

GARAWA

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

Name: Garawa (Gaarwa, Garrwa, Karawa, Leearra, Garrawa)

Language: Wanji (Wainyi, Waanyi)

Language Classification: Australian, Garawan

- The Garawa language is extinct and there are roughly ten Wanji speakers (1)

1.2 ISO code:

GBC (1)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

Borroloola: -16.087986, 136.305117

Queensland: -20.917574, 142.702796

Doomadgee: -17.941667, 138.828333 (1)

Garawa country is roughly 20,000 square kilometers. (2)

1.4 Brief history: There have been sites discovered in the region that contain engravings and tools dating back to the Pleistocene age. Over time, there have been fluctuations in the environment and probably in cultures and populations. There is evidence for macro-scale subsistence and settlement patterns that correspond with these environmental changes. Very little is known about the Garawa before outside contact. The first contact was by Mathew Flinders in 1802, who surveyed the coast and observed Aborigines. By the late 1880s, the coastal plains of the northern Garawa country were part of the European overland stock route. There are stories of shootings, massacres and cruelties against the Garawa by foreigners. The Garawa people soon established themselves in the pastoral industry, which was weak at the time and currently is no longer viable. Despite hostility and disruptive contact, the Garawa remained a strong independent community even though they have essentially been integrated into modern society. (2)

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Today the corporate group of the Garawa no longer regularly practices traditional subsistence-settlement activities. Occasionally individuals and small families go out on hunting and camping trips and will occupy traditional site locales, exploit local resources and use traditional methods. While the Garawa remain an individualistic community, they have become largely modernized. As for missionaries, the Garawa religion doesn't have evident traces of Christianity or other Western-religions.

The neighbors of the Garawa have similar institutions of social organization and section relationship. Thusly, the individuals of the Garawa can easily relate with members of another group. For instance, the Garawa and many other Australian Aboriginal groups rely on hunting and gathering as their primary economic base, have linguistic groups divided into exogamous social groupings and have social and religious connections to the land. Neighboring Aborigines may colonize Garawa land owned by a certain land-owning group after that group has ceased existence. (2)

1.6 Ecology: There are four distinct seasons in the region that sees 83 percent of the annual rainfall over an average of 61 days from December and March. The average daytime temperature is around 87 degrees Fahrenheit with highs of 94 degrees in the summer and lows of 66 degrees in the winter. The humidity fluxes during the year from 60 percent in the beginning before dipping down to about 40 percent around June and July. There are woodland areas, specifically in the north, that become lower and more open the further south you go. Common plant species include eucalyptus and melaleuca while common animals include fish, marsupials, bats and lizards. There are also large, gently undulating to rolling plains and the soil is mostly sand and clay. (2)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density:

Population:

1950	1977	1991	1996	Today
	325	260	100	100

(1)

Mean Village Size: As of the 1950s, the tribal ranged from 100 to 2,000 people per tribe with the mean being around 450. More recently the variation has decreased from 40 to 160 with 100 people being the average. (2)

Home Range Size: The Garawa live in clusters by main waterways and have a large home range that is based on what season it is. The home range is 30 to 40 kilometers. (2)

Density: Assuming a population estimate of 100 people, the density would be 1 person per 96 square kilometers. The Garawa have a relatively high population density in comparison with other inland northern Australian environments. (1)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staples: Yams, cycads, lily tubers and seeds (2)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Bats, fish, lizards, marsupials and birds (2)

2.3 Weapons: Spears, stone knives, axes, club, traps, nets and poisons (2)

2.4 Food storage: Fruits rarely last beyond the cool seasons, but honey and cycads were stored in large amounts. The storage was usually practiced by the less mobile elderly and infirm who occupied major sites. (2)

2.5 Sexual division of production: Frequent hunting and foraging trips were made by males and lasted as long as three nights. Males were also considered the nucleus of land-using groups, which meant they dictated the area the group traveled in. There was a division of labor in child nurturing, hunting, social and dynamic groups and even language. (2)

2.6 Land tenure: Land-owning was a social institution. While it was not immediately observable in on-the-ground subsistence and settlement, the members of sub-section activity maintained specific areas. A land-owning group was responsible for a certain estate, which would be succeeded by future members of the group. The group would own the estate until they die out. Because the Garawa were subsistent and mobile, the expansion and contraction meant that certain areas saw more attention and occupation than others. The most frequently occupied areas were the corridors of the rivers and streams, then the undulating country, than the plains. (2)

2.7 Ceramics: Not determined

2.8 Specified sharing patterns: Not determined

2.9 Food taboos: Many terrestrial animals were available for consumption beyond the regular diet, but were considered by the Garawa to be in poor condition. These animals were assigned a secondary diet role. Also, the western Garawa believed the bones their meals should be burnt to ensure that animals would be fat in the future. (2)

2.10 Canoes/watercraft: Not determined

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height: Roughly 172 cm+/- 13 cm (3)

3.2 Mean adult weight: Roughly 64 kg +/- 5 kg (3)

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): Not determined

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Not determined

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Not determined

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): Not determined

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): Not determined

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Not determined

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Forty percent of the Garawa were socially mature, married and reproductive adults. Twenty percent of the population was married adult males, which meant that there were zero polygynous marriages. (2)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry: Not determined

4.9 Inheritance patterns: Garawa social organization was characterized by a principle of patrilineal descent. Ideally, a father and his children belong to the same sections or semi-moieties of society to make the inheritance process more convenient. (2)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Not determined

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Not determined

4.12 Pattern of exogamy: The Garawa were exogamous so people are expected to marry others from different societal sections. (2)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? No. (2)

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? Not determined

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process? No. (2)

- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Not determined
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse: Not determined
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Not determined
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: Not determined
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? Not determined
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: $20\%/50\% = .40$ (2)
- 4.22 Evidence for couvade: No. (2)
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers: Not applicable:
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? Not determined
- 4.24 Joking relationships? Not determined
- 4.25 Patterns of descent for certain rights, names or associations: All inheritance goes through the father. The Garawa are a strongly patrilineal society. (2)
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: Not determined
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Not determined
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? Not determined
- 4.29 Is marriage usually within community or outside community? A person was expected to marry a member of a specified and opposite section. For example, male A of section 1 may marry female B of section 2 and have children, C, that belonged to section 1. The sections system allowed for outsiders to be classified. (2)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges them? Not determined
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: There were rules on correct marriage as well as kinship and organization. Rigorous punishments were imposed on any transgressors. Wrong marriages, infringements of religious secrecy and disobedience to authority occurred, but were only tolerated to a certain degree. For example, a deviation frequency of five percent of incorrect marriage may be tolerable, but a ten percent deviation would have been socially destructible. (2)

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: Not determined
- 4.15 Out-group vs in-group cause of violent death: While the in-group violence was limited, the early relationship between the Garawa and pastoralists was hostile. There are several examples of Garawa resistance in police records by location, but it is not clear to what degree. There is also a long history of hostility with Europeans, who forced them to hilly and less accessible country. (2)
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: There was limited evidence of in-group killing. As for out of group killing, this was spurred largely by the colonization of their lands by Europeans. The relationship between the two has remained hostile and turbulent for decades. (2)
- 4.17 External Relationships: Social interaction with other groups was greatest during the end of the wet time and beginning of the cool time. The abundant resources made travelling easier and increased the likelihood of meeting groups and individuals from other areas. Today, there are 193 other distinct tribes in the Queensland region alone. Fundamentally, a lot of the tribes are similar economically, religiously and socially with some variations that provide cultural distinctions. (2)
- 4.18 Cannibalism: None (2)

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential group size: The Garawa people were divided into moieties, which impacted an individual and his or her land-owning position. The average group size was only five to fifteen people while the entire tribe was about 100 people. (2)

5.2 Mobility pattern: The Garawa were nomadic, but not without roots. There was a strong felt-enduring bond to certain stretches of territory and within this home area, to particular sites of certain totemic and religious significance. While they had specific religious sites that they visited, the Garawa also had specific secular sites as well. Sites could range from the micro-level, where someone may have sat for an hour, to the macro-level, where there is a permanent community. People spent most of their lives in or near their particular homes estates. Each generation was expected to have similar familial ranges of mobility though. Several land-owning groups may have the same estate, but separate ranges of mobility.

There are 163 total sites that the Garawa used with nearly everyone being near a stream or waterway. There were 43 locations deemed as anytime sites, which are useable year round. Each sites varied in purpose based on the season (wet, storm, hot or cool time,) available resources, shelter and religious and social purpose. For instance, the hot and storm times effectively remove the meat staples of the Garawa diet and the wet time increases the amount of fruits and vegetables in the diet. Anytime sites often had water resources such as water holes and springs and are on higher ground. (2)

5.3 Political system: There was a clan leader that actively maintained peace and organizes many rituals. Despite the clan leader, there was a lack of tribal authority though. (2)

5.4 Post-marital residence: Not determined

5.5 Territoriality: On the micro level, there was spatiotemporal territoriality, which asserted rights to localized areas such as camp sites, work areas, sleeping areas and local resource areas. The rights to the area were asserted as long as the land-owning group or population existed. On the medium scale, groups asserted rights to larger areas such as basins, hills and land-systems. The rights to these areas were extinguished after the life of the group. At the macro scale there was absolute territoriality in which entire populations formally claimed exclusive and primary rights to regions. These territories were largely independent of the locations or live spans of the individual member of the local land-owning group. (2)

5.6 Social interaction divisions? Not determined

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: Because of a slight difference in the language between men and women, the opposite sex quite freely used the other sexes' dialect in joking situations. These situations were somewhat ribald and risqué and full of humor. (4)

5.8 Village and house organization: There were 25 estates for land-owning groups that do overlap some. When groups went mobile, they were as close as 250 meters to a neighboring group. There were no permanent settlements, evidence being the lack of archeological artifacts. There was no special organization of Garawa sites. (2)

5.9 Specialized village structures: There were no specialized housing situations. Because groups are so small and resources were limited, there was no perceived need to have divisive structures. (2)

5.10 Sleeping location: The Garawa slept on the floor of caves and rock paperbark shelters. Caves were the preferred spot for sleeping as well as keeping dry. (2)

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: The Garawa used sections or semi-moieties. The sections system allowed for an Aborigine from another area to be given identification without easily becoming a member of a local clan. This system is distinguished from a clan style system because it doesn't convey rights to specific clan territories or have a specific guide to membership. All people initially belonged to one of two halves or moieties. The two moieties were further divided into four semi-moieties or sections and than again into sub-sections. Each sub-section determined social, religious and territorial responsibilities. (2)

5.12 Trade: Not determined

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies: The mobility of patterns of the Garawa were dictated to some extent by the elderly. The Garawa usually remained well within the area of the home state of the senior male members of the their land-using groups. (2)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR: The Garawa were a very spiritual tribe. They used Wanagala time, which lies at the junction between secular and sacred history. The Wangala ancestors, both the remembered secular human ancestors and the sacred mythological ancestors, passed to today's Garawa a body of lore and laws that encapsulated the principles and institutions deemed essential for cultural survival. In a sense, the Garawa were constantly being guided by their ancestor worship/animism. In terms of ceremonies though, the Garawa would have at least seven major ceremonies a year, which typically last one week and would travel several days just to get to the event. (2)

6.1 Specialization: Not determined

6.2 Stimulants: Not determined

6.3 Passage rituals: In early adolescents, boys were initiated through a series of rituals, which culminate in circumcision. Afterwards, they were considered men and were expected to act as such. (4) From rite of passage to death, the final deposition of the bones of deceased people was among the first class ceremonies. It usually lasted only one to three days. (2)

6.4 Other rituals: Ceremonies were classified passed on the level of mobility of the population. The first class ceremonies required little in the way of extended gathering and largely involved representative members of the individuals own or neighboring land-owning group. These ceremonies were short and occurred in a secular manner. They included release from speaking taboos, smoking possessions and introduction to certain foods, sites and spiritual ancestors.

The next class of ceremonies was relatively large assemblages of performances and supporters that were lengthy in time. The obligation to participate in these ceremonies was the single greatest non-economic incentive for the Garawa to travel long distances. These major events included initiation funerary and cult ceremonies.

Individuals also had a strong spiritual affiliation to the country of their mothers and important complementary relationships with the members of their mother's land-owning group and section. It was rare for individuals to perform major social or religious responsibilities without consultation of the mothers' land-owning group or section first. (2)

6.5 Creation Story: The Garawa believed the creation of the world occurred during a creative period described by anthropologists as "the Dreaming." This concept is largely indefinable in terms of real time. It happened, is happening and will happen. The Garawa referred to this as "Wangala time." Recent ancestors such as parents and grandparents of today's Garawa are seen, as having lived in a transitional period between the Dreaming and the present, and upon their deaths became part of the Dreaming. During the Dreaming, Garawa creator ancestors performed actions that created and shaped both the social and natural worlds and thusly instilled elements of their spiritual power into both worlds. (2)

6.6 Cultural material: Like many non-literate Australian Aboriginal tribes, the Garawa communicated information orally, supplemented by use graphic and performance art. Art and artifact had also been used to mark social landscapes. Changes in art, both in location and in design, may prove indicative of changes in social meanings and processes. As for music, the Garawa had sacred songs that are performed at ceremonies. (2)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Not determined

6.8 Missionary effect: The effect of missionaries was minimal on Garawa. Despite conflict with foreigners, the Garawa managed to remain religiously independent. (2)

6.9 RCR revival: Modern ceremonial demography doesn't reflect traditional ceremonial demography. The season of ceremony, the number of people involved and the length of ceremony all differ. More modern events were held at Borroloola during the wet of December to February where as past ceremonies were held in the hot months, which coincide with seasonal aggregations for economic reasons. Also, ceremonies rarely last more than one week when in the past, they could were usually three weeks. (2)

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: The Garawa believed those that die become part of "the Dreaming." The dead are believed to have great influence over the present, which is one reason they are idolized. Eventually, those that pass way become part of the Earth, such as trees or creek, which is a main factor in the how religious sites are chosen. (2)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? Not determined

6.12 Is there teknonymy? No (2)

6.13 Religion: The Garawa practiced ancestor worship and animism. They believed in the transformation of mythical beings into material objects and believe these transformations impact the relationships between people, objects and the sacred ancestors. In many cases, these mythical ancestors transform into geographic features, which dictates the location of sacred sites. (2)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: Not determined

7.2 Piercings: Not determined

7.3 Haircut: Not determined

7.4 Scarification: Not determined

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Not determined

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: The Garawa would wear body paint and colorfully woven clothing while performing at ceremonies. (5)

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: Not determined

7.8 Missionary effect: The effect of missionaries was minimal as the Garawa continue to practice ancestor worship and animism. There is no evidence of Christian influence or other major religions on the Garawa. (2)

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: Over time the Garawa ceremonies became less elaborate and drew fewer people. The number of attends and the lengths of the events dropped slowly through the decades. (2)

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: Not determined

8.2 Sororate, levirate: Not determined

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin typology: Not determined

9. Other interesting cultural features:

1) There were two distinct dialects among the Garawa. The split of east and west didn't impact the understanding of social principles or land tenure though. The difference in dialects has been described as similar to English versus American, with the western Garawa speaking a little harder. (2)

Numbered references

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