

Migration Patterns for New Zealand

Notes

Migration – internal

There have been significant changes in patterns of internal migration over the years. The Sāmoan people have always moved around. One of the main reasons for moving within Sāmoa is usually economic – that is, people move from one part of Sāmoa to another because they see different economic opportunities. For example, in the 1950s, the chances to earn cash increased with the development of commercial banana and cocoa farming in certain parts of Upolu and Savaii. With internal migration, people often followed ‘channels of kinship’. This means that they would take advantage of their family ties to move from areas of less opportunity to places where resources and economic prospects were better. The extensions to roads in the 1960s and 1970s meant that there was better access to Apia (for the export and local markets). This reduced relative economic disadvantages, and so migration between rural areas declined and the migration along the road networks to Apia increased. Rural to rural migration tends to be from villages further away from Apia to the villages close to Apia, e.g. the north west of Upolu. The census from the past few years show that some Faipule Districts are decreasing in population numbers. This is due to migration.

Migration – external, international

Migration to countries such as New Zealand and the United States has had a huge impact on the population of Sāmoa. Because of this type of migration, the population growth rate is much less than the birth rate and natural increase. In 1990–91, about 154 000 Sāmoans (including people originally from American Sāmoa) were living in New Zealand, the United States and Australia. It has been estimated that 45% of the Sāmoans in the world live outside of Sāmoa and American Sāmoa. They have either emigrated from Sāmoa and American Sāmoa, or are the children and grandchildren of Sāmoans who have emigrated from the Sāmoas. The following table shows international migration for Sāmoa between 1991–2000. The information is collected from forms that all international arrivals, and international departures must fill out and hand in. When arrivals and departures are counted, the length of stay in Sāmoa is not counted.

Population Movement

There have been several important internal migration trends during the 20th Century:

northward drift

rural depopulation

□suburban sprawl.

Rural depopulation

➤ Changes in technology have reduced the demand for farm labour, and farm workers and their families have been forced to move to towns and cities to find work. In many rural areas, this has triggered a cycle of decline that has led to the closure of schools, hospitals, banks and other vital services, causing even more people to leave.

Rural depopulation has been occurring for much of the 20th Century. It was increased by the **downturn** in the rural economy (1980s) and government economic policies (1980s and 1990s) that resulted in the closure of many public services in rural areas.

➤ The migration of Maori from remote rural areas to towns and cities is one of the most dramatic population movements in New Zealand's history. It was triggered by the need for labour in urban factories during World War II, and continued by economic growth and rural poverty after the war.

➤ In 1951, 20% (23000) of Maori were urbanised. By 1971, the figure was 58% (133 000) and by 2001 the figure had nearly caught up with the national average of 86%.

Northward drift

➤ Since the end of the 19th Century South Island gold rushes, there has been a steady flow of people moving from the South Island to the North Island. Since about 1900, the North Island has had a greater share of the population.

➤ There has been a northward drift within, as well as between, the North and South Islands. The top half of the South Island (Nelson, Marlborough, Tasman and Canterbury) are growing, but most of the rest of the South Island has a declining population.

➤ Auckland and the Bay of Plenty are growing fastest in the North Island.

Suburban sprawl

➤ Electric tramways brought the first wave of suburban development to New Zealand's largest towns and cities. After 1930, trams lost their appeal as private motor cars became more popular.

➤ Rapid urbanisation after 1950 and the development of motorways resulted in the spread of low-density residential suburbs around Auckland and Wellington. This suburban sprawl has generated a rapid increase in commuter traffic, traffic congestion and the loss of quality farming land, particularly in Auckland.

➤ Early suburban developments generally housed middle- to high-income European families, leaving the inner suburbs for those on lower incomes, many of them Maori and Pacific Islanders.

Recent Trends

Since the 1980s, some new trends emerged:

➤ Increasing transport costs saw the **gentrification** of old, inner-city suburbs. Middle- and high-income earners moved in and renovated character houses, and low-income families were squeezed out to new and cheaper housing in the outer suburbs.

➤ New light industries moved to the urban fringe to take advantage of the open spaces and low-wage, semi-skilled and unskilled workforce available in the spreading outer suburbs.

➤ Urban containment policies to restrict urban sprawl and encourage higher density urban living, e.g. **in-fill** housing in spacious middle-class suburbs and inner-city apartment living.

Suburban Sprawl

A southward *counter* drift out of Auckland for lifestyle reasons. Places like the Bay of Plenty, Nelson and Queenstown provide quieter, sunnier, pollution-free and less stressful living conditions, especially for retired people.

➤ Rural **lifestyle blocks** on urban fringes have become popular for high income earners seeking an urban lifestyle in rural surroundings. For many of these 'Queen Street farmers', farming their 10 acre (4 ha) blocks is more of a hobby than a job.

The Future

New Zealand's present population geography has been shaped over many years. Where New Zealanders will live in the future, how quickly the population will

grow, where immigrants will come from, and what will happen to differences in New Zealanders' living conditions will depend largely on present and future government policies.

New Zealanders elect their government every three years. How they deal with these important issues is in their hands. It is important that voters and politicians have a good understanding of New Zealand's population geography.