

## Apinayé/Apinajé of the Je Family (Brazil)

### 1. Description

*1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:* The Apinayé have several different names, all of which are given to them by outside groups, whether they be other tribes or foreigners. They are also commonly known as Apinajé, Apinalé and Apinajés, to name a few, and are classified as part of the Western Timbira group. On a larger scale, they are members of the Je language family.

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

*1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):* Located on the southern end of the Tocantins River in Brazil.

*1.4 Brief history:* The Apinayé have never ventured past the region they currently inhabit, which is the area of the junction of the Araguaia and Tocantins rivers in Brazil, but rather have demographically shifted around multiple times within the area due to foreign invasion and land demarcation. The present-day Apinayé Indigenous Land (outlined in Decree n° 0429/94) covers an area of 141,904 hectares, all of which are protected by the CRI and SPU. They were first contacted around the mid 1600s by Jesuits (see full details in *1.5a*), which formed a permanent connection to the outside world that would prove to be detrimental to the Apinayé. After said initial contact, they were connected to Brazilians in later centuries. By the late 1800s-early 1900s, due to the encroaching outside and modernized world, their population had decreased to an all-time low of 150 individuals due to all the dangers that came along with foreign exposure (disease, scarcity of resources due to deforestation/urban development/implication of transportation systems/etc, violence). This foreign invasion continued unchallenged well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, until Funai began to fight for land rights for the Apinayé between 1975 and 1982. It wasn't until 1994 that the Funai signed a land decree outlining the Apinayé indigenous area, however, the execution of the decree is still underway and is awaiting the approval from the Ministry of Justice. The effect of this land demarcation on the Apinayé and their culture is evident in their struggle throughout the centuries to survive despite the decimation of their population and the urban/foreign development of their lands.

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

*1.5a: Influence of missionaries/Europeans:* The presence of the Jesuit missionaries in the mid to late 1600s sparked conflicts in which Apinayé tribes would raid Jesuit encampments and take iron tools. Because of these raids, the Jesuits set up military posts that were eventually abandoned due to frequent Apinayé attacks. These early and hostile encounters are crucial in marking the first contact between Apinayé and European settlers, and the general trend of the relationship between them and outsiders from then on. Throughout the 1800s, the increase in “white” outsiders into Apinayé lands resulted in a rapid depopulation due to disease, which made the once thriving Apinayé majority reduced to an insignificant minority.

*1.6 Ecology:* The region that the Apinayé inhabits is known ecologically as “cerrado”, or open land with patches of relatively stunted vegetation. In contrast to other civilizations of the Amazons, which thrived in rainforests with infinite resources, the Apinayé and other similar groups lived in these zones of limited vegetation and resources that could be derived from the land—producing what is known as “cerrado culture”.

*1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density:* The most current population reading was done in 2010 by Funasa, which recorded the Apinayé to be at 1,847 people, which is a dramatic increase from the shockingly low 150 people in 1928. In present times, there are two villages, São José and Mariazinha, which hold the majority of the Apinayé peoples.

### 2. Economy

*2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):* Primarily root crops, manioc. They also cultivate broad beans, yams, beans, sweet potato, pumpkin, watermelon, peanuts, papaya, and bananas. No advanced agricultural practices beyond small-scale farming.

*2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:* In modern times the Apinayé have mainly resorted to eating cattle, but in the past and some tribes still today hunt game like deer, tapir, armadillo, paca, cutia, anteaters, quati, capelão monkey, porcupine and rhea. They also fish.

*2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:* The use of bow and arrow in the past, now they hunt with shotguns and dogs.

*2.4 Food storage:* Lack of evidence for food storage.

- 2.5 *Sexual division of production*: Women maintain the subsistence gardens while the men hunt game and have other agricultural duties (such as pruning bushy vegetation, chopping of trees and rice planting).
- 2.6 *Land tenure*: There are certain regulations when a part of one village breaks off to form its own, mainly in determining each village's hunting and agricultural grounds.
- 2.7 *Ceramics*: No ceramics.
- 2.8 *Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns*:
- 2.9 *Food taboos*:
- 2.10 *Canoes/watercraft?* Presence of canoes.

### 3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 *Mean adult height (m and f)*:
- 3.2 *Mean adult weight (m and f)*:

### 4. Life History, mating, marriage

**\*VERY LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SPECIFICITIES OF MARITAL AFFAIRS AND RELATED ISSUES, SEE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.**

- 4.1 *Age at menarche (f)*:
- 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)*:
- 4.6 *Proportion of marriages ending in divorce*:
- 4.7 *Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously*:
- 4.8 *Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?*:
- 4.9 *Inheritance patterns*:
- 4.10 *Parent-offspring interactions and conflict*:
- 4.11 *Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals*:
- 4.12 *Pattern of exogamy (endogamy)*: Only endogamy within the proper marital moieties.
- 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*
- 4.17 *Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)*: Cross-cousin relations are apparent in Apinayé societies.
- 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?*
- 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)*
- 4.24 *Kin avoidance and respect?*
- 4.24 *Joking relationships?*
- 4.25 *Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations*: No specific focus on patrilineal or matrilineal patterns of descent.
- 4.26 *Incest avoidance rules*
- 4.27 *Is there a formal marriage ceremony?*: No evidence of formal marriage or funeral ceremonies.
- 4.28 *In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?*
- 4.29 *Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?):*  
Exogamic marriages were unheard of, all marriages were within the proper marital moieties.
- 4.30 *Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?* : The existence of four marital moieties known as *kiye*, and a rule of parallel descent, sons are incorporated with father's family, daughters with mother's.
- 4.31 *Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who*:

## **Warfare/homicide**

4.14 *Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:*

4.15 *Outgroup vs ingroup 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):* Numerous accounts of skirmishes with the neighboring Kayapo, as well as hostile relations with Brazilians early on and then other foreign invaders.

4.18 *Cannibalism?*

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

5.1 *Mean local residential (village) group size:* Prior to European contact in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Apinayé villages could reach from 2 to 3 thousand people living in circular to semi-circular villages. They were considered autonomous local groups, which acted and were represented as one political unit to the surrounding villages. Present day, the majority of the Apinayé live in two villages along the Tocantins River, São José and Mariazinha.

5.2 *Mobility pattern: (seasonality):*

5.3 *Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):* The social organization of the Apinayé, similar to other Je societies, is comprised of a network of ceremonial moieties and ritual groups, as well as fairly large villages with semi-permanent populations. They are hunter-gatherers with small-scale horticulture of root crops. In fact, the Europeans were shocked at how the Apinayé facilitated such large populations and their subsequent villages when they possessed such limited use and access to “material” items. Each village has a chief or the *pa’hi*, which is chosen by the members of the village, which possesses the autonomy to make decisions for the group. There is no greater power than a chief on a village-basis.

5.4 *Post-marital residence:*

5.5 *Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):* Very defensive of their land during the years of first contact, continue to fight for their land rights through laws rather than violence.

5.6 *Social interaction divisions? (age and sex):*

5.7 *Special friendships/joking relationships:*

5.8 *Village and house organization:* Villages are circular to semi-circular and focused around a “patio” area, where many of the village events and activities take place.

5.9 *Specialized village structures (mens’ houses):* Men dominate the area of the villages center or patio, where they discuss politics, ritual practices and division of labor.

5.10 *Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?* No evidence of hammock use, many similar groups like the Apinayé also displayed lack of hammocks.

5.11 *Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:* The existence of seasonal moieties, depending on the season, certain men from each moiety will be chosen as governors and “dominate”, thus heavily influencing the decision-making process for the village as a whole. In the summer months the Wacmeje moiety governs while in the winter months, the Catãmje govern.

5.12 *Trade:* Evidence of a relationship with the Brazilians since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, no specific evidence of whether they traded formally or not. However, there are modern technologies that have made their way into the Apinayé society like steel, shotguns, cattle, etc... which was done by the trading of information or resources.

5.13 *Indications of social hierarchies?*

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

6 *Time allocation to RCR:* Each day’s activities are allocated according to a ritual calendar, focusing mainly on activities around the “patio”, the center of village life.

6.1 *Specialization (shamans and medicine):* Shamans are called *wajaka*, and they are able to connect the dead with the living for communication purposes, although it is considered risky. Acquiring this shamanic power allows you to open a permanent line of communication to the land of the dead and also be able to cure ailments.

6.2 *Stimulants:*

6.3 *Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):* Rituals are very important during different seasons. For example, collective hunts are done in the dry seasons, which is the ideal time for rituals to take place.

6.4 *Other rituals*: Initiation of young warriors in the “log race”.

6.5 *Myths (Creation)*: References to the beginning of time being the separation of light and dark.

6.6 *Cultural material (art, music, games)*: Very high nostalgia for “the past”, the attitude that things have changed so dramatically and that they value the old ways and cherish their heritage.

6.7 *Sex differences in RCR*:

6.8 *Missionary effect*: The invasion of foreigners and missionaries ultimately took a huge toll on the Apinayé, almost effectively wiping out their entire society and their culture with it.

6.9 *RCR revival*: During the 1940s, when the population was on the mend, many of the Apinayé who had previously abandoned cultural and religious practices during their struggle for survival began to restore their old customs in order to preserve their rich culture.

6.10 *Death and afterlife beliefs*: They have a very specific belief for the spirits of dead humans or *carō*, and that they go through a series of transformations, in which they use the bodies of animals or plants as “avatars”. The use of these is that of a degenerative manner, from higher animals on the food chain to lower, or from “cultivated” plants to decaying plant material. The final stage of this process is being turned to stone, thus meaning that you can no longer communicate with the living world. They also believe that since the dead can interact with the living, it is considered dangerous and possibly life threatening, being their explanation for death by diseases or unknown causes.

6.11 *Taboo of naming dead people?*

6.12 *Is there teknonymy?*

6.13 *Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)*: Their beliefs are similar to other Amazonian groups, believing that all the elements (both human, animal and inanimate) are intertwined and part of a chain that involves all aspects of nature. They focus mainly on the spirits of animals, especially those they hunt for game, which allows for a relationship between the hunter and the hunted (important in rituals). There is an emphasis on the “humanity” of animals, being that animals are “ex-humans” and before they could talk like humans.

There is also the belief that “guardian spirits” inhabit the natural world. These entities, generally taking the form of an animal, are attached to each person and often reflecting some characteristic that the person possesses (for example, someone who is swift might have a deer guardian spirit). These spirits access humans in their dreams or other liminal states, often sending messages on how they might be more effective hunters or if they are hunting too much of one type of animal. This entity and the path of communication serves as a liaison for the preservation of its species as well as solidifying the relationship between animals and humans.

## 7. Adornment

7.1 *Body paint*: Evidence of body paint used in rituals and ceremonies.

7.2 *Piercings*: The act of piercing is present in initiation ceremonies; also the men have lip and ear piercings.

7.3 *Haircut*: Men wear their hair long.

7.4 *Scarification*:

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

7.6 *Ceremonial/Ritual adornment*: Jewelry and body paint.

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*:

8.3 *Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.)*: Presence of cross-cousin kinship systems, as well as flexible social rules (unspecific) that change constantly and are just as confusing for them to understand as it is for those who study them.

## 9. Additional Comments/Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- A solidifying factor in the social structure of the Apinayé is their exchange of spouses and names to form alliances among domestic groups and also residential units that have segmented off from the original village.
- As a people, especially in present times, there is a common theme of confrontation when dealing with certain issues. This might be rooted in their relatively violent past, but the element of this is present in the Apinayé, especially when dealing with issues of theft or accusations about cattle, resources, etc.
- A lot of the specificities of their social practices (as far as beliefs about sexuality, couvades, child-rearing, etc) are relatively unclear. The in-depth research done on the Apinayé by anthropologists has been mostly confined to their interesting and incredibly complex marriage system, as well as their relationships with outside groups and their current role in Brazilian society and how that is affecting their own society. Also, the flexibility of their social rules and regulations makes it difficult to understand what exactly they value or devalue in terms of mating and marriage, more often times than not these rules change and are unclear even to the Apinayé themselves.

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