

Ebja - America's Secret Love Child: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract— Ebja, sometimes written as Ebeye, is a one-of-a-kind city within the Republic of Marshall Island (RMI). With an inimitable cultural background and peaceful indigenes, Marshall Island has been known to house one of the most stable people in the world. Located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and away from the rest of the world, this nation has become a highly interesting place for the United States. Not only has the US set up a rigid platform for the protection and defense of its friends and allies, but it has also signed an official treaty and compact agreement to provide for the Marshall Island people in terms of economic growth and development. While the symbiotic relationship between the two countries is thriving, there are silent protests and concerns amongst the hosts. Diplomatically, the US provides aid and assistance to Marshall Island while the Marshall Island government, in return, leases its land to the United States for ballistic missile tests and launches. However, due to economic, financial, societal and cultural differences between the RMI and the US, the relationship between the two countries has often been seen as unfair and unbalanced. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine the requirements and needs of the hosts (RMI) that, if met, would foster a better relationship between the two countries and promote growth and development on the atoll. A survey instrument was designed and validated as a special tool for conducting this research. The theory of Economic Growth, the Unified Theory of Economics and economic development theories provided the background for this study and offered a theoretical framework. Findings showed that: (a) the people of Ebja feel that American assistance will promote growth and development in the nation, (b) improvement of standards and quality of life of the people of Ebeye would improve the US-RMI relationship, (c) employment of the Marshallese by the Americans would serve the best interests of the two nations, and (d) provision of education and management skills would promote a positive US-RMI relationship and improve the growth and development of the RMI.

Index Terms— Community Development, Community Relations, Ebeye, Ebja, Engineering and Construction, Engineering Economics, International Development, Macroeconomics, Marshall Island, Micronesia, Research and Development, Resource Management, Test and Evaluation, US Foreign Policy, US Political Affairs, Republic of the Marshall Island,

1 INTRODUCTION

ACCORDING to Kiste (1993), not much is known about the origin of the Marshallese people. In the Micronesian legends passed from generation to generation, the Marshallese are said to have migrated from the Japanese islands as far back as the 1700s. Although some carbon-dating evidence has revealed that people, especially merchants, visited and inhabited the Bikini Atoll Island of the Republic as early as 2,000 BC, most archeologists believe that the current settlers are a cross between the early Spanish merchants and Japanese traders who settled on the coast of Guam and Kosrae (Tobin, 1958). Whatever the case may be, the current Republic of Marshall Island (RMI) is inhabited by well-mannered, peaceful and polite fishermen and women. Although the nation has been ruled by several empires over the past 100 years, their attitude towards strangers and visitors is remarkably heartening.

Since the eighteenth century, the RMI has been under the sovereignties of the Spanish, German, Japanese

and American governments. With each colonizing government came new adaptive, colonizing ways of life. According to Kiste's memorandum, there is no a cultural indication that the Marshallese people are either apprehensive towards their visitors or concerned with their openness in offering a warm welcome to foreigners and tourists. Since the tragic era of the Second World War through the entire staging of the Cold War, the American presence on the Island has undoubtedly had a profound impact on both the economic and cultural dynamics of the nation. In this introductory section, the country's background will be analyzed briefly, including a review of the geographical region, the history, the United States' interest in the Marshall Island and the nationality of the people. Finally, the islet of Ebja will be examined at length, as the main focus of this study, in order to reveal and explore more closely the relationship between the United States and the Republic of Marshall Island.

1.2 BACKGROUND

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1.2.1 Geography and Region

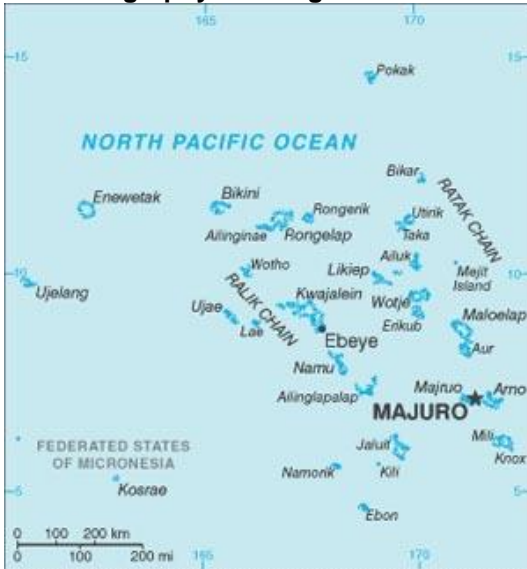


Figure 1: Map of the Republic of Marshall Island: excerpt from the Public Domain, United States Department of States

In the middle of the Pacific, there are numerous atolls scattered all over the ocean, from the Eastern block of Australia and New Zealand and spread almost all the way to the Hawaiian coasts (Figure 1). These islands and atolls are mainly populated by the indigenous people of Micronesia. According to Financial Standards Foundation eStandards Forum (2010), the cumulative total land area covers 70 square miles. These areas comprise 29 major atolls and five major islands. With Majuro as the national capital, the other major atolls consist of different islets that make up the atoll. If all these islands and atolls were to be joined together, the size of the Republic of Marshall Island would be as big as Washington DC.

1.2.2 History

As mentioned earlier, little is known about the origins of the Marshallese. However, documented records showed that the Spanish Government signed a treaty that relinquished ownership of all of the Micronesian nations to Spain in 1494 (Spoehr, 1949). Spaniard Saavedra officially became the first European to discover the present-day Marshall Islands on his route to the legendary Spice Island. In 1788, a British captain, William Marshall, on his route to transport prisoners from Wales to Cathay, passed through the atolls, and this is how the name Marshall Island was born. From 1878 through 1885, under the rule of Pope Leo VIII, the German government annexed the island and paid compensation to the Spanish Government for the annex, thereby establishing a German colony over the Marshall Islands. During the Second World War, the Japanese

captured the island from the Germans and took over the island through the war, until they were conquered by the Allied Forces under the American invasion. Hence, it was taken over by the United States in 1946. In 1978, the Marshallese adopted an official constitution and declared independence in 1979; RMI has been a self-governing nation ever since.

1.2.3 US Interests

After the devastating effects of the Second World War, the Marshall Island people were rendered hopeless in their search of a way to move toward growth and stability (Hezel, 1983). Records show that most of its citizens were enslaved and recruited by the Japanese forces to fight in the war against the Americans during WWII. As such, after the war, the ration of adult males compared to females was somewhere between 1:18 and 1:20. People who lived on the coasts of war-torn outer islands were miserable, and the repercussive ripple effects resulted in significant unemployment and the starvation among the island people. In 1947, United Nations granted the Marshall Island the status of Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the United States was the trustee. With the growing tension of the Cold War and the nuclear race, the US started its nuclear testing program almost immediately on the islands. For more than a decade, hydrogen-bomb and nuclear testing programs continued until 1958, after a devastating explosive accident on the Bikini and Eniwetok atolls. Compensation in the amount of \$183 million was paid to the RMI government in 1983. Comprehensive cleanup and environmental remediation attempts were made by the US Navy and the States Department, but proved unsuccessful. So, in 1999, the US approved a \$4-million budget to evacuate people from the islands. A compact of free association was signed between the two countries in 1991, which allowed the Marshall Island to become a self-governing nation while still receiving military and economic aid from the United States. To date, this symbiotic relationship still exists between the US and the RMI. For a payment of \$65 million per annum, the US leases one of the atolls, Kwajalein, as an intercontinental ballistic missile test range. Therefore, an active US military base is currently located in the Marshall Islands.

1.2.4 Nationality and People

There are various reported population sizes for RMI reported among the available academic data, but according to the CIA World Factbook, the most reliable sources show that there are around 60 thousand Marshallese. Nearly 5,000 of these individuals live overseas. Half of the Marshallese population is Protestant and the rest practice other forms of Christianity. With Polynesian as the lingua

franca of the nation, most adults, government officials and workers who associate with Americans, New Zealanders, and Australians speak English. In some part of Majuro Atoll, some people speak Japanese. Currently, given an unexplained explosion of the Chinese population in the region, there are, in fact, also some Marshallese who speak fluent Chinese. The legislative government, the Parliament, consists of 33 members from 24 different districts (Juumemmej, 2006). The office of the president, which is a four-term office, is currently held by Mr. Litokwa Tomeing and is elected by the legislature according to the 1979 constitution (Mokta, 2008).

1.2.5 Ebja (Ebeye)-US Workforce

Within the atoll that the US is most interested in, Kwajalein Atoll, there are several prominent islets (Johnson, 2007), which include but are not limited to: Kwajalein, Carlos, Carlson, Ebja (pronounced 'i:bai or ee-by), Roi-Namur, Ebadon, Meck, Legan, and Illegini. Ebja is the most-populated islet and houses 15,000 people (Caruci, 1989). This is the hub of the American workforce. Ebja is about 6 nautical miles north-east of Kwajalein. The only mode of transportation between the islets is by boat. As part of the compact agreement between the two countries, the US employs workers from Ebja and transports them back and forth several times daily to come to work in Kwajalein. About 1,200 workers make this daily journey along with their families and relatives. According to the International Monetary Funds (2010), due to the recent global economic and financial crisis, a desperate United States Army has been forced to reduce their workforce, which includes both American and Marshallese workers. Figure 2 shows a typical urban street and some children who live in Ebja.



Figure 2: Typical Urban Street in Ebja

As a result of the layoffs and workforce reduction, tension has grown between the two parties and morale on Kwajalein Atoll has diminished significantly (Dvorak, 2011). More importantly, the living conditions in Ebja have become noticeably depressing: the potable water quality, availability of electricity, functionality of utilities, and business growth and development have all suffered a tremendous blow due to the domino effects of the layoffs. To date, both the US State Department and the US Army are constantly actively engaged in the promotion of health

and welfare of the people of Ebja by providing scholarship programs for their children, health and hospital upgrades, cleaner environments and access to shopping at the military exchange stores. Unfortunately, the Ebja people would rather satisfy other desires and needs that are not considered by their honorable guests. Given their rich cultural orientation, pride and humbleness, most of these are seldom brought to the table or clearly conveyed to the Americans (Johnson, 2007).

1.3 Purpose and Significance of the Study

1.3.1 Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was therefore to explore, investigate and identify the desires and needs of the people of Ebja. The information obtained in this study will be very beneficial to the USAKA (US Army Kwajalein Atoll) guests, in that they would become more aware of their hosts' immediate and long-term needs. The creation of this awareness will not only assist in fulfilling the compact agreement that was signed between the two nations, but will also further improve the US-RMI relationship as a whole and the living standards of the people of Ebja in particular.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature Review Map

In the literature review, articles, books, and other documentation that can illustrate and explain past and current information regarding this research topic are summarized. Lewis's (1954) Theory of Economic Growth, Galor's (2007) Unified Theory of Economic Growth, and Rostow's (1960) Economic Development Theory are all theoretical frameworks that were used to address the economic development parameters in this study. Additionally, review journals and published academic articles that have examined economic growth in the Micronesian regions were examined to aid in synthesizing the objectives of this study.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

2.2.1 Theory of Economic Growth

In Lewis's (1954) theory of economic growth, three factors are identified that are associated with growth. First, there are efforts of a closed unit to economize available resources. In this case, a unit or community recognizes the resources they have readily available to them, be it natural gas/oil, expert services, or farm and agricultural products. Each year, or each season, this community realizes that their

survival is dependent on how much they save and economize these products. The second proximate is an increase in knowledge and the application of knowledge acquisition. In this case, the community discovers that learning is directly proportional to an increase of the available resources or the assets that belong to that particular community. They thereby invest in knowledge assets. Finally, Lewis claimed that a community then moves to increase its capital and other resources. This final stage compels a community or a closed society to not only recognize their available resources, but also it pushes the community to strive to protect and increase those resources as a function of growth and development of that community. In this study, the validity of this theory will be used to weigh and assess the nature and perceptions of growth in the Ebja community.

2.2.2 Unified Theory of Economic Growth

In the Unified Theory of Economic Growth, Oded Galor (2007) claimed that economic growth is a function of a combination of labor migration, income distribution, demography, human capital accumulation and international trade. Galor modeled his theory in such a way as to prove that stagnation of the economy gives rise to an evolutionary improvement in the labor specialization of workers. This, he claims, stimulates the development of technology. In other words, economic stagnation forces the society or a closed unit of a community to improved its efficiency in the form of technological upgrades. This technological progress, in turn, yields higher demand for human capital and sustains the economy. Given the presence of Ebja's workforce in Kwajalein, the applicability of this theory will be explored in this study.

2.2.3 Economic Development Theory

In the Economic Development Theory, Rostow (1960) claimed that all nations belong to a hierarchy of economic development. This hierarchy is divided into five main stages. The first stage, which is the traditional stage, portrays the need for self sustainment, which includes but is not limited to agricultural production for families and the immediate community. The second stage, or the transitional stagem is born when all the conditions necessary for growth of the economy are met. These conditions include labor, capital and land. The third stage is the takeoff stage. Here, all conditions of the economy of a closed unit or system begin to develop as a totality for beneficial growth in that community. The rate of investment in business and any industry increases sharply and there is self-sustainment. The fourth stage, which is the drive to maturity, forces the economy to plateau. In other words, the growth in the economy of a closed community

neither rises nor falls. Hence, saturation is attained. Finally, there is high mass consumption at the fifth and final stage.

2.3 Micronesia and the RMI

2.3.1 Innovation processes

Gupta (2005) recognized that innovation is crucial in the development of resources in order to stimulate growth and economic prosperity. In his words, Gupta concluded that internal colonialism could be expensive in terms of achieving economic luxury. He argued that youth should therefore be encouraged to strive to create newer and more modern means of achieving what he called class IV employment. In other words, low- or less-technically demanding jobs should be integrated into innovative processes. Thus, prosperous economic growth can be achieved. Rodrik (2004) echoes this approach by introducing the protection and recognition of traditional knowledge. His argument concentrates on the fact that biological and natural resources of a community are part and parcel of that community, and as such, customary laws and regulations of that society should be integrated into the cultivation and harvesting of the societies' resources. All other assistance should follow the principles already in place, and efforts should be made to reform and improve those local practices. These approaches are consistent with Lewis's (1954) Theory of Economic Growth in part because Lewis claims that a unit or community recognized the resources they have readily available to them. Also, he further claimed that the increase in knowledge and application of knowledge acquisition should come in the form additional efforts made by the community for growth and development.

2.3.2 Cultural diversity

Collison (2010) concluded that diverse cultural principles and practices should be vetted and integrated into the economic growth and well-being of a society. Not only should a society pursue economic independence, but it should also consider accepting and other forms of diverse cultural principles and practices into its local norms. She claimed that studying and understanding the diversified nature of employees, workers, management and other components of a society is advantageous in building the strong foundation necessary for future growth and stability in that society. In Salas's (2006) study, questionnaire survey instruments were sent to leaders of different Guam organizations to collect data on peace and stability in their societies. The questionnaire specifically sought answers on diversity and economic stability for Guam. Her findings indicated that all leaders were supportive of the cultural integrity of Guam. At the same time, they had open minds

regarding diversity in their society, as a function of growth and development, which suggested that embracing diversity was a positive economic move. This claim is also consistent with the combination of elements that Galor (2007) named as part of the Unified Theory of Economic Growth, in which Galor (2007).

2.3.3 Management and corruption

Schneider (2008) showed that proper management techniques and approaches are instrumental in the development of a society's economy. His point focused not only on the educational awareness of the management, but also on corruption as a critical element in the lack of progress. In developed economies, Schneider argued that the effects of a shadow economy could be just as devastating as corruption. Both, he claims, are front-and-center in terms of lack of progress in a society. More importantly, he demonstrated that in developing or poor economies, each of these, or the combination of both, can be lethal, especially in a society that has little or no resources for its people. In his 2008 study, he aimed to investigate the size of the shadow economies in 145 economies all over the world. Paying peculiar attention to social security and taxation, he studied shadow and official economies as functions of corruption. His methodology included reviews of economic surveys of informal economies of these countries, along with a review of the corruption. His findings showed that the size of the shadow economy was 38% of the national GDP in developed countries and 16.3% in poorer countries. Also, he found that, in developed countries, the shadow economy reduces corruption, while it increases corruption in poorer countries. This is consistent with Rostow's (1960) Economic Development Theory. Rostow claimed that a society needs a management platform that provides the need for self-sustainment, which will yield the transitional and takeoff stages, which allow the economic system of a society to develop as a totality for beneficial growth in that community.

These studies were used here as guidelines for investigating and exploring Ebja, its infrastructure, culture, resources and the current size of its economy. By employing the methodology describes in the next section, a comprehensive study was carried out to determine the wants and needs that could improve economic growth and the lifestyles of the people of Ebja.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this section, information about the research design that was used in this study is provided. The target population is

examined to determine the type of population that was needed for this particular study. A sampling of the respondents showed that the population of Ebja that was chosen was a random sample. Open-ended questions were used to populate the questionnaire. As can be seen, then, the instrument that was used for this study was specifically developed for this particular study.

3.2 Implementation Plan

The exploratory research method was used in this study. According to Kotler (2006), this type of qualitative analysis was necessary since there was no prior study conducted. Due to the fact that certain notions, concepts, and perceptive insights were not known at the beginning of this study, it was necessary to explore the rural and cultural aspects of Ebja in order to determine and identify certain factors that contributed to the wants and needs of the people. These factors and features that are associated with them were studied and discussed with experts in the field in order to determine the nature of the questions that were eventually crafted and incorporated into the survey instrument. The validity of the instrument was also confirmed by experts in the field, especially by professors at the College of Marshall Island in Majuro. Experts in the field were sent these survey questionnaire tools for clarification and suggestions. Twenty-four questions were originally structured for the sole purpose of this study. Fifteen iterations and revisions were made on the questionnaire in order to obtain the seven sample questions used for the study. These approved questions were therefore the basis for the design of this survey tool.

3.3 Data collection procedures.

To identify the number of respondents needed for this research, sample frame work and target population were used. Sampling procedures were established in accordance with Aczel's (2009) qualitative analysis methodology. This analysis method, along with the Creative Research System Software (2009), were used to establish that, given an Ebja population of 15,000 inhabitants and a confidence interval of 95%, the adequate number of respondents needed to successfully complete this study was 761.

3.4 Setting and target population.

Introductory letters were sent to the participants to make them aware of the content of the questionnaire and its usefulness, and to offer guidance on how to complete the questionnaire. Follow-up interviews were also conducted to confirm and clarify information that was ambiguous. The participants' rights and confidentiality were preserved and secured in order to avoid any social stigma. All acquired

data were secured and coded in order to ensure that the identities of the participants would remain secure.

3.5 Questionnaire.

The input from discussions with these participants was necessary in building not only the ground theories of this study, but also in obtaining potential subjects that could be relevant in future studies (Aczel, 2009). Therefore, the questions in the questionnaires were structure in a way as to avoid yes or no answers from participants. This way, participants were able to express themselves freely and offer additional points and issues that could help in determining the wants and needs of the people of Ebja. The following seven questions were carefully structured in order to obtain successful elements of input.

1. How do you feel the lifestyle, conditions, standard of living and quality of life is for you and your family?
2. How do you feel about the presence of the Americans on the atoll?
3. What are your feelings regarding the nature of US operations that are being run in the Kwajalein Atoll?
4. What are the most important factors today that you feel the community of Ebja is lacking and why do you feel so?
5. Starting from the most important thing to you and working down to the least important, if you could change anything about Ebja, what would you change?
6. If the Americans can help the community of Ebja, what do you think they need to do in order to improve your quality and standard of living?
7. The USAKA commander holds town hall meeting every once in a while with the RMI community. If you had an opportunity to advise the commander, what would you say to him or her?

3.6 Data analysis.

Data analysis was in accordance with the exploratory data research method discussed earlier. The demographic information that was used in this study included: (a) gender, (b) age, (c) length of time living in Ebja, (d) annual income, and (e) employment with the US. During the analysis phase, repeated keys, words, phrases, and clauses were identified and recorded. Since open-ended questions allowed the respondents to pick and choose the words and phrases they intended to use, it was imperative to identify and record the frequencies of these occurrences. The arrangement of these key words and phrases was carefully recorded. They were then grouped in order of their frequency of occurrence. A manually tabulated script was generated for these words and phrases as functions of their frequencies. This was a statistical attempt to observe and record emergent themes that were peculiar to respondents'

responses. Finally, these emergent themes were grouped according to their constituents as functions of their frequencies.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

There were five important research questions that guided the definition of the parameters of this study. These constraints helped to structure the limitations and assumptions and to focus the research. These research questions were:

1. How do the people of Ebja describe the nature of their relationship with the USAKA command in particular and the United States as a whole?
2. How does the quality and standard of living in Ebja affect the relationship of Ebja people and the Americans?
3. How confident are the people of Ebja that the Americans will help in providing a better quality of life to their inhabitants?
4. What changes, if any, do the people of Ebja believe would help promote their welfare and development?
5. What effects, if any, would there be if the Americans had never been present on the atoll, if the Americans left the atoll, and if the Americans remained on the atoll indefinitely?

4.2 Demographic Information of Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic information obtained for the 761 respondents that were surveyed for this study.

Table 1
 Demographic information of surveyed Ebja population

| Demographic Information | Male | Female |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------|
| Gender | 557 | 204 |
| Age (years) | | |
| | 18-30 | 253 |
| | 31-39 | 302 |
| | 40-59 | 128 |
| | >59 | 78 |
| Length of time living on Ebja (years) | | |
| | <10 | 46 |
| | 11-20 | 150 |
| | 21-30 | 383 |
| | 31-40 | 144 |
| | >40 | 38 |
| Annual income (\$) | | |
| | <500 | 262 |
| | 600-1000 | 451 |
| | 1,001-5,000 | 35 |
| | 5,001-10,000 | 8 |
| | >10,000 | 5 |
| Employment with the US | 221 | 540 |

The survey questions were arranged, tabulated and weighed according to their magnitudes, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Weighted values of survey questions

| Research questions | Interview questions | % of question |
|--|---------------------|---------------|
| Question 1 What is the nature of relationship between USAKA and the Ebja Community? | 2, 3 | 10 |
| Question 2 Contribution of USAKA's environmental factors on perceptions | 1, 4, 5 | 45 |
| Question 3 Contribution of USAKA's practices for improvement of perceptions | 6, 7 | 45 |

4.3 Emergent Themes

The following emergent themes were identified and recorded:

- a. People of Ebja feel that their standard of living is very poor.
- b. People of Ebja feel that USAKA could do more to help the Ebja community.
- c. There is little to no unofficial unity or association between USAKA and the people of Ebja.
- d. Employment and interactions with USAKA will help improve relationships.
- e. The US presence in Ebja is helpful in terms of growth and development.

These themes were gathered and grouped according to their thematic objectives.

4.3.1 Theme A: The people of Ebja feel that their standard of living is very poor.

As shown in Table 3, there were three invariant constituents that were observed in this theme. These constituents were: (a) the standard of living is great, (b) the standard of living could be improved, and (c) the standard of living is poor.

Table 3
Rating of standard of living

| Invariant constituents | Respondents who agreed | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| | N | % |
| Standard of living is great | 68 | 8.94 |
| Standard of living could be improved | 128 | 16.82 |
| Standard of living is poor | 420 | 55.19 |
| Total | 616 | 80.95 |

When the data were further analyzed given the demographical information, it can be seen in Table 4 that older respondents were more optimistic and felt that the standard of living in Ebja was better than what their younger respondents claimed. According to EB 241, "they built us a fancy laundry place, but that's just to keep us out of their sight. We both know they can do more for our people than that." EB 241 was referring to the new laundry

facility that was constructed in 2010 by the US Army and Air Force Exchange Services (AAFES) that was present then. See figure below for comparison of old and new Laundromat facility.



Figure 3: Old laundry facility (left) and the new laundry facility (right)

Table 4
Rating of standard of living by age, percentages

| Age (Years) | Great % | Could be improved % | |
|-------------|---------|---------------------|--------|
| | | improved % | Poor % |
| 18-30 | 0.79 | 8.54 | 14.19 |
| 31-40 | 1.58 | 4.60 | 14.32 |
| 41-50 | 3.15 | 3.15 | 10.38 |
| >50 | 5.12 | 1.58 | 4.60 |
| Total | 10.64 | 17.87 | 43.50 |

Furthermore, when we examine the length of time respondents had lived in Ebja, the results showed that the longer the time, the more accepting they were of the standard and quality of living.

Table 5
Rating of standard of living as length of time living in Ebja, percentages

| Length of time living in Ebja (years) | Great % | Could be improved | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|-------------------|--------|
| | | % | Poor % |
| <10 | 1.97 | 6.04 | 14.19 |
| 21-30 | 8.94 | 5.12 | 8.80 |
| 31-40 | 12.48 | 10.51 | 7.10 |
| >40 | 15.90 | 10.51 | 1.71 |
| Total | 23.39 | 21.68 | 30.09 |

4.3.2 Theme B: People of Ebja feel that USAKA could do more to help the Ebja community.

Four invariant constituents were identified from this theme, summarized in Table 6. They were: (a) the layoffs are hurting the community, (b) we need infrastructure support, (c) school and education quality needs improvement, and (d) health awareness and hospital support is needed.

Table 6
Identification of The Aspects of Assistance Needed

| Invariant constituents | Respondents who agreed | |
|---|------------------------|-------|
| | N | % |
| The layoffs are hurting the community | 121 | 15.90 |
| We need infrastructure support | 142 | 18.66 |
| School and education quality needs improvement | 220 | 28.91 |
| Health awareness and hospital support is needed | 89 | 11.70 |
| Total | 572 | 75.17 |

4.3.3 Theme C: There is little or no unofficial unity or association between USAKA and the people of Ebja.

There were three invariable constituents that were identified under this theme, shown in Table 7. They were: (a) the informal associations with the USAKA staff help relationships, (b) the informal relationship is just about right, (c) there is too much informal relationship with USAKA and people of Ebja. Most respondents claimed that the relationship between USAKA staff and the people of Ebja was too official; it was apparently too difficult to make the “visitors” understand what issue they were having in the community. For instance, according to EB 038, “We play softball sometimes with your USAKA staff, but that’s about it. After the game, they don’t want nothing to do with us any more.”

Table 7
Perception of casual and informal social associations

| Invariant constituents | Respondents who agreed | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| | N | % |
| Informal association too little | 238 | 31.27 |
| Informal association just right | 89 | 11.70 |
| Informal association too much | 22 | 2.89 |
| Total | 349 | 45.86 |

Further analysis showed that as the ages of respondents increased, positive response to informal association decreases, as can be observed in Table 8. In other words, the older respondents did not find informal association with the USAKA staff fruitful in the development of their communities. The younger respondents, on the other hand, believed that informal socialization was important in promoting a good relationship with the Americans.

Table 8
Effects of age on informal association and socialization, percentages

| Age (years) | Informal | Informal | Informal association too much % |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | association too little % | association just about right % | |
| 18-30 | 42.18 | 8.54 | 3.94 |
| 31-40 | 27.33 | 7.10 | 3.15 |
| 41-50 | 11.17 | 7.36 | 10.25 |
| >50 | 4.20 | 7.23 | 10.91 |
| Total | 84.89 | 30.22 | 28.25 |

Also, an interesting result was that as the income of the respondents increased, the perception that informal socialization with the Americans helped the relationship decreased, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9
Effects of income on informal association and socialization, percentages

| Income (\$) | Informal | Informal | Informal association too much % |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | association too little % | association just about right % | |
| <500 | 29.96 | 9.46 | 1.84 |
| 600-1000 | 15.37 | 9.99 | 3.02 |
| 1,001-5,000 | 11.43 | 10.25 | 8.54 |
| 5,001-10,000 | 5.91 | 8.41 | 8.94 |
| Total | 62.68 | 38.11 | 22.34 |

4.3.4 Theme D: Employment and interactions with USAKA will help improve relationships.

Three invariable constituents were identified in this theme. They were: (a) increased employment of Ebja people will improve growth and development in the community, (b) increased employment will have no effect on growth and development in Ebja, (c) increased employment will be detrimental to the growth and development of Ebja. The results for the last thematic constituent was rather surprising: a significant amount of people in Ebja felt that increased employment of the Ebja population by the Americans could, in fact, hurt their community. According to EB 135, a store owner,

“These people go and get a job with the Americans and get paid thousands of dollars. When they come home, it’s hard for local business to compete with rent, labor and land. So you see—the more our people go over there and work, the more businesses here are struggling.”

Table 10 summarizes this theme.

Table 10

Effects of US employment of Ebja people

| Invariant constituents | Respondents who agreed | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| | N | % |
| More US employment promotes growth | 127 | 16.69 |
| More US employment has no effect | 93 | 12.22 |
| More US employment hurts growth | 89 | 11.70 |
| Total | 309 | 28.91 |

4.3.5 Theme E: The US presence in Ebja is helpful in terms of growth and development.

In this theme, there are three invariant constituents that were identified, detailed in Table 11. They were: (a) US presence on the atoll helps the RMI growth and development, (b) there is no significant effect of the US presence on the atoll, and (c) the US presence hurts RMI growth and development.

Table 11

Effects of US presence on the atoll in terms of growth and development

| Invariant constituents | Respondents who agreed | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| | N | % |
| More US employment promotes growth | 220 | 28.91 |
| More US employment has no effect | 81 | 10.64 |
| More US employment hurts growth | 42 | 5.52 |
| Total | 343 | 39.55 |

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

While this study focused on the impact of USAKA presence and activities on the relationship between the two nations (US and RMI), the research project also answered the following questions, which are vital in the creation of awareness that will both assist in providing sound economic growth for RMI and further improving the US-RMI relationship as a whole. Analyses of the responses were helpful in answering these questions, as shown below.

Research Question 1: How do the people of Ebja describe the nature of their relationship with the USAKA command in particular and the United States as a whole? It can be seen from data collected for Themes B and C that most people in Ebja feel that American assistance can be of great help to them. Of utmost importance is the availability of infrastructure and education, in that order. Utilities and infrastructures in Ebja, as shown in Figure 4, have

deteriorated due to adverse climatic environmental conditions and lack of adequate maintenance.



Figure 4: Photo of warehouse roof deterioration due to rust (left) and water plant next to electrical power station (right).

Given the salty atmosphere, and windy and rainy conditions, metal and all infrastructures designed with metal are exposed to rust and corrosion (Millikan, 1911). Therefore, infrastructures that were designed and constructed in metal are bound to be destroyed as time passes. Ebja has neither the resources nor the education necessary to recognize, identify and manage the extent of decay of these metals or the technology needed to protect these infrastructures and their components. Roads, sewer lines, electrical lines, and water lines are all major components for which the people of Ebja are asking the Americans for assistance.

Research Question 2: How does the quality and standard of living in Ebja affect the relationship of the Ebja people and the Americans? As can be seen from Theme A, most people in Ebja feel that their standard of living is poor. The gap between the rich and the poor, according to Adam Smith's (1790) theory of moral sentiments, causes bitterness and animosity in a society. The relationship between the Marshallese and the Americans can, therefore, become callous and detrimental to both nations. As time goes on, this relationship, if not well managed, could result in unnecessary political tensions between the nations, as Smith might argued. When the data in Theme A were analyzed further, given the demographical information, it could be seen that older respondents were more optimistic about the standard of living, while the younger generations felt it was poor and miserable. So, as time goes by, the relationship between the US-RMI may apparently worsen in the future as these youth come of age.

Research Question 3: How confident are the people of Ebja that the Americans will help in providing a better quality of life to their inhabitants? Theme D shows that most people in Ebja feel that job opportunities with the Americans are fruitful to them and therefore important to the growth and development of the community. Although some local store owners showed concerns that the high wages of some of their customers impeded growth and development in the

community, most respondents agreed that employment of Ebja residents was crucial for the growth and development of Ebja. Furthermore, Theme B showed that the most important need and expectation of the Ebja people from Americans is that of training and education. Not only did these people want construction of schools and provision of classroom equipment, but they also expressed the desire for the Americans to provide high-quality education, economic skills, management skills and operational educational skills necessary to enhance their quality and standard of living.

Research Question 4: What changes, if any do the people of Ebja believe would help to promote their welfare and development? As shown in Theme B, second to the need for quality education and training was the need for infrastructure, third was employment, and finally, health awareness. Education would include sanitation management and facility sustainment. Figure 5 shows housekeeping challenges the people of Ebja are facing. The picture on the right shows how trash disposal is left unmanaged and unprotected from disease-borne pests.



Figure 5: Challenges with waste management and housekeeping

In Theme C, the analysis showed that as the age of respondents increased, the response to informal association decreased, and as the income of the respondents increased, the perception that informal socialization with the Americans helps relationship decreased. The scope of this research does not cover a qualitative analysis on what might have caused this correlation. However, the data strongly suggest that the richer Ebja population does not see hope for a significant improvement through informal socialization of the Americans and the Ebja population.

Research Question 5: What effects, if any, would there be if the Americans had never been present on the atoll, if the Americans were to leave the atoll, and if the Americans remained on the atoll indefinitely? Theme E showed that more people believed that American presence on the atoll promotes growth and development. Besides the points raised in Theme B, further details of this were not explicitly revealed in this study. However, in Theme C, the Ebja people showed that informal social interactions and

associations with the Americans that live on the atoll would help both the welfare of Ebja and the relationship.

Based on Lewis's (1954) Theory of Economic Growth, recognition of the resources available in a closed community and increasing the education and knowledge of members is essential for the prosperity of that particular society. In other words, since the people of Ebja have recognized that quality education and training will be an important asset to them, the USAKA command and the US as a whole should endeavor to not only provide them with such resources, but also provide a medium through which quality education in management can flourish in the republic.

Galor (2007) claimed that economic growth is a function of a combination of labor migration, income distribution, demography, human capital accumulation and international trade. The US should, therefore, take this opportunity to promote growth and development of the RMI by reinforcing labor and employment of the Ebja people, promoting and encouraging sound income distribution, and fostering trade between the RMI and the international market by providing the community with the means and the know-how to do so.

Future research should comprise qualitative investigations to determine the amount the factors identified in the results section are required in order to guarantee sound growth and development in Ebja. According to Rostow (1960), management of raw materials and resources will kickstart an economy like the Ebja economy from the transitional stage, where the use of available raw products is carried out for sustainment, to the final saturation stage, where there is high mass consumption and distribution in the international market. Since RMI is a strong ally of the United States, it is important for the US government to recognize these potentials. Not only would it help the current Ebja population, but in the long run, it will foster stronger ties and better relations for both countries as the world migrates to a global economy.

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