

1. Description

- 1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Tahiti; Official Languages: Tahitian & French; Austronesian language family
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): 639-3
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): 17°40'S 149°25'W [1]
- 1.4 Brief history: The island of Tahiti was formed from volcanic activity, and it was originally settled by Polynesians between 300-800 CE. Tahiti was a part of the Kingdom of Tahiti until it was declared a colony of France in 1880. The relaxed and contented nature of the people and the characterization of the island as a paradise impressed early Europeans, planting the seed for a romanticization by the West that endures to this day. After European contact, the population fell rapidly and traditional society was disrupted by guns, prostitution, venereal disease, and alcohol. Introduced diseases including typhus, influenza and smallpox killed so many Tahitians that by 1797, the population was only 16,000; later it dropped as low as 6,000. Pōmare I founded the Pōmare Dynasty and his lineage was the first to unify Tahiti from 1788-1791. He and his descendants founded and expanded Tahitian influence to all of the lands that now constitute modern French Polynesia. In June 1843, Tahiti was annexed to France; this was denounced by King Louis-Philippe. On June 29, 1880, King Pōmare V was forced to cede the sovereignty of Tahiti and its dependencies to France. However, it was not until 1946 that indigenous Tahitians were legally authorized French citizens. In 2004, Tahiti was considered an 'overseas country' and semi-autonomous, though only about 20% of its population is thought to be in favor of full Tahitian independence from France. Tahiti is the largest of the Society Islands of French Polynesia (which consists of five archipelagos), contains 12 communes, and its nearest neighbor is Moorea, 12 miles to the northwest [1]. Nearly 80 percent of the residents are of Polynesian or mixed Polynesian ethnicity, approximately 12 percent are of European ancestry and 8 percent are of Chinese decent. The population is concentrated in the urban and suburban areas of northern Tahiti [8].
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: The London Missionary Society, who sent missionaries and teachers such as John Williams in 1816 and John Paton in 1858 worked to provide stability in the islands through sustainable relief and development work, providing a written language, and ending traditional cannibalism and child sacrifice practices [1]. In the 1960s and 1970s, the French government made it forbidden for children to speak Tahitian in schools; present day thinking has since changed that [1].
- 1.6 Ecology (natural environment): Tahiti is the highest and largest island of French Polynesia. The island consists of two roughly round portions centered on volcanic mountains and connected by a short isthmus. The northwestern portion is known as Tahiti Nui ("big Tahiti"), while the much smaller southeastern portion is known as Tahiti Iti ("small Tahiti"). Tahiti Nui is heavily populated along the coast, especially around the capital, Papeete. The interior of Tahiti Nui is almost entirely uninhabited. Tahiti Iti has remained isolated, as its southeastern half is accessible only to those travelling by boat or on foot. The rest of the island is encircled by a main road which cuts between the mountains and the sea. November through April is the wet season, with January being the wettest month. The average temperature ranges between 21 °C (70 °F) and 31 °C (88 °F) with little seasonal variation [1].
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: As of 2010, population is 270,764 inhabitants, with a population density of about 74 persons / km² [2].

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): tropical fruits (e.g. papaya, mangoes, melons, pineapples, grapefruit, bananas, lynchee, rambutans, pamplemousse, etc.);lemon; lime; noni fruit; coconuts; vanilla; breadfruit; rice; taro root; cassava; yams/sweet potatoes; manioc; flour products, especially bread; coffee; wild plantain [4].
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Seafood, especially fish, shellfish, crustacean; pork; chicken; red meat (mostly imported), some pigs and dogs [4].
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Although archery was a sacred sport in ancient Tahiti and ancient Tahitians were expert marksmen, bows and arrows were never used as weapons of war. Slings were a popular weapon, as well as plain spears expanding into a wide blade, and clubs [5].
- 2.4 Food storage: Food storage typically 'as-is' in recognizable form – creates perfect environment for botulism and other food-borne diseases [6].
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: In such a highly stratified society as Tahiti, members of the upper class were typically supplied with plant foods from servants or in the form of tributes. Among members of the lower classes, labor was typically shared among the sexes, with distinctions in the types: women did most of the smaller scale work such as gardening and plant food gathering; men mostly did the fishing and the larger scale/time intensive agricultural labor. In general, women were economically subordinated in the peasant commodity-producing household, relegated to a devalued domestic sphere and reproduction, and have a greater economic dependence on males. In general, Polynesian men dominate in skilled and unskilled physical labor (agriculture, construction, fishing, transportation). Tahitian men have control over means of production – linked to male domination and authority. Despite their apparent exclusion from some spheres, Tahitian women possessed high status and social valuation and occupied public positions of substantial authority [7]. Before the introduction of development programs in the 1960s, men were responsible for taro gardens, tree crop plantations, and fishing, and women devoted themselves to motherhood and household maintenance. Women also assisted their husbands in agricultural production and fishing. Men tended to dominate the income-earning opportunities in the processing of copra and vanilla. Rural and urban development schemes after the 1960s expanded men's opportunities in commercial agriculture and introduced wage-earning jobs. Although women were drawn into wage labor, these opportunities were dominated by men. [8].
- 2.6 Land tenure: The contemporary system of land ownership and tenure resulted from French efforts to introduce a system of individual land ownership. Land is inherited equally by all the descendants of a landowner and is often held in common by large groups of related people. Co-owners who reside on the family land work out the details of use rights among themselves; these rights are inherited by one's children. Communal land holding is the source of many disputes as heirs petition to divide land into individual holdings or

attempt to sell land with competing ownership claims. However, communal ownership has slowed the transfer of land from native families to recent immigrants. There are few landless Tahitians [8].

- 2.7 Ceramics: There is not a lot of information about the prevalence and use of ceramics as art throughout Tahiti; however, it seems as if for what it was, ceramics used to be used for food storage. On the other hand, Tahitian art served two primary functions—to honor and communicate with the diversity of gods, spirits, and ancestors of Tahitian religion and to adorn the bodies of chiefs, warriors, and other high-ranking individuals [9].
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Through the Tahitian tradition of bond-friendships, where unrelated persons – especially friends – become like kinsmen, Tahitians share most of the rights and obligations that ideally exist between kinsmen. This includes food, labor, hospitality, and even money if necessary. In ancient times, this ideal also extended to rights in land, children, and even sexual access to wives. Tahitian sharing patterns ideally exist with their kinsmen, and would extend towards these ‘bond-friendships’ when available. It also establishes a reciprocal sharing pattern [10].
- 2.9 Food taboos: In ancient Tahiti, taboos generally prevented women specifically from eating pigs, dogs, turtles, albacore, shark, dolphin, whale, and porpoise – foods that were highly esteemed and in short supply either seasonally or throughout the year. Women also could not eat food prepared in the *marae* where contact was made between men and the spirit world. This system served to disadvantage women nutritionally and represented their subordinate role to men [12].
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Tahitians are a seafaring people and use of the canoe has been prevalent throughout time in Tahiti; in fact, there is a canoe on the Tahiti flag which represents their seafaring nature. Tahitian canoes are built very narrow, and some of the largest ones reached up to 60-70 feet long (these were used as war canoes and are no longer in existence – or at least no longer in use). The sterns of these canoes are typically intricately ornamented and decorated. Smaller canoes are used on a more regular basis, for transportation from one side of the island to another, and between surrounding islands; it is an extremely commodious form of transportation, and are also sometimes used as moveable houses [13].

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): Males: 96.02; Females: 88.57 [14].
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): Males: 77.00kg; Females: 64.78kg [14].

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): The median age is 12.75 SD 1.76, with the median age slightly higher in rural areas than in Papeete [15].
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): First pregnancy occurred at mean age of 20.6 [16].
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Average Tahitian family size is 6; Mean household size typically ranges from 5-20 interrelated family/persons [17].
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): Information could not be found.
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): The average age at first marriage is about 16.8 years for women and 20.9 years for men. In years past, some females would marry as early as ten, with others being engaged from birth – arranged by their parents. Also in the past, marriage age for females was typically between 12-16, which was in great disparity to the males aged 30+ with whom they were married [18].
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Information could not be found. However, Divorce was traditionally handled flexibly with the couple returning to her or his own family. They were then free to remarry. There was no formal legal divorce in pre-modern Tahiti [21].
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Traditionally, the practice of polygyny in Tahiti was reserved for males of the upper classes, specifically chiefs/kings, and it was confined typically to those who could afford it. Some middles and lower class Tahitians did engage in polygyny regardless. However, with French colonization and missionary work, traditional *tapu* cultural practices – including polygyny – was banned [19]. Exact percentages for current polygynous marriages could not be found.
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: There is no evidence of bride price, bride service, or dowry in modern Tahitian society.
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: People recognize bilateral kinship units that control the use of land. Individuals must demonstrate their connections to one of these units in order to claim use rights to plots of family land. Those rights are inherited by one's children [8].
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: All of the mother and fathers' relatives are considered kin. Most often couples initially live with the parents of the man or woman – whichever would be more economically beneficial – and later establish a separate domestic unit. There is not a lot of conflict that occurs between parents and offspring; parents very rarely use hitting or spanking as a form of punishment, and there is therefore less violent thoughts/behaviors prevalent among Tahitians [8].
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Homosexuality is a frequent sexual practice but it is understood in a complex manner, especially in regard to sexual relations with *raerae* (transvestites), whose sex seems to be perceived differently by different people. The attitude to *raerae* sits in contrast with the low acceptance of homosexuality generally by society, particularly among young people (more specifically, among young males). In Tahiti, about 31% of males accepted male homosexuality as compared with 37% of females. Female homosexuality was acceptable to 35% of males and 39% of females. Acceptance of homosexuality was higher among respondents who had a higher level of education and who placed less importance on religious values [16]. For adult and older women in contemporary Tahiti, gender performances are not strictly circumscribed. Conversely, there exist female- and male-bodied-*māhū*, females and males who dress opposite of the norms prescribed to their gender; these *māhū* are often misrepresented as homosexuals. Tahitian *māhū* and homosexuals often migrate to the urban centers of Papeete, rather than living in the small island villages because they felt as if life is more difficult in rural areas because people gossip incessantly, and subsequently in urban areas sexual relationships are as a rule kept hidden from friends and co-workers [20].
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Within Tahitian society, rank predominates; Tahitian marriages are endogamous in terms of social class. In rare cases of marriages that break class boundaries, the higher ranked spouse assumes the authority and decision-making

- power in the household, even if that higher ranking spouse is a female. Most Tahitians marry endogamous in terms of ethnicity as well, with the majority of marriages taking place among Polynesians; there is some recent increasing changes in exogamous marriages, particularly with Polynesians and Chinese people (who make up a significant proportion of the population) or with Europeans [7].
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? There doesn’t seem to be a concept of partible paternity among males in Tahiti, however, child rearing and socialization occurs by a network of kin within and outside the nuclear family. Since the introduction of Christianity, it seems as if males are viewed with the idea that “sperm has fertilized a female egg, his biological role in reproduction ends” [8].
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”) Since the introduction of Christianity, the mother’s role in procreation is seen as essential to the reproduction. The fetus is undisputedly hers, and will be created of her flesh and blood. [8].
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? Conception is not believed to be an incremental process. Conception is strongly correlated with aspects of sacredness in Tahiti; even the (indigenous) gods are seen as joyous and sexually playful – promoting the positive sex-ethos of the culture [21].
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Forcible sex is still a frequent occurrence with one out of every seven females saying that they had been victims of such practices; about 14% of non-virgin females reported to have been subjected to forcible sex. This percentage did not differ much from generation to generation. The percentage of women whose first sexual encounter was forced on them increased as the importance they placed on religious values decreased. In Tahitian culture, first encounters with a young girl are often forced by the young man [16].
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): The choice of a marriage partner is less fixed than in many cultures of the world. In the times before Christian influence, the preference in Tahiti was for cross-cousin marriage—a woman would marry her mother's brother's son or her father's sister's son. Missionaries forbade this type of marriage pattern. The present patterns allow for freedom of choice in marriage partners, similar to that found in American society [8].
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? In the pre-colonial era, Tahitian females enjoyed sexual freedoms because there was no stigma attached to illegitimate children. Since Christianization however this has changed and is much more conservative [22].
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: Information could not be found.
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? Because of the close kin networks in Tahiti, if the mother dies typically the kin group, including the father, grandparents, siblings, and other relatives will all help to raise the children [8].
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: 1.07 males/ 1 female [23].
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: There does not seem to be any evidence of couvades among Tahitian males.
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): There is no different distinction for potential fathers among Tahitians.
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? No formal relationship based on kin avoidance and respect. However, with a highly stratified society, Tahitians used to give the highest respect to those of higher social classes – which trumped all else [8].
- 4.24 Joking relationships? Tahitians establish joking relationships with their sexual partners as well as informal, joking relationships with their close kin. With strangers and non-kin there is typically a more formal relationship pattern [8].
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: Descent groups may have been important structural units in ancient Tahitian society, but it is no longer so in modern society. There is no formal standing for it in French law or any other institutional organization. It is more of a co-heir group system than descent group. People recognize bilateral kinship units that control the use of land. Individuals must demonstrate their connections to one of these units in order to claim use rights to plots of family land. Those rights are inherited by one's children [8].
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: Parents and direct siblings. Yet, brother sister incest was practiced among the royal families of Tahiti [21].
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Residents recognize several kinds or degrees of marital union. At one end of the continuum is the union of a couple instituted by civil (French) and church ceremonies and celebrated by wedding feasts for relatives, officials, and friends. At the other end are couples that live and eat together without a civil ceremony who are committed to raising a family together and are considered by their neighbors to be married [8].
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? On a couple's wedding day, baby names are presented to them which have been chosen from the family's genealogy. When the baby comes along one or ten years later, the naming part is already covered [24].
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?): Marriage usually takes place within the community [8].
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Marriages are not typically arranged in modern Tahiti, with couples more or less free to choose their own marriage partners [8].
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: Information could not be found.

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: 0. The French banned much of the traditional cultural practices, which included warfare [21].
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: Information could not be found.
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Information could not be found.
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Tahiti, as a part of French Polynesia with its surrounding neighbors, is in good relationship with its neighboring societies as part of one big diplomatic endeavor maintained by the French. Tensions between the majority Polynesian ethnic group and the minority European and Chinese communities are due to economic inequalities between those groups and persistent cultural differences. Violence against members of ethnic minorities is rare,

and systematic discrimination against the members of any ethnic group is not evident. There has been a great deal of intermarriage between ethnic groups, and European and Chinese families tend to assimilate into the majority culture [8].

4.18 Cannibalism? The Tahitians worshipped their gods on *maraes* (ancient temples or meeting places) built of stones. Sacrifices were offered to the gods, sometimes including humans, mostly war prisoners or troublemakers. Despite the practice of human sacrifice, cannibalism apparently was never practiced in Tahiti [25].

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: c. 434 [7].

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): There may be evidence of prehistoric human mobility in Tahiti; however, in the modern era there does not seem to be any evidence to suggest any (seasonal) mobility patterns.

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): In the early years of European contact Tahitian tribes were grouped into two major territorial units. One constituted the larger northwestern portion of the island and was known as Tahiti Nui, while the other consisted of the southeastern Tairapu Peninsula and was known as Tahiti Iti. Each maintained a paramount chief of socioReligious power. Below this highest position were chiefs who ruled over what may be likened to districts. These were Divided into smaller units and managed by inferior ranked chiefs. A paramount chief's power was not unlimited, since important matters affecting most or all of his region were decided by a council of high-ranking chiefs. Paramountcy was not totally preordained, as wars and kinship alliances served to maintain such a status. It was with European aid and combinations of these factors that the Pomare paramountcy was maintained well into the nineteenth century [8].

5.4 Post marital residence: After marriage, Tahitians will first move in with either spouse's parental home for while – whichever is deemed more economically beneficial, and then after some time move out to establish their own independent unit [8].

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): Since 1962, when France stationed military personnel in the region, French Polynesia has changed from a subsistence agricultural economy to one in which a high proportion of the work force is either employed by the military or supports the tourist industry. Tahiti is supported by the French military under their rule [26].

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): Information could not be found.

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: Joking/Special relationships typically occur among friends and kin, with a more formal relationship with non-kin and strangers [8].

5.8 Village and house organization: The only urban center is Papeete and the surrounding communes at the northern end of Tahiti. These are densely developed areas that include a large commercial and government center, military and port facilities, and a wide range of residential housing types. The dominant style of domestic and commercial architecture is International Modern with concrete walls with metal roofs and decorative wood or masonry. Many homes, while built of imported materials, retain traditional spatial organization with a single large sleeping room and an outdoor kitchen. The architecture of public buildings often reflects one of the two regional architectural traditions: Polynesian-style construction from plant materials or colonial construction [8].

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): N/A

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Traditionally single large sleeping rooms in Tahitian homes; traditionally, everyone slept on the floor – less prominent in modern times [8].

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Tahiti had a highly stratified class system; the Tahitians formerly lived in a rigidly stratified society. At the top were the *ali'i*, or ruling chiefly class, a hereditary aristocracy believed to be descended directly from the gods and to embody the sacred power, or *mana*, on earth. Below the *ali'i* were the *ra'atira*, landed farmers and warriors, and below them the *manahune*, or commoners [9]. In general, rank was more important than gender in determining this differential power and social prerogatives. For instance, a higher class woman could and did assume positions of great sociopolitical power as well as other positions of prominence and authority (i.e. sages), dominating both men and women of lower rank [7].

5.12 Trade: Biggest impact from pearls – especially famous for the Tahitian Black Pearls and Mother-of-Pearls, Tourism, Flowers, and some fishing trade; Agricultural export pretty insignificant compared to the other sources of income – however very active agricultural trade internally in which fruits, vegetables, meat, and fish are shipped to markets in urban centers from other islands. Imports of food and other consumer goods including automobiles, appliances, and building materials are enormous by comparison to exports of locally produced commodities. Trade is also entirely by containers shipped by sea into the large port complex of Papeete. Exports of local goods such as black pearls, coconut products, handicrafts, fresh fruit, and flowers are often transported by air. Most trade occurs within the Pacific basin with major trading partners in Taiwan and Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Hawaii, and California. A secondary trade market with the European Union is also important but involves luxury goods such as wine, cheese, automobiles, and clothing [8].

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? See Social Organization (5.11) above. Not as prevalent in modern society.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR: Information could not be found.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Obvious ailments such as sores and open wounds were treated with herbal medicines and poultices, and splints were applied to broken bones. Less obvious illnesses were thought to occur as a result of sorcery, contact with a sacred individual or object, or the anger of one's god. Curing was attempted through priestly prayers and offerings. Among the chiefly class, these cures were performed at the patient's marae and might include human sacrifices [27].

6.2 Stimulants: Kava is sometimes used as a stimulant [28].

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): There are a number of rituals that involve life-cycle events such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals. For example, traditional weddings include the ceremonial presentation of gifts including traditional speech making and dancing. The annual collection of church tithes by the Protestant churches on May Day also involves ritual oratory and

ceremonial visitation of local households. There might also be birth feasts held on the day a child is born. Passage into puberty included tattooing rituals [8].

6.4 Other rituals: N/A.

6.5 Myths (Creation): Seeing as the majority of Tahitians have been converted to Christianity, they believe in the Creation story of the Christian Genesis. However, before colonization, in Tahitian mythology, the supreme creator deity was Ta'aroa, also called Rua-i-tupra (source of growth). Ta'aroa emerged from a **cosmic** egg and started the process of creation. To fill the emptiness around him, he used part of the egg to make the sky and the other part to create the earth. Satisfied with his accomplishment, he filled the world with all the creatures and things that are now found in it. The Tahitians believed that Ta'aroa sent both blessings and curses, and they tried to appease him with human sacrifices [29].

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): Drums—and, in the early nineteenth century, shell trumpets—were the only musical instruments used during ceremonies. The raised platforms of certain marae were decorated with carved boards, while the god, Oro, was personified by a wickerwork cylinder enclosing sacred feathers. The culture-hero god, Maui, was represented by a large humanoid wicker figure covered with patterns of feathers. Plaited masks were worn during certain ceremonies on the Tairapu Peninsula [29].

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Most religious ceremonies were tabooed to women, and therefore women did not play a major role in RCR [29].

6.8 Missionary effect: The arrival of missionaries and colonial administrators from France brought about a massive cultural transformation, with rapid conversion to Christianity and rampant disease-related depopulation. Pervasive colonial and missionary intervention undermined, and ultimately destroyed the indigenous sociopolitical and ideological systems [7].

6.9 RCR revival: Information could not be found.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: Untimely death was thought to be because of the anger of one's god, while death through aging was regarded as a natural process. Rank determined the extent of expressions of mourning and the length of time the corpse was exposed on a platform before burial. In the case of high-ranking members of the chiefly class, this time factor was greatly extended by evisceration and oiling of the body. Simple burial, secretive for those of high rank, was customary. There *is* some indication that cremation was employed for certain individuals on the Tairapu Peninsula. Among the upper classes human relics were preserved. For some, the afterlife was seen as a state of nothingness, but for others it was believed to be a happy life, for rank in the spirit world remained the same as in life [8]. Of course, since colonization and missionary work, Tahitians believe in the Christian view of a 'heaven and hell' type afterlife.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? Information could not be found.

6.12 Is there teknonymy? There does not seem to be any evidence supporting the prevalence of teknonymy in Tahiti.

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): Ancient: Both males and females possess *mana* – supernatural “force” – which they passed on to their children. The firstborn offspring inherited the greatest quantity of mana, and this line from firstborn to firstborn could be traced back to a set of divine ancestors. Modern Tahitians are typically Christian (due to missionary work and European influence) - especially Protestant and some Catholics [7].

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: Tattooing was a ritual that nearly every Tahitian experienced. Females in particular always received tattoos. Their first tattoo was given at an early age under the arms to signify that they are free of food taboos. Before receiving these marks, the young Tahitian females could only eat food prepared by their mother. When they reached puberty, Tahitian women received another more extensive tattoo covering their buttocks as a symbol of sexual maturity. The young women were said to lift their grass shirts and expose their tattoo as a way of advertizing their sexual maturity. Males were also tattooed, but it was not as mandatory as the females. They frequently received their tattoo around puberty by the same group of elders who performed their circumcision ceremony. Designs were usually in the form of elongated rectangular shapes, with a few other designs used on hands and feet [11].

7.2 Piercings: Information could not be found.

7.3 Haircut: Tahitian hair is typically worn very long and natural, and specifically for females, is typically decorated with flowers; Hibiscus blossoms are worn behind the ear or braided with palm fronds into floral crowns. For Tahitian males, the hair usually varies in length, and will sometimes be adorned with flowers as well.

7.4 Scarification: There is not a lot of evidence that suggests the prevalence of scarification in Tahitian culture.

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Tahitian women who wear flowers in their hair are intimately associated with the image of Tahiti as a whole. Tahitians wear flowers tucked behind their ears, which signals the status of their love lives. Behind the left ear means your heart is taken and you are unavailable, while behind the right ear signals you are unattached and available. Flowers behind both ears announce you are married but available, while a backward flower declares you are available immediately [3].

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: See Body Paint (7.1) above for information about tattooing as a rite of passage at puberty.

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: Tattooing and flower adornment is typically represented by both males and females.

7.8 Missionary effect: Appalled at the sexual aspect of tattooing that occurred in Tahitian society, missionaries prohibited the practice on Tahiti in the early 1800s [25].

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: With their increasing interest in ancient Polynesian ways, many young Tahitian men and women are getting theirs -- but not necessarily with modern electric needles, but with the repetitive tapping of the mallet [25].

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: Sibling terminology reflects social institutions: parity reflects the brother-sister *tapu* and “the place of male and female lines in the transmission of group interests” and seniority reflects the emphasis on rank (primogeniture) [30].

8.2 Sororate, levirate: There seems to be no evidence of sororate or levirate in contemporary Tahitian society.

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): Information could not be found.

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

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