

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: *Gwich'in, Kutchin, Loucheux, Tukudh* [1]

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): *GWI* [1]

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Northwest Territories: *Aklavik, Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson*. Also in United States. [1] *About 150 Gwich'in live in Arctic Village, which is 149 miles south of Kaktovik, home of the Inupiat Eskimos, or 250 miles south as the caribou walks. Although environmental literature suggests they live in ANWR, and even on the coastal plain, the village lies outside the refuge. It is separated from the coastal plain by the nearly 20-million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Brooks mountain range.* [2] *The Agreement includes over 22,000 square kilometers of land in the Northwest Territories and over 1,500 square kilometers of land in the Yukon; harvesting rights and rights for commercial wildlife activities; representation to manage wildlife, land, and water regulation, within the public institutions; transfer of monies to the Gwich'in Tribal Council.* [3]

1.4 Brief history: *The biggest conflict for the Gwich'in is oil drilling from other cultures. In September, 2001, the Gwich'in position on oil development took an interesting turn. Gwich'in Oilfield Services, 51% owned by Gwich'in Development Corporation of Inuvik, and 49% owned by Ensign Drilling, was formed to explore and develop 22,422 square miles (about 14 million acres) of Gwich'in land in Canada. The proposed drill sites and a potential pipeline route are right along a major Canadian migratory path, where the caribou often birth their calves.* [2] *In 1789 the Gwich'in, locally named "Loucheux," were contacted by Alexander Mackenzie south of the Mackenzie Delta. Within 2 decades they were trading extraterritorially at posts on the Mackenzie River, and, in 1840, Fort McPherson was built on the Peel River. The Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Yukon, Alaska, in 1847. The Gwich'in had been intermediaries in trade between the coastal Inuit and interior Aboriginal communities and between the Mackenzie and Yukon and resented establishment of European trading posts in their territory. During the 20th century Old Crow progressively became the focal point and then the only Gwich'in town in the Yukon. Gwich'in suffered severe setbacks early in the 20th century due to epidemics, especially influenza.* [3]

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: *Drilling on the coastal plain will destroy the caribou herd because it often uses part of the plain as its main birthing ground. The Gwich'in ignore the concerns of the Kaktovik Inupiat who also harvest caribou and observe them on the coastal plain. In the 1970s the Alaska Gwich'in were fully supportive of oil exploration on their own lands through which the herd migrates. They offered leases to the oil industry covering their entire reserve area. In the early 70s, Exxon carried out seismic work in the area before giving it up. In 1977 village leaders went to BP Alaska Exploration to execute an agreement for exploration and several surveys were carried out. In 1980 the Rougeot Corporation of Tulsa, Oklahoma leased 1.5 million acres and paid the Gwich'in several million dollars in lease fees. The lease agreement contained no provisions to protect the Porcupine herd. All these ventures came to naught, but the Gwich'in were still preparing new lease maps in 1984. Then, in 1988, eight Gwich'in elders from Alaska and Canada representing 15 primarily Canadian villages, unanimously voted to oppose ANWR development. Although the Gwich'in denied their position was at the behest of the environmental community, it is environmentalists who have provided hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Gwich'in to lobby the issue.* [2] *Like most First Nations people across Canada, they faced discrimination in education and employment. Today, however, increasing numbers are successfully adapting to modern technology while maintaining a sense of identity and purpose through traditional activities.* [4]

1.6 Ecology (natural environment): *Northeast Alaska on Yukon River and tributaries: Fort Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, Venetie, and Arctic village.* [1]

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: *500 in Canada. Population total all countries: 800.* [1]

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): *Flour* [12]

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: *Caribou herds.* [2] *Moose and salmon, whitefish and hares.* [3] *Depending on season and regional band, the Gwich'in focused energy on hunting caribou, moose, and other large animals, and a variety of small animals like beaver, muskrat, porcupine, rabbit, and birds; fishing for salmon (Yukon drainage), whitefish, inconnu, trout, grayling, and loche; and gathering berries. With snares and deadfalls (and later, steel traps), they trapped beaver, marten, muskrat, lynx, mink, fox, otter, wolverine, and other animals—mainly for their pelts, but some for consumption as well.* [12]

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: *Gwich'in technology was similar to that of other subarctic Athapaskans, with distinctive western elements, including large metal knives with double recurved handles.* [3] *Due to later outside interaction, they have adopted new technology such as high-powered rifles, snow machines, and outboard motors, but food resources are still used principally for personal consumption or shared through kin networks. In Canada, aboriginal people are subject to some game laws such as those protecting endangered species and registering traplines. However, they have successfully challenged laws that would have restricted their rights to engage in subsistence activities.* [4]

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production: *Men were more likely than women to hunt, trap, twine fishnets, make war, and deal with the implements associated with these tasks. Women were more likely than men to tend to the children, prepare and cook food, haul sleds (dogs being scarce prior to the new trading-post exchange economy), prepare skins and make and repair clothing and blankets, gather vegetal food and fuel, and haul water.* [12]

2.6 Land tenure: *While they did not own land as individuals, the Gwich'in did have rights to particular tracts of land for hunting, fishing, trapping, or other uses, which lapsed with non-use. In the mid-twentieth century, trapping rights in specific territories were allocated to Canadian Gwich'in in hopes that management would restore depleted furbearers.* [12]

2.7 Ceramics:

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: *There was also some long- distance trade for obsidian, copper, and sea shells. Iron may also have been traded along the west coast from sources in Asia before Europeans arrived. They also traded fresh and dried meat, fish, and in some cases crops such as potatoes. Some groups resisted involvement in the fur trade, preferring to concentrate on their traditional subsistence activities. [4]*

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? *They had partially decked-over kayak-canoes. [3]*

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): *Young women are no longer secluded at the time of first menstruation, despite this being a tradition in the past. [5]*

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: *A man might beat or divorce an adulterous wife, and a woman could divorce an abusive husband or leave to take up with another man. [12]*

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: *Chiefs, shamans, and wealthy men often possessed four or five wives and one chief had eighteen, and polyandry (the woman in such a marriage being admired). Partners also sometimes exchanged wives. [12]*

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

4.9 Inheritance patterns: *Inheritance of property, which was formerly in the female line, may now follow the male line as well. [5]*

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): *Traditionally, endogamy was preferred, but contemporary practices have been heavily influenced by other cultures. [5]*

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

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): *Formerly, distinctions were drawn between cross-cousins (mother’s brother’s children and father’s sister’s children) and parallel cousins (mother’s sister’s children and father’s brother’s children—who were called by the same term as siblings). Marriages within a clan were strongly discouraged and knowledge of clan affiliations helped individuals determine eligible marriage partners. Marriages between cousins are rare in these groups today and most younger people reckon kinship using English kin terms. [5]*

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? *Female children are occasionally killed. [9] Female infanticide further decreased Gwich'in population through the late-nineteenth century. [12]*

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)

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

4.24 Joking relationships?

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: *Gwich'in identity was achieved through language. Cross-cutting the band structure were 3 matrilineal clans which regulated marriage. [3] Some anthropologists have proposed that the kinship system of these latter groups is bilateral rather than matrilineal. [5]*

4.26 Incest avoidance rules: *Marriage between two members of the same moiety is somewhat discouraged, but more common than formerly when it was considered a serious offence punishable by death. [5]*

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

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?) *Marriages with non-natives, and with natives from neighboring groups, are now common, and in some cases non-natives marrying into the group are adopted into the appropriate lineage [5]*

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? *Matrilineal clans regulated marriage [3] While arranged marriages have been replaced by dating, some avoid dating members of the same clan. [5] Some parents arranged the marriages of their daughters and sons. A young girl's mother might take the initiative in arranging her daughter's initial intimacy and consequent future marriage. Men might also secure wives by living with and serving the parents of an especially young girl until she reached*

marriageable age, or by successfully wrestling a married man for his wife. In the late-twentieth century arranged marriages disappeared. [12]

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries whom: *Marriage within the moiety was once punishable by death. [5] Some marriages were decided by the prospective bride and groom, unless the bride's mother or other members of her family objected to the status or promise of the prospective husband. [12]*

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: *Reported cases of between-tribe wars. [9] Many social problems in contemporary Na-Dene communities – alcoholism, family breakdown, marital violence, teenage suicide, and so on – are due to the displacement of traditional ways of life by non-native culture. All levels of government have attempted to address these problems, with varying degrees of success, through counselling services, medical treatment, and law enforcement. [5]*

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?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: *The Gwich'in were traditionally distributed in nine or ten regional bands. Each band split into smaller local bands or task groups according to its goals in subsistence, trapping, feuding, war, and trade, and these smaller groups reformed for communal hunting or fishing. Some of these groupings were unstable in membership, while others were relatively fixed. Some were highly mobile and others were more sedentary. [12]*

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): *Several households related to one senior person or "chief" made up a local band, which worked together to build caribou surrounds and large fish traps, but sometimes larger groups met to hunt. Several local bands formed a regional band, maintained through intermarriage and other interactions between constituent families within a single geographic area. Regional bands assembled for annual festivities and ceremonies. [3]*

5.4 Post marital residence: *A pair of same-sex siblings with their nuclear families customarily formed a household. [3] They share a residence with other members of their family, and may work and marry within the kin network of their own or adjacent communities. [5]*

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: *The aboriginal Gwich'in lived in gabled moss-covered, semi-subterranean houses of wood and moss in fall and early winter, and made use of skin-covered semi-spherical lodges in other seasons; they also made lean-tos and specialized structures such as conical puberty shelters. [12]*

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? *They had portable domed caribou-skin tents. Babies had chair-styled birchbark baby carriers. [3]*

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

5.12 Trade:

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): *They relied on religious leaders to ensure that adequate supplies of food would be secured and misfortune avoided, and the injured and sick were healed by individuals who used their own spiritual powers or directed the powers of other beings. [6]*

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): *Today, the Gwich'in continue to have great reverence for the land and the natural world even if they do no longer pray or make offerings to spirits directly. In some areas native spiritual leaders, such as prophets, practice traditional forms of healing. [6] They have wrestling bouts which are begun by little boys, those next in strength coming on in turn until the strongest or freshest man in the band remains the final victor, after which the women go through the same progressive contest. [9]*

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation):

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: *Younger people are less involved in church activities, although this too is not universally the case. Some younger people are interested in traditional beliefs which offer a sense of native identity. Women are involved in all forms of religious activity. They often organize potlatches and are the most regular churchgoers. Some women, such as Ellen Bruce and Effie Linklater of Old Crow, Yukon, have been ordained as ministers in the Anglican Church. Others have become prophets of the syncretic tea dance or drum dance religion. [6]*

6.8 Missionary effect: *Bible was introduced in 1898. [1] Evangelical Christian healers direct the Holy Ghost or God to help those who require assistance. Often, Jesus receives thanks for the arrival of a hindquarter of moose or a package of cranberries. Some, but not all, accept the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Missionaries generally were Anglican and Catholic. The Gwich'in became strong adherents to the Anglican faith as a result of the missionary activities of Archdeacon McDonald and his successors [6]*

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.): *The Gwich'in world view included beliefs in animal spirits, spirit beings, bushmen (wild Aboriginal people with supernatural attributes) and the culture hero-trickster Raven (crow), recorded in culture hero myth cycles and raven myths. [3] Traditionally, they recognized the existence of the souls or spirits of natural forces, animals, plants, land forms, and inanimate objects. [6]*

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut: *Typical hairstyles varied from tribe to tribe, but in most tribes, individual Native American people also wore their hair differently from one another. Different people chose different hairstyles based on a style that was popular in their particular band or village, a style that identified them as members of a particular clan or society, a style worn by an older person they admired, or just a style that they thought looked good on them or suited their personality. Some of the styles that were popular looked pretty different than the styles that were popular with Europeans, though. [7]*

7.4 Scarification:

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

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: *Adults and children alike wore V-tailed summer shirts decorated with red ochre, dentalium (beads made with mollusc shells) and dyed porcupine quills. Women tattooed their chins and, on ceremonial occasions, men coiffed their hair with red ochre mixed with grease and sprinkled with down. [3]*

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: *Relative age was also important and was reflected in distinct terms for older and younger siblings and cousins. [12]*

8.2 Sororate, levirate: *Evidence for the levirate is equivocal; but following a man's death, his brother, in theory, had to approve the widow's remarriage. [12]*

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

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- *Dialects: Fort Yukon Gwich'in, Arctic Village Gwich'in, Western Canada Gwich'in (Takudh, Tukudh, Loucheux), Arctic Red River. [1]*

- *Literacy rate in L1: 1%–5%. Literacy rate in L2: 50%–75%. [1]*

- *Both Alaskan and Canadian Gwich'in are members of the Gwich'in Steering Committee, which represents the ANWR issue, and both travel extensively throughout the U.S., appearing in public forums hosted by the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, the National Wildlife Federation and church groups. [2]*

- *The word "Gwich'in" means "people of the land", and it refers to a people who have lived in the Arctic since before the political boundaries that now transect the Gwich'in homelands were drawn on maps dividing Alaska and Canada. [8]*

- *The days of their ancestors, the caribou is still vital for food, clothing, tools, and are a source of respect and spiritual guidance for the Gwich'in. [8]*

- *When French missionaries arrived in the region they nicknamed the Gwich'in "Loucheux," which means people with slanting eyes. Relations were uneasy between the Gwich'in of the area and the Inuit who travelled to the region to trade in the 1800s. It is said that two Hudson's Bay Company men were responsible for a large Gwich'in massacre of Inuit 1852. [11]*

- *In 1866 the first Anglican missionary arrived. Robert McDonald married a local Gwich'in woman and made his home in the community for more than 50 years. He helped translate the bible into the Gwich'in language and a strong tradition of Christianity is practiced today in the community. [11]*

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