

1. Description

- 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: **Dieri/Diyari, language derives from Australian family language**
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): **dif**
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): **The Dieri currently reside at Leigh Creek at coordinates -30.590161, 138.401151. In relation to any standard Australian map, they are 9.9 km east of the Aroona Dam.**
- 1.4 Brief history: **Lutheran missionaries established the Bethesda mission among the Dieri in 1866. The first ethnographic reports regarding the Dieri were written by a police trooper, Saamuel Gason (1845-97) in 1874.**
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: **Their neighboring tribes were the Yandruwandha and Yawarrawarrka, respectively to their east and north-east and, to the north, the Ngameni. To their north-west were the Wangganguru, to their west the Thirrari and Arabana, while on the southern fringes were the Kuyani and Adnyamathanha.**
- 1.6 Ecology: **The traditional lands of the Dieri lay in the delta of the Barcoo River to the east of Lake Eyre. The southern boundary was marked by Mount Freeling, its most northern reach by the Pirigundi Lake. The most easterly edge was constituted by Lake Hope, and the western limits lay some 80 miles west of Lake Hope. The environment was harsh, and foraging for vegetables was a staple since the kangaroo was absent from their terrain and the emu, their favorite food, quite rare. Native rats, snakes and lizards were abundant.**
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: **Gason estimated the numbers of Dieri in the Copper Creek area at 1,000- 1,200 of which the Dieri were the most prominent, with an estimated 230 members in each village. By the end of WW2, they were estimated to number around 60.**

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): **Carbohydrate dependence was provided entirely though foraging by the women. Near the desert, they were tough to find. Seeds and Nuts (with the exception of some vegetables) were their entire carbohydrate provider.**
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: **Hunting also proved problematic based on the limited resources in their area. Indigenous rats, snakes, and lizards were the primary source of protein. Once in a blue moon, they'd kill an emu which was a delicacy to the Dieri people.**
- 2.3 Weapons: **Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Boomerangs and spears were recorded for hunting and warfare purposes. Small children occasionally played with a one handed boomerang vs. the two handed boomerang that was more effective in battle.**
- 2.4 Food storage: **Certain foraged foods were buried in the huts of certain women during the dry season. Precipitation was already limited in the area, so extended drought was problematic for the Dieri. Only one instance of food storage was recorded.**
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: **Nothing out of the ordinary. Women stayed/nurtured their children while they foraged for food. Men hunted in teams to supply their meat production.**
- 2.6 Land tenure: **There was no ownership in the ingroup of the Dieri people. But they would often fight neighboring tribes if they ventured too far into Dieri land.**
- 2.7 Ceramics: **None recorded although they did have access to plenty of natural clay in their environment.**
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: **Proscribe sharing habits were observed when the Dieri had limited food resources (which was quite often). Occasionally after a plentiful forage or killing an emu, the Dieri would let the food flow and follow a more prescribed sharing pattern.**
- 2.9 Food taboos: **Oddly enough, no readily available food was deemed taboo to consume (probably because they had limited option in their diet).**
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft? **No watercraft was recorded.**

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): **None recorded**
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): **None recorded**

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): **Not recorded**
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): **As soon as the female could have offspring, she did. Marriage occurred very early for them, and older males were fathering these children. Females could give birth as young as 12-14.**
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): **Not recorded**
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): **Estimated around 4.2 years per child, but overall estimate is inconclusive.**
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): **Females could be married first anywhere from 10-12, males often had to wait until their mid 20s to early 30s.**
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: **Divorce did not occur in the Dieri civilization.**
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: **Much like all the Aboriginal groups, Polygyny was the main form of marriage. Multiple wives with one husband was the norm.**
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: **Could happen if two competing males wanted to marry the same woman. The female was very young, so the potential husbands would offer whatever they could to wed her.**
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: **Inheritance is reserved mainly through patrilineal lines.**
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: **The parents do not watch their children with a close eye. Unlike the West, these parents believe their children should learn to go through life without them.**
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: **No homosexual activities were recorded.**
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): **Some forms of Exogamy were recorded.**

- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? **Nothing too spiritually, fathers were thought to give their child his willpower/abilities.**
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”) **The mother is scene as the birth giver throughout her pregnancy. She is fed first in their eating times, and is highly regarded during this timeframe. This all radically shifts as soon as she has successfully given birth.**
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? **Not recorded**
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape **Nothing recorded for the Dieri, but other Aboriginal groups have been found guilty of this.**
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin) **If you were far enough related, you were fine. But anything involving cross cousin relationships were strictly prohibited.**
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? **Not in the slightest, the male determines when they procreate.**
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring **Not recorded**
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? **If the male already has other wives, then they absorb the responsibility of raising his offspring. However, a younger male with one wife takes care of his children along with his mother.**
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females **Not recorded**
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades **Not recorded**
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older) **Younger males are always clamoring for a wife early on, but the older males typically win out. They are viewed favorably compared to a young male with much left to prove.**
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? **Elders gain respect from everyone. The younger members must earn their respect over a period.**
- 4.24 Joking relationships? **Not really, children will deem friends’ unique nicknames that they find humorous.**
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations **Entirely patrilineal, the Dieri view the males ownership with the upmost precedence.**
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules **Incest is viewed negatively within the community. Oddly enough, cross cousin is still more prohibited than other forms of incestual relationships.**
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? **Yes, involving an elder man to perform the ritual for them. The process is generally enjoyed by the entire group.**
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? **One gets their initial name from their father after birth. If they are a women, they might change their name after marriage. Nothing too extensive was recorded with Dieri names.**
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) **In community for females, outside the community for males.**
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? **Parents of daughter offspring’s will sometimes accept dowries in exchange for her hand in marriage.**
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: **Only when males are fighting over the same young bride.**

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: **2/3 young males died between 1906 and WW2. This was a personal assessment after reading the Lutheran reports from early 1900s.**
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: **Outgroup killings were entirely more common. Violent deaths would occur if one of the Dieri were captured during a battle.**
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: **Territoriality caused mainly all the out-group deaths. Neighboring tribes who attempted to raid their resources were killed and vice versa between the Dieri raiding.**
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): **Neighboring tribes sometimes traded with Dieri, but it was mainly reserved for special occasions.**
- 4.18 Cannibalism? **Oddly enough, Endo-cannibalism was practiced within their community. The process is thought to take a piece of the person with you for them to protect your spirit. Additionally, if the body was eaten by animals then their spirit could not help anyone.**

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: **1874: 230 Dieri people, 2017: 0 Dieri people.**
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): **The Dieri people did not venture off during seasonal patterns. The only time the Dieri would leave their tribe was for; A.) a religious ceremony that required finding themselves in the natural environment for a few days or B.) advancing to enemy lines for warfare. The Dieri people were almost entirely stationary during their existence.**
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): **The Dieri held the older men at the highest degree of political power. These men were the tribes shamans as well, leaving them as the sole authoritarian figure. Their duties included religious ceremonies, arranging ingroup marriages that abided by their customs, general day to day disputes within the group, and ultimate decision to call for warfare (although technically the Gods decided after reflecting through prayer).**
- 5.4 Post marital residence: **The male would always build an entire new residence following the marriage, a few exceptions apply. First, there were supposed to be an even number of huts in their tribe meaning they would have to wait for someone to die before building their residence. Additionally, if two brothers marry two sisters, all of them would share the same household.**
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): **Territory is heavily protected/sought after in the Dieri community. Protecting their land space is important for resources readily required in that area. Another tribe crossing into their territory to hunt or forage is essentially stealing from the community. Leading to inevitable warfare if such an action is taken.**

- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): **Yes, there are four observable divisions. Younger boys are expected to interact with one another on their own. Learning the steps it takes to be a contributing male in their society. Matured males hunt and interact together on a regular basis. Older Males are expected to remain stationary at all points in time. They're the defense/religious system essentially. Finally, all women of all ages continue to interact together throughout their life time. Raising offspring, foraging, or cooking remain female duties throughout the Dieri life.**
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: **None recorded**
- 5.8 Village and house organization: **The organization of their housing maintained the same layout, but not overall numbers of Dieri. Basically, there are three circles in the organization. The widest is reserved for unmarried/Young males, the middle ring is mature males/females/offspring, and the inner ring is reserved for the elderly.**
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): **The unmarried mens' houses are the outskirts of the organizational structure. Viewed as likely expendable, they would be the first line of defense in a tribal warfare situation.**
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? **Sleeping on the ground is typical for the Dieri.**
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: **Moieties are very common for the Dieri (Additionally, they are extremely prevalent in Aboriginal groups in general).**
- 5.12 Trade: **In group trade was the most common form of trade in their group. Labor/possessions were popular commodities to exchange within the group. The constant cycling of belongings led to much diversity in ownership with the Dieri. At some point in your lifetime, you'd probably own everything the village has to offer.**
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? **The social hierarchies heavily rely on age and being male. The older men of the group had the most influence in terms of group decisions.**

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6 Time allocation to RCR: **They constantly practice ritualistic ceremonies. Any effort to alleviate drought/sickness/hunting/gathering/etc. was fixed through a ceremony to cure it.**
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): **The Dieri by all accounts practiced Shamanism in their society. Any ailment that someone was afflicted by was the result of a curse from the all-seeing. Remedies included varying rituals that their kin would have to complete to save them. This trend continued when early visitors arrived.**
- 6.2 Stimulants: **Pituri was often used during ceremonies or prior to combat. The naturally growing substance mimics the effects of OTC ADHD medication or cocaine. The earliest anthropological data from Howitt describes it as "short lasted high".**
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): **The father generally "finds" the pre-existent spirit of his unborn child in a dream of vision, and henceforth is its social, spiritual, and ceremonial parent, but he is not one flesh and blood with it.**
- 6.4 Other rituals: **Any piercings or body modifications were to be done without crying. Crying was a sign they weren't "chosen" to receive the blessing. The real kicker being, if you ever cried during any modification, you could never receive any additional rituals after. To Westerners this sounds great, not getting stabbed an all. However, the Dieri who chickened out were ostracized and humiliated on a regular basis.**
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): **In the beginning, the earth opened in the midst of Perigundi lake and there came out one murdu after the other, *kawalka* (crow), *Katatara* (budjerigar), and *warukati* (emu), and so on. Being as yet incompletely formed and without members or sense organs, they laid themselves down on the sand hills, which then as now, surrounded the lake. There lying in the sunshine, they were after a time invigorated and strengthened by it so that at last they stood up as Kana and separated in all directions. The legend not only accounts for the totem animals, but also the Kana, that is the native inhabitants of the Lake Eyre district.**
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): **Children would often toss around a boomerang for fun. Art/Music was reserved for their ceremonies. The decorated men would dance around to the chanting of the Dieri.**
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: **Like other Australian tribes, men were the only ones to dress up for ceremonies and warfare. The female population was limited to piercings.**
- 6.8 Missionary effect: **Early visitors to the southern region of Australia went to harvest natural resources in the area. However, stumbling upon the savage Dieri made them force their Lutheran beliefs upon them. Actively stopping any acts deemed "barbaric". Which during the 1850s meant they would beat/kill Dieri who showed too much skin or practiced "devil worship" in their frequent ceremonies. Thankfully, none of these puritanical beliefs rubbed off on the Dieri.**
- 6.9 RCR revival: **None recorded**
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: **Death was dealt with by tearing down the fallen house and not mentioning his/her name anymore. Afterlife seems to have a variance in beliefs from many surveys over the region. The fallen is said to rest with the murdu but still actively looks after his/her family members.**
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? **Yes. The fallen Dieri were to be mourned in the tearing down the house ceremony. Dealing with death like Westerners in talking about his/her life, the good and the bad. The very next day, nobody were to mention the individual anymore. This was for the living Dieri benefit. If the spirit were to be called by name and leave their rest, they were said to transform the living into an animal.**
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy? **No**
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): **All Dieri people belong to a man's own totemic clan, and so, when he refers to his relations, he means members of his own totemic clan. He therefore speaks of them as his "flesh", just as the totem itself is frequently denoted by the word for flesh, and being one's own flesh.**

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: **Body paint is utilized frequently by the Dieri tribe. Ritualistic events require elder men to lather on paint to reenact certain religious events, or for marriage rights. Additionally, prior to leaving their tribe for warfare, men will paint themselves entirely to provide camouflage against combatants and to distinguish the enemy from their own. Paint color is typically reserved for whatever shade they have the most of, but it's usually the abundant white clay.**
- 7.2 Piercings: **Young Dieri children (4-8 years old) were often subjected to septum/nasal piercings. Much like other body modification practices, the piercing acted as a rite of passage for the young Dieri. The oldest member of the tribe would pierce the children as a symbolic act of life and death.**
- 7.3 Haircut: **There was no recorded data of haircuts. However, early anthropological data suggests both men and women frequently had shaved heads.**
- 7.4 Scarification: **Teenage men from 12-20 went through scarification in order to hunt with the rest of the men. The boys had to endure a lengthy tattoo session from a quill. The quill was dipped into a crude tar-like substance and stabbed repeatedly. Additionally, the boys had to fast for two passes of the sun for the scarification to "take".**
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): **Lip plates were recorded in older women (25-40). Howitt believed they derived from proven women who have proven themselves to the tribe.**
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: **Following the death of any Dieri tribe member, the entire tribe would tear down his/her house. The oldest male would be painted white with flaming red hair during the process. He was said to resemble a deity that would scare the fallen into the afterlife.**
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: **Like other Australian tribes, men were the only ones to dress up for ceremonies and warfare. The female population was limited to piercings.**
- 7.8 Missionary effect: **Early visitors from Lutheran descent attempted to convert the Dieri to no success. So no real missionary effect, but that wasn't from a lack of trying.**
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: **None recorded**

8. Kinship systems

- 8.1 Sibling classification system: **The Dieri kinship classification relies heavily on Howitt's account of the Dieri. However, his work has been recently found to be incomplete and inaccurate. The tribe is divided into two matrilineal moieties, called Matari and Kararu respectively, each of which includes several totemic social clans, called Madu.**
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate: **None recorded**
- 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): **None recorded and Cross-cousin relationships are strictly prohibited in the Dieri system.**

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- **Words in Dieri must begin with one and only one consonant and must end in a vowel. Intervocalic consonant clusters are limited (Austin 1981:26) and no vowel sequences are permitted.**
- **Infanticide occurred quite frequently in the Dieri. Any irregularities or deformities were immediately taken care of.**
- **Lying is a useful skill to learn early on. Deception is not frowned upon if they get away with it.**
- **Emus are their absolute favorite food. They provide meat for their entire group and they view hunting one as a celebration.**
- **Small children play with boomerangs early on which helps them transition to the two-handed one later.**

Numbered references

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