

Description

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

Society name: Tonga (1)

Language: National languages are Tongan and English (1)

Language Family: Tongan is classified as Austronesian (1)

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

ton (1)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

Tonga is a series of islands located in the Pacific Ocean about 2,500 miles southwest of Hawaii and about 1,000 miles northeast of New Zealand. (2) Latitude 21°8'0''S, 175°12'0''W (3)

1.4 Brief history:

Polynesians settled the islands of Tonga sometime around 500 B.C. Then local kings ruled the island for centuries and often fought with each other. Dutch navigators discovered the island in 1616 but they didn't visit the islands until 1643. The first missionaries would eventually arrive from the UK in 1747 and a second group came in 1822. In 1773, British Captain James Cook visited the islands and called them the friendly islands upon having a peaceful encounter. The second missionary group led by Walter Lawry eventually was able to convert Taufa'ahau, one of the local royalties, to Christianity and he became King George Tupou I in 1845. King Tupou the first would establish a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system much like the UK. Tonga would continue its close ties with the UK and in 1900 was a protectorate state. However after WWII, Tonga would gain independence in 1970. Tongan would ultimately become a member of the UN in 1999. (4)

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

Tonga was directly influenced by missionaries in its history. Once missionaries arrived they converted one of the local leaders to Christianity and back him as king. The missionaries also converted many citizens to Christianity making it a much predominate religion. The conversion of King Tupou I also lead to the creation of a constitutional monarchy, which changed and legitimized the government of Tonga forever.

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

Tonga is in a series of 150 archipelagos of which 36 are inhabited. Many of the islands are raised coral islands some of which are volcanic. Some many characteristics include coral beaches with palm trees and emerald lagoons and tropical vegetation. (5) The climate is subtropical with temperatures ranging 74° to 90°F and average rainfall is between 67-117 inches. (6)

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

In 2011 the population size is estimated around 106,000 (6)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

Main carbohydrates are root crops like Yam, sweet potatoes, and the Taro plant and tropical fruits like bananas, pineapples, and mangoes (5)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

The main protein-lipid source for the Tongan people is fried or roasted meat including chicken and pork with lots of fish. (5)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production:

Traditionally women would stay at home and weave baskets and make cloth while the men took care of the land or tended to animals. However, both parents actively participated in parenting and food preparation (5)

2.6 Land tenure:

In Tonga all the land is owned by the King, nobles, and the government and foreigners cannot own land. People who live on the nobilities' land are required to give gifts to their landowners and those who live on government land pay a small property tax. Land cannot be sold so it is passed down through the eldest son or given as a gift. (7)

2.7 Ceramics:

While not a ceramic a very traditional product of Tonga is the tapa a large bark cloth that is given as a gift at weddings and funerals. (7)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

“Possessions in the Tongan culture are shared, the thought of this is mine and that is yours is non-existent in the minds of a Tongan. This dates back to the time when there was no refrigeration on the islands and wealth was measured by the amount of food one had. So if wealth is food and food spoils without refrigeration then it goes that wealth (food) must be shared before it spoils. It would be very rude for a Tongan not to offer food to anyone that passes by.” (7)

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

Before the arrival of Europeans Tonga had a small empire in the region and boasted fierce warriors whose canoes could carry up to two hundred people. (5)

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

Divorce is legal in Tonga and not uncommon. (Exact statistics couldn't be found) (5)

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

Marriage in Tonga is typically between two people and nothing was mentioned of polygamy. (5)

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

At the wedding the extended families known as kainga exchange mats, bark clothes, and food. During the wedding the bride and groom “wear their wealth” and dress in their best clothes. (5)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

While in society females are always considered a higher rank than the males, inheritance patterns go through the male line and usually it is through the eldest male. (5)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

Both the father and mother of the child take part in child rearing. Also the extended family and older siblings help in bringing up the child. Another interesting feature is that children are breast feed and sleep in their parents bed until 5-8 years old. (5)

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

Since Tongans have free choice of marriage there aren't really set rules on who a person can marry. However, it is a social taboo for someone to marry outside of their social status. (5)

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

In Tonga they only have one birth mother and father. But "if you were a Tongan your father would not just be the father that gave birth to you but also his brothers as well. Your mother is not just your birth mother, but her sisters as well and your mothers brothers are your uncles and your fathers sisters are your uncles" (7)

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

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

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

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

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)

Even though Tongans recognize birth parents the siblings of your biological parents are referred to as father and mother. (5)

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

Brother and sisters are supposed to avoid each other at young age. Boys at the age of ten are required to sleep in a separate house from their sister. Topics such as sex and activities like watching videos are not shared between siblings. (5)

4.24 Joking relationships?

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

Inheritance of land and titles goes through the male line usually through the oldest male first. (5)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

Young boys are forced to sleep in separate houses at age ten to avoid being with their sisters and sex is never discussed between them. Also, movies with sexual acts in them are avoided as well. (5)

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

Yes, the most important life events are celebrated at ceremonies. For weddings these celebrations can last a week. (5)

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

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

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

People have free choice on who they marry. (5)

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):

None apparent the island is 98% Tongans with the other small percentage made up of Europeans who came in the 1700s. (6)

4.18 Cannibalism?

None reported

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality)

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

Currently, Tonga is a constitutional monarchy with a parliament system. (6)

5.4 Post marital residence:

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization:

“Now Tongans are concentrated in villages and small towns. Most villages lie around an empty area, called *mala'e*, that is used for social gatherings and games. A traditional house stands on a raised platform of stones and sand. It is oval in shape with a thatched roof and walls of woven palm tree panels. The toilet and the

kitchen are in separate huts. Contemporary houses are usually bigger and made of timber with corrugated iron roofs. Little furniture is used.” (5)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

The mala'e is the empty area in the center of the village used for social gatherings. (5) The Tongans also have a Fale Faktaha (meeting house) where meetings and dances are held along with a Fale Ngaue (work house) where the women make Tapa. (7)

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

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

“Kinship ties are of paramount importance. The two major kin groups are *famili* (family) and *kainga* (extended family). A *famili* consists of a married couple and their children living in the same house and usually includes male and/or female collaterals and affinals. The '*ulumotu'a* (head of the family) presides over this group. A *kainga* consists of relatives living in different households in the same village or in several villages.” (5)

5.12 Trade:

Currently, Tonga exports include fish and squash and it imports a variety of things including food, machines, and transport equipment.(2)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

Tonga has three distinct classes: royalty, nobles, and commoners. (7)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

6.2 Stimulants:

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

6.4 Other rituals:

Sunday law means it is against the law to play, work, swim, garden, or do anything on Sunday. This tries to enforce people to relax and go to church. (7)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

Missionaries had a huge effect on religion in Tonga. Since their arrival in the 1700s Tonga has been predominately Christian with some estimates that upwards of 98% of the population is some branch of Christianity.

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

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

Tongans are Christians and left their ancient religions a long time ago. Not much is known about the ancient religion. But since the conversion to Christianity Tongans have practiced normal Christian practices. Therefore other than Christian practices nothing is special or different about their religious practices. (5)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

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

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

See 6.8

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):

“The ritual of kava drinking characterizes both formal and daily events. Kava is prepared by grinding dried roots and mixing the powder with water in a ceremonial bowl. It is nonalcoholic but slightly narcotic. People sit cross-legged in an elliptical pattern whose long axis is headed by the bowl on one side and by the highest-ranked participant on the other. The preparation and serving of the drink are done by a young woman, usually but not always the only female participant, or by male specialists. The formal coronation of a ruler and formal receptions for foreign delegations are marked by a kava ceremony. Kava clubs are found in the towns, and kava drinking gatherings take place almost daily in the villages.” (5)

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