

## 1. Description

### 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family

Numbami, Huon Gulf/ North New Guinea AKA Siboma, Sipoma  
Language now spoken is Tok Pisin  
ISO 639-3: Sij

### 1.2 Location:

Papua New Guinea, Morobe Province near the coast, 50 miles South of Lae. Total number of people is 270.

### 1.3 Brief history:

Not much know before missionaries arrived. Smaller villages in Huon Coast of New Guinea. Language is basically gone now, adopted Tok Pisin after Europeans arrived. One of the first villages to receive European visitors, German missionaries from Lutheran Church. Similar to Jabem in language, but borrowed lots from Yabem and Tok Pisin.

### 1.4 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

Borrowing from Tok Pisin and Yabem adapted from missionaries. Switch from traditional religion to more Christian-based practices after missionaries arrived. More powerful neighbors due to missionaries. Rev G. Pilhofer, 1928 recorded some facts, McElhanon ethnography in 1970 on language.

### 1.5 Ecology:

Lots of plants and animals in New Guinea. Hunter/gatherer type society due to diversity of plants.

## 2. Economy

### 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

Yuca, banana

### 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

Some suggestion for pigs (2), mainly birds, fish, and other small mammals that are hunted.

### 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

Bow and arrows, smaller, spears used for fishing.

### 2.4 Food storage:

Kept in huts, suggestion for plant storage but meat normally cooked and eaten, not stored. Most food kept in banana leaves to be cooked. Cooked on stones over a fire, also bowls used for storage, eating, and cooking.

### 2.5 Sexual division of production:

Women gathered plants and roots, cooked, men in charge of hunting and fishing. Men helped build fires

### 2.6 Land tenure:

Village "owned" land, no private/ family owned land.

### 2.7 Ceramics:

Bowls, pots, baskets made from weaving materials (possibly plants)

### 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

Prescribed sharing? all village shares food, suggestion for: Big man/ "piety chief" gets food first.

### 2.9 Food taboos:

Women, and sometimes men, have taboos during pregnancy. Women not allowed to eat meat.

### 2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

Smaller canoes, used for fishing, not real transportation, but could have been at one point. Possible for larger canoes earlier, but seemed to settle into life style, surrounding tribes have larger canoes.

## 3. Anthropometry

### 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

N/A

### 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

N/A

#### 4. Life History, mating, marriage

##### 4.1 Age at menarche (f):

Early/ mid teens

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

mid teens- 16+

##### 4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

average between 5-7 children, not all survive to childbearing age.

##### 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

Not noted but suggestion for about every year and a half or so. Birthing and breastfeeding (usually up to 11/2 years of age, if not longer depending on mother's ability)

##### 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

16+, sometimes younger, wait for maturity before moving in together

##### 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

Very low, not really mentioned, seems low. Except when female is unable to have children, then can be divorced.

##### 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

Low, Big man or "chief" was only man allowed to have multiple wives. Some men, with infertile females have two wives, but infertile wife is not seen as a true wife.

##### 4.8 Arranged marriage, bride purchase/service, dowry:

Arranged marriages, sometimes at very young age, some suggestion of sexual freedom for unmarried adolescences. Suggestion for bride service, men had to hunt/ gather food for brides family.

##### 4.9 Inheritance patterns:

. Patrilineal, patrilocal. Some men live in "men's hut", which is just for men, usually elders. Women, elders, live in women's hut. Seems to be separation between the two sexes, but mentions that new married couple lives in a hut of their own, outside of female's father's hut, in order to keep an eye on the couple. Only considered married once they produce a child. Husband hunts for female's family, but all material wealth (pots, bowls, pigs) are inherited by sons.

##### 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

No real conflicts noted, family and village works together to provide food and shelter. Possible for any fights to be revolving around pigs, and farming, if village has farms and pigs. Young children have similar roles to women, they gather and help to prepare food. Females play games like "digging" to prepare for foraging. Males play hunting games, learn to hunt when they are between 10-13, go through a ceremony.

##### 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

N/A

##### 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

Originally endogamous marriages, with in Numbami culture, but between neighboring villages, could be considered exogamous. Become more exogamous with European visitors, combined with other language groups and tribes.

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

No partible paternity, monogamous relationships, adultery looked down on and punished.

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

Not really mentioned. Motherhood is important, want lots of offspring, infertile females are seen as a bad omen. Suggestion for these females to be divorced, males allowed to marry again.

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

Not really mentioned, takes multiple times of intercourse to produce a child so it could be a possible idea, but no real answer.

##### 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

Some rape, with younger females, given more sexual freedom and are expected to have multiple partners before being married, some are raped but usually consented to.

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

Cross cousin is preferred, on father's side. Can marry others though.

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

Yes, at younger age, before marriage. Find partners and have intercourse. A type of dating. Usually have more than one partner. Once married, adultery is a serious crime, major punishments, sometimes death of partner.

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

No. Gifts given in pursuit of a sexual partner before marriage. "Dating"

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

Grandmother or sister, village females take care of children, some are responsible for watching them while others cook and gather food, usually younger females before marriage.

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

N/A

4.22 Evidence for couvades

Some fathers are not allowed to eat specific meats, which are taboos of pregnant females, not all go along.

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

N/A

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

Wives must respect mother-in-law. Viewed as below them.

4.24 Joking relationships?

Adolescents have joking relationships, more lose language, able to make sexual jokes, not allowed around parents or elders.

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

Patrilineal. Thought to have been more bilateral before missionaries came, but no real evidence, some families pass certain material possessions to daughters.

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

Major incest Taboo, no incest between mother-son, father-daughter, brother-sister.

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

No real formal ceremony, couple gets permission from families, husband works for females' family until first child is born. Ceremony for first born child, couple considered truly married.

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

Children/ Offspring named for birth position, with birth order- first born, second born, and so on until sixth child considered "No name". Names also correspond to "daughter of..." "son of ..." (2)

Birth order	Sons	Daughters
1	Alisa	Kale
2	Alija	Aga
3	Gae	Aya
4	Alu	Damiya
5	Sele	Owiya
6	Dei	Ase Mou
7	Ase Mou	

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

Within community until missionaries came, then turned to outside of community, goes for both sexes, usually females brought from neighboring villages instead of males.

### Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

Smaller villages, few wars, peaceful tribe. Any fights are between villages and usually settled by "big men" and elders council. Some fights with other tribes but not known for it.

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

Ingroup? Violent deaths due to witch craft fights or adulteries, within villages or between them

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

Adultery, witchcraft and magic.

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

Some trading between neighboring societies, Numbami more confined to their villages. Other societies near are Yabem, Bukawa, Kela, and Jabem.

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

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

10-30 people per village

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

Move based on hunting and foraging abilities, some movement due to horticulture but less was done originally, horticulture picked up with European influences and borrowing/ communications with other societies.

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

Big man, elderly man usually considered an impressive hunter and magical. Big man can lose position if village feels there are food or water shortages that he is responsible for or lots of deaths. Egalitarian, no status other than elders have most respect of all adults. Better hunters considered more important and somewhat higher status, is given material gifts (bowls and baskets) for bringing home more meat than other men.

5.4 Post marital residence:

Considered patrilocal, couple first lives with females' family until first child is born. Then couple moves to own hut outside males' father's shelter.

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

Somewhat territorial, stays within their boundaries. More out of fear of other societies and warfare.

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

Females socialize with other females (adults), and same goes for adult males. Married females are not really allowed to spend much "alone time" with other married males, this is to avoid adultery claims. Children and adolescents are allowed to co-mingle. Adolescents normally spend more time together, dating allowed and intercourse allowed between them.

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

Adolescents have informal relationships and joking relationships. Sexual language used.

5.8 Village and house organization:

Villages filled with huts around center part of the village where ceremonies and cooking takes place. Big men huts closer to center of the village, usually bigger.

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

Some mention of men's huts where elder men spend most of their time, considered council hut.

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

Sleep in hammocks within huts. Babies sleep with mother, children sleep on the ground of hut until of "hunting age", then get own hammock.

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

Organized by households within lineages.

5.12 Trade:

Trade between neighboring societies most common, some trade between villagers.

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

Only hierarchies are Big man and exceptional hunters.

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

6 Time allocation to RCR:

Ritual/ Ceremonies done a lot of the time, for seasons and hunting better. Ceremonies for young boys being initiated into hunter and considered a "man"- usually at age 10ish, between 10-13. Ceremony for birth of first child, smaller.

#### 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

Big man considered powerful with magic. Elderly men and women considered better at medicine, usually one person who is responsible for medicine, could be shaman. Big man in charge of ritual leading.

#### 6.2 Stimulants:

N/A

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

First birth ritual, death ritual, and seasonal rituals. Usually feasts. Deaths are mourned, especially Big men. Gifts given to the dead, adorned with "jewelry".

#### 6.4 Other rituals:

Ritual for boys into manhood, feast and boy is set to do certain tasks, must hunt on his own.

#### 6.5 Myths (Creation):

N/A

#### 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

Music (mention of drums) and bowls and baskets.

#### 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

Males have more roles in rituals than females. Females more observers, except when celebrating first birth. Males play drums and participate.

#### 6.8 Missionary effect:

Rituals and ceremonies have been replaced with Christianity beliefs in most areas. Some rituals still practiced, like boy-Man ceremony.

#### 6.9 RCR revival:

N/A

#### 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

Death is important transition. Some animals, specifically birds, are seen as special creatures, possibly seen as ancestors but no real evidence just speculation.

#### 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

N/A

#### 6.12 Is there teknonymy?

N/A

### 7. Adornment

#### 7.1 Body paint:

White body paint used during rituals, not used for everyday.

#### 7.2 Piercings:

N/A

#### 7.3 Haircut:

Longer hair mentioned, seems that there is no real ritual for cutting hair.

#### 7.4 Scarification:

Some scarification, only mentioned when boys become hunters, scars on back for successful hunt.

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

Feathers and beads placed on dead, not usually found on living except big man. No mention of lip plates.

#### 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

Paints used during rituals, beads and feathers during death ceremonies on the dead.

#### 7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

More found in males than females, no real mention of female piercing or paints.

7.8 Missionary effect:

No real mention of affect from missionaries, taken on some traits of other societies.

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

N/A

**8. Kinship systems**

8.1 Sibling classification system:

Brother, sister naming, goes along with birth order.

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

Mentioning of brothers taking responsibility of a dead brother's wife, no real mention of sexual intercourse between the two, seems more likely to be responsible for providing shelter for her and her children. No mention at all of sororate.

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

N/A

**Numbered reference (all info from 1 unless otherwise noted)**

1. Ross, Malcolm. 1988. *Proto Oceanic and the Austronesian Languages of Western Melanesia*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics
2. Bradshaw, Joel (1978b). *Multilingualism and language mixture among the Numbami*. Kivung: Journal of the Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea 11:26-49