

Trobrianders

also known as “Kilivila”, “Kiriwina”, “Kitava”, “Vakuta”, “Kaileuna”

Data source: eHRAF

Secondary source

Entered by Emily Pitek, Human Relations Area Files

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Entry tags: Religion, Oceanic Religions, Melanesia

Located off the coast of Papua New Guinea, the Trobriand Islands are home to several thousand individuals who live in villages organized by matrilineages. The Trobrianders do not participate in an official, organized religion. Their belief system is largely dominated by magic and ceremonial practices, including garden magic and the kula, an inter-island trading ring. Spells, land, taboos, ancestral history, and social position are owned and shared by members of specific matrilineages. This entry focuses on the main island, Kiriwina, ca. 1914.



Date Range: 1890 CE - 1930 CE

Region: Trobriand Islands

Region tags: Oceania, Melanesia, Papua New Guinea

The Trobriand Islands (now a part of Papua New Guinea) include Kiriwina, Kaileuna, Kitava, and Vakuta. This entry focuses specifically on Kiriwina Island ca. 1914.

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Divale, W. 2004. Codebook of Variables for the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample. World Cultures: The Journal of Cross-Cultural and Comparative Research.
- Source 2: Murdock, G.P., and Wilson, S.F. 1972. Settlement Patterns and Community Organization: Cross-Cultural Codes 3. Ethnology, 11(3), pp. 245-295.

Online sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/ehrafe/>
- Source 1 Description: eHRAF World Cultures: Trobriands (OL06)
- Source 2 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ol06-012>
- Source 2 Description: Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1926. "Myth In Primitive Psychology." New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

- Source 3 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ol06-009>
- Source 3 Description: Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1920. "War And Weapons Among The Natives Of The Trobriand Islands." *Man* 20 (5). London: 10-12.
- Source 1 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ol06-047>
- Source 1 Description: Seligman, C. G. (Charles Gabriel). 1910. "Northern Massim." *Melanesians Of British New Guinea*, By C. G. Seligmann. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Source 2 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ol06-006>
- Source 2 Description: Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1916. "Baloma: The Spirits Of The Dead In The Trobriand Islands." *Journal Of The Royal Anthropological Institute Of Great Britian And Ireland* 46: 353-430.
- Source 3 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ol06-001>
- Source 3 Description: Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. "Argonauts Of The Western Pacific: An Account Of Native Enterprise And Adventure In The Archipelagoes Of Melanesian New Guinea." London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.
- Source 1 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ol06-011>
- Source 1 Description: Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1927. "Sex And Repression In Savage Society." London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Inc.
- Source 2 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ol06-002>
- Source 2 Description: Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1935. "Coral Gardens And Their Magic: A Study Of The Methods Of Tilling The Soil And Of Agricultural Rites In The Trobriand Islands. Vol. One, The Description Of Gardening." New York: American Book Company.

General Variables

Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

— Yes

Notes: "The turn of the century marked the establishment of the Methodist Overseas Mission (now the United Church Mission) on Kiriwina..." (eHRAF World Cultures, Culture Summary: Trobriands).



Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

— Yes

Notes: Until about 1899, warfare in the Trobriand Islands was more frequent (Ember and Ember, 1992; original coding notes). "The Trobriand Archipelago, and in particular the main island, Bwoiowa, was divided into a number of districts, which were at war with each other. The most important pair of such districts potentially at war were Kiriwina, with the capital village of Omarakana, and Tilataula, with its capital Kabuaku. Between these two districts relations were always strained" (Malinowski, 1920:10).

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 1880 CE - 1899 CE

— No

Notes: SCCS variable 1649, Frequency of Internal Warfare (Resolved Rating), code=1, internal

warfare seems to be absent or rare (original code 1), however, SCCS variable 1654, Pacification, code=4, pacified before the twenty-five-year ethnographic present. (Ember and Ember, 1992; retrieved from Divale, 2004).



Is there violent conflict (with groups outside the sample region):

— No

Notes: SCCS variable 1650, Frequency of External Warfare (Resolved Rating), code=1, external warfare seems to be absent or rare (original code 1), however, SCCS variable 1654, Pacification, code=4, pacified before the twenty-five-year ethnographic present. (Ember and Ember, 1992; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group have a general process/system for assigning religious affiliation:

— No

Notes: Magical spells can be acquired through inheritance, but also by the exchange of goods. In this sense, descent is important in magical practices, but there is no system for assigning religious affiliation (Malinowski, 1926, various sections).

Does the religion have official political support

— No

Notes: In the case of the Trobrianders, headmen have magical abilities and might be considered specialists in the sense that their power is the strongest. However, the Trobrianders do not have an official, organized religion. The headmen are practicing the same magic as laymen, and are not officially declaring religious support.

Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

— Estimated population, numeric: 8000

Notes: "At the beginning of [the twentieth] century, the population in the Trobriands was about 8,000..." (eHRAF World Cultures, Torbriands Culture Summary). The principal authority on the Trobriands, Malinowski, did not record an exact population figure, but indicated the population was "a few thousand" (1935:ix), and the islands were densely populated.

Nature of religious group [please select one]:

— Small religious group (not related to larger religious group)

Notes: The Trobriand Islanders do not participate in an organized religion. Rather, their religious system consists of magical practices on the individual and kin-group level.

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:

— No

Notes: While there are headmen of villages in the Trobriand Islands, these headmen are not religious

leaders. Because they are born into chiefly lineages, leaders inherit the powerful magical powers of their lineages, but these powers do not make them religious specialists. Village chiefs work with village garden magicians, who are also hereditary leaders deriving power from specific lineages. The garden magician oversees the crops and gardens of a village, and will conduct ceremonies related to the weather and agriculture. Garden magicians are better defined as religious specialists rather than religious leaders. (Malinowski, 1922, 1935)

Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

— No

Notes: Large or Impressive Structures (from Murdock and Wilson, 1972), code= Er; the most impressive structure (or type of structure) is an economic or industrial edifice, e.g., a storehouse, factory, or office building. An additional important type of large or impressive structure is the residence of a category of influential individuals, e.g., a noble, a wealthy landowner, or the local headman.

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

— No

Notes: There is no monumental religious architecture.

Are there specific sites dedicated to sacred practice or considered sacred:

— Yes

Notes: "There are a number of special spots--grottoes, clumps of trees, stone heaps, coral outcrops, springs, heads of creeks--called 'holes' or 'houses' by the natives. From such 'holes' the first couples (a sister as the head of the family and the brother as her guardian) came and took possession of the lands, and gave the totemic, industrial, magical, and sociological character to the communities thus begun" (Malinowski, 1926:36). These points of origin are sacred sites to each kin group.



Are sacred site oriented to ecological features:

— Yes

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Beliefs

Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer "no" only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body.

Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

— Yes

Notes: "Among the natives of Kiriwina, death is the starting point of two series of events which run almost independently of each other. Death affects the deceased individual; his soul (baloma or balom) leaves the body and goes to another world, there to lead a shadowy existence" (Malinowski, 1916:353).

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as non-material, ontologically distinct from body:

— Yes

Notes: "A remarkable thing happens to the spirit immediately after its exodus from the body. Broadly speaking, it may be described as a kind of splitting up" (Malinowski, 1916:354).

Belief in afterlife:

— Yes

Notes: "Among the natives of Kiriwina, death is the starting point of two series of events which run almost independently of each other. Death affects the deceased individual; his soul (baloma or balom) leaves the body and goes to another world, there to lead a shadowy existence" (Malinowski, 1916:353).

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: "In fact, there are two beliefs, which, being obviously incompatible, yet exist side by side. One of them is, that the baloma (which is the main form of the dead man's spirit) goes 'to Tuma, a small island lying some ten miles to the north-west of the Trobriands.' This island is inhabited by living men as well, who dwell in one large village, also called Tuma; and it is often visited by natives from the main island. The other belief affirms that the spirit leads a short and precarious existence after death near the village, and about the usual haunts of the dead man, such as his garden, or the sea-beach, or the waterhole. In this form, the spirit is called kosi (sometimes pronounced kos). The connection between the kosi and the baloma is not very clear, and the natives do not trouble to reconcile any inconsistencies with regard to this matter" (Malinowski, 1916:354).

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "below" space:

— Yes

Notes: "Another view is that the baloma descend underground to a real "nether world," and live there in Tumaviaka (Great Tuma)" (Malinowski, 1916:370).

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined horizontal space:

— Yes

Notes: "In fact, there are two beliefs, which, being obviously incompatible, yet exist side by side. One of them is, that the baloma (which is the main form of the dead man's spirit) goes 'to Tuma, a small island lying some ten miles to the north-west of the Trobriands.' This island is inhabited by living men as well, who dwell in one large village, also called Tuma; and it is often visited by natives from the main island. The other belief

affirms that the spirit leads a short and precarious existence after death near the village, and about the usual haunts of the dead man, such as his garden, or the sea-beach, or the waterhole. In this form, the spirit is called kosi (sometimes pronounced kos). The connection between the kosi and the baloma is not very clear, and the natives do not trouble to reconcile any inconsistencies with regard to this matter" (Malinowski, 1916:354).

Reincarnation in this world:

— Yes

Notes: SCCS variable 1998: Belief in Reincarnation of Deceased Adults, code=4 (strong belief). (Rosenblat, Walsh, and Jackson, 1976; retrieved from Divale, 2004).



In a human form:

— Yes

Notes: See Malinowski, 1916:357

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

— Yes

Notes: SCCS Variable 1850: Secondary Bone/Body Treatment: Original Scale (code=6), secondary contact with the body or bones is the preferred means of disposal for all or nearly all adult members of the society. (Schroeder, 2001; retrieved from Divale, 2004).



Cannibalism:

— No

Notes: "...the absence of cannibalism (for the existence of which neither Me Bellamy nor myself could discover any evidence)..." (Seligman, 1910:668).



Secondary burial:

— Yes

Notes: SCCS Variable 1850: Secondary Bone/Body Treatment: Original Scale (code=6), secondary contact with the body or bones is the preferred means of disposal for all or nearly all adult members of the society. (Schroeder, 2001; retrieved from Divale, 2004).



Re-treatment of corpse:

— Yes

Notes: "A man would generally be buried on the morning of the day following his death. A black band is traced on the dead man's forehead, he is decorated with a necklace of sabisa bead, here called karob and with armshells, and a shell ornament called nauwa is placed in the nasal septum, a new perineal bandage is also put on him" (Seligman, 1910:715). The body may be exhumed and reburied several times during the mourning process, and "the most striking feature of the funeral customs of these islands is that the skull and certain bones are taken from the body, the skull being kept and the bones worn, while certain limb bones are

mad into spatulae with which certain relatives feign to take lime" (Seligman, 1910:721). "The bones of a dead woman are removed by her husband, his mother, his brothers, and sisters, and his sisters' children, all of whom help in cleaning the bones of the deceased, the skull being finally kept in the widower's house. The widower's brothers and his sisters' sons make spatulae from the bones of the deceased and keep and colour the spatulae so made. The dead woman's lower jaw is worn by her husband, while her cervical vertebrae are worn by her mother-in-law and her husband's sisters, the former also wearing a number of her phalanges" (Seligman, 1910:722).

Are grave goods present:

— Yes

Notes: "The dead man's body is adorned with all his valuable ornaments, and all the articles of native wealth he possessed are laid beside it. This is done in order that he may carry the 'essence' or 'spirit part' of his riches to the other world" (Malinowski, 1916:355).



Valuable items:

— Yes

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Are formal burials present:

— Yes

Notes: See Seligman, 1910, Chapter LiV: Burial and Mourning Ceremonies



In cemetery:

— Yes

Notes: Presumably, after Government intervention ca. 1900, burials were to take place in burial grounds rather in domestic places (Seligman, 1910:715).



Domestic (individuals interred beneath house, or in areas used for normal domestic activities):

— Yes

Notes: Yes, until Government intervention ca. 1900 (Seligman, 1910:715).

Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

— Yes

Notes: Spirits (see additional questions below for details)



↳ A supreme high god is present:

– No

Notes: SCCS variable 238: Religion: High Gods, code=1 (a high god absent or not reported in substantial descriptions of religious beliefs). (Murdock, 1962-1971; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

– Yes

Notes: "The kosi, the ghost of the dead man..." (Malinowski, 1916:355).

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

– Yes

Notes: "The kosi , the ghost of the dead man, may be met on a road near the village, or be seen in his garden, or heard knocking at the houses of his friends and relatives, for a few days after death. People are distinctly afraid of meeting the kosi , and are always on the look out for him, but they are not in really deep terror of him" (Malinowski, 1916:355).

↳ Human spirits have memory of life:

– Yes

Notes: "The kosi , the ghost of the dead man, may be met on a road near the village, or be seen in his garden, or heard knocking at the houses of his friends and relatives, for a few days after death. People are distinctly afraid of meeting the kosi , and are always on the look out for him, but they are not in really deep terror of him" (Malinowski, 1916:355). "There is not the slightest doubt that a baloma retains the semblance of the man he represents, so that if you see the baloma , you recognize the man that was. The baloma live the life of men; they get older; they eat, sleep, love, both whilst in Tuma and on visits which they pay to their villages" (Malinowski, 1916:368).

↳ Human spirits exhibit positive emotion:

– Yes

Notes: "The spirit, in any case, settles down to a happy existence in Tuma, where he spends another lifetime, until he dies again" (Malinowski, 1916:362).

↳ Human spirits exhibit negative emotion:

– Yes

Notes: "At first the spirit wants to weep for those left behind; his relative baloma protect him, saying, 'Wait, let him have a spell; let him cry.' If he has been happily married, and has left a widow for whom he cares, he naturally wants to be left for a somewhat longer time to his grief (Malinowski, 1916:361).

↳ Human spirits possess hunger:

– Yes

Notes: "There is not the slightest doubt that a baloma retains the semblance of the man he represents, so that if you see the baloma, you recognize the man that was. The baloma live the life of men; they get older; they eat, sleep, love, both whilst in Tuma and on visits which they pay to their villages" (Malinowski, 1916:368).

↳ Human spirits possess/exhibit some other feature:

— Yes [specify]: Trickery

Notes: "The kosi seems always to be in the mood of a frivolous, yet harmless, hobgoblin, playing small tricks, making himself a nuisance, and frightening people, as one man might frighten another in the darkness for a practical joke. He may throw small stones or gravel at anyone passing his haunt of an evening; or call out his name or laughter may be heard coming out of the night. But he will never do any actual harm" (Malinowski, 1916:355).

↳ Human spirits communicate with the living:

— Yes

Notes: "The kosi seems always to be in the mood of a frivolous, yet harmless, hobgoblin, playing small tricks, making himself a nuisance, and frightening people, as one man might frighten another in the darkness for a practical joke. He may throw small stones or gravel at anyone passing his haunt of an evening; or call out his name or laughter may be heard coming out of the night. But he will never do any actual harm" (Malinowski, 1916:355).

↳ In waking, everyday life:

— Yes

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↳ In dreams:

— Yes

Notes: "I call [the baloma] the main form because the baloma leads a positive, well-defined existence in Tuma; because he returns from time to time to his village; because he has been visited and seen in Tuma by men awake and men asleep, and by those who were almost dead, yet returned to life again; because he plays a notable part in native magic, and even receives offerings and a kind of propitiation; finally, because he asserts his reality in the most radical manner by returning to the place of life, by reincarnation, and thus leads a continuous existence" (Malinowski, 1916:357).

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: "Another powerful agency of death consists of the tauva'u , non-human though anthropomorphic beings, who cause all epidemic disease" (Malinowski, 1922:76). "A much less dangerous being is the tokway , a wood sprite, living in trees and rocks, stealing crops from the field and from the yam-houses, and inflicting slight ailments" (Malinowski, 1922:77).

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

– Yes

Notes: The tauva'u, however, can sometimes change into reptiles and be seen by humans (Malinowski, 1926:67).

– No

Notes: (Malinowski, 1922:76).

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

Notes: "Another powerful agency of death consists of the tauva'u , non-human though anthropomorphic beings, who cause all epidemic disease" (Malinowski, 1922:76).

↳ These supernatural beings possess/exhibit some other feature:

– Yes [specify]: Shape-shifting

Notes: "The tauva'u can, at will, assume the shape of man or reptile" (Malinowski, 1922:76).

↳ Does the religious group possess a pantheon of supernatural beings:

– No

Notes: Spirits of the deceased are organized into kinship groups in the afterworld, however, there are no higher supernatural beings organized into a pantheon (See Malinowski, 1916, Section V).

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

– Yes

Notes: "But the baloma are not entirely materialistic. They not only resent scarcity of food and poor offerings, but they also keep strict watch over the maintenance of custom, and they punish with their displeasure any infraction of the traditional customary rules which ought to be observed during the milamala" (Malinowski, 1916:379).

↳ Supernatural beings care about taboos:

– No

Notes: "Apart from the lack of superstitious fear, there are no taboos connected with the behaviour of the living towards the spirits" (Malinowski, 1916:384).

↳ Supernatural beings care about proper ritual observance:

– Yes

Notes: "But the baloma are not entirely materialistic. They not only resent scarcity of food and poor offerings, but they also keep strict watch over the maintenance of custom, and they punish with their displeasure any infraction of the traditional customary rules which ought to be observed during the milamala" (Malinowski, 1916:379).

↳ Supernatural beings care about performance of rituals:

– Yes

Notes: "But the baloma are not entirely materialistic. They not only resent scarcity of food and poor offerings, but they also keep strict watch over the maintenance of custom, and they punish with their displeasure any infraction of the traditional customary rules which ought to be observed during the milamala" (Malinowski, 1916:379).

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

Notes: "But the baloma are not entirely materialistic. They not only resent scarcity of food and poor offerings, but they also keep strict watch over the maintenance of custom, and they punish with their displeasure any infraction of the traditional customary rules which ought to be observed during the milamala" (Malinowski, 1916:379).

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Notes: "But the baloma are not entirely materialistic. They not only resent scarcity of food and poor offerings, but they also keep strict watch over the maintenance of custom, and they punish with their displeasure any infraction of the traditional customary rules which ought to be observed during the milamala" (Malinowski, 1916:379).

↳ Done only by high god:

– No

Notes: SCCS variable 238: Religion: High Gods, code=1 (a high god absent or not reported in substantial descriptions of religious beliefs). (Murdock, 1962-1971; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: "But the baloma are not entirely materialistic. They not only resent scarcity of food and poor offerings, but they also keep strict watch over the maintenance of

custom, and they punish with their displeasure any infraction of the traditional customary rules which ought to be observed during the milamala" (Malinowski, 1916:379).

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

— Yes

Notes: "But the baloma are not entirely materialistic. They not only resent scarcity of food and poor offerings, but they also keep strict watch over the maintenance of custom, and they punish with their displeasure any infraction of the traditional customary rules which ought to be observed during the milamala" (Malinowski, 1916:379).

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

— Yes

Notes: "But the baloma are not entirely materialistic. They not only resent scarcity of food and poor offerings, but they also keep strict watch over the maintenance of custom, and they punish with their displeasure any infraction of the traditional customary rules which ought to be observed during the milamala" (Malinowski, 1916:379).

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

— Yes

Notes: The baloma express their anger through rain and storm (Malinowski, 1916:379).

↳ Punishment in this life consists of crop failure or bad weather:

— Yes

Notes: The baloma express their anger through rain and storm (Malinowski, 1916:379).

Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: See Malinowski, 1927, Section IV: Obscenity and Myth

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: "We understand now that the rules of law, the rules with a definite binding obligation, stand out from the mere rules of custom. We can see also that civil law, consisting of positive ordinances, is much more developed than the body of mere prohibitions, and that a study of purely criminal law among savages misses the most important phenomena of their legal life" (Malinowski, 1926:29).

↳ What is the nature of this distinction:

– Present and clear

Notes: "We understand now that the rules of law, the rules with a definite binding obligation, stand out from the mere rules of custom. We can see also that civil law, consisting of positive ordinances, is much more developed than the body of mere prohibitions, and that a study of purely criminal law among savages inquires the most important phenomena of their legal life" (Malinowski, 1926:29).

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: See Malinowski, 1926, Section X The Rules of Custom Defined and Classified



Generosity / charity:

– Yes

Notes: "Generosity is the highest virtue to [the Trobriander]..." (Malinowski, 1926:29).



Respectfulness / courtesy:

– Yes

Notes: See Malinowski, 1926, page 52 (section title: The Rules of Custom Defined and Classified)

Practices

Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

– No

Notes: "Chastity is an unknown virtue among these natives. At an incredibly early age they become initiated into sexual life, and many of the innocent looking plays of childhood are not as innocuous as they appear. As they grew up, they live in promiscuous free love, which gradually develops into more permanent attachments, one of which ends in marriage" (Malinowski, 1922:53).

Does membership in this religious group require constraints on sexual activity (partial sexual abstinence):

– No

Notes: While exogamy and monogamy are cultural expectations, they are not religious in nature. "...a pronounced crime: the breach of totemic clan exogamy. The exogamous prohibition is one of the corner-stones of totemism, mother-right, and the classificatory system of kinship. All females of his clan are called sisters by a man and forbidden as such" (Malinowski, 1926:78). "In her married life, the woman is supposed to remain faithful to her husband, but this rule is neither very strictly kept nor enforced" (Malinowski, 1922:54).

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

I.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale "ceremonies" and "festivals."

— Yes

Notes: Annual feast of the return of the dead (Malinowski, 1926:28). The Kula, with accompanying magical ritual and public ceremonies (Malinowski, 1922:81).



Are there orthodoxy checks:

Orthodoxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are interpreted in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper interpretation, etc.

— Yes

Notes: "The Kula is not a surreptitious and precarious form of exchange. It is, quite on the contrary, rooted in myth, backed by traditional law, and surrounded with magical rites. All its main transactions are public and ceremonial, and carried out according to definite rules. It is not done on the spur of the moment but happens periodically, at dates settled in advance, and it is carried on along definite trade routes, which must lead to fixed trysting places" (Malinowski, 1922:85).

Society and Institutions

Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

— A chiefdom

Notes: The Trobrianders are best characterized as a minimal chiefdom. Community-level village headmen come from high-ranking matrilineages, and the highest ranking chief resides in Omarakana village. The Omarakana headman works with elected council members in presiding over the villages. SCCS Variable 237, Jurisdictional Hierarchy beyond local community [Note, identical to EA033] code=2, one level (e.g., petty chiefdoms). (Murdock, 1962-1971; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

— Yes

Notes: The Trobrianders do not have an organized religion, so in this case, the "religious group" is coterminous with the society. SCCS variable 20, food storage (code=3, communal facilities). (Murdock and Morrow, 1970; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group in question provide water management (irrigation, flood control):

— No

Notes: The Trobrianders do not have an organized religion, so in this case, the "religious group" is coterminous with the society. SCCS Variable 232: Intensity of Cultivation (code=4, horticulture) [no irrigation]. (Murdock, 1962-1971; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Taxation

Does the religious group in question levy taxes or tithes:

— No

Notes: The Trobrianders do not have an organized religion, so in this case, the "religious group" is coterminous with the society. SCCS variable 1736, Tribute, Taxation, Expropriation, code=1, no tribute, taxation, or expropriation (original code 10) (Harmut, 1998; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Enforcement

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

— No

Notes: The Trobrianders do not have an organized religion, so in this case, the "religious group" is coterminous with the society. SCCS Variable 90: Police (code=1) not specialized (police functions are not specialized or institutionalized at any level of political integration, and the maintenance of law and order being left exclusively to informal mechanisms of social control, to private retaliation, or to sorcery (Tuden and Marshall, 1972; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

— No

Notes: The Trobrianders do not have an organized religion, so in this case, the "religious group" is coterminous with the society. "In no case is there any definite sentence pronounced by a third party, and agreement is but seldom reached then and there" (Malinowski, 1926:60). SCCS variable 89: Judiciary (code=1, absent), "supreme judicial authority is lacking at any level above that of local community" (Tuden and Marshall, 1972; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group in question enforce institutionalized punishment:

— No

Notes: The Trobrianders do not have an organized religion, so in this case, the "religious group" is coterminous with the society. "One point in connection with the chief's authority deserves special mention. Power implies not only the possibility of rewarding, but also the means of punishing. This in the Trobriands is as a rule done indirectly, by means of sorcery. The chief has the best sorcerers of the district always at his beck and call. Of course he also has to reward them when they do him a service. If anyone offends him, or trespasses upon his authority, the chief summons the sorcerer, and orders that the culprit shall die by black magic. And here the chief is powerfully helped in achieving his end by the fact that he can do this openly, so that everybody, and the victim himself knows that a sorcerer is after him. As the natives are very deeply and genuinely afraid of sorcery, the feeling of being hunted, of imagining themselves doomed, is in itself enough to doom them in reality. Only in extreme cases, does a chief inflict direct punishment on a culprit. He has one or two hereditary henchmen, whose duty it is to kill the man who has so deeply offended him, that actual death is the only sufficient punishment. As a matter of fact, very few cases of this are on record, and it is now, of course, entirely in abeyance" (Malinowski, 1922:64).

Does the religious group in question have a formal legal code:

— No

Notes: "The rules of law stand out from the rest in that they are felt and regarded as the obligations of one person and the rightful claims of another. They are sanctioned not by a mere psychological motive, but by a definite social machinery of binding force, based, as we know, upon mutual dependence, and realized in the equivalent arrangement of reciprocal services, as well as in the combination of such claims into strands of multiple relationship. The ceremonial manner in which most transactions are carried out, which entails public control and criticism, adds still more to their binding force" (Malinowski, 1926:55). "Law represents rather an aspect of their tribal life, one side of their structure, than any independent, self-contained social arrangements. Law dwells not in a special system of decrees, which foresee and define possible forms of non-fulfilment and provide appropriate barriers and remedies. Law is the specific result of the configuration of obligations, which makes it impossible for the native to shirk his responsibility without suffering for it in the future" (Malinowski, 1926:58).

Are the group's adherents subject to a formal legal code provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— No

Notes: "The rules of law stand out from the rest in that they are felt and regarded as the obligations of one person and the rightful claims of another. They are sanctioned not by a mere psychological motive, but by a definite social machinery of binding force, based, as we know, upon mutual dependence, and realized in the equivalent arrangement of reciprocal services, as well as in the combination of such claims into strands of multiple relationship. The ceremonial manner in which most transactions are carried out, which entails public control and criticism, adds still more to their binding force" (Malinowski, 1926:55). "Law represents rather an aspect of their tribal life, one side of their structure, than any independent, self-contained social arrangements. Law dwells not in a special system of decrees, which foresee and define possible forms of non-fulfilment and provide appropriate barriers and remedies. Law is the specific result of the configuration of obligations, which makes it impossible for the native to shirk his responsibility without suffering for it in the future" (Malinowski, 1926:58).

Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

— No

Notes: Time is measured in several ways (fishing seasons, trade and Kula, wind seasons, and moons, among others), but gardening seasons are the "real measure of time". "The native who wishes to define a period or to place an event will always co-ordinate it with the most important, the most rigidly maintained, and the most characteristic index of that period; that is, with the concurrent gardening activity" (Malinowski, 1935:53).

Is a formal calendar provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— No

Notes: Time is measured in several ways (fishing seasons, trade and Kula, wind seasons, and moons, among others), but gardening seasons are the "real measure of time". "The native who wishes to define a period or to place an event will always co-ordinate it with the most important, the most rigidly

maintained, and the most characteristic index of that period; that is, with the concurrent gardening activity" (Malinowski, 1935:53).

Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes

Notes: The Trobrianders do not have an organized religion, so in this case, the "religious group" is coterminous with the society. "A man who had no gardens would be an outcast, whereas a man who for one reason or another is no good at gardening is an object for contempt. Everybody has to make gardens, and the more garden plots a man is capable of tilling, the greater is his renown" (Malinowski, 1935: 60).



Please characterize the forms/level of food production [choose all that apply]:

- Gathering
- Fishing
- Pastoralism
- Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards

Notes: The main subsistence activity of the Trobriands is horticulture, with considerable fishing, supplemented with a minor amount of gathering and raising pigs and chickens. SCCS Variable 203: Subsistence economy: gathering (code=1, 6-15% dependence). SCCS Variable 205: Subsistence economy: fishing (code=3, 26-35% dependence). SCCS Variable 206: Subsistence economy: animal husbandry (code=1, 6-15% dependence). SCCS variable 207: Subsistence Economy: Agriculture (code=5, 46-55% dependence). SCCS Variable 232: Agriculture: intensity (code=4, horticulture, i.e., semi-intensive agriculture limited mainly to vegetable gardens or groves of fruit trees rather than cultivation of field crops). (Murdock, 1962-1971; retrieved from Divale, 2004).