

## **1. Description**

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Wogeo, Austronesia, Schouten language family (1)

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): WOC (1)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): 3° S and 144° E (4)

1.4 Brief history: The Wogeo people had initial contact with the Dutch in a secular, rather than missionary fashion. The Dutch got the Wogeo to work as plantation workers on neighboring islands in the early 1900's. Around 1934, a Catholic mission was created in the area and the missionaries began to influence the people (4). Today, the people are governed in a secular manner by the Sepik Administrative District and remain fairly independent (1).

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: The Catholic mission established appears to have little influence upon the people. There isn't evidence of Christianity spreading, or of the mission becoming an authority figure at any point in time. There aren't really any powerful neighbors to influence the Wogeo, since they are located on the islands off of the coast of Papua New Guinea. The original authority system was enacted by the Dutch, and today the people are governed by the Sepik Administrative District (4).

1.6 Ecology (natural environment): The island contains mountains, plains, and tropical forests. There is ample rainfall in the monsoon season, and many of the mountains originate from volcanoes (4).

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: There are around 1,000 Wogeo people (1) living in several small villages consisting of about 80 to 100 people (3). It is believed that the villages are spread out along the coastline, and contact is common between groups, so they are located fairly close to one another. The Wogeo don't tend to travel off of the island, the only major documented case of this occurring, is when they were shipped to neighboring islands by Europeans to work on plantations (4). Approximately every 5 years, the Wogeo travel to a neighboring island for trade, but this does not occur on a regular basis (4).

## **2. Economy**

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): The Wogeo primarily eat taro, bananas, coconut, yams, breadfruit, sago, pawpaw fruit, and almonds (4).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Wild pigs, lizards, dogs, fish, and shellfish are the primary sources of protein (4).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: The bow and arrow has been cited as being used in the past during times of warfare. It is also likely to be a weapon of choice used to hunt and kill the pigs on the island (4).

2.4 Food storage: No evidence

2.5 Sexual division of production: The women are the primary caretakers of the children, especially since it is seen as "weak" for men to have contact with infants. Along with taking care of the children, women tend to the house and make clothing. Men gather nuts, build houses, make tools, and fish. Both men and women work together in the garden (4).

2.6 Land tenure: Each person has equal access to the forest and to the forest products within their group's territory. If a person enters another group's territory, they will likely be convicted of witchcraft, adultery, or raiding. Rights to the beaches are usually divided between several neighboring villages. Gardens are inherited patrilineally, and each man has the right to build a house near his garden. Men usually own 10-20 garden plots within their village (4).

2.7 Ceramics: Not found.

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Because each item is owned by the individual, using other people's goods is heavily looked down upon, and sharing is not seen often (4). The only exception to this rule is within one's clan. Immediate family members collectively share food and frequently eat together, but the community as a whole, does not usually have communal events or items to be shared (6).

2.9 Food taboos: There are many food taboos during pregnancy. All nuts, except coconuts, and most fish is forbidden for pregnant mothers. Yams are not to be eaten by either the mother or the father, because they believe the rough skin will be transferred to the baby. Fathers cannot eat shark meat because it is believed the child will be born with a large mouth (2).

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? There is evidence of the Wogeo building canoes out of the tree trunks for their infrequent trading ventures to neighboring islands (4).

## **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): It is believed to occur on average at age 13 (2).

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Estimated late teens/ early twenties for females, and late twenties/early thirties for males (2).

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Not found

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): Approximately 3 years (2).

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): Female : 17-21, Male; around 25-30 (3).

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Approximately 1/5 (3). Divorce is not terribly common, and the only legitimate reason for divorce is if the husband physically harms to wife. It has been shown that sterility is not an acceptable reason to obtain a divorce in Wogeo society (5).

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Approximately 50% of men are polygynous. The high infant mortality rate is said to be the cause, for having only one wife gives a low probability of producing viable offspring.

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: A betrothed girl always has a valuable dowry, usually in the form of land. After the marriage, the father of the bride is also required to present food to her new kinsmen (3). There is evidence of bride service when marriage occurs not between two clans within the same village (which is preferred), but rather between two clans between neighboring villages. This is likely because of the past warfare and conflict between neighboring villages, and the bride service is seen as a way to appease to hard feelings between the two groups of people (6).

4.9 Inheritance patterns: Patrilineal (4).

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Young children under the age of two are incredibly spoiled, and no child is to ever be slapped or beaten. Temper tantrums frighten the whole village, and everyone in the village brings food to distract the child. Overall, children and parents have few conflicts and are very peaceful and docile towards one another. Fathers are not a part of the child's life until the child turns two, because associating with infants is said to be a sign of weakness.

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Homosexuality is not openly discussed within the community. In a study of marriage and sexuality by Ian Hogbin, he found no evidence of homosexuality. If it occurs, it is kept secret, because it is likely that black magic or some sort of alternative punishment would be forced upon those partaking in homosexual behavior (3).

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Exogamous clans form via a male descent system linking people back to a common ancestor (5).

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? Males are recognized as important and necessary parts of the conception process. The Wogeo believe that the conjunction of semen and the female "secretion" result in an embryo. Fathers are actually viewed as important as the mother during pregnancy. In fact, fathers are said to experience morning sickness for two to three months of the pregnancy, and are said to tire easily and avoid dangerous activity, as the mother would. If the mother is promiscuous, it is believed that several different traits from each man she slept with can be seen in the baby. Society recognizes multiple "physiological" fathers (2).

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows"): The mother is believed to nourish the embryo with menstrual blood. The blood is supposed to provide the food for the fetus (2).

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? No, the Wogeo realize that conception is not an incremental process, but are not sure on the details of conception itself (2).

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: There isn't any direct evidence of rape, but there is the practice of undesirable men convincing the headman to allow him, along with fellow village men, to kidnap a bride against her will, since no one wants to marry him (3). Adultery is heavily looked down upon in Wogeo society, so some speculate that rape occurs "behind closed doors" (3).

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): Anyone other than those of the same moiety and close relatives. Cross cousins actually fall under the category of close relatives, and those who have cross-cousin affairs are publicly shamed (3).

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Yes, especially early in her life, primarily before marriage. After the "honeymoon" stage of marriage wears off, it is expected that both husband and wife take lovers. However, any man that is caught sleeping with a married woman is severely beaten and publicly ridiculed. In some cases, unfaithful wives are beaten as well. So, even though extramarital lovers are expected, public knowledge of such affairs end in abuse and ridicule (3).

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: Adultery is heavily looked down upon in Wogeo society, so extramarital partners are never publicly recognized, therefore gift-giving seems rare (6).

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? If the child is older than an infant, the father would be the primary caretaker, as they are normally very involved in the upbringing of the child past infancy. If the mother dies during infancy, the child rearing would be passed of to a grandmother or aunt, since it is “weak” for a father to associate with an infant (2). The Wogeo were found to exhibit incredibly high rates of adoption, therefore it can be inferred that unrelated people may adopt a child (5).

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: Not found.

4.22 Evidence for couvades: Not found.

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): It is a little unclear, but the older a father is, the more social status he has attained, and the more desirable he is for a young woman. Young men are not desired as husbands or fathers, so they usually have to wait until they reach a certain age to achieve such things (3).

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? Not found.

4.24 Joking relationships? Kin members within the same clan are said to be close to one another, but it is deemed inappropriate to make jokes around your close family members, so joking relationships usually occur within community members who are in different clans (4).

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: Some names are passed down in a matrilineal manner, but the rest of the society is dominated in a patrilineal system (4).

4.26 Incest avoidance rules: People must marry outside of their moiety to avoid incest (5).

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Yes, after a betrothed girl’s first menarche and feast, there is a ceremony in which the bride’s family escorts the girl to her husband’s house where she is formally given to him (3).

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? The naming of the firstborn requires a ceremony that is attended by all of the relatives. The grandfather repeats the names of the ancestors, and when the one chosen is reached, the people call out in recognition. The grandfather breaks open a coconut, eats a mouthful, and spits it over those present (2).

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?): It is heavily preferred to be outside of one’s community (or at least clan). Marriages occur within the same village, but between different clans. Because of past conflict between neighboring societies, marriage within the same village is usually preferred (3).

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Yes, marriages are arranged by the headman. There is an odd case for those men afflicted with ringworm. These men have a hard time attracting a mate, and receive special permission from the headman to capture a wife (3).

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: Not found.

### **Warfare/homicide**

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: Warfare is not especially prevalent in present day, but the raiding system and revenge killing used to be quite common (6).

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: Neighboring clans used to kill members of Wogeo society as part of the vicious revenge killing cycle. There is not much evidence of ingroup violent death (6).

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Revenge killing used to be common for out-group killing, there is not much evidence of in-group killing or its potential causes (6).

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): In the past, headmen organized clansmen and went of raids of neighboring societies to kill an enemy (6).

4.18 Cannibalism? No.

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

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: Many small villages span the coast, with a total population of Wogeo totaling around 1,000 (1). Each village is estimated to contain 80 to 100 people (3).

- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): There is evidence that the Wogeo are fairly stationary people who do not travel outside of the lands given to them by their ancestors, and to avoid conflicts with neighboring societies (4).
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): The Wogeo island itself is governed by the Sepik Administrative District (1). Each clan has a headman, who makes important group-level decisions, aids in marriage selection, and controls all of the magic rituals within the clan (6).
- 5.4 Post marital residence: The husband, wife, and children live together in a separate household from the rest of their family members. Each house has a garden that they tend to (5).
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): There are very defined boundaries between the different village's territories. If one were to cross the territorial lines, they would be putting themselves at risk for being killed. Since warfare has subsided in recent times, there aren't any known active defense systems, like watch towers, but there is always a paranoia about a revenge raid/killing happening (6).
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): Older people are thought of as higher status, and therefore sometimes a separate class of people entirely. Therefore, there is not a lot of interaction between old and young people (4).
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: Joking relationships between members of the same village who are in different clans rather than between clan members to avoid offending close relatives (4).
- 5.8 Village and house organization: Villages contain many individual houses which are inhabited by a mother, father, and all of their children (6).
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): There is one men's house in the community where young, unmarried men are sometimes forced to live (6).
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Not found.
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Each village is made up of two patrilineal clans, each with a "head man". The society, as a whole, is divided into matrilineal moieties (which only matter when deciding marriage) (2).
- 5.12 Trade: There is not much evidence for trade between neighboring societies because of conflict, rather if trade occurs, it is between neighboring island societies (4).
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? The older members of the community are definitely of higher status than the younger members and this creates a general social divide. As one ages, they naturally move up the hierarchy (4).

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

6.0 Time allocation to RCR: Not found.

- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): The primary medical practitioner is the headman. Illness is believed to be caused by sorcery, by having trespassed on another's property, or by failing to incise one's penis recently. Apologizing to the property owner or an immediate incision should cure the illness. Each illness is associated with a specific magical system and at least one person in each community knows the rites for that illness (4).
- 6.2 Stimulants: Not found.
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): After birth, the mother is considered a "danger" to society until the next full moon, and she is forced to live in a hut until this happens. The hut is built far away from her house so her other children do not find her during this "dangerous" time. If the woman dies during childbirth, because she is considered dangerous, she is not given the traditional mourning rituals, and is buried immediately as quickly as possible. After the full moon, the woman is required to prepare hermit crabs for the women of the village and taro for the men of the village. Then she is able to return to normal activities (2). There is usually an elaborate feast after a girl's first menarche (3).
- 6.4 Other rituals: After birth, at the first full moon, the mother takes the baby to the headman, for a magic ceremony to make the baby healthy and strong. The mother gives the dried umbilical cord to someone who is going far out to sea; if it is not thrown overboard in deep water, the child is supposed to have little chance of growing tall and strong (2). One of the oddest and most unique rituals attributed to the Wogeo is the act of incising men's penises on a regular basis. This act is supposed to be "male menstruation", and the island has been referred to as the "Island of Menstruating Men". (4)
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): The nanarang are believed to be the creators of the Wogeo people, and are referred to as heroes (4).

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): “Music, especially singing and the playing of flutes, drums, and slit gongs, is of ceremonial and recreational importance” (4). Theatre is used to portray messages to the community. There is an example where several men dress up and act an adulterous scene and the negative consequences of such an action, as a method of deterring other members of the community from being adulterous (even though extramarital lovers are common, public knowledge of such an act is bad) (5).

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: The male headman is the only person who can perform black magic against a neighboring tribe or person (4).

6.8 Missionary effect: In 1934, a Catholic mission was set up in the area, and missionaries made contact with the people. However, the influence did not appear to be very strong, as there is no evidence of Christianity today, and the government and practices of the Wogeo have always appeared to be entirely secular (4).

6.9 RCR revival: Not found.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: The Wogeo believe that death is always caused by someone else, and after a person dies, the family members set out to find the culprit.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): Along with the creators (heroes), there are two other main pillars of Wogeo religion. The second power is called upon during District food distributions, and the third power is the souls of the dead, who don't really affect the affairs of the living. Magic is used in daily life. Magic is used by headmen to prevent misfortune and to bring good luck. Sorcery is believed to be the major cause of illness and death (4).

## **7. Adornment**

7.1 Body paint: There is evidence of past use during times of warfare (4).

7.2 Piercings: Not found

7.3 Haircut: Not found.

7.4 Scarification: There is some evidence of scarification occur along the ribcage, but it is not believed to be a current practice (4).

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Beads, feathers, and paint were used in the past during times of warfare, and currently during ceremonies (4).

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: Costumed dancing is an important component of rituals. Beads, feathers, and paint are also worn during ceremonial rituals (4).

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: It is primarily the men who participate in these rituals, so they are the ones who primarily paint themselves and wear elaborate beads and feathers. The women don't usually directly participate in the ceremonies and there isn't mention of them wearing any sort of adornment (4).

7.8 Missionary effect: In 1934, a Catholic mission was set up in the area, and missionaries made contact with the people. However, the influence did not appear to be very strong, as there is no evidence of Christianity today, and the government and practices of the Wogeo have always appeared to be entirely secular (4).

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: Not found.

## **8. Kinship systems**

8.1 Sibling classification system: Iroquois system (4).

8.2 Sororate, levirate: Not found.

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

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

1.) There are pregnancy taboos for mothers and fathers. Mothers have to give up intercourse, and all nuts except coconuts and most fish is forbidden. Yams are not to be eaten by either the mother or the father, because they believe the rough skin will be transferred to the baby. Fathers cannot eat shark meat because it is believed the child will be born with a large mouth (2).

2.) Mothers are not supposed to engage in sexual intercourse for about 2 years after the birth of their child, and those who have children too soon are disgraced by society (2).

#### Numbered references

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5. Rosenblatt, Paul, and Walter Hillabrant. "Divorce for Childlessness and the Regulation of Adultery." *Journal of Sex Research* 8.2 (1972): 117-27. Print.
6. Hogbin, Ian. "Social Reaction to Crime: Law and Morals in the Schouten Islands, New Guinea." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 68 (1938): 223-62. Print.