1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

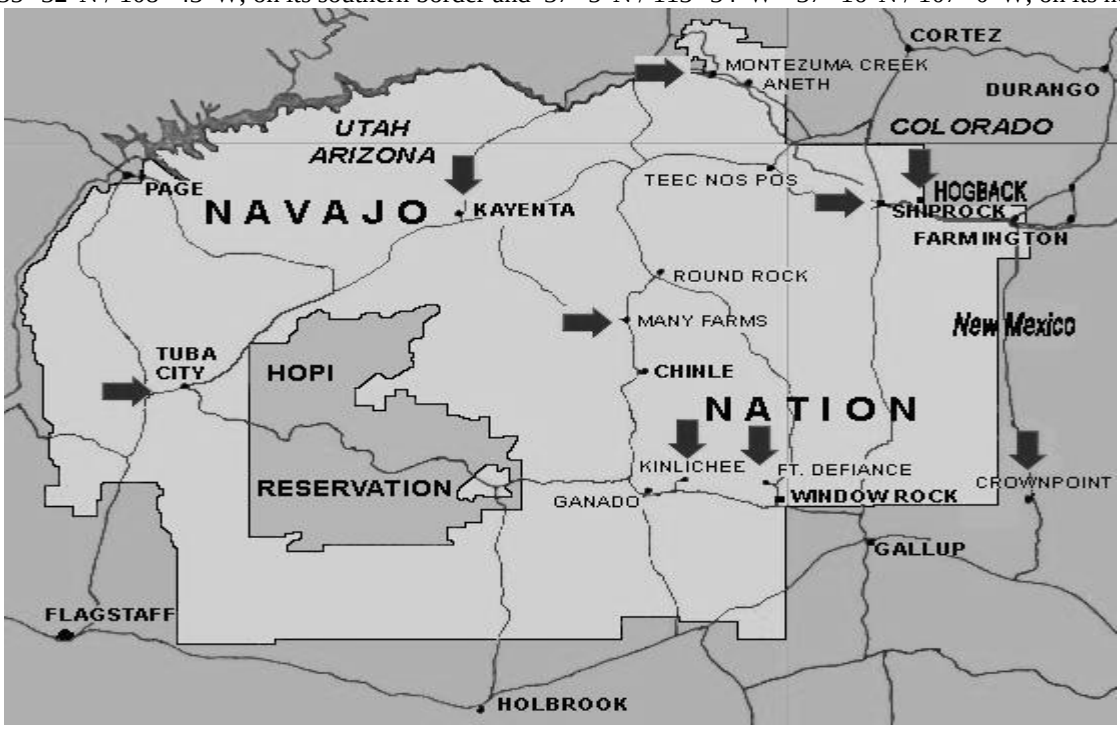
The Navajo (Navaho, Diné or Naabeehó), of the Na-Dene, Nuclear Na-Dene, Athapaskan-Eyak, Athapaskan, Apachean, Navajo-Apache, Western Apache-Navajo language family (1).

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

NAV (1).

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

The Navajo traditionally resided in the Four Corners area of the Southwestern United States and more specifically on the Colorado plateau, however, in accordance with the Treaty of 1868 they were moved onto a federally recognized reservation known simply as the Navajo Indian Reservation which was carved out of their traditional homelands and now resides roughly within 35° 12' N / 111° 38' W - 35° 32' N / 108° 43' W, on its southern border and 37° 5' N / 113° 34' W - 37° 16' N / 107° 0' W, on its northern borders (3).



1.4 Brief history:

The Navajos, who are now the most numerous Indian tribe in the United States, origin has been traced to the ancestors of the Na-Dene language family that crossed into America around three millennia ago, who upon arrival began breaking into distinct language groups, such as the Athapaskans, of which the Navajo belong, somewhere around two millennia ago. Around 1,000 – 600 years ago a subgroup of the Athapaskans, the Apachean or southern Athapaskans broke away and began traveling south taking a multiphasic path following a generally southern path along the Rocky Mountains before setting in the Southwestern United States and becoming their own respective "tribes" the Navajo and the Apache (18, pg. 9-10). The name Navajo itself is comparatively recent and does not exist in "Navajo" language, they instead refer to themselves as Dine or Dene, which translates into "the people". Anthropologists and Scientist disagree as to when the Navajo came into contact with the Pueblos and to what their exact relationship was. Some have submitted that there existed a guerrilla type warfare initiated by the Navajo intended to steal goods, food, and women forcing the Pueblos to begin dwelling high up on cliffs such as those found in Mesa Verde. While on the other hand some have suggested that there was a significant trading network between the two respective tribes (19, pg. 4). I would opine however that the evidence suggests that it was a combination of the two with significantly more emphasis on a trading network. Not only did the Navajo learn and adopt agriculture principles from the Pueblo, they also adopted a significant amount of their culture adapting it in to their own such as the myth of emerging from the womb of mother earth (18, pg. 9). The Navajo "officially" first came into contact with the United States when General Steven Kearny led an expedition through their territory during the Mexican American War. After the end of the Mexican American War in response to the increasing encroachment of European settlers into their homeland, they began a pattern of raids aimed at stealing livestock, goods, and women for sale as slaves however, by 1864 the Navajo had been forced on to a reservation. Unlike many of the other plains Indians who had lived a purely nomadic hunter and gather lifestyle, the Navajo who were already semi accustomed to agriculture "flourished" on the reservation at least in comparison to other tribes (6).

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

1.6 Ecology:

The Navajo traditionally resided in the Four Corners area of the Southwestern United States and more specifically on the Colorado plateau which consist in large part of sand and sandstone that has been subject to eons of erosion creating a succession of mesas, alluvial sandy plains, and deep canyons. Rainfall is sparse, ranging from an average of around 8 inches per year in the lower elevations up to 22 inches in the smaller mountainous areas. Therefore, most of the land could easily be classed as an arid semi-desert. Although nights tend to be cool, even in the summer, daytime summer temperatures easily reach well into the hundreds while winter temperatures drop well below freezing (2, pg. 42).

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

148,530 speakers including 7,616 monolinguals (1990 census) out of 219,198 ethnic Navaho (1990 USA Census Bureau) (1).

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

Wild plants, seeds, fruits, roots, and nuts, corn, beans and squash (11, pg. 15).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

Gophers, prairie dogs, jack rabbits, sheep, deer, goats, horses, and cattle (11, pg. 15).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

Like their Northern Athapaskan relatives the Navajo employed the bow and arrow and lance in times of war, and after moving south and acquiring horses sometime after the Pueblo revolt of 1680 they began using lasso's as a weapon with varying degrees of effect paralleling their mastery of the horse (16, pg. 206).

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production:

While it is possible to identify female and male jobs among traditional Navajos (such as weaving, basketry, pottery, and milking for females and deer-hunting, plowing fields, and saddle-making for males), ethnographies and life histories make it clear that occupational specialization was slight and that most jobs were done when they needed doing by the person present. The result is a complementary, balanced division of labor, one exemplifying the Navajo belief that "everything exists in two parts, the male, and the female, which belong together and complete each other". Given the matrilineality and matrilocality of traditional Navajo society and the apparent greater mobility of men, however, it is also obvious that women had to be self-reliant and cognizant of knowledge and skills necessary for self-sufficiency and survival (11, pg. 13-14).

2.6 Land tenure:

Families traditionally have exclusive use rights to agricultural land as long as they actually farm it; if it lies uncultivated for more than two years another family may take possession. All range land, however, is treated as Common and collective property of the whole community and is unfenced (6).

2.7 Ceramics:

While the Navajo are known more for their magnificent woven tapestry's and baskets, they also produced low-fired ceramic figurines depicting Navajos going about daily activities and in smaller numbers religious deities (17, pg. 337).

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

The sharing of food is a symbol of solidarity. For example, when a sheep is butchered, everyone in the unit get what's they want and need. It would be considered an antisocial act of enormous proportions for one household to butcher an animal for food and not share it with others. In other words sharing of food is communally utilized and the sharing of food is a social obligation. This also applies to non-Navajo who may happen to be present at meal time (7, pg. 88).

2.9 Food taboos:

Several food taboos are rigidly observed; they must never touch fish, wild turkey, bears and moreover they do not even touch bearskin robes out of respect for the taboo and finally the flesh of swine is considered to be extremely taboo much more than the others (10, pg. 357).

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

No evidence found, moreover given the arid semi-desert environment in which the Navajo traditionally lived canoes or other watercrafts would likely be completely unnecessary.

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):

The age varies but girl's first menarche generally corresponds with their age when they were first marriage with 13 appearing to be the median (12).

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):

Girls were traditionally married at a very early age, and some were married while still mere children, but as a rule the marriageable age is approximately twelve to fourteen (10, pg. 356).

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

Divorce involve very little formality, and the rate of divorce was believed to be fairly high, the majority of divorces taking place between spouses who have been married less than two years. Furthermore, since the Navajo society revolved around a matrilineal model a divorce in some instance could be as simple as the women moving the man's belongings out of the Hogan (6).

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

It is nearly impossible to truly attach a percentage in any fashion to an indigenous society as the society's themselves did not keep such records and once scientists and anthropologists began trying to attach these percentages the society's themselves had been altered by outside society's, however, polygyny is believed to have been extremely high in Navajo society in past times (4) but has declined rapidly in 1900 7.6 % men reported having more than one wife (5, pg. 48).

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

Traditionally, to acquire a wife in Navajo society a man would have to gain the approval of the women's family and would seek their approval by providing horses, sheep or some other item of significant value to persuade the family, because younger women naturally demanded higher prices, older men tended to marry them, whereas younger men would marry older women and once they found fortune could take a younger wife (14, pg. 43).

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

Basic productive resources are the collective property of the extended family and are not alienable by individuals; they are passed on from generation to generation within the group. Jewelry, saddles, horses, and many kinds of ceremonial knowledge are treated as personal property, however, individuals have considerable freedom in disposal of these, although it is always expected that a woman will leave most of her personal property to her daughters and that a man will leave much of his property to his sister's children (6).

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

The Navajo term for both hermaphrodite and transvestite is nadle, which can be translated as "weaver" but when etymologized is "being transformed." However, they distinguish between the two and between male and female transvestites. Hermaphrodites were called "the real nadle." whereas transvestites were called "those who pretend to be nadle." The outlook of Navaho society toward the nadle is very favorable. They are believed to have been given charge of the wealth in the beginning and to control it to the present day. The family which counted a transvestite among its members or had a hermaphrodite child born to them was considered by themselves and everyone else as very fortunate. The success and wealth of such a family was believed to be assured. Special care was taken in the raising of such children and they were afforded favoritism not shown to other children of the family. As they grew older and assumed the character of nadle, this solicitude and respect increased, not only on the part of their families but from the community as a whole (9, pg. 273-274).

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

Traditionally there was strict clan exogamy, however marriages outside of the broader Navajo "tribe" was generally not an approved method of finding a partner (4, pg. 60-61).

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

Rape and/or rape customs appear to be absent from traditional Navajo culture, which likely can be attributed to the fact that women shared equal rights with men and sometimes superior authority and importance and therefore the reciprocal relation of a man and women were conceived as interdependent with the omens role is society often being essential. Moreover the Navajo's greatest deity "Changing Women" or Mother Earth symbolizes women's social importance and therein implies that Navajo women would not customarily be the victims of sexual coercion or rape (8, pg. 35).

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?

If the mother died, traditionally a female member of the mother's nuclear family (maternal grandmother), who was past her child bearing years, raised the child (11, pg. 14).

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)

In pre-contact periods maternal uncles were honored as secondary fathers and took on the task of disciplining and teaching his nephew (16, pg. 21).

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

The most rigid avoidance "taboo" exercised in Navajo society is that of the mother-in-law and son-in-law relationship which begins with the announcement of the engagement. Women believe that if there son-in-law looks them in the eyes they will go blind, therefore when talking to their mothers-in-law men strictly avoid eye contact tending to maintain eye contact with the ground during the conversation (7, pg. 26-27).

4.24 Joking relationships?

There are two recognized forms of joking in Navajo culture the most extreme permits obscene teasing and occurs between cross cousins, who are not permitted to be mates. The term *bi-zedi* is used by two female cousins or by two cousins of the opposite sex. There exists a joking relationship between the maternal uncle and the nephew however it does not become obscene. Teasing about sex may however be indulged in by maternal uncles and nieces and paternal uncles and aunts with nephews and nieces. There are also joking relationships between maternal grandmothers and maternal grandson, and father-in-law and son-in-law but neither are obscene (4, pg. 72-73).

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

Unlike the majority of their distant relatives the Northern Athapaskans who were/are of bilateral descent, the Navajo are strictly matrilineal and suggest that they must have underwent a rapid cultural change after breaking off and heading south (15, pg. 7).

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

According to Locke, one of the primary roles of Navajo clans was to help in the limiting of marriage choices. Traditionally one was to never marry within one's own clan or that of ones father as it was considered to be incestuous. Moreover incest and the practice of witchcraft, which Navajo's believe stems from incest, is viewed as one of the most repulsive crimes (16, pg. 20).

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

Yes, after the bride and grooms parents have successfully negotiated the terms of the marriage, Hogan or shade is built for the bride and groom and on the evening of the set upon date for the ceremony, one of the groom's male relatives delivers the gifts to the bride's family. Then one of the male relatives of the bride, her father, or maternal uncle leads her to her seat beside or betrothed who has already entered the Hogan. The woman's father will have previously placed a small pot of water with a gourd ladle and a basket filled with ceremonial (unflavored) gruel between the couple seats. When the relatives of both parties have arrived, the bride's father marks the basket of gruel with pollen, drawing a line from the opening in the east across to the west with white pollen and from south to north with yellow pollen. He then makes a circle around the basket always working in a clockwise direction. The bride then dips water from the pot with the ladle and pours it over the groom's hands and then he does the same. Next he eats a finger full of gruel from the east side of the basket and his bride inmates him. They repeat this process from west, south, and north sections of the basket. After the couple has eaten their desired amount of gruel the remaindered may be eaten by the audience. The guests then spend the rest of the night feasting while the elders give advice to the newlyweds on how to get along. After they have been married for two or three days they wash each other's hair in yucca suds (4, pg. 140-141).

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

Names as a means of identification are generally not important in Navajo society, more frequently they are referred to by their relationship. In terms of given names it is givens shortly after the child is born and used until that person becomes a parent when they become so and so father or mother. Generally they are given a name between two and three months old when there maternal or paternal grandparents or other elder says your name is such and such and slaps the child. These names tend to have some significance to the clan either by some deed of their kin or from a perceived supernatural event that occurred when the child was present (4, pg.96-107).

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

In traditional Navajo society marriage was to be outside of your clan and kinship network (4, pg. 60-61).

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

Marriages are arranged by the boy's family, when a father decides it is time for his son to marry he meets in a family council with his wife and her brother and decide who the boy shall marry, it appears that the mothers brother has the deciding vote on the maternal side. Furthermore if the boy's father is not interested in marrying his son the boy's paternal grandfather takes the lead in the selection. Once a decision has been made the boy's father and maternal uncle approach the girl's family and negotiate, generally horses are given and if an agreement is reached between the family's the girls family tells the boy's family to return at a set time and the marriage will take place (4, pg. 139 - 140).

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Their doesn't appear to be significant conflict over who marries who, however as previously mentioned young women command a higher cost and thus older men are more likely to marry the younger women and vice versa with regard to younger men and older women (14, pg. 43).

Warfare/homicide

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):
4.18 Cannibalism?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

The Navajo's traditional territory was especially favorable for sheep culture, and to maintain the flocks in sufficient pasture they move them to different grazing grounds at least twice a year, often with more frequency than that, with these movements being regulated by the condition of the grass and the supply of water. In a dry season many of the smaller springs tended to dry out, and moreover, when flocks are held too long in one place, their close cropping destroys the vegetation, enforcing an abandonment of the locality for two or three years, by which time, if left entirely alone, the grasses again recover. The usual practice was to take the flocks up to the higher plateaus and mountains in the summer, grazing in the proximities of springs or an occasional rain pool, and moving down to the valleys and lower wooded mesas in the winter, when both sheep and the Navajo depend, to a great extent, upon the snow for their water supply. By this means they are able to partially utilize the pasturage in the broad waterless valleys, retiring as the summer advances to the grassy uplands that have been fertilized by the melting snow (10, pg. 347).

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

There was no system of formal authority among the Navajo except that embodied in kinship relationships. In the preservation period, however, the population was divided into a number of localized bands, and each of these had its recognized leader, although he had no coercive powers, instead he acted more in line with a present day advisor, advising on such things as war, peace, and food acquisition, but again he had no power to enforce these ideas. The principal mechanism for the maintenance of order has always been the concept of collective responsibility, which makes all members of a family, or even of a clan, responsible for the good behavior of any individual member. Maintaining the good name of the family or clan within the community is an important consideration for all Navajo (6).

5.4 Post marital residence:

The Navajo people traditionally united in matrilateral kinships and generally formed a matrilocal residential cluster with distinct spatial identities (2, pg. 43).

5.5 Territoriality? (Defined boundaries, active defense):
5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (Age and sex):
5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

There are two recognized forms of joking in Navajo culture the most extreme permits obscene teasing and occurs between cross cousins, who are not permitted to be mates. The term *bi-zedi* is used by two female cousins or by two cousins of the opposite sex. There exists a joking relationship between the maternal uncle and the nephew however it does not become obscene. Teasing about sex may however be indulged in by maternal uncles and nieces and paternal uncles and aunts with nephews and nieces. There are also joking relationships between maternal grandmothers and maternal grandson, and father-in-law and son-in-law but neither are obscene (4, pg. 72-73).

5.8 Village and house organization:
5.9 Specialized village structures (men's' houses):
5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

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

There was no ranking in traditional Navajo society; social obligations were determined entirely by kinship and residence. Both men and women had fairly specific, lifelong obligations toward the family into which they were born as well as toward the family into which they were married. The father in each household was the recognized household head, and the father in the oldest household was the headman of each residence group, with considerable authority over the allocation of labor and resources among all the members of the group. The status of women was notably high (6).

5.12 Trade:

Traditionally, the Navajo prior to moving south were nomadic Hunters and Gathers, however, after coming into contact with the Puebloians peoples of the American Southwest, they slowly began transforming into a semi-sedentary society in large part to the extensive trading they did with the Puebloians, trading hunted game for agri. based foods such as corn and squash and in the process learning the skills necessary to produce them on their own (6).

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

6.2 Stimulants:

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

A Navajo girl, upon reaching the age of 13 and experiencing her first menstrual period becomes initiated into womanhood by a 4-day ritual entitled the Kinaalda, which is part of the Navajo Blessing Way Ceremony. The Kinaalda literally translates "puberty ceremony", and this term is interchangeable with both the girl and the ceremony. The Kinaalda is based on a myth about the first Kinaalda Ceremony performed by and for Changing Woman, who is the female deity identified with the Earth and she is the source and sustenance of all life on the earth's surface, controlling particularly fertility. During the Kinaalda the legendary origin and its transmission to mankind is retold and enacted (12).

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation):

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

Sand-painting is an art form used in religious rituals, including healing ceremonials. Highly stylized designs represent the Holy People, or abstractions of sacred power, serving to make sacred figures and concepts temporarily visible and concrete. The artist uses materials and hues that are specified for a particular ceremony, often including pollen, charcoal, and pulverized minerals. There is little variation among individual painters, since this is not considered a form of self-expression. Indeed, accuracy in the execution of sand-paintings is prized, as it is regarded as important for their ceremonial efficacy. An experienced painter may carry around the designs for several hundred paintings in his head (sand-painting is an exclusively male activity) (13, pg. 44-45).

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

Traditionally, Navajo were morbidly afraid of death and the dead and spoke about them as little as possible. The dead were buried promptly and without public ceremony, although a great many ritual taboos were observed by the close kin of the deceased and by those who handled the corpse. Ideas about the afterlife were not codified in a systematic way, but varied from individual to individual. There was no concept of rewards and punishments for deeds done in this life; it seems that the afterworld was not thought of as a happy or desirable place for anyone (6).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

Teknonymy is prevalent among the Navajo. For example, a woman becomes *iba bama*, mother-of-she-went-to-war, and the father becomes *iba bvje*, father-of-she-went-to-war as soon as the first child is born. Similarly a child may be called such and such son/daughter (4, pg. 100).

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

Navajo gods and other supernatural powers are many and varied. Most important among them are a group of anthropomorphic deities, and especially Changing Woman or Spider Woman, the consort of the Sun God, and her twin sons, the Monster Slayers. Other supernatural powers include animal, bird, and reptile spirits, and natural phenomena or wind, weather, light and darkness, celestial bodies, and monsters. There is a special class of deities, the *Yei*, who can be summoned by masked dancers to be present when major ceremonies are in progress. Most of the Navajo deities can be either beneficial or harmful to the Earth Surface People, depending on their caprice or on how they are approached. Navajo mythology is enormously rich and poetically expressive. According to basic cosmological belief, all of existence is divided between the Holy People (supernatural) and the Earth Surface People. The Holy People passed through a succession of underworlds, each of which was destroyed by a flood, until they arrived in the present world. Here they created First Man and First Woman, the ancestors of all the Earth Surface People. The Holy People

gave to the Earth Surface People all the practical and ritual knowledge necessary for their survival in this world and then moved away to dwell in other realms above the earth. However, they remain keenly interested in the day-to-day doings of the Earth Surface People, and constant attention to ceremonies and taboos is required in order to keep in harmony with them. The condition of *hozoji*, or being in harmony with the supernatural powers, is the single most important ideal sought by the Navajo people (6).

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

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

Primitively the men dressed in deerskin shirts, hip-leggings, moccasins, and native blankets. Breeches fashioned from any pleasing, but usually very thin, material, and extending below the knees, being left open at the outer sides from the bottom to a little above the knees; deerskin moccasins with rawhide soles, which come to a little above the ankles, and brown deerskin leggings from moccasin-top to knee, held in place at the knee by a woven garter wound several times around the leg and the end tucked in. In early times the women wore deerskin waist, skirt, moccasins, and blanket, but these gradually gave place to the so-called "squaw-dress," woven on the blanket loom, and consisting of two small blankets laced together at the sides, leaving arm-holes, and without being closed at top or bottom. The top then was laced together, leaving an opening for the head, like a poncho. This blanket-dress was of plain dark colors (12).

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

Sororate was especially common in pre-contact and gradually became less acceptable with the advent of European influence into Navajo society, however it is still believed to be practiced in small numbers despite Federal laws and Tribal laws outlawing the practice (2, pg. 43). Levirate was also traditionally practiced but as with Sororate has fallen out of practice by the great majority, if not all Navajo people (4, pg. 62, 155).

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

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

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