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Chapter 10

THE PACIFIC ISLANDERS



The Pacific Islanders remained relatively isolated for many years, but the advent of World War II brought an end to their peaceful existence. Their strategic location meant that the massive military might of the warring nations led to a large-scale invasion of the Islands, not only of men but of weapons, large-scale technology, and modernization. But, as Colbert¹ writes, modernization also brought poverty, crime, corruption, youth anomie, drug abuse, degradation of the environment, and a drastic change in traditional cultural ways.

But proponents of the new ways counter by applauding the introduction of employment, a wage system, higher standards of health and living, up-to-date technology, science, and less dependence on ritual and superstition. Younger generations are more likely to prefer aspects of modernization such as Hollywood movies, television, fast foods, and more independence from parental control. It is a timeless struggle, not only on the Islands but throughout the world, when a more traditional generation and culture comes face to face with the new. And when the new generation becomes old, it will no doubt face the challenges of the younger generation.

But the idea that people would voluntarily leave sandy beaches, clear skies, warm weather, and the "romantic lifestyle" of tropic isles like Samoa for overcrowded freeways, poor housing, and urban living is difficult to believe. Yet such a migration is now taking place. It has meant that for some of the small island communities, a greater number of persons now live on the mainland than remain in their former homes. Perhaps paradise, as depicted in Hol-

Table 10.1 Pacific Islander Population, 1980 and 1990

Group	1980	1990
Polynesian		
Hawaiian	220,278	205,501
Samoaan	39,520	57,679
Tongan	6,226	16,707
All other	2,186	3,998
Micronesian		
Guamanian	30,695	47,754
All other	4,813	7,216
Melanesian		
Fijian	2,834	7,218
All other	477	
Pacific Islander, not specified	469	4,519
Total	259,566	350,592

Source: U.S. Census.

lywood movies, is not sufficient to sustain life, or, more likely, the island image reflects a stereotype, not a reality. Economic incentives, joining family, and a better life for children sound rather mundane coming from migrants from tropical isles, but these reasons appear as powerful for them as for others who have immigrated to America. Relevant questions are then the same as for any immigrant group: Who are they, why did they come, how were they received, and what are their adaptive patterns in the United States?

Before 1980, Pacific Islanders were not measured as a specific group in the U.S. census. The 1980 census divided the Pacific Islander population into Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian (see Table 10.1). The most numerous were the native Hawaiians, who comprised 85 percent of the Pacific Islander population, followed by the Samoans, Guamanians, and Tongans. The 1990 census indicated no change in the rankings but showed an increase of 35 percent in the number of Pacific Islanders in the fifty states. They amounted to less than fourteen hundredths of 1 percent (.00014) of the population. In this chapter, we will cover the Samoans, Guamanians, and Hawaiians; our observations may also be pertinent to other Pacific Islander groups.

SAMOANS

The Samoan Islands are located in the South Pacific, approximately 2,300 miles southwest of Honolulu and 1,600 miles northeast of New Zealand. There are nine major islands, which have high rainfall, high humidity, and a

tropical climate. The islands are divided into two political entities, American Samoa and Western Samoa. American Samoa has been United States territory since 1900. Western Samoa, in this century, has been owned by Germany, Great Britain, and New Zealand, but has been independent since 1962. The population of American Samoa increased from 5,679 in 1900 to 46,773 by 1990. Western Samoa also saw a dramatic increase in population during the same period, from 32,815 to ca. 190,000. However, large-scale emigration during the past several decades has slowed the population growth.²

Samoan legends hold that the people originated on the islands, but social scientists believe that Samoa was populated by Asians who came over the ocean in canoes. They lived in isolation until 1816 when Christian missionaries arrived via Tonga and Tahiti. Because the chiefs accepted the Christian faith, the islanders also became Christians. They were soon followed by traders from Great Britain, Germany, and the United States; the influx of foreigners dramatically changed native ways of life.

Prior to foreign intervention, Samoans lived under *faasamoa*, a term that denotes their customs, culture, values, and traditions.³ The people living on the various islands shared the same language and culture, and the family served as the main organizing unit. Family name and reputation were important; respect for brothers, sisters, and older persons was built into the structure so that *faasamoa* gave the people a sense of cohesiveness, pride, and identity.

Their social structure was hierarchical. Central to the social system was the family, with the children at the bottom, the parents above the children, and the chief at the top. In the village, the family was below the village council of chiefs; at the district level, the district council was made up of certain chiefs from each village. The stratification continued up to the national level and was called the *Matai* system, which acted as the basic governing unit. The system of governance was effective in keeping unity among the islands for thousands of years prior to the arrival of foreigners.

Britain, Germany, and the United States were the primary contenders for influence over the islands. The intrusion of the colonial powers forced changes in the Samoan way of life. Division of the islands and introduction of Western methods of education, individualism, working for wages, and a cash economy meant that the Samoans could no longer live in their traditional ways. The foreign powers stripped the local governance structures of their ability to exercise authority and control, and the Samoan system was supplanted by colonial administrators.

The effects of westernization on a small population, living in a restricted space, can only be described as dramatic. The native way of life became an anachronism; the world powers fragmented the islands, the various powers claiming different spheres of influence. Acculturation meant becoming more American in American Samoa, more English in

Western Samoa. This background led Sereisa Milford to assert that whatever the reasons given for leaving the islands, the primary impetus was provided by Western colonialism and imperialism.⁴

The Mead-Freeman Controversy

Samoa became prominent through the early writings of Margaret Mead, especially in her book concerning adolescent sexuality.⁵ Her view was that growing up in Samoa was akin to living in paradise—competition was limited, and there was little guilt or inhibition in terms of sexuality. Derek Freeman attempted to unmask Mead's findings; retracing her footsteps several decades later, he concluded the opposite—that Samoans were by nature sexually inhibited, puritanical, aggressive, highly competitive, and prone to jealousy.⁶ Pathological behaviors included assault, rape, suicide, and murder.

In an attempt to discover the "real" Samoa, Lowell Holmes conducted his own investigation, which generally supported Mead's findings. Perhaps the most acute observation on the controversy came from the wife of the prime minister of Western Samoa, who stated that neither Mead nor Freeman accurately represented the Samoan culture or its way of life. Both outsiders missed the subtlety of life in Samoa; it was neither the permissive paradise of Mead nor the aggressive society of Freeman. Another Samoan suggested that anthropologists study the tribal tensions and the sexual neuroses on the island where he now lives—Manhattan.⁷

Migration

The first modern migration from Samoa occurred in the 1920s when Samoan members of the Mormon church were brought to Hawaii to help build the Hawaiian Mormon Temple at Laie, about 35 miles from Honolulu.⁸ This first group of immigrants was guided by a primarily religious orientation, and most stayed on in Laie, in contrast to subsequent groups, who were more concerned with economic issues and tended to move on to Honolulu and other places where there were better economic opportunities.

In contrasting some of the differences between the native Hawaiians and the Samoans who made up the bulk of the population at Laie, Bernard Pierce noted that the Samoans were much more business-oriented than the Hawaiian population. He attributed these differences to prior contact that had enabled the Samoans to develop a business sense, including a desire to acquire goods, that had eluded the Hawaiians. He also noted that the Samoans were never apologetic about their culture, whereas the Hawaiians often made derogatory remarks about their own way of life.⁹

The second significant migration occurred after the U.S. Navy transferred administration of American Samoa to the Department of the Interior in 1950. Many Samoans followed the Navy to Hawaii and then to the main-

land. Others migrated to the United States seeking better jobs, better education, and reunion with relatives. Western Samoans, as citizens of an independent nation, must go through regular immigration procedures; Samoans from the American sector are able to travel to the United States without passports or visas.

Most Samoan Americans have settled in Honolulu, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Seattle. Outside Hawaii, they face a vastly different physical and cultural climate. As one Samoan told us, in Hawaii she never felt that she was a member of a minority group, but in Los Angeles she is clearly aware that she is part of a minority.¹⁰ The Samoan Islands are in the tropics, where distances are short and the people are surrounded by kin. Skin color and language are not marks of difference, and there is an easy familiarity. Age is treated with respect, and family needs have the highest priority.

But in America, Samoan populations, primarily first-generation, are practically invisible and largely ignored by the dominant community. Because of their small numbers and the relative insignificance of their home islands in international affairs, they possess little political power. An additional handicap is that they are often lumped in with other Asian groups who are often more successful than they. They suffer disadvantages due to language barriers, lack of educational and occupational skills, and low income.

Most live in family and extended-family units and expect to have other kin join them in a chain migration. Although they are a first-generation community, there are many young children. Their median age of 20.8 years is far below the American median of 33.0 years. Their sex ratio is about evenly divided, 51.5 percent male to 48.5 percent female, and they tend to marry among themselves.¹¹

In common with all Americans, finding a job and securing housing are among their highest priorities. Since most are unskilled laborers, wages are minimal. One solution, which is also reinforced by their past ways, involves an exchange of goods and services among kinfolk. Thus the family and the kinship network serve as important resources, and some of the Samoan ways can be preserved, tempered by the realities of living in urban America.¹²

The Samoan adaptation reflects a bicultural lifestyle. At work a man might dress and act like fellow Americans, but at home he may take off his shoes, put on a lava-lava (a long wraparound skirt), sit on the floor, and talk to others in Samoan. He may wait for the adolescents in the household to prepare the evening meal and expect his school-age children to take care of the younger members. Household decorations may reflect an island ambience.¹³ It will be interesting to see how long this lifestyle will be retained as the younger, more acculturated generation achieves adulthood.

The demographic picture of the Samoans indicates that *faasamoa* may be affected by the large number of young children in the Samoan

community. While the first-generation adults are engaged in Samoan-style oratory, exchange of gifts, and the Samoan chatter, younger children are expected to fall back to the outer circle. Thus in Samoa the children might hear and learn to participate from their peripheral positions; in urban America they are more likely to retreat to another room to watch television. Parents are also likely to encourage their children to speak English and to practice the behavioral patterns that will allow them to get ahead in the new culture. But as one Samoan told us, there remains less of an emphasis on higher education, especially when compared to the Chinese and Japanese. If a high school graduate is given the choice of getting a job and putting food on the table or spending the next four years in college, there is a tendency to choose the former.¹⁴ Younger adults are likely to find that the old culture is less relevant and hinders their participation in the new society. Perhaps it will be up to future generations to appreciate the ways of the ancestral culture.

One of the special facets of the Samoans, which differentiates them from the other Asians, is athletic ability, coupled with large body size. As a consequence, Samoans have become prominent in football, at both the college and the professional level, and it is not uncommon to hear sports broadcasters struggling over a name like Tuiasasopo. One potential problem is that athletic role models may become too attractive; only a tiny proportion can succeed in professional sports.

GUAMANIAN

In many ways, the problems and adaptations of the Guamanians, Tongans, and other Pacific Islanders are similar to those faced by the Samoans. The absence of a Margaret Mead may have made the rest of the islanders less familiar than the Samoans—at best a mixed blessing.

Guam, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are territories of the United States and constitute the commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. The native people are the Chamorros, and the islands are located about 1,500 miles east of Manila, 1,500 miles south of Tokyo, and 6,000 miles west of Los Angeles.

Guam was "discovered" by Magellan on his famous round-the-world expedition in 1521 and was under Spanish rule until Spain lost the Spanish-American War of 1898. It then became a United States possession. Spanish rule was characterized by a missionary zeal and attempts to change the life of the inhabitants in every way. But the Chamorros did not submit; there were revolts and high Chamorro resistance. As a consequence, the Spanish rulers virtually wiped out the native population. Early accounts placed their number at over 50,000, but by the first recorded census in 1710, only 3,539 survived. Eventually, the natives, composed primarily of females—most of the males had been eliminated—mixed with Filipino and Mexican exiles, as

well as later arrivals such as Europeans and Japanese, so most modern Guamanians have a multiracial ancestry.

Guamanian immigration was aided by the 1950 Organic Act, which conferred American citizenship on the inhabitants of Guam. It has been a two-way migration—Guamanians have been coming and going in both directions—so precise numbers are difficult to ascertain. There are a number of reasons for the migration. One is military service: As early as 1938, young men volunteered for the Navy and ended their careers in West Coast cities such as San Francisco, San Diego, Seattle, and Los Angeles. Another group immigrated to attend American schools because there was a need for trained people to help in the administration of the islands. Prospective teachers, nurses, doctors, and lawyers left to be trained on the mainland, and many did not return. Then there were those who were dissatisfied with island life; they saw a dearth of educational and vocational opportunities, as well as inadequate public services, medical facilities, and job opportunities. Other reasons behind the immigration were destructive storms in 1962 and 1976 and overpopulation.

The immigrants had dreams of America similar to the images held by other immigrants. It was the land of opportunity, of milk and honey, of peace and tranquillity. A more practical reason was to join old friends and relatives.

The year 1970 was an important one for Guam, as for the first time its governor was elected. Prior to that time it had experienced a series of colonial administrations—the Spanish, the Americans, the Japanese, and the Americans again. The island was also opened to immigration; previously it had been under the protection of the U.S. military, and no one was allowed to come in. The opening up of the island meant increased foreign job competition, especially from Filipinos, Taiwanese, and Koreans.¹⁵

Chamorro values include a strong family, ancestor worship (despite a Catholic tradition), a fishing and farming lifestyle, and the authority of the mother in the home. The mother is the primary decision maker; families are close-knit, with parents, unmarried and married children, and aunts and uncles often in close proximity. Child rearing is viewed as a family responsibility. Faye Munoz cited the example of the role of one strong mother: A couple who had been married for twenty-eight years and living in California continues to seek the permission of the wife's mother if they wish to go out. If the mother says no, the couple will stay at home.¹⁶

Guamanian problems are similar to the problems faced by other islander groups. They are unsophisticated in the business and technological world. Whereas groups such as the Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Vietnamese have gone into restaurants, grocery, and liquor stores, few islanders can be found in small businesses. There are almost no Pacific Islanders in the professions; common jobs are in the unskilled and semiskilled sector, as custodians, cooks, and clerks.

Guamanians come from a culture with rich oral rather than written traditions. Children born in the United States and those who had left Guam before the age of 12 have difficulty with the native language, and elders fear that much of their history will fade away.

Older folks suffer from isolation—there is little integration—and they tend to know more about political activities and occurrences in the islands than in their present homes in the United States. Other problems include low pay, inadequate education, and difficulty in supporting large families. Guamanian immigrants do not understand their neighborhoods or the larger political system, and often they do not know where to turn for help or for personal, business, or social services; their former island networks, effective in their earlier lives, are less relevant here. Munoz indicated that although the Chamorros had been exposed to American influences since the turn of the century, their needs and priorities were deemed less important than the defense requirements of the United States.¹⁷ As a consequence, they became dependent on America—paternalistic models, no matter how benign, often do that—and this left them unprepared for independent living once they gained their freedom.

HAWAIIANS

Of all of the Pacific Islander groups, the Hawaiian represents either the most successful or the least successful, depending on one's orientation. If the criteria for success include racial amalgamation and interracial mixing, then Hawaiians would certainly be deemed very successful. There are almost no "pure" Hawaiians left, although their disappearance cannot be attributed solely to racial amalgamation. However, if success is measured by pluralistic models—the ability of a group to retain its autonomy and culture and to remain racially "pure"—then the natives of Hawaii would certainly be classified as unsuccessful.

Hawaii was believed to have been colonized by Polynesian voyagers, mostly from the Marquesas Islands and Tahiti over 1,500 years ago. When Captain Cook, the famous English explorer, came to the islands in 1778, their more than 300,000 inhabitants had a thriving culture. It was a highly stratified system, reminiscent of medieval Europe, China, and Japan, with a class of chieftains (*aliis*) at the top; an elite group of specialists (*kahunas*) active in the arts, crafts, medicine, and religion at the next tier; and the commoners, who made up the majority of the population, at the bottom.¹⁸

Hawaii's past was marked with conflict. "Tribal" warfare and eventual bloody reunification of the islands under the control of King Kamehameha I left them unprepared for the "foreign" invasion. By the time the first New England Congregationalist missionaries arrived in 1820, one year after the death of Kamehameha, Hawaii had already undergone a change

from the idyllic isle discovered by Cook several decades before. For example, Cook emphasized the strength, intelligence, and cleanliness of the natives who farmed, fished, and enjoyed athletic games and dances. But by the 1820s, commentators complained about the laziness of the Hawaiians, their apathy, and their poor health; the destruction of the native culture was already under way.¹⁹

The hospitality of the islanders—it was a place for happy refreshment after a long voyage—and the importance of trade were the key factors in their demise. Hawaiian chiefs rushed to trade with the *haoles* for fancy clothes, ornaments, and weapons and in their greed claimed rights to fishing grounds and fruit trees and often worked the commoners to death. Agricultural resources that were formerly consumed by the people were put up for sale to the visitors; the insatiable tastes of the chiefs for foreign goods resulted in heavier taxes. Hawaiian boys went sailing with the big ships; derelict *haole* seamen roamed the ports, encouraging swift trades in alcohol and sex. Then came the introduction of the "white man's diseases" from European sailors and traders—syphilis, gonorrhea, colds, pneumonia, smallpox, and cholera. The Hawaiians had no immunities to diseases with which they had had no experience; powerful, robust Hawaiians could succumb as easily to measles as to cholera.²⁰ Drunkenness was widespread, and in extreme cases, Hawaiians lost the will to live. From a relatively stable population of about 300,000 in 1778—before the coming of the white men—the natives were reduced to a population of about 57,000 in 1889. Within thirty years of Cook's arrival, indifference and apathy became a part of the Hawaiian way of life, to be replaced years later by overwhelming despair. The old social ties had largely disappeared, and group respect had been demolished.²¹

The Christian missionaries from New England also sped the process of social change by attacking the roots of the Hawaiian way of life. The native language, dress, dances, and art were downgraded, and the entire sociopolitical system of the islanders was constantly forced to change. But at least initially, the missionaries were moved by spiritual goals, whereas sailors and merchants came for lust and profit.

The Hawaiians were introduced to Western culture in the form of explosives, iron implements, a money economy, and Christianity. The single event that most dramatically changed the social system was the Great Mahele of 1848, which permitted the purchase of land by private persons.²² Through a series of complicated manipulations, much of the land formerly under the king and chiefs ended up in the hands of a few white oligarchs.

After the Great Mahele, *haole* investments in land expanded, the growing of sugar and other enterprises grew at a rapid pace, and the demand for cheap labor changed the demography of the islands. In common with the Native Americans on the mainland, the native Hawaiians did not make good laborers—why should any man work from dawn to dusk, week

after week, performing backbreaking labor for someone else when the fish were plentiful in the sea and the coconuts dropped from the tree? One visitor, commenting on Hawaiian labor, noted:

If the overseer leaves for a moment, down they squat . . . and the longest-winded fellow commences upon a yarn . . . that keeps upon the others a broad grin. . . . as soon as he comes in sight, [they] seize their spades and commence laboring with an assiduity that baffles description, and perhaps all the while not strain a muscle.²³

The importation of cheap labor thus became a high priority for the plantation owners. Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Filipino laborers were imported from Asia; smaller numbers of workers were also brought from such European areas as Scotland, Portugal, Spain, and Germany.

Beginning in the early 1840s, American residents in Hawaii, though a tiny minority, played an enormous role in Hawaiian politics. From 1842 to 1854, for example, an American, J. P. Judd, served as prime minister to Kamehameha III, and by the late nineteenth century, Americans dominated the Hawaiian economy as well. The United States made a series of commercial treaties with Hawaii and in 1887 received the exclusive right to establish a naval base at Pearl Harbor. The coming to power of the nationalist and traditionalist Queen Liliuokalani threatened the control of the American elite, and it overthrew her in a coup in 1893, aided by U.S. naval forces. A provisional government headed by Sanford B. Dole, the pineapple king, negotiated to have Hawaii annexed, but anti-imperialist President Grover Cleveland refused to allow it to take place. The Dole government continued in power until 1898, when, in the enthusiasm for expansion created by the Spanish-American War, Hawaii was annexed by a joint resolution of Congress. Although Hawaii had a population and economy worthy of statehood at the time of annexation, racism kept it in territorial status until 1959. American politicians rightly assumed that polyethnic Hawaii would send non-white representatives to Congress. As one southern legislator put it during a hearing on Hawaiian statehood in the 1930s, if Hawaii became a state, we'd have "a senator named Moto!"²⁴

Lawrence Fuchs reports that there were at least three Hawaiis at the time of annexation. One was the haole society, characterized by monogamy, private ownership of land, Western dress, music and recreation, and Christianity. Whites owned most of the land, were in control of the economy, and ran the political system. Plantation life was primarily Asian—languages, games, worship, and attitudes toward family, property, and authority had the flavor of the Orient. Asians provided the labor; although in the majority numerically, they were divided by ethnicity and were economically dependent. Then there was what remained of the native Hawaiian culture, found in the more remote villages, where people prayed to Madam Pele, the Fire Goddess, to spread lava over the land to wash the foreigners into the sea.

The relative power of each of the groups was a good predictor of the type of Hawaii that was to emerge.

At the start of the twentieth century, Hawaii was full of contradictions, yet the oligarchy lived and managed them up to the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, when the cumulative effect of public education, universal suffrage (which was decreed under American annexation), and World War II began to alter its structure. As Fuchs writes:

A handful of haoles, intolerant of opposition, ran the Islands, but discontent was openly expressed in uncensored ethnic papers. The oligarchy, self-consciously Caucasian, made few open appeals to racial prejudice. The small group . . . nevertheless helped foster education. The small aristocracy, reaping the benefits of a plantation system, with its ruthlessness, was constantly torn between the desire for power and profit and the evangelism of both the Congregational church and the American dream of freedom and opportunity for all.²⁵

But the toilers on the plantations and the native Hawaiians did not see the conflict—power and profit seemed always to prevail.

There were some gaps in the stratification system. One was the emphasis on education—a New England value—and children of former plantation workers acquired an education. Foremost were the children of Asian background; native Hawaiians were less so inclined. Another was that of miscegenation and intermarriage; even the early haoles married Hawaiian women of high rank. Members of important haole families—Bishop, Wilcox, Shipman, Campbell, and others—married Hawaiian women. As Fuchs speculates, their own traditions of intermarriage may have prevented them from attacking the marital practices of other groups. Native Hawaiians joined in this practice fully.

Although there were strikes and other symptoms of discontent, the haole oligarchy dominated the islands for the next forty years. Ethnicity became the primary means of identification—people thought of themselves as haoles, Hawaiians, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos. Each ethnic group, shaped initially by the historical circumstances of its immigration, developed a distinctive way of life. The goal for the haole was to maintain control; for the Portuguese, to be considered a haole; for the Chinese, to be economically independent; and for the Japanese, to be accepted. The goal for the Hawaiians was to recapture the past.²⁶

Of all the groups, the native Hawaiians had the most difficulty in adjusting to the competitive haole culture. Much of their past behavior did not fit into the newer society. For example, their sexual behavior and the casual use of property were looked on as criminal by haole norms. The islands had undergone too much change; a retreat to the past left the Hawaiians even further behind.

An attempt was made in 1920 to set aside public lands at nominal rents to persons of at least one-half Hawaiian blood through the Hawaiian Homes Commission. The legislation was an attempt to "rehabilitate" the

Hawaiian people and for them to regain possession of their land. But as Fuchs reports:

The rehabilitation idea did not produce a Hawaiian renaissance. It was, after all, too much to ask. The haole religion, family structure, sex mores, land system, property relationships . . . were fundamentally different from what was known in ancient Hawaii. The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act represented one more, perhaps the major, futile Hawaiian effort to recapture the past.²⁷

An understandable and all too common response to frustrated lives is the phenomenon of scapegoating. Hawaiians were no exception. Rather than venting their hostility against the powerful haole, the natives began blaming the "orientals" for their plight. They helped the haoles write land laws discriminating against the Chinese, then turned their animus against the Japanese. But even though they disliked both the haoles and the Asians as groups, the natives maintained many individual friendships and continued their traditions of sex and marriage without discrimination.

Intermarriage meant that Hawaiians and part-Hawaiians became diffused throughout the population. They carried on the spirit of *aloha*—in spite of animosity and hostility toward groups, individuals were treated with friendliness and generosity. As a consequence, the picture of Hawaii as a racial paradise has a degree of validity, given the ethnic and racial diversity of its population.

Alan Howard recorded a rise in ethnic militancy in the 1970s led by younger, relatively well-educated Hawaiians with an interest in the native language, traditional art and music, and a revitalized ethnic identity. Their basic theme was their alienation from their land and the abuse of the environment by the "foreigners." It included valuing group affiliation over individual achievement and maintaining social relations over accumulating wealth.²⁸

At a conference sponsored by the Council of Hawaiian Organizations, a number of goals were listed. First was to achieve self-determination, followed by establishing a land base for use by native Hawaiians. Other goals were to address educational needs, to achieve economic independence, and to strengthen the family and the old spirit of cooperation. The leaders saw the haole immigration as the primary cause for the disruption of the Hawaiian lifestyle.²⁹

Haunani-Kay Trask writes that their country was stolen from them, along with their citizenship, their lands, and their independence.³⁰ In many ways there are similarities between the experiences of Native Americans and Hawaiians. Both were "conquered," and both wish to restore and affirm historic water, fishing, hunting, gathering, and access rights. Their opponents object to special rights for both Native Americans and native Hawaiians.

Present-day Hawaii has not been kind to the native Hawaiians, who have the highest poverty rates, the shortest life expectancy, and the highest infant mortality in the state. They have more heart disease and cancer and comprise a high proportion of the prison population. Their educational level and political sophistication remains minimal, so that their future power in the state is likely to remain low when compared to some of the more active Asian American groups. However, leaders in the community have become more active in asserting their rights by advocating for a Hawaiian nation, regaining control of their lands, and petitioning the United Nations for Hawaii to be placed on the decolonization list. The image of Hawaii as the island of aloha, romance, and harmony is certainly not in the experiences of the natives.³¹

Hawaiians have emigrated to the mainland, but their actual numbers are difficult to assess. Many are of mixed ancestry, and their experiences are as diverse as their backgrounds.

COMMON PROBLEMS

A number of similar problems are faced by all immigrants from the Pacific Islands. They represent a group with 1,200 distinct languages³² and cultures so different from one another that there is no easy way to classify them. For most islanders, the problems are more pronounced when they leave home for life on the mainland. The native Hawaiians are unique in that they are the only ones to have been "invaded"—they lost their lands, power, culture, and identity because they lacked restrictive immigration laws and other practices that would have kept them in a position of dominance. Instead, they integrated and assimilated at a rapid pace, so that by the end of the 1980s, very few of the "pure" remained.³³

Some of the problems faced by all Pacific Islanders in America are these:

1. The vast differences between the education and skills necessary to survive in a modern technological society and the culture of the islands.
2. Loss of status, rank, and prestige. Former leaders may end up in unskilled laboring jobs; very few find employment in the white-collar and professional sector.
3. Low wages and high expenses. Many Islanders have large families and are obligated to take care of them. Most contribute regularly to their churches.
4. Problems of roles and identity. Identities that are closely tied to the family, kinship groups, and villages are weakened in the new culture. Hierarchical roles, especially of the male, are threatened.
5. Unrealistic stereotypes of the islands that foster an exotic, romantic image or one of heavy-drinking revelers.

6. Placement under the banner "Asians." Pacific Islanders' backgrounds are vastly different, and this lack of differentiation places the islanders at a disadvantage when competing for federal funds and other forms of assistance.
7. Attempts to recapture a past that may be beyond their ability to control.

The problems for the Pacific Islanders are more sociocultural than those caused by discrimination and oppression. What was functional in a small island economy may not be useful in an urban, technological society. Further, unlike some other Asian groups, their numbers are too small and their resources too slim to develop a structurally separate community and a parallel "opportunity structure." Community resources that may have been supportive in the islands may not be effective in helping them capitalize on opportunities available in the mainstream American society.

The most encouraging sign is that islander immigration comes at a time when overt discrimination has largely disappeared. There are still problems associated with membership in a different "race" in a race-conscious society, but the relatively small size of the group should enable them to acculturate at a rapid pace. Their cultural ties, especially in terms of their language, are not functional in any international sense, so by the second and third generations it may quietly disappear. However, it is hoped that their strong family ties and the ethos of helping one another will be retained and become integrated into the larger society.

NOTES

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3. Sereisa Milford, "Imperialism and Samoan National Identity," *Amerasia Journal* 12 (1985): 49-56.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (New York: Morrow, 1928).
6. Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Masking and Unmasking of an Anthropological Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).
7. Lowell D. Holmes, *Quest for the Real Samoa* (S. Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1987).
8. Bernard Pierce, "Acculturation of Samoans in the Mormon Village of Laie, Territory of Hawaii" (master's thesis, University of Hawaii, June 1956).
9. *Ibid.*
10. Interview with Sereisa Milford, Sept. 9, 1986, at UCLA.
11. Ramsey Shu and Adele Satele, *The Samoan Community in Southern California: Conditions and Needs* (Chicago: Asian American Mental Health Research Center, 1977).

12. Lydia Kotchek, "Of Course, We Respect Our Old People, But . . . : Aging among Samoan Migrants," *California Sociologist* 3 (1980): 197-212.
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15. Faye Munoz, "An Exploratory Study of Island Migration: Chamorros of Guam" (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1979).
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. Alan Howard, "Hawaiians," in Stephan Thernstrom, ed., *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 449-452.
19. Bradd Shore, "Pacific Islanders," op. cit., pp. 763-768.
20. Lawrence Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono: A Social History of Hawaii* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1961).
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
28. Howard, "Hawaiians."
29. Shore, "Pacific Islanders."
30. Haunani-Kay Trask, "Politics in the Pacific Islands: Imperialism and Native Self-determination," *Amerasia Journal* 16 (1990): 1-19. See also Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1993).
31. Mindy Pennybacker, "Should the Aloha State Say Goodbye? Natives Wonder," *Nation* 263 (5) (August 12, 1996): 21-25; Noreen Mokuau and Jon Matsuoka, "Turbulence Among a Native People: Social Work Practice with Hawaiians," *Social Work* 40 (1955): 465-473.
32. Linda S. Parker, *Native American Estate* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989).
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