

## 1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

\*Martu, Martu, Australian Language Family

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

\* [ISO 639-3: mpi](#)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

\*23.427974,122.695547

1.4 Brief history:

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

\*Europeans forced the Mardu to move westward. Between the years of 1949-1969, missionaries tried to convert children and teenage girls by moving them to dormitories and telling them to renounce their culture. (Tonkinson)

1.6 Ecology:

\*The Martu live in the Western Desert of Australia. The area is very dry, with dry shrubbery. During the day it can become very hot and at night it cools down and becomes very cold. There is an absence of permanent rivers or freshwater lakes. (Tonkinson)

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

\* Due to the difficulty of finding food and water in the desert, the Martu are highly mobile and travel in small bands to maintain low population density. (Tonkinson)

## 2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

\* Bush Tomatoes, tubers (like yams and bush onions), blackberries, rock figs and bush palms are all important parts of the diet, depending on the time of year. (Tonkinson)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

\*Small reptiles are the most reliable source of meat but kangaroos and emus are both popular with hunters as well as many different types of mammals such as introduced species like rabbits, camels and foxes. (Tonkinson)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

\*Men hunt with spears, which are 8 to 10 feet in length and thrown with spearthrowers. (Tonkinson)

\*For fighting they also use shields and boomerangs as well as clubs. (Tonkinson)

2.4 Food storage:

\*Seeds that are periodically abundant are stored in the boles of trees. (Tonkinson)

2.5 Sexual division of production:

\*Women hunt lizards and small game frequently and both sexes can engage in hunting and gathering activities. (Tonkinson)

\*Men sometimes prepare large game and secret ritual feasts but much of the food preparation is done by women. (Tonkinson)

\*Women's estimated contribution of food is 60%-80% (Tonkinson)

2.6 Land tenure:

\*Each family group has a certain area or estate that they are tied to religiously or ritually (Tonkinson)

2.7 Ceramics:

\*None

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

\*Kangaroos are always butchered into the same cuts of meat, each of which is designated as belonging to a particular kin. (Tonkinson)

2.9 Food taboos:

\*It is considered taboo to skin a kangaroo. (Tonkinson)

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

\*None.

**3. Anthropometry**

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

\*Males ~66inches [Although some where were as tall as ~72 inches]

\*Females ~62 inches

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

\*Not listed

**4. Life History, mating, marriage**

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

\*Probably around 11 or 12. (Tonkinson)

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

\*Unlisted

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

\* Unlisted

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

\*Unknown

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

\*Females marry around age 12. (Tonkinson)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

\*Unknown

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

\*Middle-age or older men typically are married polygynously with two or three wives. (Tonkinson)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

\*No

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

\*Wealth and status are not acquired through inheritance. (Tonkinson)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

\*Not discussed

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

\*Homosexuality appears absent but some relations do occur between young males. (Tonkinson)

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

\*Marriage ideally occurs between individuals whose groups are genealogically and geographically distant. They are classed as cross-cousins and referred to as 'spouse'. However, cross-cousins are sometimes classed as siblings and are therefore not marriageable. (Tonkinson)

\*Sister exchange is quite rare. (Tonkinson)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?

\*A woman's husband is always the father of the child. (Tonkinson)

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")

\*Spirit children find their mothers (Tonkinson)

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

\*No

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

\*Not discussed in the literature.

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

\*People classed as cross-cousins, but generally not actually close relatives. (Tonkinson)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

4.22 Evidence for couvades

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

\*The physiology of reproduction is never discussed by the Martu; the father of a child is the husband of its mother. (Tonkinson)

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

\*Mother-in-law avoidance (Tonkinson)

4.24 Joking relationships?

\*Same sex relatives (Tonkinson)

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

\*Bilateral (Tonkinson)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

\*Marriage between people who are classed as siblings is discouraged. (Tonkinson)

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

\*No. (Tonkinson)

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

\*Children are named a while after they are born by older family members. (Tonkinson)

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

\*Women marry men in other groups or lineages than themselves. (Tonkinson)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

\*Once young men are initiated they are eligible to claim their promised spouse. Later, men may arrange marriage of a girl with her parents. (Tonkinson)

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

### **Warfare/homicide**

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

4.18 Cannibalism?

\*No

### **5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

\*6-30 people (Tonkinson)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

\*The Martu move frequently, depending on availability of water and food. (Tonkinson)

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

\*Bands that are generally made of one or more families in which the male heads are patrilineally related. May vary from 6-8 people to around 30. (Tonkinson)

5.4 Post marital residence:

\*Patrilocal (Tonkinson)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

\*The Martu identify boundary zones between groups but don't see territories as enclosed or bounded but instead as clusters and tracks that link them together in a regional web. (Tonkinson)

\*Boundaries are somewhat vague in absence of major landforms/ water sources (Tonkinson)

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

\*Relationships between male relatives of similar ages are very close and are often joking relationships. (Tonkinson)

5.8 Village and house organization:

\*Camps are made by clearing an area and then burning the surrounding area to discourage unwanted animals. Food is stored on flat platforms to keep it away from the dogs. A slight depression is dug out for sleeping in. Family shelters are kept apart from each other for privacy. (Tonkinson)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

\*Boys and young men sleep in bachelor shelters. (Tonkinson)

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

\*Ground. (Tonkinson)

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

\*Loose bands that sometimes gather into larger groups

5.12 Trade:

\*Trade takes place in 3 main contexts: Ritual activities during big meetings, gift exchange between friendly kin during small group meetings, and as part of obligations owed to certain close kin and affines. (Tonkinson)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

\*There are hierarchies based on age and a separate hierarchy that initiated men follow.

\*In the men's hierarchy, there are cooks (first level) who are older men who prepare many ceremonial meals and act as advisors and direct ritual. Next are the active middle aged men who transmit messages between cooks and lower status people. The third level are "leg men" who assist the second level men. The lowest level are partially initiated men who are novices and must remain silent and do exactly as told. (Tonkinson)

## 6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

\*Not a great deal of specific time is allocated to RCR but they can practice ritual wherever they want. (Tonkinson)

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

6.2 Stimulants:

\*None mentioned.

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

\*Birth is not celebrated ritually. (Tonkinson)

\*There are two rituals related to death; the burial and the reburial. (Tonkinson)

6.4 Other rituals:

\*Male initiation (Tonkinson)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

\*The Dreaming or Dreamtime is seen as a period of creation, but to the Martu the ultimate origins of the creative beings aren't important and neither is the timing of the creation. (Tonkinson)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

\*Men spend much more time going through initiation than women, though women do have their own rituals that they keep that the men don't know about. (Tonkinson)

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

\*N/A

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

\*The Martu do not believe in reincarnation but belief that the soul returns to where it was before the person was born. (Tonkinson)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

\*Yes (Tonkinson)

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

\*Yes (Tonkinson)

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

\*Totemism.

**7. Adornment**

7.1 Body paint:

\*Yes. Red and white ochre paint are used. (Tonkinson)

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

\*When their hair grows long, men sometimes tie it back out of their faces with hair bands, which also serve as decoration. (Tonkinson)

7.4 Scarification:

\*Older children and adults of both genders often have scars on their upper arms. Men also often have a prominent scar ridge (called cicatrices) across their chest. The scars are either self-inflicted or added by friends to enhance personal appearance. (Tonkinson)

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

\*Women wear pubic tassels and men sometimes wear pubic pendants. Women also sometimes wear gum-tree nuts in their hair. (Tonkinson)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

## **8. Kinship systems**

8.1 Sibling classification system:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

**9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):**

## Works Cited

Tonkinson, Robert. 1991. *The Mardu Aborigines: Living the Dream in Australia's Desert* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.