequently young fathers beat their wives and children after a drinking binge, a practice that women may loathe but must accept with resignation.

In all the cases, however, the child beating was judged by others in the community as so notably frequent and severe as to constitute an abuse.

Of greater concern than the individual incidents of neglect and abuse uncovered in the study was the pattern that seemed to emerge in the family situations of neglected and abused children. Those most often maltreated were stepchildren or children who had been handed over to others for fosterage.

A woman who has remarried and brings children from her previous marriage to the home of her new husband may face serious tensions.

Not infrequently the stepfather shows decidedly preferential treatment towards his own children, as when he provides chicken and other treats for his children but denies these same things to his stepchildren. Occasionally, however, it may work the reverse, as when the father, to prove his love for his new wife, favors her children at the expense of his own.

In Palau, which has an exceptionally high rate of illegitimate birth, young mothers often turn their children over to their own parents for rearing. The grandparents, who seem to show resentment at the imposition of this additional burden on them, may discriminate against their grandchildren so strongly that they simply leave home, even if it means taking up the life of a drifter.

In Yap the paternal grandfather of a young boy balked at taking him into his house and caring for him, although this would have been expected of the man by custom. The grandfather, who reluctantly acquiesced in the end, beat the child so badly that the boy soon ran away from him to find refuge elsewhere.

If these studies indicate anything, it may be that the "safety net" that served to protect children in the traditional Micronesian family now has gaping holes. In the past, remarriage, whether after divorce or death of a spouse, held little uncertainty and anxiety for children because they found security among their own extended families.

Similarly, the practice of allowing fosterage within the lineage circle, not to speak of adoption outside this kin group, was once commonly practiced and posed few problems for the children.

That it seems to be problematic today may be just another indication of the fragmentation of larger kin groupings in favor of an increasingly nuclearized family.

The community surveys also revealed a surprisingly large number of cases of sexual abuse, given the strong cultural prohibitions of incest in Micronesian societies. According to an unpublished report, the incidence of sexual abuse on Palau is about as high as on Guam.

The incidence in other parts of Micronesia is impossible to determine because of the loose methodology used in the study, but the incomplete data suggest that the rates may be rather high. In most cases the incestuous relationship is perpetrated by a father, stepfather, or uncle, and the sexual abuse may continue for years before the girl runs away or marries.

In a more recent study of child maltreatment in the Marshalls, a researcher reported seven cases of sexual abuse on Ebeye over a three-year period, all of them involving children under the age of seven.

Many of the elaborate restrictions designed to maintain a respectful distance between father and daughter seem to have fallen into disuse in recent times. Whether this has been responsible for a rise in sexual abuse—if indeed there has been an increase—is still

appeared at the end of each stage was resolved when the child was incorporated into a larger social circle. As the child grew older, he was exposed to the socialization of a widening circle of kin.

The erosion of social structures at the lineage and village level has impeded this process by removing many of the cultural supports for young males. Young men remain dependent on their parents for favors of food and money at a time when they would ordinarily be supported by a wider kin group.

While very similar in substance despite differences in emphasis, both explanations have their shortcomings. Neither explains the phenomenon of "love suicides," suicides seemingly precipitated by sexual jealousy or anger at spouse or girlfriend, that have become rather common in Palau and the Marshalls in the last decade.

Nevertheless, suicide research in Micronesia has marked a advance in the approach towards social research. Previous work, utilizing sociological and psychological assumptions, tended to lay the blame for social problems like suicide on the disruption springing from social change. The assumption was that suicide was a manifestation of personal disintegration, which in turn was caused by the social dislocation and anomie resulting from rapid modernization.

All woes could be ultimately laid at the doorstep of macro-societal changes. Rarely was any attempt made to differentiate in these changes and almost never was an attempt made to trace their impact upon key social institutions like the family.

Social change, as presented in many writings on the Pacific, was undifferentiated and unmediated. Somehow, by some magic, it worked its way into society and made its force felt on the lives of individuals.

In the suicide research on Micronesia, guided by anthropological techniques and concepts, Rubinstein and I rejected a simple anomic explanation. Whatever the limitations of our work, we have attempted to delineate the effect of macro-societal changes on those institutions like the family that have a more immediate impact on the lives of individuals.

Child and Spouse Abuse

In 1985 the Micronesian Seminar, then based in Chuuk, undertook a provisional study of child abuse and neglect at the request of the Truk Office of Community Action (TOCA). Shortly after the completion of this project, the Micronesian Seminar was contracted to do a broader study for all the Caroline and Marshall Islands.

These studies were prompted by a growing concern in the United States for research that would support stronger legislation on what was perceived to be a serious problem. The rights of children in the family and the desire to protect children from parental abuse were becoming a key domestic issue in developed countries.

Hence, it was assumed that the issue was, or at least ought to be, as relevant in Micronesia.

Research into what might loosely be called "child abuse" began with Dennis Keene's study of young female runaways in the Marshalls in January 1985. Keene, an anthropologist, chose as the subject of his study a highly visible sub-group in Majuro, young women known as *kokan* "traders," who had left their homes and lived wherever they could find shelter.

These women, ranging in age from 15 to the early 20s, drank Alcohol, smoked, ran around with men, and often supported themselves by prostitution. Many were newcomers to Majuro. Most had dropped out of school and had experienced tension with their families that often culminated in the parents cutting off their daughters' hair to humiliate them or throwing them out of the house altogether.

Keene suggested that the flagrant promiscuity of these girls could be viewed as a defiant response to their problems with their families.

The community survey that the Micronesian Seminar did in Chuuk, which a year later was extended to other parts of Micronesia, uncovered further evidence that all was not well with the Micronesian family.

Adjustments, of course, had to be made in the definition of "child abuse" and "child neglect" to take into account cultural norms in child rearing practices. Even so, the survey revealed a surprisingly high incidence of abusive behavior.

In some cases the family singled out one or two of the children and subjected them to especially shabby treatment, denying them food and other treats that were

Suicide was a phenomenon that occurred most frequently in those places that were in the process of transition towards modernization.

There was another reason not to posit a one-to-one linkage between suicide and modernization. Suicide is a culturally patterned response to certain conflict situations; it is a Micronesian solution to certain kinds of interpersonal disruption.

The very fact that one has chosen to commit suicide implies a commitment to traditional values and norms of conduct—the centrality of traditional family relationships, the acceptance of the old prohibitions about voicing negative feelings towards older kin, and an acceptance of the age-old strategy of withdrawal to avoid conflict.

Even if victims have been exposed to some Westernization, they affirmed their basic Micronesian values through their decision to die.

If the suicide epidemic could not be blamed upon a general malaise arising from rapid change, was it possible to identify a more specific cause or causes? Rubinstein and I were convinced that the suicide epidemic was related to the breakdown of the traditional Micronesian family, especially since suicide was usually occasioned by a family problem or quarrel.

Like others, we had a sense that the Micronesian family was changing dramatically, but we were not sure just how.

There was evidence of serious inter-generational tensions, but one might ask whether such tensions had not always existed in Micronesian societies. Rubinstein hypothesized that socialization of young men had been radically altered since the disappearance of the men's houses or similar institutions that had once served as a device for educating and socializing young men.

I wondered whether competing modern institutions such as the school had not lured young people away from their own families so that they were less well integrated into traditional extended kin groups.

Many longtime expatriate residents believed that the increase in suicide was due to family neglect. Perhaps parents who were busy with their jobs or preoccupied with other things were not giving enough attention to their children today. Yet, the interviews and other cultural data that Rubinstein and I were analyzing gave quite the opposite impression.

Traditional family structures throughout Micronesia permitted what could be called a "comfortable distance" between parents and children. In the context of the extended family much of the responsibility for exercising authority and the socializing young men fell to other older relatives.

Recent changes had the effect of concentrating this responsibility more and more in the biological parents, and so a multi-parent family was giving way to a two-parent family.

Soon Rubinstein and I began elaborating our own hypotheses to explain the dramatic increase of suicide. I looked to the weakening of the extended family system as one of the main causes of the suicide problem.

The older system provided multiple kin options and supports for children. If they experienced harsh treatment at the hand of one "parent," they could readily find another to medicate the conflict or provide the needed support.

In today's nuclearized family, the father and mother have been forced to assume increased responsibilities for their children, with a concomitant increase in tension between parents and their offspring.

I argued that the monetization of the economy has largely been responsible for the breakdown of the lineage system. Cash income, especially from jobs, has offered an alternate resource base, thereby weakening the land-based system.

While partly agreeing with my explanation, Rubinstein has offered a somewhat different view. His principal focus is on the disruption of the socialization process that has resulted from the weakening of lineage and village-level organization. The political and economic changes, among them monetization, that stem from rapid acculturation have brought about structural changes in the extended family.

In this he agrees with me. But where I see the heightened tension between parents and children brought about by the demands of modern parenting as the locus of the problem, Rubinstein looks to broader difficulties in the socializaiton of the young.

During the various stages of the traditional socialization process, Rubinstein argues, the tension that

West Center, undertook an epidemiological survey of the case data. Meanwhile, I continued to gather case files on recent suicides, which by 1980 had reached 40 a year in the Carolines and Marshalls.

Whatever else might be said about suicide, it was clear that the rate was escalating with painful rapidity. Suicides, which had numbered perhaps five or ten a year throughout Micronesia in the early 1960s, had grown as much as tenfold in some districts.

The frequency of suicide in places like Chuuk was among the highest in the world, and the specific rate for males aged 16–25 was over 200 per hundred thousand.

Rubinstein and I adopted an ethnographic field approach in our study. Together we organized a series of workshops in which we elicited the interpretations of young Chuukese adults and youth leaders.

At one workshop, our participants introduced us to the Chuukese term *amwunumwun*, which proved to be a key insight into the psychodynamics of suicide. *Amwunumwun* means to distance oneself from others as a way of giving vent to strong feelings when it is culturally inappropriate to directly display such sentiments.

Negative feelings are usually exhibited through some form of self-abasement in a range that extends from isolating oneself and refusing to speak to others to the taking of one's own life.

The strategy is one of withdrawal rather than confrontation and is in keeping with similar behaviors throughout Micronesia and Polynesia.

American mental health personnel commonly viewed suicide as "retroflective anger," anger directed inward by the victims upon themselves. However, as Rubinstein and I pieced together a Chuukese interpretation of suicide, we began to understand the serious limitations of Western psychological frameworks.

Initially we had understood suicide as an act of aggression, a vengeful and defiant final strike against the family. Chuukese survivors of suicide attempts, however, appeared genuinely shocked at this interpretation of their act and vigorously denied any revenge motivation.

Gradually we came to understand that suicide, although it was often an angry response, contained elements of a lingering melancholy love that was thought to be beyond repair this side of the grave.

This sentiment was echoed in the maudlin and self-abasing lyrics of the Chuukese love songs that were to be heard almost continuously on the radio. As a dramatization of the victim's sorrow, hurt, and frustration, suicide was a withdrawal from a painful situation.

In 1982, with a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health, Rubinstein began a three-year ethnographic study of Chuukese family life to gain further insight on suicide. In an attempt to accumulate better case data, he interviewed friends and families of victims for a second and third time.

As data were gathered on longstanding tensions within the family, many of the suicides that had at first appeared shockingly impulsive took an entirely different aura. To be sure, some suicides resulted from a single isolated family spat, but these were far fewer than originally thought.

By way of example, one young man from Chuuk was believed to have committed suicide because his parents would not intercede on his behalf to get back his wife after she had left him.

As new data were collected, it appeared that the young man himself had sent away his wife, a girl picked for him by his parents, because of a long conflict with them over other family matters.

As a last poignant memorial of himself, on the night of his suicide, the young man left his footprint and signature in wet cement on the floor of the family meeting house.

What is the cause of the suicide epidemic since the late 1960s? Following Durkheim's well-known model, many attributed it to anomie resulting from rapid modernization in Micronesia.

Rubinstein, however, took exception to this view and argued that there was no direct correlation between suicide and urbanization and rapid transition towards American life-styles.

He demonstrated that suicide was most prevalent in peri-urban areas rather than in the most heavily acculturated places. Outer islands, with their traditional lifestyle, and towns, where modernization had progressed the furthest, showed relatively low suicide rates.

Third, it is an escape from the routine and an adventure that offers a sense of thrill and a whiff of danger.

The point is made throughout this brief study that alcohol use among the young is far more controlled, through social norms governing both the context of drinking and the behavior of those indulging in alcohol, than might at first be apparent.

Thanks to the anthropological approach taken, alcohol abuse and juvenile delinquency began to be understood as behaviors that were not at bottom countercultural; instead, they seemed to reflect some of the key elements of Micronesian cultures.

Viewed this way, they no longer appeared the terrible scourges that they were once thought to be.

Suicide

By the mid-1970s, another social problem came to the fore: youth suicide. Suicides, which had previously numbered only a handful a year, had started to climb in the early 1970s and had reached more than 20 a year by 1974.

The great majority of the victims were males between the ages of 15 and 30; indeed, suicide was the principal cause of death among this age group.

The data revealed that almost all suicides were precipitated by a clash between the victim and his family. What was confusing, however, was the apparently trivial nature of the incident that was said to be the immediate cause of the suicide.

Young men were hanging themselves because they had been refused five dollars by their father or because there had been no food for them when they returned home hungry.

While the weak self-image of the suicide victim was acknowledged, it was noted that self-esteem for Micronesians is rooted not so much in what one can achieve as in maintaining satisfying personal relationships with those most important in one's life.

Micronesians, after all, were not known to commit suicide because their business failed, because they were thrown out of school, or because they lost their job.

It was suggested that if uncertain relations between young men and their families led to the growing frequency of suicide, perhaps this was because the family, like the larger community, had been weakened in recent year.

The cultural upheaval of modernization was taking its toll on the family; its roles had been relegated to other institutions, and the effectiveness of the supporting role it once played for the young had been eroded.

Micronesian suicides exhibited remarkable differences from those in the United States and the Western world. The clinical depression that was often linked with suicide seemed to be missing in Micronesia. Moreover, rates in Micronesia were very high among the young but diminished among older age-groups, while US rates rose with age.

Suicides in Micronesia seemed very much a response to a certain problem with one's family, or even a particular family member. There was no evidence of the existential angst, or the general sense of meaninglessness that is so often related to suicides in the West.

Very few of the victims seemed severely disturbed, emotionally troubled, or mentally imbalanced. Hence, the body of literature on suicide in the United States and Europe was of little help in understanding the sudden suicide epidemic that had erupted in Micronesia.

Not all Micronesians looked with a kindly eye upon the interest that was being shown in suicide. Some resented the unfavorable publicity that the islands were receiving and the insinuation that Micronesian society was so disturbed that large numbers of its youth were choosing death over life. Others were unconvinced that suicide was a major problem.

Suicide, they suggested, was an entirely permissible and time-honored strategy for correcting certain impossible situations, e.g., after one has disgraced his family by committing incest. In their view, suicide was not a vexing problem, but a solution to certain insoluble difficulties that arise within the family.

Was suicide, then, endemic or epidemic? Was it, like youth drinking and delinquency, a cultural response that represented continuity with traditional values and practices? Or was it another of the social plagues that have followed Westernization?

As the number of victims in every part of Micronesia mounted, Don Rubinstein, then a fellow at the East-

mechanisms that are expected to regulate the behavior of youth.

A few of the reasons, however, were particularly incisive from a cultural viewpoint. Some Micronesians explained that young people drank as an opportunity to permit "exhibitionistic tendencies to surface," including dancing and flirting with girls, and to "have an excuse for anti-social conduct."

In other words, drinking freed young people from cloying cultural restraints.

Mahoney tried to establish a link between alcohol consumption and the rate of violent crime, both of which he found especially high in Yap, Palau and Chuuk. He suggested that these three island groups were "the last parts of Micronesia to have sustained acculturative contact with the Western world."

Given enough time, he suggested, these islands too would adjust to intoxicating beverages as the other parts of Micronesia have rather successfully done.

Mac Marshall, another anthropologist, carried the research into alcohol abuse even further with his monograph on youth drinking in Chuuk. In *Weekend Warriors*, published in 1979, Marshall attempted to show the continuity in basic behavior patterns before and since intensive outside contact.

Drunken brawling, he argued, provided a modern-day substitute for traditional warfare. Whether this thesis be accepted or not, Marshall's book offers a refreshing new outlook on the problem of alcohol abuse.

In many publications of the day, authors decried the use of alcohol without offering any insight on why alcohol should be such a big part of the life of the young. Marshall takes up the important question of what function alcohol serves for Chuukese (and by extension, other Micronesians).

One of the main functions is that the act of drinking redefines the person culturally; the drinker now stands in a special category and is no longer entirely accountable for his acts. The very act of drinking declares a "cultural time-out."

Marshall goes on to suggest that the new status of the drinker has boundaries of its own, however. There are scripted behaviors for drinkers and limits to what even a drunk person can get away with.

He describes in considerable detail drunken behavior by youth to show that it is largely ritualized, although not without real risk of violence. Marshall's contribution is to show what drinking means within the cultural context of a single Micronesian society.

Not only does he seek to understand why young males drink, but he also explores their behavior and the limits that are imposed on their behavior.

Building on the materials written by these anthropologists, the Micronesian Seminar in 1981 convened a three-day workshop on alcohol use among youth that was attended by over 20 Micronesians representing every part of the territory.

Following the lead of Mahoney and Marshall, we proposed to examine how and why alcohol is utilized by young people in the different island societies of Micronesia.

Rather than view alcohol use as nothing but a "symptom of personal maladjustment or social malaise" and consider how the islands might rid themselves of this menace, the workshop tried to regard alcohol as something embedded in the culture and sought to understand its cultural meaning and context.

The workshop raised the questions: What part does alcohol play in island society? How is it used and what purposes does it serve?

The assumption underlying the workshop was that if Micronesians could be helped to develop a sounder and more explicit understanding of the function alcohol plays in the society, they would be better able to determine what would have to be done to alleviate the problem.

The workshop did little more than underscore and possibly synthesize what had already come out in the earlier writings of Mahoney and Marshall. The workshop report explained there are three main functions that drinking serves in most Micronesian societies.

First, it permits young men to express themselves much more freely, particularly with respect to their negative feelings. If it is true that young people fight because they are drunk, it is equally true that many get drunk precisely in order to fight.

Second, it accords some brief recognition—even through the fear and disruption they cause—to the young, who are not very often granted recognition.

disrupting the normal process of maintenance of social order in small communities.

Finally, in addressing the matter of parental neglect that had been mentioned in many previous studies, Rubinstein took note of the breakdown of the family.

He associated parental neglect not with divorce or neglect by the nuclear family, but with the deterioration of the extended family and the shift of responsibility for the young to individual parents.

He noted the passing of the multi-parent family and the advent of the two-parent family, a theme that was to emerge again and again in later research.

Anthropologists and those using anthropological perspectives had swept aside most of the dire predictions that had prevailed in the previous decade. A careful examination of police records revealed that a great majority of all arrests were of the very young, that is, those under the age of 20, and most of these were for minor offenses.

Contrary to the prevailing myth of the day, a study by a group of Xavier High School seniors in 1975 showed that high school dropouts were not disproportionately represented in the arrests. Delinquency was not, therefore, the inevitable fate of those who left the school system early. Nor was delinquency, even that involving major felonies, a reliable predictor of a criminal career.

Those arrested for assault and even homicide in their youth later put such deeds behind them and matured to become respectable members of their communities.

Rubinstein found that delinquency among youth was greater in the district centers and larger communities where traditional social controls had begun to break down. The smaller and more integrated the community, the less youth disruption occurred.

Even with the breakdown of some of the old social controls, cultural forces remained operative enough to ensure that young Micronesians did not totally run wild. Delinquency, although undeniably troublesome to the community, was not the threat that it had once seemed to represent.

Alcohol Abuse

Much of the mayhem caused by youth was attributed to the use of alcoholic beverages, which had been legally permitted in Micronesia only since 1960. Almost all of the crimes committed by those under the age of 18, and the vast majority of those committed by older persons, were alcohol-related.

It was clear that alcohol abuse was a key factor in the anti-social behavior of young Micronesians. This sent research off in a new direction: alcohol abuse among the young in Micronesia.

Francis Mahoney's 1973 study of alcohol use in Micronesia was an initial step. Mahoney, an anthropologist who had done his dissertation on the personality of Palauans, studied "the set of attitudes held toward youthful alcohol abuse" rather than the patterns of drunken behavior itself.

Bringing to bear his cultural knowledge of Micronesia, Mahoney observed that young Micronesians were traditionally granted an extended period of "play time" that lasted until the age of thirty. Until then they were considered mere apprentices and did not enjoy "decision-making responsibilities either at home or in the community."

In an earlier age, males in this age category would have been "young warriors," Mahoney notes. Thus, from a Micronesian viewpoint, the concept of "juvenile" might quite properly be extended through the twenties to the early thirties.

The prime analog for the drinking party, Mahoney suggested, is the outer island all-male tuba circle. This was a relaxing evening's entertainment that enhanced rather than threatened the social solidarity of the group. The men might tell salacious stories and dance and sing without inhibition, but there was no violence or insulting talk.

In this respect, the outer island drinking party differed from its opposite number in the district center.

In his discussion of the social causes of alcohol abuse, Mahoney simply recorded what he learned in interviews with Micronesians. Some of the reason given for youth drinking, such as poor law enforcement or an ineffective court system, pointed to a failure of the

as a "serious" or "very serious problem." The causes given for this problem were quoted at length from Kenney's report.

The major programs outlined in the plan as a means of dealing with delinquency followed two lines: first, to upgrade youth services in all islands so as to "keep the kids off the streets," as it were; second, to improve the justice system so that it might better handle youthful offenders.

When the Micronesian Seminar, our research-pastoral institute, convened a large territory-wide conference on youth in 1977, the search began once again for the causes of the youth problem.

We took the position that people could not remedy the situation unless they understood the social forces that went into creating it. Hence, a sociocultural analysis of the youth situation in Micronesia was an imperative first step.

The conference began with a review of the usual explanations of the youth problem: alcohol abuse, lack of jobs, failure in school, boredom caused by lack of recreational opportunities, communication gap between the generations, and family breakdown.

These, however, were merely used as a departure point for further analysis. Participants were asked why these "causes," many of which also existed in the past, should be so devastating today.

Participants were then introduced to the processes of socio-cultural change, which remained the main topic for most of the week-long conference.

Under the guidance of Len Mason, participants examined the workings of the traditional culture, reviewed the principal forces acting to bring about social change, and drew for themselves a picture of the "contact culture" that had resulted from these changes.

Special attention was given to the place youth held in traditional society in contrast to the changing world of today. Three significant factors were seen as contributing to the uncertain place of modern youth.

First, their roles are less sharply defined than formerly and there is much more role conflict than before. Second, traditional recognition and rewards accorded to the young are less certain today than in former times. Third, the authority system and social controls that formerly checked unacceptable behavior have eroded.

More significantly, however, the problems of the young were discussed, perhaps for the first time, in the context of cultural change. However tentative and provisional, an attempt was made to show the relevance of the dynamics of cultural change to the problem at hand.

The terms for defining the problem were no longer taken entirely from American sociology; instead, those of cultural anthropology were used. The point was repeatedly made that youth could not be understood apart from the family and the changes that had befallen it.

Having played a key role in placing the discussion of the "young problem" in its proper cultural setting at the 1977 conference, anthropologists took the lead in exploring youth delinquency in the following years.

Don Rubinstein, an anthropologist who had just completed his fieldwork on Fais, was chosen to conduct a study of the social aspects of delinquency.

Rubinstein's report challenged the dubious assumptions of a "delinquent personality" and a "delinquent career" upon which much of the discussion of delinquency in Micronesia had been based. Rubinstein found little evidence for either in the pattern of delinquent behavior that he studied.

Rubinstein concluded that "juvenile delinquency is neither a widespread nor a serious problem in Micronesia." Most violence was unintended and occurred almost by accident while young people were recreating.

Rubinstein also noted that young men who engaged in delinquent behavior eventually marry and settle down to become responsible members of the community. Hence, he concluded: "delinquency in Micronesia should be seen as a developmental phase and not as the incipient stage of a deviant career."

Rubinstein pointed to three social disruptions that were producing confusion among Micronesian youth: education, social mobility and family change. In taking on a large share of the socialization function, schools were alienating youth from their home communities. The growing mobility among villages and islands was also

exotic societies and formulating general principles governing culture.

Like any science, anthropology was thought to have its practical applications. On the basis of its understanding of cultural dynamics, it was at first expected to be able to facilitate the introduction of technology to societies that were in need of help.

Later, as anthropology began showing a new emphasis on the study of culture change and a shift in priorities towards problem-oriented research, much more came to be expected of the discipline.

The remainder of this article is a look at the influence of anthropology's practitioners and perspectives on social problem research in Micronesia.

The Youth Problem

During the 1970s there was a great concern about what was perceived as a growing problem of drinking and disorder among Micronesian youth. As incidents of youth misbehavior multiplied, it seemed as if a generation of young males were rootless and increasingly alienated from the values of their island societies. The problem was regarded as all the more threatening, since it was feared that they would grow up to be a criminal element in society.

Writings on the problem were founded on the premises of the deviance theory that guided similar work in the United States. The thinking of that day was epitomized in Michael Kenney's book-length study, *Youth in Micronesia in the 1970's.*

Three main causes of delinquency emerged in Kenney's study: breakdown of the traditional family, lack of structured activities for youth, and diminished social control. By far the most attention was given to the second cause, particularly with respect to the lack of jobs available for young people.

Reflecting the opinions of many be interviewed, Kenney's main thesis was that young people were restless and getting into trouble because they were bored. The common assessment was that they just did not have enough to do. Given them basketball courts, sports leagues, and especially some way of earning money, and watch the difference.

The largest of the three sections of his study, complete with page after page of tables, was a survey of what could be done to increase employment opportunities for youth. Kenney's assumption, grounded in the classical definition of anomie, was that if youth were deprived of legitimate opportunities to realize economic aspirations, they would turn to other means.

"The breakdown of the family," Kenney's term for another of what he saw as the main causes of delinquency, was hard to pin down because it was a catchall phrase used to describe many different ills in the family. Generally, it seemed to refer to the failure of parents to offer proper guidance to their children, because they were too busy working or had too many children or both.

At times, however, the term "beakdown" seemed to describe the growing divorce rate and the number of broken families.

In any case, the reference was to the nuclear family and not the extended families that were under assault by the forces of modernization.

Kenney and other observers did not appreciate that extended kin groupings were at the heart of Micronesian social organization. The models and analytical tools used to describe the youth problem in Micronesia were no different from what they would have been in America.

Many of Kenny's informants called attention to what he called the "clash of cultures." No one had any doubt that rapid modernization had a big part to play in youth behavior.

Some pointed to the fact that a rift was developing between youth and adults, in contrast to traditional societies, with each operating in an entirely different sphere.

Youth were being educated by a foreign system and were being increasingly socialized in a realm outside the control of the family. For these reasons, the values that adults embraced were no longer considered important by the youth. A value-gap was developing between the generations.

The same assumptions were made by territorial planners in their proposals to obtain US federal funds under the Juvenile Justice Act in the late 1970s. Juvenile delinquency, although redefined to include young adults up to the age of 30, was regarded by almost everyone

ANTHROPOLOGY'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS RESEARCH IN MICRONESIA

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Cultural Upheaval and Anthropology

In the early 1970s, after a decade of accelerated development initiated during the Kennedy Administration, Micronesia found itself partitioned into "two worlds," as anthropologist Leonard Mason pointed.

There was the world of the outer islands, easily recognizable to anthropologists of an earlier era but increasingly neglected by administrators and showing growing signs of social and economic stagnation.

There was also the world of the district centers and their environs, the site of most public services and main target of development plans. The expanding populations of these district centers were exposed to a variety of social forces that could not longer be ignored.

Wage employment in the Carolines and Marshalls doubled from 3,000 to 6,000 between 1962 and 1965, and it doubled again to 12,000 during the next ten years. The high school education explosion of the 1960s, in which the number of graduates grew from 100 a year to ten times this number, was soon to be followed by an enormous increase in the number of college-bound students, as US federal assistance grants were extended to Micronesia in 1973.

Town populations grew everywhere in Micronesia as migrants followed the jobs and educational opportunities.

The most extreme example was Ebeye, which had for years been a bedroom community for those working on Kwajalein and their kin. The population of the island, which had then come to be known as the "slum of the Pacific," soon grew to 8,000.

If this new world offered previously unimaginable opportunities for Micronesians, it had its pitfalls as well. For example, the new-found wealth of those who lived on Pohnpei made it possible to buy outboard engines for their paddling canoes, but it also supported the 21 bars in Kolonia Town.

Everywhere in Micronesia there were gloomy reports of wanton violence by drunken youth, public disorder on payday weekends, senseless suicides, and general dismay among communities that did not know what to do about this chaos.

Superimposed on this was the picture of life in Micronesia as it had been in the early post-war years: taro planting and breadfruit picking, village celebrations with mounds of food, respect forms observed in the presence of chiefs.

For all the changes that had occurred during the sixties and earlier, there was the illusion that in certain places or certain times nothing had been disturbed in the rhythm of island life.

Anthropology, which had from its birth proclaimed that at least part of its charter was to improve the lot of humankind, was challenged to come to the aid of the Micronesian island societies it had been studying ever since World War II.

From the beginning, anthropology had seen its purpose as more than building up a fund of lore on