

The Toda dataset

Source : William H. Rivers, *The Todas*. London: Mcmillan and Company, 1906.

Coding : Noelle Counord and Klaus Hamberger for the Kinsources project, January 2017.

Ethnographic context

The Todas are a small tribal community of buffalo pastoralists living in the Nilgiri hills in Southern India. At the time of Rivers' ethnography (1901-02), they numbered about 800 individuals. They were organized into two endogamous divisions, each divided into exogamous, localized patrilineal clans:

Tarthar division	Teivali division
Nòdrs	Kuudr
Kars	Piedr
Pan	Kusharf
Taradr	Keadr
Keradr	Pedrkars
Kanòdrs	Kulhem
Kwòdrdoni	
Päm	
Nidrsi	
Melgars	
Kidmad	
Karsh	

While marriage between parallel cousins was prohibited, the Todas practiced preferential marriage between cross-cousins (*matchuni*), as well as sister exchange. Moreover, they had an organized system of fraternal polyandry (see pp. 515). In general, co-husbands are full brothers¹. As a consequence, Todas often had multiple fathers, though they usually named only one man (generally the most important living member of the set of co-fathers) when asked for their father's name.

Data sources and coding

Rivers is one of the founders of the empirical study of kinship systems based on genealogies which, as he claimed in 1906, "bring a concrete element into anthropological work". Rivers systematically used genealogies as a support for all kinds of ethnographic investigation, concentrating on concrete empirical cases rather than on abstract description of institutions.

As Rivers describes in his book (pp. 461 ff.), the collection of genealogical data had to cope with the difficulties arising from taboo on the names of dead ancestors. Not being able to collect information on ancestors directly from their descendants, Rivers worked with the help

¹ There is only one case in which a woman (1374 in our dataset) has married two men from different clans (actually uterine half-brothers, though this is not visible in the genealogy).

of several renowned Toda genealogists, whom he met in private sessions so as not to provoke public disapproval. As they had a genealogical memory that covered the quasi-totality of the Toda community (of both divisions), Rivers was able to establish a dense genealogical network, which was his major tool for the study of Toda social organization.

The result of this research is the genealogical appendix V of Rivers' monography *The Todas*. It consists of 72 genealogical charts covering 736 living individuals (without a systematic record of their children), that is, the entire Toda population of the time. Charts 1-51 correspond to the Tarthar division, charts 52-72 to the Teivali division. The two genealogical networks are not connected to each other. Due to a probable failure to record all widowed and unmarried women, as well as a real male surplus confirmed by the 1901 census (caused by the past practice of female infanticide), males largely outnumber females in the dataset.

The charts contain only agnatic genealogies, whereas the descendants of women are recorded in the genealogies of their husbands with cross-references indicated in parentheses following the name. Although individuals are not numbered on the original chart, this system of cross-references, together with the rarity of homonyms within clans, has it made easy to identify individuals appearing on different charts.

Gender is indicated by upper case letters for male, lower case letters for female, or (if names are missing) by conventional gender symbols. A small number of children are without indication of gender.

Rivers uses double horizontal lines ("equality symbols") for marriages, which causes problems of readability in cases where polyandry and polygyny are combined. Shared fatherhood is indicated on the charts by multiple vertical lines of filiation to one and the same sibling set, starting, however, not from the individual names but from the marriage symbols, which is a source of ambiguities where several women are involved.

Cases of shared fatherhood have been coded in the COPATERNITY relation, whose structure is completely analogous to the FAMILIES tab, except for the possibility of multiple fathers. We have adopted an extensive reading of Rivers' diagrams (confirmed by numerous cross-references), where all men and women directly or indirectly linked to each other by chains of marriage symbols (even when interrupted by other husbands and wives) are married to each other. By contrast, even when there were several wives in the marriage chain, we have always coded one single mother (usually the one to the right of the first vertical filiation line to the sibling set in question). Where maternity was ambiguous on the charts, this has been indicated in the CODER field. As the FAMILIES tab does not allow for multiple fatherhood, we had to make an arbitrary choice and assign children to the fathers "closest" to them on the genealogical charts. This is, however, a purely technical device. In fact, in the matrimonial census only maternal siblingship will be correctly represented, while paternal siblings may frequently be counted as first cousins. There are also two cases of shared motherhood in Rivers' charts (114 vs 115 and 203 vs 241).

Children of the same sibling set are numbered from left to right. In cases of polyandry, the numbering is continuous for an identical mother; in other cases, it starts again for each couple. The same numbering of children has been preserved in the COPATERNITY tab.

Dataset Overview

Field	Type	Comment	Source Coding
INDIVIDUALS			
Id	Numeric	Continuous numbering from left to right and top to bottom, with discontinuities and jumps due to numerous doubles that have been eliminated during coding.	-
NAME	Text	First names	As given on the charts
GENDER	Char	Gender (H for men, F for women, X for unknown)	Capital letters for male, minor letters for female; gender symbols for unnamed individuals
DIVISION	Text	The division (Tarthar or Teivali)	Inferred from clan. Corresponds to the source chart for male descendants.
CLAN	Text	The clan affiliation (see the list above)	Indicated below the name. Where no clan has been indicated, we have not coded it.
SOURCE	Numeric	The number of the genealogical chart where the individual is noted	Genealogical charts are numbered in the book.
NOTE	Text	Original notes in the text	Mainly “d.y.” (died young), “d.unm.” (died unmarried), “d.n.n.” (died before being names). For these three types of individuals no clan affiliation is indicated in the source.
CODER	Text	Coder’s notes. Concern mainly ambiguities of filiation	
FAMILIES			
SOURCE	Text	The number of the genealogical chart where the family is noted with children or further information. It is only noted if different from the source of the parents involved.	This field corresponds to Rivers’ original cross-references to marriages.
NOTE	Text	Original notes in the text	Mainly “No ch.” (no children) and “i.m.” (infant marriage).
CODER	Text	Coder’s notes. Concern mainly ambiguities of filiation	
COPATERNITY			
FATHER, MOTHER, CHILD	Numeric	The id numbers of the individuals involved in the relation	Vertical lines linking fathers and mothers to the same sibling set
CODER	Text	Coder’s notes. Concern mainly ambiguities of maternity in cases of combined polyandry and polygyny	