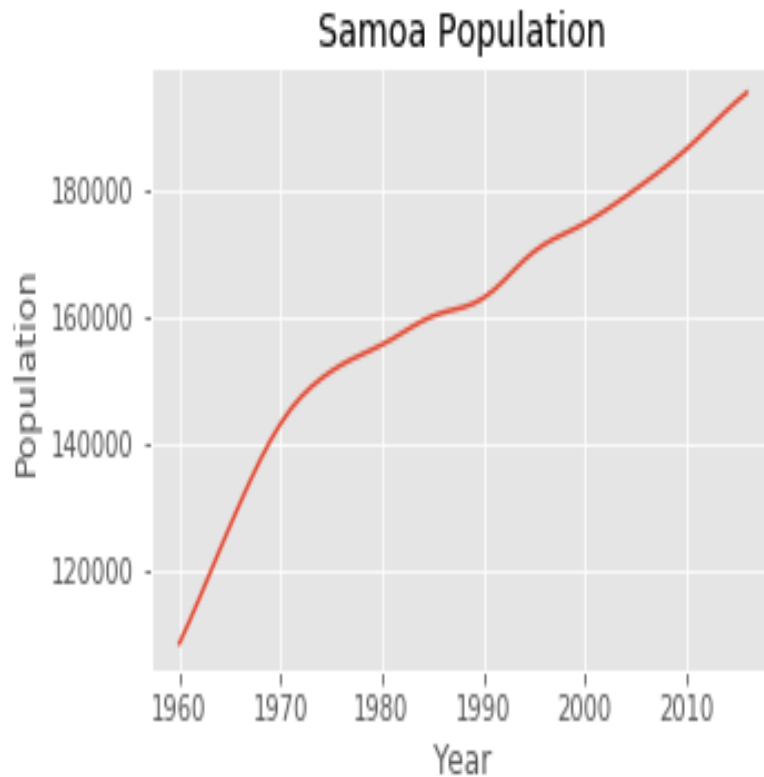


# Samoa



Coordinates:  $13^{\circ}35'S$   $172^{\circ}20'W$  /  $13.583^{\circ}S$   $172.333^{\circ}W$  /  $-13.583; -172.333$  The Independent State of Samoa (Samoan: Malo Sa<sup>o</sup>oloto Tuto<sup>o</sup>atasi o S<sup>o</sup>moa), commonly known as Samoa (/s<sup>o</sup>mo/; Samoan: S<sup>o</sup>moa, IPA: [sa<sup>o</sup>moa]) and, until 1997, known as Western Samoa, is a unitary parliamentary democracy with eleven administrative divisions. The two main islands are Savai'i and Upolu with four smaller islands surrounding the landmasses. The capital city is Apia. The Lapita people discovered and settled the Samoan Islands around 3,500 years ago. They developed a unique Samoan language and Samoan cultural identity. Samoa is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. Western Samoa was admitted to the United Nations on 15 December 1976. The entire island group, which includes American Samoa, was called "Navigator Islands" by European explorers before the 20th century because of the Samoans' seafaring skills.