

*Agriculture and natural resources*—Forest-fire cooperation, 1930-51, cooperative distribution of forest planting stock, 1930-44, reclamation, 1936, wildlife (and fish) restoration (and management), 1939 to date, supply and distribution of farm labor, 1943-49, State and private forestry cooperation, 1945-64, cooperative projects in marketing, 1948 to date, flood and forest-fire control, 1949-53, watershed protection and flood control and prevention, 1954 to date, drought relief, 1954-57, basic (agriculture) scientific research, 1965-68 and 1971-73, forest protection, utilization, and restoration, 1965-73, land and water conservation, 1956-66, water resources research, 1966 to date, commercial fisheries research and development, 1967-70, Water Resources Council, 1967 to date, cooperative State research service (formerly agricultural experiment stations, listed with education grants through 1967), and meat and poultry inspection, 1968 to date, domestic farm labor, 1968-69, cropland adjustment, 1969 to date, and mineral resources conservation and development, 1971-72

*Miscellaneous*—Civil Work Administration advances, 1934, Federal Emergency Relief Administration, 1934-38, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, 1931-41; Public Works Administration, 1942-44, war public works, 1942-49 (including liquidation), public works advance planning, 1947-49, disaster and emergency relief and State preparedness, 1949-51 and 1953 to date, industrial waste studies, and defense public works, 1950, civil defense and preparedness, 1952 to date, libraries and community services, 1957 to date, waste treatment works construction, 1957-70 and 1973, civil defense research and development, 1959-61, National Science Foundation facilities, 1958, small business research and management counseling, 1959-66 (including liquidation), area redevelopment assistance and public facilities, 1963-67, accelerated public works, 1963 to date, educational television, 1965-66 and 1968-69, rural water and waste disposal, 1966 to date, arts and humanities activities, 1966-68, Department of Commerce State technical services, 1966-70, Appalachian assistance and regional development and law enforcement assistance, 1966 to date, economic development facilities, technical and community assistance, and National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, 1967

to date, economic development planning and research, 1968-71 and 1973, environmental protection construction, operations, research, and facilities, oceanic and atmospheric research, development, and facilities, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and preservation of historic properties, 1971 to date, intergovernmental personnel assistance, and US Travel Service, 1972 to date, Regional Action Planning Commission, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and new community assistance, 1973 to date, mine health and safety, 1973, mines and minerals, 1974, coastal zone management, 1974 to date, economic development planning technical assistance, 1975 to date, and energy research and development, 1976

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## Research Grants Studies

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Sections 702 and 1110 of the Social Security Act authorize extramural research projects in the broad areas of social security. The Social Security Administration provides funding through grants to nonprofit organizations and through contracts with both nonprofit and profitmaking organizations. From time to time, as projects are completed, the BULLETIN publishes summaries of research findings. A summary of a completed project (Grant No 57842) is presented below.

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### KINSHIP AND SOCIAL SECURITY IN A MICRONESIAN SOCIETY

This study of the effects of socioeconomic change on aging and family life in the Lukunor community in Micronesia was conducted by Keith M. Marshall and Mark Borthwich of the University of Iowa. The de facto population of Lukunor Islet is about 500, but at least 600 others who trace their ancestry to this one-half square mile islet are living in the district centers of Truk and Ponape.

Acculturative influences began on Lukunor more than a century and a half ago when European and American ships first stopped at the islet.

to trade and rest. Since that time, Spanish, German, Japanese, and American administrations have controlled the region, the latter having had the most profound impact on people's lives. A dramatic increase in Federal funds to the Trust Territory in the 1960's brought a new level of educational and technological influences. The increasing availability of cash employment in the district center has rapidly accelerated emigration from Lukunor, and these jobs, in turn, have increased the cash flow to the outer island community.

From its first contact with outsiders, the Lukunor community has usually regarded visitors not as invading enemies but as bearers of new resources. As they embraced imported goods, they found it necessary to adapt to the demands of colonial representatives and missionaries by adopting new forms of political authority, changing traditional customs, and publicly disavowing pagan beliefs.

The older people of Lukunor, who grew up with these changes, appear to have few regrets over them, and many feel that times have never been better as far as their standard of living is concerned. Nevertheless, it is clear that the elderly occupy a more peripheral place in their society than formerly. This shift in their status can be related to five major areas of change: Property, demography, economy, authority, and bureaucracy.

### **Property**

The elderly have been fairly successful in maintaining control over the land as a status support. Abolition of a traditional form of land exchange has eroded the economic power of elderly heads of families but has not affected the position of the elderly as a group. The sale of land is becoming more common as the islanders turn to a cash economy. Such transactions are usually made by younger persons. The elderly do not appear to be threatened by land sales, although some families may eventually face a land shortage as a result of having sold excessive amounts of their property.

As old-age insurance, land is less important as a private possession than as a source of food for all family members. The clearest indication

of this fact is that elderly persons with little or no land do not appear to be neglected. Local subsistence techniques still supply the major portion of food for the Lukunor Islet population in spite of its current heavy use of imported foods. This fundamental reliance on local land and sea resources could, however, decline if a government-sponsored feeding program were begun.

Clear evidence of culture change on Lukunor is found in the decreasing distribution and use of traditional skills and knowledge that once were highly prized forms of property. Young people remain interested in learning traditional medical lore, but modern education and the availability of new technologies obviate, in their eyes, the need for most other traditional practices. This attitude has reduced the importance of the elderly in the education of their children and grandchildren.

### **Demography**

While land continues to be the major source of sustenance for the Lukunor Islet community, population pressure on the atoll's resources has remained constant only because of the large number of persons who have emigrated. Many of the emigrés are young people, including children of elderly persons. Thus far the care given the aged has not been seriously affected since a sufficient number of able-bodied relatives remain on the island. Off-island children usually send aid to their elderly parents on Lukunor, but day-to-day support for the aged derives primarily from on-island family members. The aid sent by off-island relatives is perhaps most important in reaffirming the fact that bonds of obligation and support between siblings, parents, and children remain strong even when distances separate them.

### **Economy**

Little aid in the form of cash is sent from port town to outer island, but the cash needs of islanders everywhere are increasing along with their expectations of a constant flow of cigarettes, gasoline, luxury foods, and other items for which the costs continue to mount. The elderly are more

the beneficiaries of rather than direct participants in this cash flow, since most of them neither receive a salary nor control the money earned by lineage members. The number of elderly receiving an income will increase, however, as younger salaried employees reach retirement age and begin to draw social security benefits. If the income of the typical Lukunor family remains small, the additional funds provided by monthly social security checks will give such elderly persons significant economic power. Since few people attempt to build cash savings, the Trust Territory social security system appears to serve a useful purpose in helping employed persons and their families adjust to the sudden loss of income that may come with retirement or disability.

### **Authority**

Political power will probably never be regained by the elderly to the extent that they held it before the introduction of municipal offices. Even so, elderly lineage heads remain influential in community affairs, particularly as regards the use of copra land and sections of reef. As has perhaps always been the case, the elderly combine subtle pressures with their formal prerogatives to uphold their status. Land and special knowledge may be withheld as reminders to younger generations of their debt to the aged, and such privileges as a claim to the largest fish caught by a lineage member and the right to taboo lineage land are among the more formal means of accomplishing the same end.

### **Bureaucracy**

Despite the courtesy, respect, and generally adequate care the elderly receive in Trukese society, Federal programs for the aged in Micronesia have been set up to alleviate vaguely defined "social problems" based on American notions of what such problems are. Thus programs for such things as housing, nutrition, and homemaker services have been introduced with little thought given to their overall impact. Such programs do not disturb or in any way upset their recipients. In fact, such programs are embraced as another

much-needed, cash-producing "resource," comparable to a piece of copra land.

One goal of the program that pays the elderly to teach younger people traditional skills and knowledge is to encourage an attitude of appreciation for both the aged and the past they represent. (This program will probably have little influence in creating such an attitude.) More fundamentally, however, it is useful to ask whether the entire aging program in Micronesia might not cause a gradual attitude shift concerning care of and responsibility of the aged. Will an elderly person's kinsmen begin to place greater stress on government support for the aged to replace their own responsibilities? Agam, the answer is that at the present level of activity it is doubtful that the Trust Territory aging program will bring about such an attitude shift in any Micronesian culture.

Care should be taken, however, to ensure that too great a dependence on outside resources does not result from continued, concentrated support in the areas of food, housing, and income to the aged of a single community. Such dependence is already a major problem in port towns where overcrowding and a shortage of locally produced food threaten to erode the tradition of resource sharing among kinsmen.

Administrators of aging programs in the Trust Territory must therefore consider aging as a "social problem" from two perspectives. First, they must weigh the effects on the elderly of changing status resulting from social change. The present study suggests that in the outer islands of the Truk District, such status has declined somewhat but that poor treatment for the aged has not resulted. Second, they must consider the fact of Micronesia's growing dependence on outside resources beyond what can be considered healthy for any society.

Allocations from the United States to the Trust Territory have increased tenfold since 1962, but this rise has not been accompanied by an increase in the area's economic potential. Thus, it has given Micronesians a false sense of economic expansion.

The aging program in the Trust Territory contributes to these false expectations by subsidizing the elderly and their families with direct gifts of food and materials. Although emphasis on such projects as local food production by the

aged may promote their greater self-reliance, it will do little to diminish the broader dependencies created by this prematurely funded program in search of a social problem that is barely emergent and for which the program itself is poorly adapted

Problems for the aged will increasingly involve emotional strains brought on by the cultural rift between them and the newly educated, highly acculturated younger generation, rather than physical hardship and neglect. An attempt to bridge this generation gap by promoting "cultural education" courses taught by the elderly will accomplish little until the crisis of youth unemployment is confronted and Micronesians of all ages accept the fact that their economic goals must be limited by available resources.

This research poses no grand scheme for solving Micronesia's economic difficulties, but it does suggest that the elderly need not and in fact should not be excluded from helping to define realistically local needs and potentials. They should not be denied a role in the implementation of economic and social programs to meet

such needs. Many older persons maintain influence as official or unofficial leaders in their communities, and they can bring to such a task their experience and influence in promoting cooperation among broad networks of kinsmen. Asking advice and assistance from the elderly in developing programs for a more self-reliant society will not only give them a place in the mainstream of social change, it also will draw upon a truly "traditional" Micronesian talent: the capacity to change, adapt, and cooperate in the interest of common survival.

*Copies of the final report of this completed research project are in the Social Security Administration Library, 571 Altmeyer Building, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, Md. 21235, and in the Library of the Office of Research and Statistics, Room 320-O Universal North Building, 1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. Copies of the report may be obtained through interlibrary loan. (Also in these libraries are copies of more than 50 other project reports that have been completed since 1963. Most of these reports were listed in the May 1974 BULLETIN.)*