Chapter 3

SUICIDE IN WESTERN SAMOA:
A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Cluny Macpherson and La'avasa Macpherson

Suicide in Samoa in Perspective

Suicide is not a new phenomenon in Samoan society. George Pratt, a missionary and lexicographer who lived in Samoa between 1839 and 1879, recorded a term for suicide, toa'i, in the first edition of his dictionary of the Samoan language (Pratt 1862). In a letter to another missionary, George Brown, he explained that suicide is "mostly caused by anger within the family" (Freeman 1983: 220, 346). Margaret Mead reported the phenomenon after her 1926 studies but was inclined to the opinion that the incidence was low and that suicide was not the result of humiliation, nor popular among adolescents for whom life was largely free of the stresses which might give rise to suicide. Lowell Holmes, in a re-study of Manua, reported cases of suicide in that area in 1957 (Holmes 1957). Derek Freeman contends that the myth which developed as a result of the dissemination of Margaret Mead's account of Samoa diverted attention from such contradictory evidence as suicide. This in turn led to an underestimate of the real extent of suicide in anthropological writings which Freeman attempted to correct by detailing 22 cases which occurred since 1925 for which he has information.

The fact that other missionaries, anthropologists and administrators lived in and studied Samoa during the same period and did not report suicide should not pass without note. Missionaries like George Turner (1861; 1884), and J. B. Stair (1897), provided careful, detailed accounts of much of Samoan life in the belief that they were recording a changing aboriginal culture for posterity. They took great care to record details of customs for which they had little sympathy and there is no good reason to believe that, had suicide been known to them, they would have overlooked it in their accounts. Lexicographers such as Neffgen (1918) collected vocabulary but recorded no term for suicide. Anthropologists such as Bradd Shore (1982) have provided conscientious accounts of contemporary Samoan society which were informed by theoretical perspectives closer to those of Freeman than those of Mead. In none of these accounts was suicide the subject of extensive discussion which one might have expected.
it been an institutionalized response demanded by Samoan society for particular acts and/or by specific persons. In short, suicide has existed but does not seem to have been an institutionalized response. Suicide, while apparently always present in Samoa, has been characterized by a level which has fluctuated in ways, and for reasons, which cannot be established. What can be established is that the rate has recently increased dramatically and it is this increase, and not suicide itself, which demands our attention. The problem which we now address is not a new problem but an old problem of new dimensions and exhibiting new characteristics.

Early warning of the growing importance of suicide appeared in an article in the Fiji Medical Journal in 1974 on paraquat poisoning in Samoa. In 1982 the government newspaper Savali published a report based on a police survey which suggested a high rate of suicide in Western Samoa. In 1982 Felise Va'a, a Samoan journalist, published an article in Pacific Islands Monthly on the growing rate in Samoa and later in the same year Dennis Oliver published another article on the same subject. One of the most interesting articles appeared in Islands Business in May 1983 and contained material on both the problem and the intervention which had been attempted in Western Samoa (Keith-Reid 1983). In the intervening period studies of the rate of suicide elsewhere in the Pacific had suggested that, while suicide occurred throughout the region, rapid increases in rate were peculiar to Western Samoa and parts of Micronesia. As a result, attention has been focussed on these two areas which appear to have a very high, and rapidly increasing, adolescent suicide rate. But the rate, or more correctly the incidence, of suicide in Western Samoa is itself a case for study. In view of the importance of this issue it is addressed here before problems of explanation.

The Rate as a Problem

Several aspects of the rate, specifically the estimation of the rate of suicide over time, and the relationships between published, official and "true" rates of suicide seem problematical.

The first problem stems from the relatively recent inclusion of suicide as a cause of death in the published figures. Until 1967 a category for suicide was not included as a category in the tables containing causes of death. It is therefore difficult to establish with any precision, trends in the incidence of suicide over time against which to consider the recent increase. A further
problem with the available longitudinal data stems from periodic reorganization of the international code used to classify causes of death.

A second problem stems from the accuracy with which causes of death are classified and is reflected in the published figures. These problems have been overcome to some extent by the more detailed analysis of the source data which is available for the Western Samoan case. This has produced a more accurate indication from national official data. This evidence is contained in data collected by Dr. John Bowles, a psychiatrist, who, at the request of the Health Department, examined inquest records dating back to 1956 to establish the incidence of suicide, and Dennis Oliver who examined Coroner's reports as part of the Suicide Study Group. Their evidence, set out elsewhere in this volume, suggests that, contrary to the pattern suggested by the official data, the incidence was low until around 1976 when it began to climb suddenly.

The official data are set out in Table 1, followed by data from the Bowles' analysis in Table 2. Table 1 suggests a decline, rather than an increase, in the rate of suicide and would suggest that the problem is something of an illusion. The picture which emerges from World Health Organization data is similar and appears to have been derived from the same source data.

In contrast, the material shown in Table 2, based on official data, reflects the rate more accurately and suggests a much higher incidence than the published official data. Discrepancies of this order must be of concern to statisticians and indeed anyone who is interested in understanding the problem. For the purposes of this paper we have assumed that privileged access to official data will have resulted in a more accurate indication of the incidence than published data. This impression is confirmed by Samoans themselves who will agree that there has always been suicide in Samoa but that it has become more frequent in recent times. It may be however that the impression of increase is a product of the extensive publicity given to the phenomenon during the intervention activity in Samoa, and of the continuing coverage of suicide in the newspapers.

There are however deaths which are not the subject of inquests and for which causes are reported by medically untrained persons and which are not the subject of questioning and cultural factors which we contend may lead to a significant underreporting of suicide from deaths which fall into this category. It is almost certain therefore that even the figures derived from
inquest reports understate the true rate for reasons connected with the collection of statistics and the culture within which they are collected. Since both of these matters are significant in understanding the extent of adolescent suicide they are examined briefly below.

It is widely known that the accuracy of health statistics for any given year in Samoa varies. The health statistics, which include statistics for causes for death, carry at the bottom of every table the warning "figures refer to reported cases only." Given the amount of illness which is not presented at hospitals and is not therefore recorded it is difficult to estimate the true extent of any illness. The accuracy of statistics for causes of death is similarly problematical because of the large number of deaths for which the cause is not known or is ill-defined. This figure runs at between 25 and 35% of all cases over time. This derives from the fact that autopsies and coroner's inquests are not mandatory and while deaths must be reported there is no legal obligation to establish cause of death by inquest. The causes of deaths which occur in hospitals, or where patients are under medical supervision, are probably accurately established but those deaths which occur in villages are not necessarily established with the same degree of accuracy.

Suicides which occur in the village, in the bush, or at sea may not necessarily be reported as suicide. It is likely that a number of deaths resulting from the ingestion of paraquat and other herbicides are in fact reported, not as suicide, but as deaths resulting from poisoning. Some deaths which result from hanging, gunshot wounds, and jumping from trees and over waterfalls in the bush may well be reported as accidental deaths. It may be instructive to consider trends in these figures to establish the possible upper limits of suicide rates in Western Samoa. These figures are included as Appendix 1, for this purpose.

There are also cultural reasons why such cases might not be reported. The appearance of family and village solidarity and unity is zealously guarded and considerable efforts are made to resolve conflicts before they become the subject of public discussion. Where suicide is the outcome of a family or inter-family dispute in which traditional conflict resolution processes have failed those involved may seek to contain that fact. Failure to do so might lead to the family and/or village becoming the subject of gossip and joking about the quality of leadership both of which are sources of shame and embarrassment and are to be avoided. In such cases a suicide can be concealed
because the responsibility for reporting deaths, and their causes where known, falls to the village pulenu' u, or mayor. It is possible that people withhold the fact of suicide from the pulenu' u or that the pulenu' u, in concert with others, withholds the fact from the registrar.

There is another possibility, which would have a similar effect on the rate which stems from cultural devices for understanding the otherwise inexplicable. This involves supernatural agencies which are held to have a significant influence on the activities of human communities. The activities of supernatural agencies are discussed regularly in conversation and are invoked to explain sets of events which are otherwise inexplicable. Some accidents and resultant deaths are explained in terms of the activities of aitu (spirits), which lured people into the bush until they were lost; which lured people to the edge of waterfalls and then pushed them; which caused people to lose their footing and fall from trees and so on. Such explanations are canvassed seriously in cases in which an event is considered unusual or out of character. Where a person had concealed their shame or dissatisfaction and subsequently took their life in a private situation it is highly unlikely that the activities of the aitu would be considered in the search for an explanation (Goodman 1971). Since supernatural agency serves as an accepted residual explanation it is likely that other explanations would not be sought. It is conceivable that suicide would not be considered and that death would be reported as accidental rather than self inflicted. If this is the case, and it seems plausible, it would have the effect of deflating the "true" rate. The explanation was suggested by a person who claimed to know of this type of incident. If any of this is true, and there is good reason to suppose that it may be in some cases, the reported rates which have become the basis of concern and the ensuing debate are probably under-estimates of the actual rate.

Another factor which complicates attempts to calculate the extent of the phenomenon is that unsuccessful suicides are not always recorded as such. While knowledge of the incidence of unsuccessful attempts may add significantly to our understanding of the phenomenon it seems for the moment that this factor cannot be estimated.

Some Hypotheses

While suicide is clearly a personal matter, and while specific cases can only be understood within specific contexts, variations in the rate of suicide
may be usefully understood within cultural and structural contexts. There is nothing original in this argument which derives from the work of the French sociologist Emile Durkheim who discovered connections between patterns of social structure and rates of suicide (Durkheim 1951). Two hypotheses, both of which were suggested by case data collected in the first phase of this project, are examined in this paper. Each attempts to relate these personal events to the cultural and structural contexts within which they occur. In each case the emphasis differs: in one the importance of cultural factors is examined; in the other the importance of structures and changes in these structures. The first hypothesis is that in a society as rigidly structured and as authoritarian as Samoa, some altruistic suicides are to be expected. Altruistic suicides are committed by individuals discovered, or threatened with discovery, in violation of certain moral norms, or legal proscriptions. In these cases the individual may be led, out of shame and concern for the consequences of their conduct for their kin group, to commit suicide. In some cases the decisions may be taken when an individual believes that he/she will become the object of public ridicule or contempt as a result of the discovery. As Samoans say, sili le otii le le ma: 'death is better than shame.' Evidence suggests that this type of altruistic suicide has occurred in Samoa over time and accounts for what might be called the residual rate. However the recent increase appears to have emerged in somewhat different circumstances and cannot be explained as a simple increase in the rate of altruistic suicides.

The second hypothesis is that changes in the demographic, social and economic structures in contemporary Western Samoa have limited opportunities for upward mobility in Western Samoa which has generated a measure of frustration among youth. In gerontocratic societies, such as Western Samoa, youth are not entitled to challenge the existing distribution of power and this may heighten a sense of disillusion with their society and their place in it. Where disillusion leads to declining commitment to a society's norms and institutions the incidence of anomic suicide would be expected to increase. This hypothesis, suggested by the coincidence of a series of structural changes and an increase in the rate of youth suicide in Western Samoa, is examined below.3

**Altruistic Suicide**

The nature of the relationship which typically develops between
individuals and their kin group or 'aiga is central to an understanding of suicide in Western Samoa. Samoan culture defines the kin group as o e uma e tau ile suafa ma le fanua: all those who are bound to the title and the land by reference to which a kin group ('aiga) is defined. The definition is apt because the bond between the individual and his/her kin group is an immensely powerful one and is forged early in life. The power and prestige which a kin group enjoys at a given time is the product of past and present leadership and direction of its chiefs and orators (ali'i and tulafale) in economic, political and social activities. The maintenance of its prestige depends on their ability to mobilize the group's resources when economic, political and social events dictate. This depends in turn on members developing a sense of commitment and obligation to their kin group.

The kin group sets out to "persuade" children during their socialization that a particular relationship is appropriate. The group, however, has a powerful set of sanctions available in this process: it can very clearly illustrate the nature and extent of people's dependence on their 'aiga or kin group. The individual derives from the kin group rights to a house site, agricultural land, and practical assistance from kin in a wide range of economic tasks. Thus while below we will talk about "teaching" and "learning" it must be seen in the context of marked dependence on the part of the learner.

Samoan children are taught that their personal identity and status is intimately connected with that of their kin group or 'aiga. The cultural validations of the relationship are drawn from the pre-Christian Samoan culture and from Christian scripture. The dependence of the individual on the kin group is also reflected in the proverbs and scripture involved to illustrate the relationship. They are taught that members of powerful and united kin groups are entitled respect, and enjoy prestige within the village. Conversely, members of weak or disunited kin groups enjoy less respect and prestige within the village. The desirability of a united kin group is similarly reflected in proverbs and scripture invoked to justify the precedence of its needs over those of its members.

Children are taught that their conduct can enhance or detract from their 'aiga's prestige and power, and there is strong pressure on individuals to consider the consequences of their conduct for their kin group. They are taught that they can enhance their kin group's prestige and power by acting in ways which reflect well on the 'aiga and its leaders. This typically involves
accepting the precedence of the kin group's needs over one's own, placing one's resources at the group's disposal at different times, and accepting the authority (pule) and direction of the group's leaders. The person who submits to these conditions contributes to the enhancement or maintenance of their group's prestige and is entitled in return to a sense of pride and satisfaction. As a kin group's prestige is enhanced through a person's acts, so too is the person's prestige by association with the group.

Children are shown that they can as easily detract from their kin group's prestige and power by acting in ways which reflect badly on the 'aiga and its leadership. A person who acts without concern for the consequences for their group's status within the village is obliged to feel ashamed (ma, masiasi) and guilty for having brought the family into disrepute. The term for such acts, fa'ato'ilalo le 'aiga, means, literally, to 'cause the family to sink down', and the more colloquial term, toso i lalo le 'aiga, means, literally, to 'pull down the family' and leaves no doubt about agency.

Children are shown that acts which detract from the group's status also reflect on innocent members because of the way in which Samoans explain causes of deviant behavior. Samoan culture depends heavily on notions of externalized control of individuals' conduct and tends to explain much deviance in terms of inadequate teaching and/or supervision of the deviant. Thus, when deviance is discovered attention is focussed on both the individual and the group to which he or she belongs. In the process, responsibility may be apportioned among chiefs, whose weakness and lack of control permitted a situation to develop; parents, whose weakness and inadequate teaching produced a person apparently unable to distinguish between right and wrong; and siblings whose lack of concern meant that they were left unsupervised in circumstances in which opportunities for deviance were present. There is a clear implication that a lack of suitable role models within a person's kin group has also contributed to the situation which again reflects on one's innocent relatives. The individual is shown that while none of these things is necessarily true they will nevertheless be the basis of explanations arrived at by others. Thus a person's act may well rebound on many innocent relatives including those to whom one has the strongest affective bonds, and the most strongly developed sense of responsibility.

Worse still, the appearance of a particular trait in one member of a group, may give rise to the suspicion that it is present in others. This
suspicion leads to consideration of the group's past conduct for evidence of this possibility, and in the process the group's past misconduct becomes the subject of protracted public discussion.

Children are reminded that all acts of any significance will be remembered long after the act itself. As the proverb suggests, e sola le fai, 'ae tu'u le foto, 'the stingray escapes but leaves behind its barb.' Both the good and the bad which one does is remembered within the kin group and village and becomes a source of continuing pride or shame to their descendents. Again, as the proverb suggests, 'e pala le ma'a 'ae le pala le upu, 'stones may be reduced to sand but words never decay.' These "messages" are broadcast regularly in religious and secular contexts, and become a central feature of the disciplining of children and young people.8

While this process is persuasive, it does not in and of itself, ensure unquestioning compliance to moral norms. As Shore notes,

No boundary is, however, intended to provide an absolute limit on behavior. All boundaries are assumed to include opportunities for testing and occasional trespassing. "Getting away" from time to time with officially proscribed behavior is a matter of personal pride for many Samoans, and they admit this in intimate conversation. Such pride in overstepping official and social limits on personal behavior provides life with a vitality that Samoans cherish, and is in no sense inconsistent with a professed reverence for the very laws and regulations that are being tested. Only a respected law is worth making a great effort to test.... For Samoans, respecting laws means finding ways worthy of testing them and, when they assert themselves in their full authority, when one has pushed too far, it means demonstrating public deference to them.... For boundaries to be dignified they must be asserted strongly from time to time. (1982:119)

Samoans do violate norms and commit offenses against law. The commission of an offense may call forth various responses in the individual ranging from determined attempts to conceal the offense, through admission, to suicide. Their responses will be influenced by several things; the seriousness with which the offense is regarded; the probability of its discovery; and the likely consequences for the family of its public disclosure.

The seriousness of the offense is relatively easily established because much law is dispensed in public contexts. Many matters are discussed and disposed of within the family. Matters which cannot be resolved within the family, either because they involved another family or are offenses against the village, are discussed within the village council (fono) which is in effect a
public forum. The *fono* is empowered to make extensive public enquiries and to levy heavy fines on offenders, but because its authority rests on moral coercion, it is likely to go to considerable length to establish culturally appropriate connections between offenses and punishments. Certain significant events may prompt village ministers to preach on the theological status of particular offenses in church which is probably the most public of all fora. Matters which cannot be resolved in the village are tried in government courts which are again frequently open to all. National print media and radio also regularly provide coverage and editorial comment on moral and criminal matters. It is not difficult for most offenders to establish the seriousness of their offense.

The probability of discovery of the offense is not so easily established. Although there may be no reason to believe that an offense was witnessed, there are cultural factors which may lead an offender to believe that the offense will emerge. Firstly, the belief in the omnipresence of the Christian God may lead an offender to believe that although there may have been no human witness the offense is known to God which is potentially more serious. In the context of these discussions a passage from Luke 8,17, is frequently invoked:

*Au a leai se mea lilo e le fa'aalia; e leai foi se mea natia e le fa'ailoa a e iu ina fa'aalia.* 'For nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.'

Secondly, the belief that there are supernatural agencies, or *'āitu*, who may have witnessed the act and may eventually reveal the act to others, possibly through illness, may give the offender cause for anxiety. In our work on Samoan indigenous medical belief and practice we found that much attention is paid to the patient's relatives' conduct where an illness is thought to involve supernatural agency. It is hoped that the cause of the supernatural agency's anger may be discovered in a relative's conduct if it cannot be identified in the patient's.

Thirdly, any anxiety which is produced by these beliefs is likely to be made more acute by a belief that one's offense may cause others to suffer in the form of illness visited on one's relations and in particular one's children. On this point tradition and scripture are shown to "agree" in discussions of *'āitu* who punished offenders by visiting their close relatives, mixed with references to passages from Ezekiel 18,2:
ua 'aina e tama o vine moto, a e magiaia ai nifo o le fanau. "The fathers have eaten the sour grapes but the childrens' teeth are set on edge."

Fourthly, proverbs which suggest that offenses will be revealed in due course abound and are often connected with incidents in which the attempt to conceal the offense made it the more serious. Among the most popular of these is the proverb which pulls together biblical and traditional wisdom in the saying e leai se mea lilo i lalo o le la, 'nothing can be hidden under the sun'. It seems likely that those most committed to traditional and Christian belief systems would be most likely to believe that their offenses will inevitably become known and might be most prone to acute anxiety or guilt.

The consequences of any given offense is theoretically the same for any kin group. The same terms are used by all to refer to situations in which members' conduct reflects badly on their 'aiga. Their kin group may be ta'u valea (referred to by others as stupid); ta'u leaga (referred to by others as bad) and so on. In fact, however, in a highly stratified village society certain families' reputations will suffer more from such an accusation than others. Those who have been expected to, or have claimed a right to, set standards of conduct will suffer more than those who have not. The families of prominent titleholders, pastors, mayors (pule nu'u), teachers and police personnel will be more seriously damaged by their members' misconduct.

The kin group suffers in several ways. Firstly, the "prosecution" of any offense will involve disclosure of the facts and give rise to public conjecture about the past conduct of members of the family concerned. The "facts" become incorporated in a "file" on the family which is re-opened periodically in similar circumstances and become a permanent source of shame. Secondly, the status of a matai or chief who accepts responsibility for the conduct of individual members of the kin group may be lowered where the offense is a serious one. This in turn affects all whose status is connected with that title and its holder. Thirdly, where a fine is levied on the offender, all or part of it may have to be paid by innocent members of the kin group and, depending on the seriousness of the offense, this may cause considerable economic hardship.

Again these consequences must be most serious for those of highest status within the village, for, as Samoans point out, it is the prosecution of offenses by such people which demonstrates to others the importance of the norm or law concerned. In the case of banishment, which is less common now, the
entire family was required to leave its land and houses which for many people represented a devastating loss. For members of such families the expectation of the discovery of the offense, and knowledge of its consequences for the kin group might be expected to produce feelings of acute anxiety. In some cases such individuals simply prepare themselves for the social and physical ordeal that they will face at the hands of the family and village. In others the individual may try to spare the family the protracted public prosecution by taking their lives. Where they do so in such circumstances their act may be regarded sympathetically by others who are spared the consequences of the public trial. But suicide is not promoted as an "appropriate resolution" of the situation in ways which might lead an offender to regard it as obligatory.

The term for suicide in Samoa is *pule i le ola* or *taupule i le ola* which means to 'control the right to life.' The scriptures specifically accord this right, to create and to take life, to God. As a consequence Samoan culture is unable to promote any form of conduct which usurps such rights. This does not, however, prevent it from promoting other values and beliefs which may make suicide seem curiously appropriate to one who finds oneself in certain situations.

It is no coincidence that suicide is frequently associated with the shame which Samoan society holds to be appropriate where a person's conduct has caused serious and lasting damage to their kin group. Discovery, or threat of discovery, of offenses against sexual morality are prominent as causes and include cases of lost prenuptial virginity, adultery in prominent families, incest, elopement of the village virgin (*taupou*), and an 'inappropriate marriage' contracted without consent. Case 1, in Appendix 2, is an example of the sorts of circumstances which seem to typify this category. Still others result from unrequited love, termination of love affairs by one party, and the revelation of love affairs by third parties figure prominently as causes. Case 2, in Appendix 2, is an example of the sorts of circumstances which seem to typify this category. Discovery, or the threat of discovery of dishonesty, theft and crimes against property also emerged as causes in cases which we recorded. Case 3, in Appendix 2, is an example of the sort of circumstances which seem to typify this category. In these cases the people involved believe that they have become, or will become, objects of ridicule and take their lives before the "facts" become public. In each case this may be compounded by concern at the consequences of their acts for their kin group and its
reputation within the village.

Altruistic suicide, frequently associated with shame, appears to be distributed over a range of age groups and has probably always been a feature of Samoan society. In those cases which we documented those involved were people who were apparently committed to Samoan culture and showed no marked bias to a particular sex. The trend to suicide by growing numbers of primarily adolescent males cannot be readily explained within this framework. This new phenomenon seems to be associated with another powerful emotion, rage, which has been identified by Gerber (1985), Shore (1982), and Freeman (1983). In the next section we set out some of the factors which might collectively contribute to a greater degree of frustration on the part of adolescent males, and reasons why this might surface in a form which might lead to suicide.

Youth Suicide: an anomic form?

Changes in a society's social, political and economic structures influence individuals' perceptions of their life chances and of themselves. In certain circumstances the changes lead to increased optimism about life chances and more positive perception of self. Conversely, changes may lead to increased pessimism about life chances and a less positive perception of self. While self perception and perception of life chances may vary independently of one another there is frequently a connection between the two. Where the situation is produced and perpetuated by agencies and structures over which they have little or no control they experience a sense of powerlessness. Our thesis is that increases in the rate of suicide reported in Western Samoa take place against a background of change which has limited opportunities available to Samoan adolescents. Opportunities for upward mobility in Samoan society are limited by factors set out below, and opportunities for migration are similarly limited. In circumstances where a gap opens between expectations and opportunities, a buildup of frustration may lead to declining commitment to norms and structures which appear unable to meet their aspirations and which is typically associated with anomic suicide.

Demographic Factors

Population Density. Population growth may place increased pressure on resources where it occurs in a stagnant economy (Western Samoan Government 1982:2) and is associated with decreases in available per capita resource
levels. Increased population density leads to a reduction in the available land resource when all other things are equal. This may be significant in understanding the situation of youth in Western Samoa for reasons set out below.

There has been a small increase in population density in Western Samoa: in the period from 1971 to 1981 population density rose by only 1.3 persons/square kilometer from 52.7 to 54 persons/square kilometer. But the national figure masks significant regional variations: between 1971 and 1976 urban area population densities increased from 501 to 531 persons/square kilometer, and in the Northwest Upolu from 141 to 146 persons/square kilometer (6% and 3.5% respectively).

But Western Samoa has sustained higher rates of increase in population density in the past: between 1961 and 1966 density increased by 14.8% over the whole country, and 17.4% and 17.0% in Apia and Northwest Upolu respectively, apparently without increases in the rate of suicide. This argument is not without problems for an increase in one or more areas, with consequent pressure on resources, is typically offset by a decline in density in other areas and easier access to resources. If density does contribute to the rate, increases in some areas and decreases in others might be expected to offset one another.

Population density influences the life chances of youth who are primarily dependent on village agriculture by placing constraints on available land and other resources. Slow growth in the wage/salary sector of the Western Samoan economy in the recent past has meant that more school leavers have been unable to find jobs in that sector and have had to remain on the land. In some villages around Apia, and in Northwest Upolu, their situation would appear to have deteriorated as pressure on the arable land resource has increased in those areas. A reduction in the volume of emigration in the period since 1978 may have increased the density and accentuated any effect resulting from pressure on available resources. In villages elsewhere in Upolu and on Savai'i the situation of youth solely dependent on agriculture may in fact have improved as people have left the regions. This improvement may have been temporary: the increase in the population since 1976, coupled with the reduction in opportunities for emigration, may lead to increasing pressure on resources in these areas. Case 4, in Appendix 2, shows how resource shortage may lead to suicide. In villages where there is pressure on resources, and particularly land, the opportunities to improve income through increasing
production has therefore been limited. This situation is made worse because as
land becomes more scarce land disputes tend to increase and security of tenure
becomes a problem. This difficulty is acknowledged by the Western Samoan
Government which pointed to the difficulties facing all who seek to improve
their lifestyle in plantation agriculture: "the consumer goods to which the
farmer aspires are not within reach without a quantum leap in income, something
which he rarely sees as possible in agriculture....A major constraint is thus
that village agriculture as practiced now is not economically competitive with
the wage sector." (1982:32)

Population density alone does not tell us a lot about the situation of
youth in Western Samoa. Coupled with another demographic indicator, dependency
ratio, it may contribute more to the picture.

Dependency Ratio. A further impression of the situation of Western Samoan
youth may be gained by considering their role in economic activity over time.
The dependency ratio, which relates the productive and non-productive sectors
of a population, is a useful index for this purpose. Observation of the
dependency ratio over time can give an indication of the shifts in the load on
economically productive members of a society.

Growth in the dependency ratio in a stagnant economy typically leads to a
decline in the living standards of the economically productive population. In
the absence of economic growth and/or increased opportunities for
out-migration, this group may well become disillusioned. This is significant
in Western Samoa because youth play a very significant part in the production
of food and assets, typically taking the heaviest and most monotonous parts in
both plantation agriculture and capital projects. As the *amaga*, the body of
untitled, they are at the "bottom end" of the one way chain of command. 9
In the following section we consider some features of Samoan dependency ratios and
their possible significance for youth suicide.

As shown in Table 3, the national dependency ratio has actually declined
in the 10 years between 1971 and 1981 which means that, on the surface at
least, the situation of the economically active seems to have improved over the
period. But Western Samoa still has one of the highest dependency ratios in
the South Pacific behind only the Cook Islands and Niue. But economically
active Samoans face more difficulties because most work is in village
agriculture with unstable returns on effort, whereas Cook Island and Niuean
economies have extensive wage sectors. But national figures mask the very
considerable range of regional variations as Table 4 shows. And these figures alone are also misleading because they mask significant variations within the regions.

The dependency ratios, calculated in this way, are of limited value because responsibility for production does not fall equally on all in the 15-59 year age group. In village society production falls more heavily on younger people and on young untitled men in particular. A dependency ratio calculated on a smaller population base gives a more accurate impression of the burden on the youth, which for the purposes of this paper, may be more significant. Table 5 gives the dependency ratios broken down by age group as well as region.

What one regards as the best indication of the "real" dependency ratio will determine which set of figures is used but if one accepts that most food production and heavy work falls to those between 15-39 years of age the dependency ratios, while varying regionally, will be very much higher than the official figure. The lot of those in the Apia Urban Area supporting 2.3 persons would seem easier than the lot of those in rural villages in the rest of Upolu where each person supports 3.1 persons.10

Several points follow from this analysis. Samoa has experienced a high birth rate for some time but the rate of population growth was artificially depressed by the high rate of emigration in the 1960's and 70's. The imposition of limits on out-migration to American Samoa, New Zealand and Australia has almost certainly led to an increased population growth rate in Western Samoa. In many villages already high dependency ratios, produced by substantial out-migration in the 60's and 70's, will be forced higher still as the economically inactive component grows faster than the productive one.

Villages which experience high levels of out-migration may have gained in terms of the potential resources available to them through migrants who settled overseas. But it is not clear that these gains are offset against the effort required of the untitled who remain. In fact increases in potential resources available through migration seem to be simply regarded as net increases and do not lead to significant reductions in effort required of those who remain. If this is the case, increases in the dependency ratio may signal more work for those who remain as the numbers of persons whom they must work to maintain increases. This situation has been made worse by the instability of prices for all commodities except taro (Western Samoan Government 1982:102) and by the increased cost of imported goods.
In villages in which high out-migration during the 1970's produced high dependency ratios, disillusion with the increased effort required of those who remain may be more acute because they compare their lifestyle and life chances with that of their peers who migrated. They might be expected to experience a rather stronger sense of relative deprivation than those in villages from which fewer people migrated when opportunities existed. Where dependency ratios and pressure on land resources are high or growing, young peoples' disillusion with their lifestyle and life opportunities might be expected to be more acute than those in villages where these are lower. If disillusion is connected with the propensity to suicide and if the dependency ratio influences this sense of deprivation, the rate of suicide would be expected to vary by region and village, as suggested by data collected by Bowles and Oliver.

However, as Graves and Graves (1976) have shown in the Cook Islands, it is not the actual demographic facts which are significant but the perception of those facts. It is likely that the publicity given to the population growth in the media and in birth control programs over the past few years has heightened the impression of growth rather than the actual rate. The rate of growth may appear most significant to those young literate Samoans who, in growing numbers, seek jobs which do not appear to exist and who, coincidentally, show a tendency to suicide.

While the demographic phenomena lead to an erosion of economic prospects for many youth, the same group is exposed through formal education and the media to visions of lifestyles in which economic prosperity is associated with high degrees of personal freedom. We turn now to a brief examination of the influences of education and the media in shaping aspirations of youth.

Social Factors

Education. Education has been stressed in successive development plans and has received significant shares of both the domestic product and aid income over a long period of time. The emphasis on education has seen increases in a number of indices, shown in Table 6. The most significant features of the figures in Table 6 lie in the increases in those receiving secondary education of 205%, and tertiary education of 325%. These people are increasingly exposed to alternatives to Samoan society and lifestyle, through education. They also develop high expectations of wage employment, and of a lifestyle which wage employment makes possible, which are unlikely to be realized in the stagnant
Samoan economy (Western Samoan Census 1976, vol 2:103).

Recent reductions in opportunities for advanced studies overseas, and particularly in New Zealand, as a result of budgetary constraints in Samoa and immigration regulations in New Zealand, have intensified competition for those places, and produced disappointment among those who might have expected to study overseas. Furthermore this situation is unlikely to improve. But the numbers at these levels of education are small within the total population. If the impact of education on young peoples' expectations is limited, the impact of other factors is not so constrained.

The Media. Various development plans have attempted to improve Western Samoa's communication infrastructure. Government initiatives have resulted in dramatic growth in the number of radios in Samoan homes. Because the government retained control of program content, these initiatives have not been a major source of alternative visions of life. But, the unforeseen consequence was that the same radios receive programs from American Samoa in which a "pseudo-American" lifestyle is presented as normal.

Control of the print media is largely in private hands and has seen an increase in both the numbers of newspapers (from 3 to 6) and in their circulation from 15,000 to 32,000 between 1971 and 1979 (latest data available). Newspapers regularly contain material on alternative lifestyles and Samoana, a Samoan language newspaper published weekly for Samoans in New Zealand and Western Samoa, regularly contains telling comparisons of the lifestyles outside Samoa. Situations vacant columns contain advertisements for comparable positions in New Zealand and Western Samoa which highlight salary differentials very graphically.

The growth in numbers of television sets in Western Samoa reflects the availability of television transmission from PagoPago in American Samoa. More and more Samoans are able to watch a world peopled by the stars of "Days of Our Lives," and "Falcon Crest" interspersed with advertisements portraying an affluent, liberated lifestyle supplied by KRCN4 San Francisco.

The growth in the numbers of fixed and mobile cinemas and in attendances is harder to chart accurately but they are significant because film contains some of the most explicit and visually persuasive alternatives to life in Samoa. The images in films offer alternative visions of specific relationships, some of which explicitly challenge Samoan conceptions of those relationships.
The impact of the growth of media born alternatives is easy to underestimate and difficult to establish, but as a source of dissatisfaction with life in Samoan society and a source of challenge it deserves closer scrutiny. A situation emerges in which the aspiration of young Samoans are being raised as their opportunities are eroded. This generates considerable pressure on social structures for changes which will lead to improved economic prospects and increased personal freedom. The prospects for both increased upward mobility and personal freedom seem limited by a series of factors which have become more significant in recent times and to which we now turn.

Social Mobility: the blockages. Several routes have traditionally been available to youth who aspired to power in Samoa: becoming a chief; a pastor; a wage earner/entrepreneur; or emigrating. These remain but, for reasons set out below, are less available and, where before those who aspired to power could reasonably expect to attain it, it is now increasingly clear to many that these avenues are blocked. In the following section the various avenues and the blockages within them are set out.

In Samoa there are some 14,000 matai or chiefs who are normally selected by members of the extended kin group which they head. Matais control access to both house sites and agricultural land vested in their matai title and derive considerable power from this fact. Those who require access to land for subsistence must accept the matai's power over their activities and indeed their income. The attainment of matai titles is competitive and open to all who demonstrate competence in certain prescribed activities. A relatively small number of Samoans have the resources necessary to live without access to land and some 96.8% of the population live, according to the census, "under a matai." A matai's power is limited by the necessity of retaining the kin group's support and the possibility of their removal by the kin group where their performance is considered unsatisfactory.

Shortly after independence, a large number of new titles were created in an attempt to alter the balance of power within districts since only matais are enfranchised. (Meleisea and Schoeffel 1983:100) The prospect of access to power seemed for the young to expand very rapidly but government moved to limit the creation of new titles and closed off this avenue. The number of titles available is now more or less fixed and while more than one person may hold a given title at the same time, holders have vested interest in discouraging this
trend. Thus, young men have unlimited opportunities to demonstrate competence, but more limited opportunities for access to power. These are further limited by the steadily increasing life expectancy of incumbents which means that for many young people the period during which they will serve (tautua) the matai is increasing and that during which they can expect to exercise power is decreasing.

Pastors also enjoy power and a privileged lifestyle and derive authority from their religious office. They too can be removed for unsatisfactory performance and can be controlled in certain subtle ways by the village in which they work. This group is small and while entry is technically open to all, in fact the prospects of entry to theological college, and to the lifestyle beyond, is limited by a stable demand; the steadily increasing life expectancy of incumbents; and the absence of a compulsory retirement age.

For those committed to mobility within the traditional sector avenues are closing off at a time when there is pressure for their opening up. These are not, however, the only avenues for social mobility and it is to the others that we now turn.

Wage employment and entrepreneurial activity have always been avenues to power within the village for the young. Opportunities have existed for people to leave, enter the wage economy for a period, return and invest their stake in entrepreneurial ventures. The preferred destinations for accumulating capital were the United States and New Zealand, but a period of employment in Apia was considered better than nothing and many looked to wage employment in Western Samoa as an opportunity to accumulate some money and enjoy a measure of independence. The Western Samoan economy has grown slowly and new jobs are not being created in sufficient numbers to absorb school leavers. Nor, because of their scarcity, are they being vacated by incumbents who might have gone to New Zealand after a period of employment in Apia. Those who might in other circumstances have been "cooled out" by a period of wage employment no longer have as ready access to this possibility. Furthermore the over-supply of labor has resulted in a depressed wage structure so that even those who do secure employment may find that the gap between income and expectations is continually widening. The other avenues to the capital needed to enter entrepreneurial activities are loans but the agencies empowered to make loans tend, for reasons connected with the cost of administration, to make these to larger ventures (Macphersons 1981). The only other alternative is borrowing through the
village development scheme but these are cooperative ventures, are typically controlled by those whose authority is recognized by the government, and offer little opportunity for mobility for untitled adolescents.

**Migration.** The high rates of out-migration over a long period may have led to an expectation that many Samoans would leave Samoa for varying periods at some time in their life. It has become, in effect, part of the Samoan life cycle. Even those who expected to spend most of their lives in Samoa, often left to put together financial and or socio-political capital which could set them up. The high rates of movement between Samoa and New Zealand and American Samoa which occurred through the 1960's and 1970's were evidence of this expectation. Over a period of 201 years this trend became established as a rite of passage (Bedford 1982). The rapid decline in the opportunities for this movement occurred as the economies of New Zealand slowed, and the American Samoans moved to limit illegal movements from Western Samoa to American Samoa and the U.S.A. For those who came to consider that a period outside of Samoa was a reasonable expectation this decline was a blow. The fact that many believe that it is likely to be permanent may have an impact on national morale. It is significant that the decline coincides with the increase in the rate of suicide among those who under normal circumstances might have been offered opportunities to live and work outside of Western Samoa.

These factors alone do not constitute a satisfactory explanation. Most Pacific nations experience various combinations of these demographic and social phenomena. There is no suggestion in the literature that these lead to high rates of suicide elsewhere in the Pacific and specifically in American Samoa or Tonga, with which national comparisons seem most appropriate. It is useful to look beyond these factors for those things which seem peculiar to Samoan society and might explain the unusually high rate which Samoa exhibits.

**The Situation of Youth in Samoan Society.** Western Samoa is a gerontocracy and power is formally concentrated in the hands of its chiefs (matai) and clerics (faife'au). Both groups claim to exercise legitimate authority and each group tends to support the other in, what might seem to outsiders, a powerful and conservative alliance. The alliance's power, derived from secular and religious traditions, is not widely challenged.

Samoan 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: o le afa ile rule ole
tautua. Since this is almost invariably true for those who presently hold power over adolescents, they frequently have some difficulty in understanding challenges to that belief.

Their responses to challenges to their authority as chiefs (matai), pastors (faife'au), and parents (matua) are usually severe and punitive. Some adolescents may experience a degree of frustration over the opportunities for mobility, which may be made more acute by the limited opportunities which their culture provides to challenge the existing distribution of power, as Case 5 in Appendix 2 suggests.

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. The semantic and linguistic structure of such enquiries reflects the asymmetry of the relationship and excludes any real challenge. But failure to resolve a matter this way does not exhaust the possibilities.

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 mafafau). 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. Such advice is powerful because it is drawn again from secular and religious traditions which tend to coincide. In such cases the attention which has been paid to one's situation may alone persuade a person that he or she is considered important to their family and may prove therapeutic.

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. It provides an opportunity for both parties to cool and the young person may eventually decide to accept the inevitable and return to apologize. If the more senior party admits responsibility they may eventually visit the other village, ostensibly on an unrelated mission, and make some peace. Running away does not necessarily solve problems because the situation to which one flees is likely to be very similar to that from which one has fled. While young children might expect to find a more indulgent grandparent, a youth who is supposed to be mature can not expect to find very much sympathy if the matter reflects a lack of maturity (le mafaufau) on his or her part. Furthermore, the situation to which one returns may not have changed and if the source of dissatisfaction is structural it can be expected to emerge again.

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. They are watched and eventually the rage is expected to subside. But people will say that often in a rage, a situation can be seen very clearly. A number of cases of suicide which we documented occurred during or shortly after a display of rage. While one can only speculate at the connection between the rage and the suicide it seems possible that a sense of despair about solving a problem is involved in some way. It does seem that the public consumption of herbicides and the possibility of protracted death in a public context might be intended to bring public attention to their grievance and create a sense of remorse in those whose actions gave rise to the grievance.
Summary

The culture which stresses the subservience of the individual to the collectivity is embedded in scripture and tradition. This cultural context, which Durkheim found was connected with high degrees of altruistic suicide, seems unlikely to change rapidly. Thus one would expect that this type of suicide will occur in Samoa for as long as secular and religious traditions continue to exert the same types of pressure in Samoan society. But adolescent suicide is a different problem.

The young untitled person is offered progressively more education, and visions of alternative lifestyles. Samoan society, dominated by older people and traditions, is unable and unwilling to accept some of these expectations or to move to make these attainable. In the event they become alienated from central values but are forced to continue to live by them, the young untitled people, sensing their powerlessness to produce change, become dissatisfied with society and seek opportunities to leave. In the past, some found it possible to demonstrate commitment to traditional values and persuade their families that they were the sorts of people whose migration should be sponsored: they were committed to Samoan custom and would contribute to the family and village. These opportunities are no longer readily available which increases their sense of frustration. This frustration would not be as serious as it is if there were opportunities for attaining at least some of their aspirations within Samoan society. But, confronted with an apparently immovable tradition reflected in councils dominated by those committed to the tradition, attaining those aspirations seems increasingly unlikely. Under these circumstances the things which have masked a growing alienation on the part of this group of young Samoans are removed and we see more clearly a disaffection which has been growing for some time.

This blocked opportunity model is only one of a number which can be introduced to explain the incidence of youth suicide in Samoa. It is most useful in explaining a general disaffection and a marked increase which happens to coincide with particular structural trends in Western Samoa and the closing off of opportunities for emigration. It is however instructive and provides a backdrop against which particular cases may usefully be seen.

The prospects for redistribution of power within Samoa seem remote, and the prospect of increased emigration, which is related to the state of the international economy, seems equally remote. If the structural context is
significant in producing a general pessimism among Western Samoan adolescents, one would predict an increase in the rate as growing numbers of adolescents encounter blockages in the opportunity structure for which no solutions appear imminent. The combination of structural and cultural factors outlined in this paper would seem to point to a continuing and high rate of adolescent suicide. However, while the structural factors may prove somewhat intractable for reasons connected with economic linkages between Samoa and the global economy, cultural factors can be altered where people choose to take decisions. People are most likely to take those decisions when they are able to establish linkages between cause and effect and it is hoped that this paper will go some way to making some of those connections.
1. Toa'i also meant to do something reluctantly, against one's will, meanings which the word retains to the present. We are not linguists but the connection between the act of suicide and a sense of duty does seem interesting particularly in view of the connection between altruistic suicide and highly disciplined societies such as Samoa.

2. The World Health Organization cautions against calculation of rates where fewer than 1000 deaths are recorded in a given year; where more than 25% of deaths are coded as having ill-defined causes; and where significant numbers of deaths are reported by witnesses without the benefit of medical advice or questioning. All three of these conditions coincide in Western Samoa.

3. Further evidence for this hypothesis comes from the fact that American Samoa, which has a similar culture but has been subject to a different set of structural changes has apparently had a significantly lower rate of suicide. (Freeman 1983:346)

4. The proverb, *ua gase ile vao le tagata o Tupuivao,* 'Tupuivao's man perished in the forest,' is used to emphasize the loss of a person who in a fit of anger leaves home and severs relationships with his kin group. This gloss is from Schultz (1965:106).

5. The proverb *e leai se manu e olo,* 'where no pigeon call is heard,' likens the kin group in which no strife is found to the perfect peace. Conversely the proverb, *ua fa'aselu gaugau,* 'a comb with broken teeth', likens the family which is always quarrelling to the broken comb which is both ugly and useless. Both of these proverbs can be found in Schultz (1965:83).

6. Shore (1982:175-176) provides an extended account of the reasoning behind this and is recommended to those seeking an accurate and comprehensive account of Samoan models of deviance.

7. Some of the proverbs used in the context of such discussions carry the implication that such traits are genetically transmitted. Perhaps the clearest statement is found in the proverb, *e so'a le moasope ile moasope,* which means, literally, 'the crested hen resembles the crested hen': that one's characteristics will be found in one's parents.

8. Samoan parents, pointing to defects in their children's behavior, ask
children to consider what other people will think of their parents and/or family if they were to see them behaving in this way. In fact a central concern in shaping childrens' behavior is getting a child to see the consequences of his/her behavior for those around him/her.

9. Space does not permit elaboration of this argument but Lockwood's (1970) studies of Samoan village economies provide a comprehensive account and analysis of the division and disposal of labor in village agricultures.

10. This is based on the assumption that a person who marries by age 20 has children who are able to contribute to his work load by age 40 and is able to reduce their physical contribution in agriculture; and that those in rural districts must derive their income from village agriculture while those in the urban area will derive at least part of theirs in the less physically demanding and more stable wage sector.

11. This is not to suggest that all who remain in Samoa experience acute dissatisfaction and/or wish to leave. Many in fact regard their life as satisfying and have no wish to leave.

12. This stems from the belief that beyond a certain point splitting of titles weakens their status and authority and increases probability of dissension within the family over succession and ranking (Meleisea and Schoeffel 1983:105).
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Western Samoa Department of Statistics
APPENDIX 1

The figures in Tables 7 and 8 contain causes of death where these might conceivably contain cases of suicide which have been reported as death by other causes. The value of these tables lies not in the actual numbers involved but in the trends and the extent to which these coincide with the trends in suicide incidence. There are of course other categories in which suicide deaths might appear and it is certainly not clear from the figures that the problem is either new, or that its dimensions are immediately evident.
APPENDIX 2

Case 1.
A pastor's daughter who had become pregnant by one man shortly before she was due to marry another, apparently believed that her pregnancy would be discovered and is believed to have decided to take her life to avoid the disclosure of the fact.

Case 2.
A boy who had been told by his girlfriend that she wished to terminate their relationship, returned to his home and borrowed a rifle with which he then shot the sleeping girl before announcing his grief and turning the rifle on himself.

Case 3.
A policeman who had been responsible for collection of fines had stolen some money and had been suspended pending an enquiry. No one in the village was aware of the fact until, on the day after he was supposed to have appeared in court, he pretended to leave the village but returned, borrowed a friend's rifle and went inland to a plantation where he shot himself.

Case 4.
Population density causes pressure on resources such as stones suitable for house-building and may lead indirectly to suicide, as this case shows. In a village where people started dismantling stone wall pig enclosures to make a house foundation, a pig escaped and ruined a nearby plantation. The owner made various public threats against the owners of the pig and eventually shot the pig. When his family refused to support him in a dispute with the pig's owners he hung himself.

Case 5.
Two brothers worked very hard to extend and improve their plantation. They hoped that their father, a matai, might permit them to retain some of the proceeds of the sale of their crop. When he showed no sign of allowing them to keep some of their income they approached him directly and explained a plan in which they would have retained a small proportion of the income. He refused
outright and the older brother returned to the plantation and drank paraquat and died. The younger brother again approached the father and asked him to reconsider the plan. The father again refused and the younger son also returned to the plantation and drank paraquat from which he later died.
Table 1

Suicide in Western Samoa
(by sex for selected years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>1980</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Western Samoan Statistical Abstracts
## Table 2

Incidence of Suicide from Inquest Records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
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<td>1979</td>
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<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bowles J., (in Keith-Reid 1983)
Table 3
Dependency Ratio for Western Samoa, 1971 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>1981</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population &lt;15</td>
<td>73840</td>
<td>69239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population &gt;55</td>
<td>8981</td>
<td>11571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent total</td>
<td>82821</td>
<td>80810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active total</td>
<td>63806</td>
<td>75539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population total</td>
<td>146627</td>
<td>156349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependents/100 active</td>
<td>129.8</td>
<td>106.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Western Samoa Statistical Abstract

Table 4
Dependency Ratios by Region (1976)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&lt;15 yrs + &gt;60 yrs/100 (15-59 yrs)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apia Urban Area</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Upolu</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Upolu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Savai’i</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5
Recalculated Dependency Ratios for Age Groups (1976)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Apia Urban</th>
<th>NW Upolu</th>
<th>R Upolu</th>
<th>Savai'i</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>506.7</td>
<td>626.0</td>
<td>781.8</td>
<td>827.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>379.8</td>
<td>456.9</td>
<td>537.0</td>
<td>564.0</td>
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<td>429.0</td>
<td>436.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-34</td>
<td>270.0</td>
<td>322.2</td>
<td>365.6</td>
<td>361.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-39</td>
<td>228.4</td>
<td>282.6</td>
<td>316.8</td>
<td>309.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-44</td>
<td>222.4</td>
<td>256.1</td>
<td>281.0</td>
<td>275.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 6
Selected Educational Statistics for Western Samoa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People in:</th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>1981</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary institutions</td>
<td>29443</td>
<td>32206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>6244</td>
<td>8707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>3514</td>
<td>10731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (all institutions)</td>
<td>39201</td>
<td>51644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>146635</td>
<td>156349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1/T2*100</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Western Samoa Statistical Abstracts
Table 7
Deaths from Accidental Causes and Other External Causes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Accidental Causes</th>
<th></th>
<th>Other External Causes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>males</td>
<td>females</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Western Samoan Statistical Abstracts

Table 8
Deaths from Poisoning and Injury Poisoning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Poisoning</th>
<th>Injury and Poisoning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Western Samoan Statistical Abstracts

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