

SAMOAN AND TONGAN MIGRATION:
THE CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE

ROBERT W. FRANCO
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

EAST-WEST CENTER
POPULATION INSTITUTE

Paper presented to the "Education in Oceania" conference, March 5-9, 1980, at University of Victoria, British Columbia. This paper is in rough draft form and is not to be quoted or circulated without the permission of the author.

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Introduction

American Samoans and Western Samoans have been immigrating to urban-metropolitan America for the last thirty years, while Tongan movements into the United States began as recently as 1968. There has been a great deal of research on the Samoan community in Hawaii, and this interest indicates the visibility and impact of the Samoan there. My research with the Samoan community in California began in 1974 and I have considered the Samoan case from both the island and urban perspective.

FROM SAMOA TO THE STATES

Within this presentation I will discuss the Samoan case in much greater detail than the Tongan case and although much of the discussion about the Samoan cultural response to population growth and migration can be applied to the Tongan case, the Tongans, without political affiliation to the United States, have immigrated in fewer numbers, with a slightly different urban-adaptive response. However, the movements of Samoans and Tongans into urban America has had similar effects on island development and educational systems.

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Historical Setting and Background

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The imaginary line from Hawaii to New Zealand that demarcates the western boundary of the "Polynesian Triangle" is approximately 4400 miles long. The Samoan Islands, consisting of the "unincorporated territory" of American Samoa, and the independent nation of Western Samoa, lie 2600 miles southwest of Hawaii along this line. The division of these islands into two distinct political entities is a long story presented here in condensed form.