

THE CHANGING SAMOANS

Behavior and Health in Transition

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Chapter 16

Samoan Coping Behavior

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SAMOAN COPING STRATEGIES

The main purpose of this chapter is to identify significant problems commonly shared by Samoans as they confront increasingly complex environments, and to describe their coping responses to these problems. Some of the problems are endemic to Samoan culture; that is, they are rooted in the traditional life-style, while others are a consequence of changes in economic and social conditions that are affecting the Samoan populace. Still other problems are associated with dislocations such as migrations to New Zealand, Hawaii, the U.S. mainland, and other destinations where Samoans are ethnic minorities. As might be expected, the coping strategies used are composed from a mixture of practical considerations—recognizable to anyone having to deal with the daily contingencies of life in the modern world—and some distinctly Samoan, or at least Polynesian, modes of problem solving. In Chapter 6 Ala'ilima and Stover presented data on coping from the subjective standpoint of individual Samoans. Their presentation demonstrates the considerable variability both in problems confronted and in coping responses. In this chapter we look for commonalities, although the reader should keep in mind that an increase in variability is one of the major consequences of the macroprocesses affecting the Samoan population.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

One of the major problems for comparative anthropologists lies in the variability of conceptual usage from study to study, and it seems that the

more widely used the term the greater its range of usage. Concepts like stress, coping, modernization, and acculturation, like the concept of culture itself, have been defined in innumerable ways (and more often left implicit), depending on the purposes of the ethnographer or comparative analyst. While it would be presumptuous to propose definitive conceptualizations here, it is important that we define key concepts as we use them, if for no other reason than to clarify the bases of our judgments.

The concept of *stress* has proved so thorny that many recent commentators have refused even to attempt a definition (Mason 1975:29). There are, however, a number of identifiable models of stress (Scott and Howard 1970), and it will be useful for our discussion to specify the one we are using here. This might be termed the "social stress/generalized susceptibility model" as developed by Cassel (1976) and Syme and Berkman (1976). From their perspective, stress is viewed as the result of a disjunction between demands of the social environment and an individual's coping resources or ability to solve problems. Coping resources span social and personal factors and include, for example, the emotional and instrumental assistance provided by others, as well as personal attributes. Although coping resources can buffer the effects of environmental stress, if demands are not matched by resources, and if recurrent or acute problems are not solved, the stress process is seen as promoting a susceptibility to disequilibrium that contributes to the onset of disease, psychopathology, and/or social deviance.

The concept of *modernization* has also encountered difficulties, and has been justly criticized for implying a unilineal progression from a traditional base to a monolithic notion of contemporary, urbanized, Western society. Its usage frequently has been in the intellectual tradition of classical evolutionism, with "traditional" substituted for "savagery" and/or "barbarism," and "modern society" for "civilization," and it is subject to all the criticisms that brought on the demise of that paradigm. Earlier generations of anthropologists used the term *acculturation* to refer to the cultural (as distinguished from the material) changes experienced by a population encountering the various agencies of modern Western societies, but that concept, too, with its implications of lineal transformation from one single base line culture toward another, has proved overly simplistic. Indeed, one of the lessons we have learned by extensive examination of populations undergoing change is that responses are highly diversified within as well as between cultures. Cultural contact almost invariably produces, over a period of time, a myriad of new possibilities for most of the individuals it engages, just as it generates new problems. For this reason I prefer the concept of *cultural diversification* to refer to the processes of relevance to Samoan coping behavior. I originally used this concept to deal with responses to changes affecting Hawaiian-Americans (Howard 1974), and the same rationale holds for contemporary Samoans. To paraphrase the argument:

The viewpoint is based on an assumption that contemporary Samoans represent a collectivity of individuals attempting to cope with an increasingly complex milieu. Their world is no simple mix of things Samoan and Western. At one level their world is dominated by legal, political, occupational, and educational institutions imposed by the prevailing American (or in the case of Western Samoa, New Zealand) social system, albeit with modifications of a particularly Samoan nature. At another level Samoans are affected by the cultural prescriptions of *fa'aSamoa*, and by the norms generated within local communities, within work groups, and extended families. These relate to ways of speaking, using time and space, and behaving toward various categories of people, and they influence the organization of daily routines. Local norms differ from community to community, and may or may not be compatible with Western expectations. Some are derivative from earlier forms of Samoan culture, some are amalgamations of several traditions, while still others are innovative adaptations to new circumstances, including the problems posed by change itself. The point is that Samoans face a wider range of problems than did their ancestors, and they have at their disposal a greater range of cultural options to deal with them. In short, cultural diversification has the advantage of including all those processes by which cultural repertoires are expanded, whether or not they are associated with particular historical traditions. (Adapted from Howard 1974:83-84)

Cultural diversification entails, for Samoans as well as for Hawaiian-Americans, an expansion of both problems and problem-solving techniques, or *coping strategies*, as we shall refer to them. The basic framework for examining "problems" within the context of stress research derives from studies of stressful life events (Kaplan et al. 1983). The underlying premise is that a life change produces a disequilibrium that imposes a period of readjustment, during which the individual is more vulnerable to stress and its consequences (Kessler et al. 1985:533). Work on stressful life events has been facilitated by the Social Adjustment Rating Scale (see Chapter 8 for a discussion of Samoan responses). Although it was initially presumed that any life change, whether positive or negative, increased the probability of illness, and that effects were general rather than specific [i.e., not predictive of a particular illness (Homes and Rahe 1967)], recent research suggests that such features as undesirability, magnitude, time clustering, and uncontrollability are crucial to the relationship between life events and pathology (Thoits 1983; Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend 1981). This framework is of theoretical import for coming to grips with the health implications of stress among Samoans, particularly insofar as it involves migration. A move to a new environment, and especially to New Zealand, Hawaii, or the U.S. mainland, generally involves several significant life changes, either simultaneously or in quick succession. It ordinarily involves changes in household composition, work, finances, eating habits, and recreational activities, to name a few. But these rather distinct "events" by no means

exhaust the potential stress involved in relocation. Chronic stress, in the form of "daily hassles" (Kanner et al. 1981) may take an even greater toll. For Samoans, as with other struggling immigrants, solving problems on a daily basis in a strange linguistic and cultural environment can take a great deal of energy and many resources. At the very least these daily hassles can be expected to exacerbate the effects of life events (Pearlin et al. 1981, Brown and Harris 1978).

Another line of stress research has emphasized the psychological characteristics of individuals as opposed to external conditions. Interest in this approach has been greatly enhanced by the attention given to the so-called *type A*, or *coronary-prone, syndrome*. The characteristics at the center of the syndrome are generally considered to be an exaggerated sense of time compression, competitive achievement striving, aggressiveness, and hostility. Research by Glass (1977) strongly suggests that two response factors are of particular importance in linking these characteristics to physiological indicators of stress, namely personal control and anger arousal. Thus Glass found that it was not simply that type A persons were inherently more aggressive than type B persons, but that they became so in response to a specific set of circumstances that threatened their sense of mastery (1977:70). This implies that coronary-prone individuals are more subject to anger arousal in response to frustration. Although one would not expect Samoans—particularly rural Samoans—to show type A personality characteristics [although they do show up with modest frequency in questionnaire data¹ (Graves et al. 1983)], there is good reason to believe that they experience heightened emotional arousal and threats to their sense of control in new environments. Indeed, violent outbursts are well documented among Samoans and have become a central part of their ethnic stereotype.

It is generally agreed that a variety of additional psychosocial factors implicate vulnerability to stress. Resources ranging from financial means to communication skills have been documented as mitigating variables. Commonly included are such assets as cognitive flexibility, social support, and effective coping strategies (Haan 1982).

Cognitive flexibility is considered to be an asset because it allows individuals to consider a range of alternative solutions to a problem rather than relying strictly on past procedures. It is associated with novel problem-solving behavior as well as the capacity to readjust one's mental program to fit new circumstances. Individuals lacking in cognitive flexibility are presumed to be effective problem solvers as long as conditions are congruent with those in which they were initially socialized, but they are expected to experience more acute difficulties when conditions change.

Perhaps the variable that has received the most attention over the past few years has been social support, "a term that has been widely used to refer to the mechanisms by which interpersonal relationships presumably protect people from the deleterious effects of stress" (Kessler et al.

1985:541). Among the benefits attributed to social support have been access to the expression of positive affect or emotional support, to expressions of agreement with a person's beliefs and feelings, to advice and information, to sympathetic listeners and to material aid in times of hardship (House 1981). The initial enthusiasm that permeated the literature on social support in the 1970s has been dampened somewhat by a growing awareness of the complexities involved. For example, recent evidence suggests that low-density networks characterized by weak ties can aid adaptive strivings more than high-density networks under some circumstances (Hirsch 1980, 1979). There is also accumulating evidence that different types of support have different effects and are associated with differential outcomes (Cohen and McKay 1984; House and Kahn 1984). Other complications include the possibility of being enmeshed in networks of relationships that are partially supportive but also involve a good deal of negative affect, which may add to the strains of adaptation. Furthermore, received support is generally offset by the obligation to provide it, and for some the burden of obligations may outweigh the benefits accrued. As we shall see, the evidence for Samoans is mixed. Group support clearly plays an important role in the adaptation of Samoan immigrants to the United States and New Zealand, but there is just as clearly a price to be paid.

The concept of coping has also received a good deal of attention in recent years. The earlier emphasis on coping behavior has yielded to a greater concern for cognition, although most definitions retain both a behavioral and cognitive aspect. Thus, Kessler et al. define coping as "the cognitive and behavioral effort made to master, tolerate, or reduce demands that tax or exceed a person's resources" (1985:550; Cohen and Lazarus 1979; Pearlin and Schooler 1978). The emphasis is on the active role individuals play in structuring the world around them and in managing resources when responding to adaptive problems.

Coping strategies can be categorized in a wide variety of ways, and although no typology is generally agreed upon, Pearlin and Schooler (1978) list three dimensions common to most: altering the problem directly, changing one's way of viewing the problem, and managing emotional stress aroused by the problem. A wide variety of coping strategies have been identified, including assertive problem solving; tension reduction through exercise, humor, crying, drinking, drugs, etc.; engaging in diversions; aggressively attacking frustrating persons or obstacles, and so on. Of special concern for our purposes is the degree to which individuals attempt to cope in a self-reliant versus an other-reliant manner. As we shall see, Samoan culture places a heavy emphasis on familial and communal obligations, and encourages group efforts at problem identification and resolution. Since this is often seen as being at odds with the demands of life in the modern world, the tension between self- and other-reliant coping strategies has been a focal point for research on Samoan adaptation to new environments.

It is my intention to summarize the findings on Samoan coping strategies from a variety of sources, including the studies being reported on in this volume and previously published literature. The discussion is divided into two major segments. The first deals with aspects of Samoan culture that have a bearing on coping styles and factors associated with successes and failures of coping. The second segment concerns Samoan responses to specific kinds of life events, particularly those associated with urbanization and emigration. My focus will be on adaptive problems associated with work and economic demands; crises, including illness; and the management of anger

COPING SAMOAN STYLE

To begin our discussion of Samoan coping style let us examine the literature dealing with Samoan personality. Of particular concern will be cognitive styles, emotional patterning, self-esteem, and sense of control, since these aspects of personality directly implicate coping behavior

Cognitive styles

Given the Samoan emphasis in child-rearing on obedience to adult authority (Chapter 7), the heavy emphasis on ritualization and the overall weight of tradition on social life, one might expect individuals to develop an alloplastic cognitive structure, that is, one that cannot easily be altered to accommodate unusual experiences or observations contrary to those previously made and incorporated. This in turn might be seen as an impediment to learning new coping skills in new environments (Howard 1966).²

Although I know of no data sets that directly measure Samoan cognitive styles, the personality data that are available suggest that the learning milieu in traditional Samoan settings in fact favors an alloplastic cognitive style. Thus Torrence (1962), using both verbal and nonverbal tests with a sample of 1000 Western Samoan school children, found them to rank lowest in original thought when compared with similar samples for Australia, Germany, India, and southern blacks. He attributed low creativity among Samoans to four specific cultural values: (1) an emphasis on remembering well, (2) an acceptance of authority hierarchies, (3) submission, and (4) doing nothing until told. The inference one might draw from these data is that Samoans can be expected to experience a good deal of adaptive strain when attempting to meet the demands of a new environment. We must be cautious about making such an inference, however, since the primary strategy Samoans use to cope with adaptive requirements, and the stresses and strains they induce, is social rather than psychological.

Social support

In concluding their review of personality data on Samoans, Holmes et al. (1978) present the following image:

The picture that all these studies present is essentially similar, and there is consistency through time. It reveals the Samoans as a people valuing order in things familial and ceremonial, with a great tendency toward mutual aid and support, especially when directed toward family or other members of the in-group. There is a strong tendency to conform to the will of the group and to reject opportunities for leadership or personal gain. Samoans are tenacious and conservative. They do not value personal autonomy, personal achievement, or being the center of attention. They are not an aggressive people, nor are they particularly sensual or creative, and, just to throw in one man's opinion [Maxwell 1969], they are extremely extroverted. (Holmes et al. 1978:470)

This composite image is based on the work of some 15 students of personality utilizing a broad range of methods, including folklore and literature analysis; projective, verbal and nonverbal testing; observation and interviewing; controlled laboratory observation; personality inventories and value schedule analysis, among others (Holmes et al. 1978:453). The overwhelming emphasis on social relations in this "personality" portrait has been affirmed by ethnographers and sociologists. Mead, for example, wrote that: "The dominant note in Samoan society is its prevailing social emphasis. All of a Samoan's interest, all of his emotion, is centered upon his relationship to his fellows within an elaborate and cherished social pattern" (1969:80).

Social strategies based on kinship rights and obligations and reciprocal exchange are the primary means by which Samoans cope with problems. Furthermore, in many instances it is the family group rather than the individual that formulates strategies. This is often the case when it comes to decisions to migrate, particularly for women (Shankman 1976). Thus Graves et al. (1983) report that only half of the men and 16 percent of the women in their New Zealand sample claimed to have made the decision to migrate mainly by themselves. Their informants asserted that it is particularly common for families to send their single daughters to New Zealand because they are considered more likely than sons to send remittances back home. The financial exigencies involved in migrating make it very difficult for an individual to go it alone, and over three-fourths of the Samoans in Graves' sample reported that their fares were paid mainly by their families (Graves et al. 1983:14).

Family-oriented decision making may be seen as a reflection of the Samoan preoccupation with status in the traditional mold, in which honor is a familial responsibility. Parents and family elders typically scrape enough money together to send promising youngsters abroad so that they

can get a well-paying job and send remittances back home. Younger ones might be sent abroad in order to get better quality educations. When remittances are sent home they are likely to be invested in conspicuous generosity, especially in lavish gifts to the local church and to community projects, which enhances the family's status. Concerning the centrality of the family to Samoan social life Fay and Vaiao Ala'ilima (1968) have written:

It is difficult for someone steeped in Western individualism to grasp the Samoan idea that the smallest political unit is a family group. The family is regarded not as a plurality of individual opinions, but as a single political organism. True, it may have internal parts: its old people providing experience, its young people acting as arms and legs, and its chief being the central brain for formulating decisions. The strength of such a body depends, however, not on individual rights but on how effectively these organs perform their different functions collectively. Any glory gained by the family is shared equally by all.

the organic family concept means that decisions about community affairs are left to family chiefs with little resentment by other members. The arms and legs simply assume that the brain will operate on behalf of them all. A Samoan adolescent was recently asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" He answered without hesitation, "My chief has decided I shall be a pastor." Probing for signs of adolescent rebellion, the interrogator continued, "Yes, but what would you like to be yourself?" The boy acted surprised and confused. He couldn't say, not because he felt suppressed by his chief but because he had not thought of this as his individual decision before. Unlike a Western adolescent he did not sharply dissociate his personal opinion from that of his family on the matter. In some ways a Samoan boy may be freer than a Western boy. Chiefs are notably tolerant of the dress, social activities, and personal habits of their young men; but only so long as these do not affect the strength or public image of the group. When it comes to defending family reputation, position, and interests, traditional chiefs are expected to direct and their families to obey (1968:13-14)

Self-esteem, an important variable frequently mentioned in the coping literature, is for Samoans therefore closely tied to their position in their family and their family's position in the broader Samoan community. To become the matai of a well-respected family, to hold a prestigious title, are nearly universal goals for Samoan men. Women contribute to their family's honor by supporting their husband's and son's ambitions, and by demonstrating social competence in their own right. Thus it is important to recognize that the way in which a Samoan is located socially, quite beyond the usual indicators of socioeconomic status (occupation, education, residence, etc.), is of considerable consequence for understanding his or her vulnerabilities and coping potential. Families, and to a lesser extent neighbors and church congregations, not only provide material resources

for coping, they are a continuing source of psychosocial resources (although there are costs involved as well, as we shall see).

The management of anger

This now brings us to the issues of emotional arousal and control. The Samoan cultural paradigm places a considerable emphasis on the constraint of impulse. Indeed, the social control of personal action is at the core of the Samoan notion of culture:

When Samoans speak or sing about *aganu'u* or "culture" they stress those aspects of social life associated with dignity and respectful deference. In the Samoan sense of the term, then, culture excludes aggression, competition, and the unrestrained expression of personal impulses. Those aspects of experience, part of the natural order of things, are not, in themselves, cultural facts for Samoans. In its Samoan sense culture is control and the social institutions and understandings which are associated with control. (Shore 1977:410)

Yet most observers have commented on the extent of violence in Samoa, in contrast to the social norms. Freeman (1983), in his refutation of Mead's ethnography, documents high rates of assault, rape, murder, and other forms of aggression in the Samoas, but he is by no means the first anthropologist to challenge Mead's idyllic portrayal. For example, Robert Maxwell reported that during his relatively short period of field work a total of 30 of the 52 men in his village sample were involved in one or more fights (Maxwell 1969:223). Furthermore, it is the intensity of aggression that has often caught the attention of observers (see, for example, Lemert 1964:371).

In answer to the question, Why are Samoans aggressive? Keene (1978) looks to both child-rearing practices and frustrations generated by social patterns. He notes that in Samoa the expression of aggression is not regulated by family rules but rather is heavily punished. If a child's behavior is irritating to an adult, the child will be slapped or spanked. No explanation is given to the child, so any rules that underlie the punishment are obscure and implicit. In addition to frequent use of corporal punishment, Samoan parents often follow it with displays of affection, presumably to communicate to the child that he or she is loved and wanted in spite of the punishment. The overall effect, according to Keene, is that parents provide aggressive models. They generate high levels of anger through frequent and severe punishment, and they link pain and love, violence and pleasure in the child's mind [for an excellent description of parent/child relations in Samoa, see Gerber (1975)].

In addition to frustrations imposed by the shift from an indulgent infancy to a punitive childhood, Keene maintains that the requirement of sharing is a continuing source of frustration to Samoans. Thus, there are

many times when an individual is forced by custom to give up things he may want for himself or his family. It is also likely, he suggests, that the cultural requirement that aggressive feelings must not be expressed serves to intensify the hostile emotions engendered by the system of child rearing. The strict rules discouraging displays of hostility are such that there is little opportunity to vent hostility short of fighting. It therefore seems that in contrast to the Tahitian case, where redundant controls in conjunction with a gentle child-rearing strategy serve to produce a gentle character (Levy 1978), in Samoa powerful external controls have a pressure-cooker effect.

Shore (1982) reports that Samoans themselves attribute controlled behavior to external social constraints, while uncontrolled behavior is associated with the failure of self-control over personal desire. They tend to see their own anger as leading to tantrums and going wild.

In order to understand the character of Samoan aggression one must also take into account social structural principles. As has been pointed out, Samoa is highly politicalized in the sense that striving for status is a continuous preoccupation. Challenges to status are threats to self-esteem and to the esteem of one's family members, and it is expected that these challenges will be vigorously met. What is significant here is that the cultural apparatus oriented toward controlling anger and aggression requires clarity of status differences, on the unambiguous complementarity of junior and senior. In his incisive analysis of conflict in Samoa, Shore (1982, Chapter 11) shows that the flash points involve relationships that include structural ambiguities or contradiction, such that status differentials are uncertain. It is not simply a matter of young men, among whom most of the violence occurs, being less in control of their emotions. They are also in a position of considerable status ambiguity, so that the effects of social controls are seriously dampened.

As we shall see, the relationship between social and personal controls is of considerable significance for understanding behavioral and psychological responses to urbanization and migration to new environments, particularly where traditional social controls are inoperative or severely limited in their effectiveness.

PROBLEMS AND RESPONSES

As Harbison points out in Chapter 4, migration has played an important role as an adaptive strategy for Samoans in a context of high fertility, low mortality, and limited natural resources. As an aggregate strategy it has the advantage of drawing off surplus labor and increasing foreign exchange through remittances, although it has the disadvantage of increasing the dependency ratio, thus creating a greater burden for the productive individuals who remain. As a family strategy—and it is clear that emigration is, for the most part, a family rather than individual

decision—migration is a means of expanding the group's access to varied resources, including new labor markets.

In order to highlight Samoan coping strategies in the context of the resulting diversification, I will focus on studies of Samoans abroad, in New Zealand and the United States. This is not to imply that life within the Samoas is without stress. In fact there are good indications, including an alarming increase in suicides (discussed below), that it may be stressful indeed (see Chapters 9 and 15). But whatever adaptive problems confront Samoans in the villages, or in Apia and Pago Pago, they are present in more extreme forms abroad, and hence provide more acute insights into coping strategies.

Samoan migrants to New Zealand and the United States face all of the disadvantages of immigrants from nonindustrialized countries, and then some. Language is often a problem, making it difficult to conduct the normal business of daily life outside the household;³ discrimination based on negative ethnic stereotypes can be a problem that undermines self-esteem; the scarcity of familiar food requires changes in eating habits; in New Zealand and on the U.S. mainland cold weather requires adaptive adjustments; and given the large size of most Samoan families, the burden of dependent children often adds to financial problems. On a more general level, those Samoans who come directly from rural villages have simply had little training for, or experience with, urban life. What they do have, however, in almost every instance, are relatives to rely on.

Housing

The initial problem most migrants confront is housing, and the dominant coping strategy is simple—stay with a relative until one can establish one's own residence. In the United States an exceptionally high proportion of Samoans reside in public and low-income housing. The demand for such housing remains strong and results in long waiting periods; it also contributes to crowding. According to the 1980 census, Samoans are reported as having the highest median number of persons of any ethnic group in the United States. For renter-occupied housing units the U.S. median is 1.99 persons per dwelling; for Samoans the median is 4.23 persons (U.S. Dept. of Labor 1984:81).

In their New Zealand sample, Graves et al. found that the average migrant lives with relatives for between 2 and 3 years, with only a few (5-10%) able to find their own place in less than two months.⁴ The situation in other overseas communities is essentially the same, although the time frames may vary according to local circumstances.⁵ This arrangement has, of course, both advantages and disadvantages for new migrants and their host households. For the new immigrant the accommodating household generally provides a supportive group of relatives who know the ropes and can assist in solving the basic problems of adjustment. They can steer the new arrival through appropriate

channels, can assist in finding employment, and can provide material support until the person is able to pull his or her own weight. For the accommodating household providing aid is a means of expanding the local network of kinsmen that can be relied upon when needs arise, since the provision of a place to stay imposes strong obligations on the recipient to comply with future requests for assistance. If the new immigrant is able to find gainful employment shortly after arrival, the returns to the household may be more immediate, in the form of contributions to family income. On the debit side, households are under pressure to accept a broad range of relatives, including those who are likely to be troublesome and unproductive, resulting in an additional burden on household resources. For the ambitious newcomer the obligation of submitting completely to the authority of the household head, and turning over one's paycheck, may be a heavy price to pay.

Employment and economic problems

Kinsmen also play a dominant role in finding employment for new migrants. It is expected that all able-bodied men will get a job as soon as possible so that they can begin to contribute to family expenses, to engage in reciprocal exchanges, and send remittances back home. The situation for women is somewhat more variable, since some are expected to contribute in domestic rather than wage-earning roles.⁶ Since most immigrants arrive with minimal skills, and without prior experience in the kinds of jobs available, they are likely to be limited to a somewhat small segment of the labor market. They are also less likely to have job-hunting skills, and so must rely on relatives who have already established themselves. In formal situations such as job interviews Samoan etiquette calls for lowering one's head and avoiding eye contact. Initiative is to be left in the hands of the interviewer, and questions answered softly and deferentially. Unfortunately, these displays of respect are often perceived as signs of apathy by prospective employers [see Shore and Platt (1984) for a discussion of communication problems related to Samoan employment].

The job markets vary from place to place, as do the regulations governing immigration and employment. Whereas immigration to the United States is unrestricted for American Samoans, Western Samoans going to New Zealand are required not only to arrange housing in advance, they must also present proof of guaranteed employment. Unemployment is therefore not much of a problem for Samoans in New Zealand, whereas it can be in the United States.

The U.S. census data for 1980 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983a) shows 9.7 percent of all Samoans in the labor force to be unemployed, with rates slightly higher for females than males. The unemployment rates are 81 percent higher for Samoan males, and 51 percent higher for Samoan females than for the U.S. population as a whole (U.S. Dept. of

Labor 1984:59). In Hawaii the percentage of unemployed Samoans in the civilian labor force is by far the highest of any ethnic group (Franco 1984:23). The unemployment rates for youths ages 16 to 19 are particularly severe, reaching over twice the state average in California (U.S. Dept. of Labor 1984:60). Furthermore, as a consequence of both unemployment and the low-paying jobs that are available, Samoan per capita income is among the lowest in the United States, trailed only by the Vietnamese. Using standardized indices of poverty, the census data show 29.5 percent of Samoans to be below the poverty line compared to 12.4 percent of the population as a whole, with 19.6 percent living in "extreme poverty" (below 75% of poverty level) compared with 8.3 percent of the total U.S. population (U.S. Dept. of Labor 1984:42).

Research by Pitt and Macpherson (1974), and by Graves et al. (1985, 1983, 1981, 1977) in New Zealand provides a good indication of the importance of the 'aiga in economic matters, from obtaining a job to establishing economic viability. The Graves distinguished between three types of adaptive strategies, which they labeled kin-reliance, peer-reliance, and self-reliance, and developed questionnaires to measure them. They then interviewed substantial numbers of Samoans, Cook Islanders, Maoris, and Pakehas (European New Zealanders). They found the Polynesians, and particularly the Samoans, to be higher than the Europeans on 13 of 15 measures of kin-reliance. The results were significant at the .001 level (Graves et al. 1983:44).

The kin-reliant strategy shows up clearly in obtaining employment, and particularly first employment. Thus, 66 percent of the Pacific island immigrants (including Samoans) in the Graves sample obtained their first job through a relative, compared with 47 percent of New Zealand-educated Polynesians (also including Samoans) and 43 percent of European New Zealanders. When "present job" was the subject of inquiry the figure fell to 35 percent, which was comparable with New Zealand-educated Polynesians, but still well above the 20 percent of Europeans who were kin-reliant. Pitt and Macpherson (1974), using a different data base, found that 44.8 percent of Samoan immigrants who responded to their inquiry located their first job through relatives, 11.7 percent went through a friend, and 2.3 percent used the church. The remaining 41.1 percent either answered advertisements (19.7%), went through the Samoan or New Zealand governments (13.7%), or looked for jobs on their own (7.7%).

Pitt and Macpherson (1974) note that Samoan job stability has been high in New Zealand, and that this is related to adaptive strategies. They found that the majority of migrants in their sample had had only one job since arriving in New Zealand, and that the pattern was one of short periods in various jobs until one found a "good" job. The notion of a good job begins with relatively high take-home pay, with less concern for working hours, job satisfaction, or status. According to these authors:

This attitude toward jobs has also been noticed by employers and the Chief Employment Officer in the Auckland office of their Department of Labour, who said that cutbacks in overtime lead to job changes and the restoration of overtime to the return of those who had left.

This emphasis on immediate earnings may be partly explained by the support patterns in which migrants are involved. A migrant's earnings must support his nuclear family, contribute to the support of the kin group in Samoa, and also to other expenses incurred within the family group—such as the fares of other migrants from Samoa. To do all this a migrant needs a good deal of money. Migrants are well aware of the variation in hourly rates of pay but they reason that industries with high hourly rates and relatively frequent rises are often prone to industrial unrest and stoppages. Thus small hourly raises may be achieved at the expense of major losses of immediate income.

This emphasis on take-home earnings also explains why few migrants, even those with the necessary educational qualifications, take clerical and other white-collar positions. It appears that, initially at least, they prefer jobs that offer higher pay even at the expense of a possible gain in status. This preference explains why only 4.4 percent of the total work force is employed in commercial and retail-clerical occupations. (Pitt and MacPherson 1974:82)

Other criteria that affect a job's desirability are the opportunities it presents for obtaining work guarantees for intending migrants and for providing employment for Samoans already in New Zealand who want to change their jobs. As Pitt and Macpherson point out, the best chances exist in industries with high labor turnover, both because job opportunities frequently occur and because the stability of Samoan labor is appreciated. An important result of this process is that work units in selected industries come to consist of groups of relatives and friends. The opportunity to work with other Samoans acts as an additional buffer for new migrants, especially if they have initial language difficulties. Although problems are encountered in new work situations, particularly with regard to adjusting to a quite different mode of giving and receiving instructions, asking questions, and other information processing procedures, Samoans seem to adapt well to initial confusions. They tend to avoid confrontations whenever possible, and to passively accept authority in most circumstances (Graves and Graves 1977; Pitt and Macpherson 1974:88-98).

Franco (1985a) found somewhat different attitudes prevailing among younger Samoan immigrants to Hawaii. Whereas older Samoans were described by his informants as willing to take any kind of employment, younger ones were described as desiring white collar jobs. Informants also made a distinction between Western Samoans, whom they perceived as more committed to "making it" in the Hawaiian job market, and

American Samoans, whom they perceived as more casual about employment. They ascribed this difference to the economic backwardness of Western Samoa and the lack of career opportunities there. Franco also found that Samoans in Hawaii respond enthusiastically to jobs that offer periodic advancement and other forms of recognition, while they become discouraged and indifferent to jobs that do not. Significantly, they see work under the former conditions in much the same terms (*tautua*, or "service") they see work for a matai. In the traditional system *tautua* is the path to chieftainship. In contrast, jobs where mobility is blocked and recognition not forthcoming are considered to be merely work (*galue*); they elicit little commitment and are readily dropped.

Although circumstances differ in Hawaii and in various U.S. mainland communities, the general reliance on kin networks, and to a lesser extent on friends, is pronounced everywhere among new Samoan immigrants. With time, however, increasing proportions of the immigrant population move toward a self-reliant adaptive strategy. Thus in the Graves sample of Pacific island immigrants, whereas only 27 percent obtained their first job by themselves, 51 percent got their present job without help from kinsmen or friends (Graves et al. 1980:203). Among Polynesian men, whom they consider to be the major determiners of what strategy will be followed by their families, the Graves found a strong positive correlation ($r = .27$) between length of time in New Zealand and self-reliant scores (Graves et al. 1983:44).

COPING WITH ILLNESS AND CRISES

The ways in which Samoans deal with illness have been a cause of consternation among Western health practitioners, who typically perceive them as only seeking modern medical treatment as a final resort. Clinicians express particular consternation when children are involved, whom they see "as helpless victims of parental unconcern and who often suffer from diseases whose course responds well to early intervention with appropriate therapy" (Cook 1983:138).

There appear to be two sets of reasons for this behavior. One focuses on Samoans' experience with Western medical personnel, which is often negative from the Samoan viewpoint. The other set of reasons is based on the fact that there are alternatives to Western medicine that are institutionalized within Samoan culture.

For an immigrant Samoan, going to a medical clinic, hospital emergency room, or comparable facility can be an exercise in frustration. Aside from language problems that may severely impair communication, the impersonality of the procedures, combined with intrusive questioning about medical histories, is a disquieting occurrence. Often nurses and doctors themselves are under pressure and reveal an impatience that aggravates communication problems, and it is not uncommon for parents

who bring children with advanced conditions to be directly rebuked. The characteristic Polynesian response to these experiences is avoidance. Avoidance both reduces the embarrassment and shame experienced in such encounters and minimizes anger toward authority figures that cannot be adequately expressed.⁷

Equally important is the alternative system of health care that has been retained with considerable vigor, even among overseas migrants. Aspects of Samoan practices have been described by McCuddin (1974), Kinloch (1980) and Cook (1983), and I will not dwell on them here. For our purposes what is important is that all agree that Samoans retain confidence in traditional practices and include them, along with Western medicine, in their repertoire of responses to illness. The question is thus what determines how much priority different individuals give to "traditional" or "modern" practices in their hierarchy of resort. Variations in response patterns depend upon a number of factors, including the family diagnosis of the problem (what kind of illness it is, how severe the symptoms are, etc.), past histories of such ailments within the family, the advice of respected relatives and friends, the relative availability, and expense of various kinds of healers and facilities, and so on.

Not surprisingly, in view of everything else we have learned about Samoan culture, illnesses are regarded as family problems first and foremost. For this reason Samoans are often reluctant to bring problems to the attention of outsiders until they are convinced they cannot be solved within the family (Kinloch 1980:25). Reinforcing the tendency to rely on family remedies is the Samoan (and widely shared Polynesian) theory of illness, which stresses behavioral factors as causal. The central notion is that one's "life essence" (*to'oala*) has been displaced from its normal location in the upper abdomen to various parts of the body where it may induce pain and other symptoms. What causes the *to'oala* to move are occurrences, and especially behaviors, that disrupt the normal order of things. They may include working too much, getting too little sleep, eating the wrong kinds of foods, and most seriously of all, acting immorally or in ways to disrupt interpersonal relations within the family. Among the more provocative offenses are failing to carry out one's family responsibilities properly, disobeying an authority figure or God's laws, and disrespectful behavior toward kinsmen and ancestors (Cook 1983:140).

The general healing principle this notion of causation entails is that the patient can be brought back to normal by the application of behavioral or physical opposites. Thus, if overwork is seen as the cause of an illness, rest is prescribed; a fever is treated by rubbing the patient with leaves dipped in cool water; and a chest cold attributed to exposure is dealt with by using Vick's Vaporub and wrapping the victim's chest in cloth. The most prevalent treatment, however, and the one that usually initiates the healing process, is massage, usually performed by an older family member. The idea behind this is that massage functions to put back into place, by directional stroking, the *to'oala* of the patient (Cook 1983:140;

McCuddin 1974:7). If an illness persists, and does not respond to home treatments, the patient may be brought to a clinic, hospital, or physician, or alternatively, to a Samoan specialist.

The literature suggests a pragmatic, but somewhat impatient approach when it comes to healers. If the condition does not respond to treatment quickly the prescribed regime may be dropped and alternative treatments sought. If the condition continues for a long period, or grows worse, this is often taken as a sign that something is wrong within the family and a family meeting is held to determine the probable cause. Anyone bearing grudges, or having a grievance against other family members, is expected to air their feelings and amidst confessions, apologies, and prayers to work toward reestablishing family harmony.⁸

Quite aside from the relative merits or hazards of Samoan views toward illness and treatment (and there are cases to be made in both directions), their beliefs provide them with an alternative coping strategy in the face of an impersonal and anxiety-provoking Western medical system. Their beliefs not only give them a sense of control over most ailments, by making them comprehensible and manageable, but they also act to strengthen family solidarity, and thus reinforce the dominant coping mechanism of kin-reliance.

The importance of kin-reliance as a coping strategy for dealing with acute crises is clearly manifest in Ablon's reports of Samoan reactions to a disastrous fire (Ablon 1973, 1971a). The fire occurred in a church social hall in San Francisco in 1964, killing 17 Samoans and severely burning many others. Attending physicians in hospitals remarked about the stoicism with which both the burn victims and their relatives accepted the event, in marked contrast to typical American responses. Those who provided long-term care described their patients as "stalwart and uncomplaining, no matter the seriousness of their burns" (Ablon 1973:170). The only complaint was that some patients did not follow instructions for self-care after leaving the hospital.

The Samoans Ablon interviewed 5 years later explained their ability to absorb such disasters as a result of the Samoan proclivity for hard work and their deep, fatalistic religious beliefs. They spoke of themselves as strong and able to take the inevitable hardships of life without complaint. Ablon, however, emphasizes the importance of family and community support, which, she comments, "may be more apparent to the non-Samoan observer than to the Samoan who takes for granted the extraordinary emotional, social, and financial support offered by the Samoan extended family and the larger Samoan community" (Ablon 1973:177). The evidence for such support in her interview material is overwhelming.

COPING WITH ANGER

We have already commented on the contradictions that appear in the literature on Samoa concerning aggression. On the one hand is Mead's

idyllic image of Samoans as gentle and emotionally bland; on the other is Freeman's portrayal of them as among the most aggressive people in the world. As we pointed out, social context is a critical factor in understanding the nature of aggression in Samoa. In this section we are concerned with the implications of cultural diversification for the management of anger and aggression. If Shore (1983) and others are correct, and controls depend upon well-defined cultural principles and the clarity of social contexts, then one would expect the management of anger and aggression to become a more acute problem as the Samoans are drawn more fully into the modern world system. The same should hold true for migrants to New Zealand and the United States, and in fact the available information suggests that this is indeed the case.

Data on mortality and suicide within Samoa (Chapter 5; Bowles 1985; Macpherson and Macpherson 1985; Oliver 1985) indicate that violence to others and self has increased in recent years, presumably in response to "modernizing" influences. In American Samoa the rate of recorded homicides and suicides, while variable from year to year, appear to show a marked upswing since the 1970s, with both rates at 25 per 100 000 during 1980 (Chapter 5, Table 5.10). Age-specific rates for young men would be considerably higher, since women and older men are involved to a much lesser extent in such events.

There are, of course, problems with the official vital statistics records. Careful inquiry on a case-by-case basis suggests that violent deaths are considerably underreported. For example, in Western Samoa the official statistical abstracts list only four suicides for the years 1980-1982, whereas Bowles, working from inquest records, determined that 122 cases could reasonably be classified as suicide over the same period (Bowles 1985; Macpherson and Macpherson 1985:70). Bowles' data show a steady increase from 1970 (6 suicides) to 1981 (49 suicides) (see Table 16.1). While the suicide rate for the total population, based on Bowles's information, stands at 22.6 per 100 000 for the years 1981-1983, for males 14-24 they are 71.0 and for males 25-34 they are 75.6 (Bowles

Table 16.1 Suicide Rates for Western Samoa, 1981-1983 Average per 100 000

	Population	Deaths	Rate
Total population	156 349	106/3	22.6
Total males	81 027	76/3	31.3
Males 15-24	18 787	40/3	71.0
Males 25-34	8380	19/3	75.6
Total females	75 322	30/3	13.3
Females 15-24	19 570	21/3	35.8
Females 24-34	8155	5/3	20.4

Source: From Bowles 1985:23.

1985:23). During the peak year 1981, the suicide rate for males in the 25-34 age group reached 167 per 100 000. Furthermore, for every completed suicide there was evidence of an unsuccessful attempt (Bowles 1985:17). Clearly, such figures are of epidemic proportions.⁹

While comparable figures for suicide are not available for Samoans abroad, data on imprisonment in New Zealand and Hawaii indicate that Samoans are considerably overrepresented in prison populations (see, for example, Pitt and Macpherson 1974:108-112; State of Hawaii 1985). It is also the case that where they interact with other groups in urban environments Samoans are perceived as highly aggressive, and are known as quick-tempered brawlers (Gerber 1985). We must not be misled into generalizing about Samoans as crime-prone, since clearly the vast majority of Samoans are law-abiding. Furthermore, the likelihood that selective law enforcement, prosecution, conviction, and incarceration operates to the detriment of Samoans must be considered. Nevertheless, such statistics and stereotypes do raise questions that ought to be approached in a forthright manner, and since a high proportion of Samoan arrests appear to involve physical aggression, the ways in which Samoans manage anger would seem to be a place to look for explanations.

The first point that needs to be made is that when Samoans talk about emotions their attention is directed to interactions in which those emotions occur rather than to internal sensations (Gerber 1985, 1975). In other words, it is the social context that commands interest. With regard to anger, the ideal is expressed in the concept of *lotomama* (to be without anger), particularly in the face of a situation that might provoke it (Gerber 1985). When individuals do get angry, however, it is social context that plays the determining role in how it is, or is not, expressed. As pointed out earlier, within Samoa the flash points of aggression generally occur in situations where status differences are minimal or are ambiguous. Where clear hierarchy exists, expressions of anger are inhibited to extremely muted. The prototype of hierarchical relations are between parent and child, and as many observers have reported, there are no socially acceptable ways of directly expressing one's anger toward parents. There are, however, several terms that can be used to indicate covert angry responses to parental demands, including *augata* (laziness), *o'ono* (suppression of anger), *fiu* (fed up), and *musu* (reluctance) (Gerber 1985). Of these the most interesting is *musu*, since it has specifically been linked with suicide.

Pratt, a missionary who lived in Samoa between 1839 and 1879, noted that suicide is "mostly caused by anger within the family" (quoted in Macpherson and Macpherson 1985:36; see also Freeman 1983:220, 346). It is important to recognize, of course, that the term *family* refers to the extended family (*'aiga*), which for youths involves subordination to many adults. Concerning the situation of youth in Samoan society, Macpherson and Macpherson have written:

Samoa culture prescribes for adolescents a period in which they are expected to serve (*tautua*), not challenge, those who hold power over them. Adolescents are told that service is the path to power. [Samoa] culture allows youth to raise sources of dissatisfaction in the family provided that appropriate deference is shown to the person with whom the matter is raised. A young person must make it clear that he or she is grateful for the opportunity to raise a matter which it is not their right to do. By implication he or she accepts that any outcome is final since the opportunity to raise the matter is a privilege accorded them and not a matter of right.

A person who wishes to express continuing dissatisfaction with an outcome may become *musu*, in which state he or she becomes sullen and withdrawn; says very little to those around them; does no more than what they are told; and shows little interest in social life. In most cases one who is *musu* will treat a particular person with special disinterest to underscore the supposed source of their discontent. The Samoan concern with relationships and their maintenance leads those around the person concerned to attend to the source of the discontent. Where the matter is soluble gentle pressure is applied to both parties to move toward a compromise. Where an adult makes concessions care is taken to ensure that this is portrayed as generosity and not retreat. If a "reasonable" compromise is negotiated, but is not accepted by the young person, the sympathy for him or her is likely to wane quickly and is likely to be replaced with accusations of childishness (*fia pepe*), and immaturity (*le mafaukau*). The difficulty is that what mediators consider a "reasonable" compromise may not meet the expectations of the young person. In this situation the young person has three options, and their choice will be determined, at least to some extent, by their sense of injustice.

Where the matter involved is not a source of major annoyance the person may simply accept the suggestion that he or she forget the matter and be patient in the knowledge that his/her turn will come.

Where a matter is of more significance a young person may demonstrate his/her intensity of feeling by running away to another village. This is a symbolic rejection of the legitimacy of the authority of those in power.

If a person feels that a matter is of major importance and experiences an intense sense of dissatisfaction and injustice, he or she may be moved to an intense rage which both Gerber (1985) and Shore (1982) highlight in their accounts of Samoan emotion. The rage is said to "leap up" inside the person and take control. In that state people typically lash out, usually at inanimate objects with fists, knives, paddles and so on. A number of cases of suicide which we documented occurred during or shortly after a display of rage. (Macpherson and Macpherson 1985:56-58)

Indeed, after reviewing the inquest records on suicide Oliver determined that "The precipitating event in half of the cases was a scolding or rebuke; and in 55 percent of the cases the triggering agent was one of the parents of the victim" (Oliver 1985:76).

Oliver also found that the ratio of matai to commoners was particularly high in the four villages with the highest incidents of suicide (Oliver 1985:76), further pointing to the significance of authority relations for self-directed rage.

Macpherson and Macpherson hypothesize that the dramatic increase in the incidence of suicide within Western Samoa is the result of blocked social mobility.¹⁰ The combination of rapid population growth, an increase in the dependency ratio, and a stagnant economy, along with higher aspirations and a decline in the possibilities for emigration, wage employment, or advancement within the traditional status system has led, they conclude, to a stronger sense of relative deprivation and deepened sense of frustration (Macpherson and Macpherson 1985).

Although aggressive behavior among Samoan immigrants to the United States and New Zealand is almost legendary, there have been few careful studies of its nature. The typical speculation, exemplified by Gerber in the conclusion to her recent paper on rage and obligation, is that when Samoans migrate the structure of supports for authority, including parental authority, is eroded, leaving the burden of controls on the individual. But to the extent that the individual has been trained to rely on external authority and social submission, the appropriate channeling of underlying anger may not occur (Gerber 1985). The result is an increased variability in ways of handling anger (see Chapter 8 for examples) and a greater frequency of socially inappropriate outbursts of hostility. Other explanations stress the sensitivity of Samoans to slights to their social status, and their comparatively enormous body size (see Chapter 11), which presumably makes reliance on physical force a temptation when settling differences with non-Samoans.

While all this may be so, such explanations are not very satisfying. One would like to know more about the circumstances in which violence does occur, for again, it must be stressed, the vast majority of Samoans do not engage in such behavior. The study of Graves et al. (1981, 1983) on drinking and violence in New Zealand provides some valuable clues to the contextual nature of Samoan aggression in overseas environments. They found that even though relatively few Samoans admitted to being regular drinkers (41% of the men and 4% of the women, compared to 90% and 86% of European New Zealanders), the Samoans account for a disproportionate amount of pub violence. Graves et al. relate this to the strong group orientation of Samoan workers, since this leads them on the one hand to stay in pubs longer and consume more alcohol, and on the other to join in to help a friend or relative when he gets into a fight. They also found Samoans to be particularly sensitive to verbal assaults, and to move quickly from a verbal to a physical level of conflict. The fact that Samoan women do not drink means that male drinking takes place in settings, such as all-male pubs (rather than mixed lounge bars), where they are most likely to become engaged in fights.

The cumulative evidence makes it clear that the chief coping strategy

for Samoans is interpersonal. When problems arise it is rarely considered a matter for individuals to resolve for themselves, but involves the extended family at a minimum and often more distant kin and community. The question we now will address is what are the health implications of such a coping strategy, especially for Samoans abroad.

THE HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF SAMOAN COPING STRATEGIES

The fact is that perpetual involvement with kin networks can become enormously burdensome, especially for an upwardly mobile couple. The obligations of committing income to a broad range of relationships, or supporting the church, of sending remittances back home, make it difficult to save for investments in future socioeconomic advancements. In comparing the situational stressors to which Pacific island immigrants and European New Zealanders were exposed, the Graves found that although the levels of stress were comparable, they derived from different sources:

Polynesian subjects reported more stress in the area of money matters and kinship relationships: they are more likely to run out of money and receive a notice from a debt collector, and are more likely to have had relatives living with them or experience the death of someone close to them or the birth of a child. These situational stressors all follow from their large families and obligations to kinsmen, both financially and through hospitality, which put a strain on their resources even though their incomes are roughly comparable to their European neighbors. (Graves et al. 1983:37)

The implications of social involvement for health status are particularly interesting, but the results from existent studies are inconclusive. Thus, although Pawson and Janes (n.d.) found their measure of social support to correlate strongly and significantly with blood pressure in the expected direction among a sample of Samoans in California, other studies raise questions about the impact of social involvement on health. For example, among the Samoans in their New Zealand sample, the Graves found that for both men and women, kin-reliant and peer-reliant strategies are both associated with higher rates of reported health symptoms than those who emphasize self-reliant strategies. Furthermore, they found that the main factor responsible for this outcome is the commitment to "mutual aid." These results held only for the Samoan segment of their sample:

Only among Samoans is mutual aid strongly associated with more reported health symptoms ($r = .45$ and $.47$ for men and women, respectively). And only among Samoans is the number of friends and relatives within walking distance, the amount of money given to relatives, and the number of visits during the last two weeks (mainly with relatives and co-ethnics)

consistently associated with *more* reported health symptoms. In fact, among Cook Islanders and Europeans these relationships usually go in the *opposite* direction, though the magnitude of these correlations tends to be small. (Graves et al. 1983:45-46)

These findings are congruent with those of Hanna and Baker (1979; see also this volume Chapter 15) that Samoans residing in rural communities on Oahu in the State of Hawaii suffer from higher blood pressure than those residing in urban Honolulu. The rural residents are much more involved in a tightly knit Samoan community and are likely to be burdened with heavy social obligations. Martz et al. (1984) found that in their American Samoan sample high levels of community involvement are associated with intermediate stress levels as measured by overnight urinary hormone excretions. Those showing the most stress are the ones who are most self-reliant, while those showing the least stress have relatively modest levels of involvement with kin and community, but rely heavily on friendships for social support. This makes sense since friendships are voluntary relationships involving far less custom-laden obligations (see also Chapter 9, this volume). The evidence seems clear, then, that the predominant Samoan coping strategy—relying on kinsmen—is one that has costs as well as benefits.

CONCLUSIONS

Like all formerly rural populations who are in transition, Samoans are confronted with a myriad of adaptive problems. Foremost is the problem of making a living, of gaining access to resources so that they can maintain a life-style that they value. It is also important for Samoans to keep channels of mobility open, so that the interests of the family can be advanced. For Samoans social status, and particularly the prestige of the family, is a perpetual problem.

Overseas, Samoan immigrants are generally at a disadvantage as a result of language problems, inferior schooling, and lack of experience with cosmopolitan culture. Even within the Samoas there are indications that social mobility is increasingly blocked. As a result, Samoans are a population under stress.

Samoan coping styles are shaped to a considerable extent by the traditional culture. The resources they rely on to deal with problems are primarily social. They are not an entrepreneurial people, and their socialization emphasizes conformity to social convention rather than individual enterprise. As a result Samoans do not seem to rely on an array of personal qualities to solve problems or to deal with stress. There is little training for independent decision making, for imaginative problem solving, or for internalizing controls over behavior and emotion. Cognitive flexibility is not a particular strength.

It is apparent that, for the most part, the dominant strategy Samoans do use, reliance upon others in their extensive social networks, has served them well thus far. It has allowed them to explore a variety of possibilities at minimal cost, and has diffused the adaptive burdens they would have to bear as individuals going it alone. But there have also been costs, and it remains to be seen how well it will hold up in the long run.

It is certain that one consequence of cultural diversification will be that the next generation of Samoans will have more choice than their parents and grandparents had. They will have been less thoroughly socialized in the traditional Samoan style, and will have learned a greater variety of coping strategies. It will be interesting to compare the health of those who choose traditional family-oriented strategies, or modifications of them, with those who choose to adopt more "modern," individualized coping mechanisms.

NOTES

1. For example, in the Seven Village Study (discussed in Chapter 8) 47 percent of the men and 64 percent of the women interviewed reported often being bothered by a lack of time.

2. Alloplastic contrasts with autoplasic, which refers to a cognitive style based on altering one's cognitive organization in the face of new information that does not fit into existing patterns.

3. Graves et al. (1983:14) indicate that 41 percent of their sample of Samoan immigrants to New Zealand report "a substantial strain to carry on a conversation in English." They claim that most Samoans are unable to communicate freely in English when they arrive, and are therefore dependent on relatives to help translate for them. The period of linguistic dependency lasts for approximately 2 years.

4. Accommodation presents special problems in New Zealand, since entry permits are only issued after an intending migrant can prove he or she has a suitable accommodation waiting. Whatever housing is designated must then be inspected to make sure it complies with overcrowding regulations. Furthermore, Samoans do not become eligible for housing assistance until they have been in New Zealand for 5 years (see Pitt and Macpherson 1974:31-37).

5. Douthit and Lung (1974:1) for example write that in Hawaii, "Housing is a problem singled out by Samoan immigrants to be an immediate concern. A substantial number of Samoans live in substandard housing. Severely overcrowded conditions are given as the primary undesirable factor."

6. In Hawaii Samoan women have the lowest percentage of participation in the labor force of any documented ethnic group (37.7%); the next lowest group is Vietnamese women (44.6%). All other groups are over 50 percent, with Japanese women leading at 63.4 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983:66).

7. Kinloch (1980:24) points out that two additional factors may influence medical personnel's impressions that Samoans, and Samoan parents in

particular, behave inappropriately. One is that they are reluctant to use the telephone to talk with medical personnel; hence, they make appearances where others would seek advice by phone. The other is that Samoan parents tend not to tell doctors from whom they are seeking a second opinion of previous medical attention, thus leading doctors to imply prolonged negligence.

8. The basic causal notion here, if I can extrapolate from other Polynesian cultures, is that intrafamily conflict irritates ancestral spirits, who show their displeasure by bringing illness or other forms of misfortune.

9. According to Murphy, "The international statistics of suicides during the 1970s do not show any other country to have a suicide rate in males 15-24 which is as high as the Western Samoan one" (reported in Oliver 1985:74). While this statement must be taken against the background of notorious underreporting of suicides in almost all official statistics, it nevertheless underscores the magnitude of the problem in Western Samoa.

10. This echoes the comments of Franco's informants concerning the importance of job mobility in Hawaii. In fact the same term *musu* (sullenness) was used to describe reactions in both instances.