

The Effects of Migration on Gender Expectations and Family Roles:

A Comparative Study Between Native and Diaspora Tongan Communities

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Introduction

This project uses standard ethnographic methods to understand the effects of migration on Tongan Diaspora communities in Utah with focuses on:

- cultural identity
- gender differences and expectations
- family roles
- religiosity
- livelihood
- interpersonal networks

Background

This work is important because it intersects several domains of public health:

- economic health
- spiritual health
- intellectual health
- social health

Projects

In the last year my projects have involved:

- forming contacts and networks with Tongan families within Utah
- conducting interviews
- recording sartorial markers of cultural identity

Along with Dr. Adrian Bell in the Anthropology Department and Dr. Marianna Di Paolo in the Linguistic Department we have gathered data on:

- ethnolinguistic markers
- migration history
- spirituality
- family size and make-up
- occupation



The town of Roosevelt, Utah where the first set of interviews were conducted

Population

Tongan Diaspora communities in Utah are the target populations for this project.

- Influence and sponsorship of the Mormon/LDS church have historically attracted Tongans to move to Utah
- Salt Lake City and West Valley City have the largest and second largest population of Tongans of any city in the U.S.
- One in four Tongan Americans live in Utah. (1)



Traditional Tongan dance



Tongan family plays volleyball at Salt Lake City's Friendly Island Festival

Impact in the Community

Information about Tongan families' experience after migration will provide:

- feedback on how Diaspora populations are assimilating to their new environments
- data on how immigrant families interact with other cultures in their communities

References & Acknowledgements

- (1) <http://www.health.utah.gov/disparities/utah-minority-communities/native-hawaiian-pacific-islander.html>