

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Walbiri, Warlpiri

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Central Western part of the Northern Territory. "Traditionally the Warlpiri-speaking people occupied the Tanami Desert; today they live mainly in towns and on the Aboriginally-owned cattle station of willowra. A number of Warlpiri live in Alice Springs and others can be found scattered across the top of northern Australia and the Kimberly region (Encyclopedia.com)."

1.4 Brief history: "In 1946 the government established the settlement of Yuendumu, to which it moved many Warlpiri in the region, thus ending the period in which any Warlpiri were living a completely independent life in the bush. Today, with government assistance, a number of small groups have set up outstations or homeland centers in the area of their traditional land interests, leading to a limited recolonization of the remoter desert regions, supported by modern technology (Encyclopedia.com)."

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: "But a person should not expose himself in mixed company, particularly if the spouse is also present. The action would "shame" the onlookers; it would cause them to think about the married couple's sexual relationship, and the couple would be aware of their thoughts. This sort of modesty seems to have developed since the people began wearing clothes in the presence of Europeans. In the past they generally went naked or wore tiny and inadequate public tassels (Meggit, M)." "They were aware that most Europeans would rather employ monogamous Aborigines, for the Europeans regard these as being more moral...(Meggit, M)." The Australian government forced the Warlpiri to sedentarize in the 1940's putting a strain on their hunter-gather lifestyle.

1.6 Ecology:

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: The Warlpiri reside mainly in the settlements of Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Ali-Curang, Willowra, and Hyirripi. They represent the most populous Aboriginal group in Central Australia. (Dussart, F). "Nowadays, most Warlpiri live in towns ranging in size from 300 to 1,200 people...The core of each town includes a store from which all day-to-day nutritional and material requirements are bought, a clinic, a primary school, a municipal office, a workshop, usually a church and a police station, and a number of European-style houses (Encyclopedia.com)."

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Roots, fruits, grasses, and tree seeds (Encyclopedia.com)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: lizards and small marsupials, supplemented by large game such as kangaroos and emus (Encyclopedia.com)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Boomerang, spears, spear throwers, digging sticks

2.4 Food storage: NA

2.5 Sexual division of production: "In this society the sexual division of labour is clearly marked. The men hunt games, the women gather vegetable-foods and the smaller forms of wild life The women also prepare most of the food, collect firewood, carry water, and care for the young children (Meggit, M)."

2.6 Land tenure: "Rights in places and tracts of land (estates) are acquired from one's father or mother but also on the basis of one's place of conception, the burial place of a parents...(Encyclopedia.com)."

2.7 Ceramics: Dishes, stone-cutting

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: NA

2.9 Food taboos: NA

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? NA

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): NA

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): NA

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): NA

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): NA

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): NA

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): NA

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): 8-9 years old for women, 19-20 for men

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: 7.7%, "Occasionally couples are encountered whose personalities are mutually antipathetic. If they are childless, they separate eventually and remarry, with public approval; but, if they have children, close relatives press them to remain married at least until the children approach puberty (Meggit, M)."

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: "Ideally, the residential unit should be a composite family, comprising a man, several wives, and their unmarried daughters and uncircumcised sons, all of whom should share the one shelter (Meggit, M)." "Most of the married and single men with whom I discussed the matter said that two or three wives were enough for anyone, this number would provide adequate economic help and sexual variety for the husband, would bear him many children, and could be supervised comparatively easily (Meggit, M)." 1st tribe: 1.6 mean wives per husband, and 42.5% polygynously married and 2nd tribe: 1.5 mean wives per husband, and 34.3% polygynously married

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

4.9 Inheritance patterns: NA

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: “Young girls receive domestic and ritual training not only from their mothers but also from married elder sisters and mothers’ mothers. Boys derive much of their knowledge of kinship organization from the patient teaching of their mothers’ fathers; they learn hunting and fighting techniques as much from uncles and brothers-in-law as from fathers and elder brothers (Meggit, M).” **Father-Son:** “The marked affective bond between father and son, which develops early in the boy’s infancy and persists until death, is manifested in many situations (Meggit, M).” “At the death of his father or of a son approaching manhood, a man wails in a prescribed fashion and gashes his thighs deeply (Meggit, M).” **Father-Daughter:** Men see less of their daughters than they do of their sons, however “Men may often be observed nursing and fondling their infant daughters. They like to deck them out with combs and bangles and some go to great trouble to obtain small pearlshell pendants to hang around the girls’ necks (Meggit, M).” “A man has certain obligations towards his daughter after her marriage, especially if she still resides in his community. He should continue to protect her from insult and injury, especially from maltreatment by her husband (Meggit, M).” “Women wail and gash their heads at the deaths of their close fathers...(Meggit, M).” **Mother-Son:** “The Walbiri regard a woman’s love for her son as one of the most intense and enduring affective attitudes there is (Meggit, M).” “For the first nine or ten months of its life, the child is carried everywhere in a wooden trough slung from the mother’s shoulder and is never out of her sight...the woman lavishes affection on the baby (Meggit, M).” “A woman whose adolescent or married son is a way working for the Europeans feels his absence deeply. Without any apparent stimulus, she often bursts into shrill keening and gouges her scalp with a digging stick (Meggit, M).” **Mother-Daughter:** “A woman treats her infant daughter with the same loving care that she displays towards a son of the same age...until the girl marries, she rarely leaves her mother’s side...a girl accompanies her mother on the daily search for food and firewood (Meggit, M).” “A woman’s behavior at the death of a daughter is the same as that at the death of a son...Women wail, cut off their hair and gouge their scalps when their mothers die (Meggit, M).”

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: NA

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): NA

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

Childlessness is attributed to the failure of the “*guruwari*” entering the woman. “This condition is not caused by any moral fault or ritual pollution. Rather, it is regarded as a regrettable indication of the imperfect control that humans have over dreamtime beings (Meggit, M).”

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”): “...the child’s conception-dreaming enters the mother in order to animate the fetus, and, second that all members of a matriline share a vaguely defined and impersonal spirit that the child automatically acquires while in its mother’s womb (Meggit, M).” “While a mother is walking along, a *kuruwalpa* will penetrate her—through the womb, foot, or navel—in a fashion that animates the fetus (Dussart, F).”

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

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Yes, sexual coercion is seen by both males and females. “Having selected a suitable woman, the man performs love-magic rituals privately in the bush to engage her affects. As he already has reason to believe she is interested in him, he can confidently rely on the magic to sway her. The adulterer then arranges to meet the woman secretly in the bush, where they spent an hour to two together (Meggit, M).” Rape does occur as well

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): “The preferred marriage is with “mother’s mother’s brother’s daughter’s daughter (Meggit, M)”, counted as second-cousins

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?: “although it is recognized that some men are likely to initiate sexual liaisons with certain extra-familial relatives, the overt norm in sexual relationships is that men should copulate only with their wives, and reproduction should occur only within the family (Meggit, M).” “Male adultery is regarded with complacency and some amusement by most men... But all men roundly condemn female adultery as a shameful business (Meggit, M).”

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: NA

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?: The father

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

4.22 Evidence for couvades: NA

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

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?: NA

4.24 Joking relationships?: “Heavy-handed sexual joking is common in all-male groups (Meggit, M).”

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

4.26 Incest avoidance rules: Yes, “intercourse with his actual cross-cousins is regarded as incestuous” (Meggit, M)

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?: Yes, “The father, as a rule, does not attend the public ceremony of betrothal; he is grieved by the thought that his daughter must eventually leave his camp (Meggit, M).” “There are no marriage ceremonies among the Warlpiri unless future spouses get married in a church as Christians. Betrothal takes place during initiation ceremonies (Dussart, F).” “The statement that there is no wedding ceremony requires comment. The people regard the initial removal of the girl to her husband’s dwelling at his request as the termination of the betrothal and the beginning of the marriage, Her walking through the camp to join the man consist Utes the public statement of the fact (Meggit, M).”

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

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

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? “A young man has little say in the choice of his wife (Meggit, M).” Marriages are arranged by the fathers; the mother’s brother may consult as well as the mother who might sway her husband if she does not like the potential son-in-law.

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: NA

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: NA. I did not find any supporting evidence in any of the sources I used for warfare.

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: NA

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

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

4.18 Cannibalism?: NA

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: ≈ 30 (Meggit, M)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): No

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

5.4 Post marital residence: “By the time girls are 10 or 12 years old, they have usually left their families of orientation to join their husbands (Meggit, M).”

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): NA

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): NA

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: NA

5.8 Village and house organization: House organization: “roughly rectangular, flat-roofed structure, 5 or 6 feet square. Four forked corner-posts support a roof made of rusty sheets of galvanized iron or of layers of leafy branches (Meggit, M)”. Apart from the widows’ and the bachelors’ camp, each shelter is an individual dwelling occupied by one family. Outsiders should not enter a shelter without an invitation (Meggit, M). “Ideally, the residential unit should be a composite

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses): The “Women’s Camp” “which houses widows not yet eligible for remarriage and the few unmarried women not living with their parents (Meggit, M)”. There is also a structure in which bachelors gather to gossip and gamble. Married men who wish to escape from boredom or domestic disputes often join the young men here (Meggit M).” Most shelters in the community are rebuilt two to three times a year.

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?: NA

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

5.12 Trade: “It is true that family members consume much of the food they gather and use many objects they manufacture; but they distribute a significant quantity of these things to relatives outside the family in return for other goods and services (Meggit, M).” “There was an extensive exchange of items and material culture in the past, but it was mainly in the nature of gift exchange rather than economic necessity. Much prized, both locally and beyond, was the red ocher from a mine at Mount Stanley. It was exchanged for balls of hair string, spear shafts, or shields. Incised pearl shells and dentalia were exchanged into the Warlpiri area from the Kimberly range (Encyclopedia.com).”

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?: Cross-culturally the Walbiri believe the “Whitefellow” has almost unlimited wealth and power. Next are the “Yellowfellows”, half-caste Aborigines, labeled as “Afghans and other Asians”. They have fewer material possessions, less money, and less power. At the bottom of the scale is the “Blackfellow”, with few possessions and little money, prestige, or power.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR: Some rituals may last weeks, while others are performed in less than half a day. Ritual cycles occur during a specific time of the year such as during the wet season (Dussart, F).

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): “When discussing their religion, Warlpiri men and women invoke a key concept: the *Jukurpa*.

6.2 Stimulants: NA

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): “*Tarruku* events associated with male initiation cannot be witnessed by women (Dussart, F).” This ritual event includes the circumcision of the young boy. “The second stage of initiation is called *kajirri* and *kankarlu* or “high school” in Aboriginal English (Dussart, F).”

6.4 Other rituals: NA

6.5 Myths (Creation): “Mythical heroes and heroines emerged from the earth, traveled around the countryside, performed marvelous acts, and continue to live in the *Jukurpa*. Their travels transformed the shapeless ground into features (hills, water, trees, etc) (Dussart, F).” “The actions of these legendary beings...are still reenacted by the Warlpiri in their ritual performances (Dussart, F).”

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): “One or several songs, designs, and dance sequences are associated with the segment of a Dreaming...(Dussart, F).”

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: “The same basic elements of designs, songs, and dances performed by men and women are stylistically arranged according to age and gender that characterize a specific ritual activity (Dussart, F).”

6.8 Missionary effect: “Colonial and postcolonial forces have irrevocably changed Warlpiri ritual activities. A number of ceremonies have disappeared, and others have been altered (Dussart, F).” “Church *purlapa* is the Aboriginal English term used for creolized performances merging some components of Christian and Warlpiri religions...Missionaries representing various branches of the Christian church have long struggled to convert the Warlpiri and have had a small but noticeable impact within certain areas (Dussart, F).”

6.9 RCR revival: NA

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: “The ceremonies marking a person’s death are called *malamala*, or “sorry business” in Aboriginal English. *Malamala* ceremonies are performed by a dead person’s relatives. Widows, mothers, and mothers-in-law go to a “sorry camp,” where they are placed under a speech taboo that can last from several weeks to several months (Dussart, F).” “Men conduct

“sorry business” but are not put under a speech taboo. Male relatives self-inflict wounds to their bodies to show their sorrow at the loss of their relative (Dussart, F).”

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?: Yes, “The name of the deceased as well as all words sounding the same are placed under a speech taboo. All individuals sharing the name of the deceased or something that sounds familiar are subsequently identified as *kumanjayi* or “no name” (Dussart, F).”

6.12 Is there teknonymy?: NA

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): The *Jukurrpa* provides the Warlpiri with links to their ancestral past and land, as well as to their ancestors and to each other...(Dussart, F).” “*Jukurrpa* has often been translated in English as “Dreaming,” “Dreamtime,” or “Ancestral Times” (Dussart, F).” “If they do not enact their *Jukurrpa* correctly not only the land may become ill, but the people, animals, flora, and resources attached to it are put at risk as well (Dussart, F).”

6.2 Stimulants: NA

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: Yes, during rituals

7.2 Piercings: NA

7.3 Haircut: NA

7.4 Scarification: Men will gash their legs when their fathers die

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

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: NA

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: NA

7.8 Missionary effect: NA

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: NA

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: NA

8.2 Sororate, levirate: Yes

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): **Brothers:** “The relationship between Walbiri brothers nicely exemplifies of the principle of sibling unity, and the people themselves stress both the desirability and the prevalence of fraternal solidarity and substitution (Meggit, M).” **Sisters:** “Nevertheless, sisters usually treat each other in friendly fashion in everyday life, and their behavior exhibits no formality (Meggit, M).”

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

1) If a man’s wife becomes ill: “He watches over her during the convalescence and ensures that various of her female relatives are present to care for her. If the woman dies, his observance of the prescribed rules of mourning exhibits and emotional intensity and scrupulousness that the behavior of other mourners generally lacks. Even the members of his own family hesitate to approach him during this period (Meggit, M).”

3) A few younger women, however, are reluctant to share their husbands with co-wives and, by nagging and being generally obstructive, sometimes dissuade the men from making second marriages (Meggit, M).”

4) “In the past all first marriages were arranged, often when the girl was young or even before she was born. The average age difference at first marriage was 21 years, with a girl of about 10 marrying a man in his thirties. These age differences are now in sharp decline as are the numbers of arranged marriages. Middle-aged men at present can still expect to have two or three wives in the normal course of events, which is made possible by the delay in men’s first marriage, but this is changing rapidly. Permanent, stable unions were the ideal and separation and divorce were comparatively rare; however, because of the age differences between husbands and wives, most women could and can expect to have several husbands over a lifetime and to have more say in whom they marry as they get older. Preferred marriage partners in the past were classificatory second cousins, but more people are now marrying first cousins, and a few are marrying classificatory mother’s mother’s daughter’s sons (Encyclopedia.com).”

Numbered references

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2. Dussart, Françoise. “Warlpiri Religion.” *Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Lindsay Jones, 2nd ed., vol. 14, Macmillan Reference USA, 2005, pp. 9693-9697. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*, proxy.mul.missouri.edu/login?url=http://go.galegroup.com.proxy.mul.missouri.edu/ps/i.do?p=GVRL&sw=w&u=morenetuomcolum&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CCX3424503311&asid=fd40efd6b4bdaced5ae9232c21090896. Accessed 4 May 2017.
3. “Warlpiri.” *Encyclopedia of World Cultures*. . *Encyclopedia.com*. 3 May. 2017<<http://www.encyclopedia.com>>.