

## **1. Description**

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Zo'e, Tupi-Guarani

1.2 Location: They are situated between the rivers Cuminapanema and Erepecuru Urucuriana. Municipalities of Obidos and Torres Vedreas, North of the State of Para (Cartagenas, 1).

1.3 Brief history: The Zo'e were uncontacted until 1988 which is the same year that the FUNAI was created which has protected them from the any real influence of western society, or even worse, extinction. It is believed that they were driven into their current location by, most likely, the Carib groups that occupy the Tumucumaque Park. Even though there has been little contact with the Zo'e, they came extremely close to extinction the year they were contacted due to diseases and their population dropped to 130 individuals but they have thrived since and the population is around 230. (Cartagenas, 2).

1.4 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: No missionaries or schools have been brought into the Zo'e culture. They are on protected land that extends over one million acres but severe deforestation is happening only thirty kilometers from their village. The Zo'e have only peaceful trading relationships with their neighbors and any signs of borrowing are still unclear. (Cartagenas, 2).

## **2. Economy**

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): The most prominent carbohydrate, although also a fatty protein, is the Brazilian Nut. It is gathered all year round. They also harvest manioc, yams, sweet potatoes, peppers, and several types of bananas. All items are gathered by females. (Cartagenas, 5).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: The Zo'e are extremely good hunters with their only weapon being the bow and arrow. They hunt mostly Spider monkeys, which are very prevalent where they are located. They also hunt wild pigs and King Vultures. The main use of the King Vulture is for the use of their feathers for the men's arrows and the women's headwear. Since the first contact, fishing has become much more popular because of the metal hooks and nylon lines given to them. However, they did fish before using Lonchocarpus, a toxic legume that will take the oxygen out of the water. They would make a small dam and fill it with legumes killing the fish. While hunting is, for the most part, done in groups, fishing is mostly done alone. (Cartagenas, 5).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: The only weapon used for hunting is the bow and arrow. Arrows are very significant to the men and are designed with carvings and adorned with the white chest feathers of the King Vulture. The Zo'e men are very good hunters and work in packs to surround the prey. If a Spider monkey is stuck in the tree, the men are exceptional tree climbers. They tie a rope around their feet as a support and can climb to the top of a tree in a matter of seconds. Since the first encounter of westerners, the Zo'e were introduced to metal fishing hooks and nylon string, which has greatly changed their means of catching fish. Before they would build small dams, fill them up with Lonchocarpus, which is a type of legume that takes oxygen from the water. Fishing is often done alone while hunting is done in packs. (Cartagenas, 5-6).

2.4 Food storage: The Zo'e women produce very dark and glossy ceramic pots of various sizes, which are used for both storage and cooking. The baskets are made only by women and the meticulous tradition is passed down from generation to generation. They also make a Pehit, which is a disposable bag made of twisted leaves of Sakura. (Cartagenas, 6).

2.5 Sexual division of production: Women do all of the gathering and cooking while men do the hunting.

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics: There is a very important tradition of making ceramic pots that is passed from female generation to generation. The pots are very dark and glossy and take a lot of work to make. (Cartagenas, 6). Exactly how they were made was not stated but the finished product would suggest pit firing. Pit firing entails placing unfired or bisque-fired pottery in a hole dug in the ground. Burning materials like wood or coal are placed above

and beneath the pottery and leaving them for several hours to burn the ceramic kiln. After a fixed time, the burning materials are to be covered with sand to get rid of oxygen. Silica, potash, and other elements in the burned wood or coal are deposited on the pottery to create a glazed effect (ceramicstones.net).

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: No Data.

2.9 Food taboos: No Data

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?: From the different articles I've read there was no mention of any watercraft.

### **3. Anthropometry**

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): No Data

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): No Data

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

4.1 Age at menarche (f): The average age is 15 (Dutilluex)

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): The average age for female was 16 however it is unclear what the age is for males.

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): The completed family size is hard to say because the Zo'e are very polygamous with an emphasis on polyandry. The concept of their marriage is still very unclear because each male has multiple wives and each female has multiple husbands. Their first spouse is someone of older age who is more like a teacher instructing them on how to be spouses. For the most part, they will eventually also marry the son or daughter of their husband or wife. It is not clear if there is limit to how many spouses one can have and if there is a difference between the sexes. (Cartagenas, 3).

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): The average birth interval is three years; they have discovered abortive plants that keep this practice very strict. (Cartagenas, 4).

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): Girls have their first marriage at the average age of seven while males are not until nine. However, this is meant to teach the child how to be a spouse. A female will not consummate the marriage until after her first menstruation. It is unclear when a male is allowed sexual activity but is believed after his first big hunt. (Cartagenas, 4).

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: There have been no recorded cases of divorce which is most likely due to the fact they are polygamous and the marriage rules are very undefined.

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: The Zo'e are known as the "Marrying Tribe" and their marriage system is still not very well understood. Polygamy is very common, especially polyandry, however the population maintains remarkable numerical balance by gender. The most common form of marriage is a young boy or girl, between seven or nine years old, marrying an older member of the village. The older member acts as a teacher, showing the children how to act as a spouse. Once the child reaches maturity, they will often marry one of the older members children. This is how they practice polygamy while remaining balanced. (Cartagenas, 4-5)

4.8 Arranged marriage, bride purchase/service, dowry: The most respected men in the village are called the Yu. These men are only referred to as Yu in the context of marriage arrangements. The translation for the word is support, or mainstay. When not used in this context, it also the same word for the center beam in a house and the spine of the body. The Yu is the eldest men of the nuclear family and arranges marriages to start or maintain alliances. Negotiations usually deal with providing food in hunts for females in return for marriage and sex. (Cartagenas, 4).

4.9 Inheritance patterns: No Data

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Parents avoid any patronizing in order for children to learn fast enough to fend for themselves. They never get punished, except of very rare occasions, when they get scratched with a fish bone to rid them of their bad blood. (Dutilleux).

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: No Data

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

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): Marriages are very much alliance based and are meant to or make or maintain close ties with allies.

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Their first marriage or two are often times arranged but as they get older they will often find a husband based more on attraction. I therefore do believe they do enjoy sexual freedom however there is no documentation on the matter.

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: No Data.

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? No Data.

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: Although polyandry and polygyny are both the common form of marriage, there is a equal balance gender ratio. This is in large part due to the fact that the younger spouse will often times marry one of the older spouses children when they are of age, usually around fifteen. (Cartagenas, 3).

4.22 Evidence for couvades: No Data

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): There was no data on pregnancy but once a girl reaches menarche, she is often given to her older husband’s son. However, she maintains sexual relationships with both.

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? The marriage system of the Zo’e makes kin relationships very unique. The in-law relationship is almost non-existent because they are often times your spouse as well. There is no documentation of any avoidance relationship and from what I’ve read there seems to be no hostile or avoidance relationship.

4.24 Joking relationships?:

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: No Data

4.26 Incest avoidance rules: No Data

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Marriage ceremonies are celebrations that are hosted by the family that is receiving the new member. It consists of dancing and drinking the seasonal brew. This is how most ceremonies/rituals are done. (Cartagenas, 7).

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? There is no data on how formal names are given but they do have a very limited kinship terminology that changes many times throughout one's life.

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?): All marriages were within the village, however it was unclear if there is any preference to relation of a spouse.

**Warfare/homicide:** There are no documented cases of warfare or in-group killings.

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Out-group vs. in-group 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):

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

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: The Zo'e lives in a single village of about 230 individuals, however they are semi-nomadic.

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): The Zo'e are semi-nomadic and some of the men and sometimes their family move around during the wet season, for the most part. During the dry season, Spider monkeys are very prevalent but not during the wet season so they will often follow the wild pigs. (Cartagenas, 6).

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): There is no political system and the most powerful men are the Yu, who arrange marriages. Disputes are rare but when they do happen they are often settled with everyone present. (Cartagenas, 4).

5.4 Post marital residence: The Zo'e are ambilocal and depends on the marriage arrangement, however there is an emphasis on uxilocality.(Cartadneas,4)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): The Zo'e live on protected land that covers millions of acres. They do not come in contact or have any problems with neighbors. The only tribe they have come in contact that can be documented were the Waiāpi who only knew the Zo'e through learning of them on video. Upon meeting the Zo'e, they told them of the dangers the white man will bring to them and to avoid them. (Meeting Ancestors)

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): Children are taught from a very young age to fend for themselves. This makes the relationship division based on age fairly limited. Elders do have a bigger say in things such as food, spouses, etc. There also seems to be limited division of social interactions between sexes. (Dutilleux)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization:

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): No Data.

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? They sleep on the ground mostly but they do also have hammocks. It is unclear if there is some sort of rule to who can or can't sleep on hammocks.(Dutilleux).

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: There is no clear understanding of social organization

5.12 Trade: There is trading going on between the villagers, especially when it comes to marriage but there is not any intra village trade. Trading is done in order to maintain alliances within the village. (Cartagenas, 4-5).

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? There are no indications of social hierarchy. A man by the name of Angelo Benelli attempts to make the argument that the Zo'e are a utopian society, however I do not believe he has spent nearly enough time with them to make this argument. He bases it on their hospitality upon arrival and during his visits he never saw any sort of dispute. (Benelli,6).

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

6 Time allocation to RCR: No data.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): The Zo'e have no shamans or any sort of religious leader. Their stories of creation and other rituals are passed down from generation to generation but they are aware that they don't know where the stories come from. There is no documentation on any prevalent medicine beside an abortive plant that helps keep women from having children too close together.

6.2 Stimulants: Alcohol is a major part of Zo'e culture and is especially important for use in rituals and ceremonies. (Cartagenas, 6).

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): The Poturo is a very important ceremony for both males and females. The poturo is a lip piercing made of light wood that is on average eight centimeters in diameter and twenty centimeters in length. They do not know where the custom comes from but do know that it is how they distinguish themselves from other people and tribes. (Cartagenas, 5., Dutilleux).

6.4 Other rituals: The only well documented ritual is the She'py, which is also the name of their alcoholic drink. The ritual can be for many reasons including marriage, birth, lip drilling, and so on. Its generic name allows it to take place any season. A family will often host the party because someone in the family is celebrating an important transition in life. The rituals consist of a lot of drinking and dancing. There are many social rules to these rituals and depending upon the host, a person must know when it is appropriate to show up and whom it is appropriate to dance with. After the night of celebrating, all of the men make themselves vomit with the intentions of cleansing themselves. (Cartagenas, 7).

6.5 Myths (Creation):

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): Music is a very important part of daily life. It is both function and non functional. The women sing working songs as they are doing their jobs around the village. While there are also many songs celebrating different things. I couldn't find any information on art.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: From the few rituals I read about, there didn't seem to be any difference.

6.8 Missionary effect: The Zo'e are still unaffected by any outside group.

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: No Data.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? No Data.

6.12 Is there teknonymy? No Data.

## **7. Adornment: (Cartagenas, 5)**

7.1 Body paint: The women paint themselves in red paint, meant to symbolize beauty and cleanliness.

7.2 Piercings: Piercing are not all that common but when they do appear they are made from the shell of a sowe'hu, which is a small snail found in the forest.

7.3 Haircut: The men have short hair all the time while the women have fairly long hair. There is no data on the significance of hair or there is any meaning behind it.

7.4 Scarification: there are no cases of scarification.

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): The Zo'e are most well known for the Poturo, the lip piercing which was discussed earlier. The feathers of the King Vulture are also very important for both males and females. Males use them on their arrows while females put them on their headbands and bracelets. They have recently been using small western items such as colorful plastic and zippers.

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: There was no differences in adornment from the rituals I read about.

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: Besides the red paint, overall adornment is about the same. Both males and females wear no clothes, men will sometimes wear a penis case.

7.8 Missionary effect: none.

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

## **8. Kinship systems**

8.1 Sibling classification system: the kinship terminology is very limited and often time changes. This is because the majority of Zo'e have more than one spouse, often times from the same family including father/son or mother/daughter.

8.2 Sororate, levirate: No Data.

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): No Data.

## **9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):**

The Zo'e are a very young tribe, ethnographically speaking. There is relatively very little known about them and the Brazilian government has made many laws trying to keep their culture theirs.

## **Numbered references**

1. Cartagenes, Rosa. Zo'é: os Tupi da fronteira do mundo.
2. Cartagenes, Rosa. The Zo'e: March to the West. Indigenous Peoples in Brazil: 2001-2005. Instituto Socio, pp. 287-300, Sao Paulo, 2006.
3. Dutilleux, Jean-Pierre. The Zo'e: People of the Moon. 2003.