

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Tzutujil, Language of Guatemala, and part of Mayan (1)

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Eastern and Central highlands of Guatemala (15° 30' N and 90° 15' W) (2)

1.4 Brief history: In 1500 B.C. settled in villages and developed agriculture. 600 A.D. They began to build ceremonial centers, and by A.D. 200, these had developed into cities containing temples, pyramids, palaces, courts for playing ball, and plazas (2). Finding of many little images sculptured in the form of mushrooms in Guatemala almost certainly indicates a mushroom cult in the Mayan culture of Central America (7). Quiche Mayan group who originally migrated to the Guatemalan highlands from Tulan, the ancient Toltec capital. They settled near Lake Atitlan, occupying a large region on the southwestern reaches of the lake and producing a wide variety of agricultural products for food and also cacao for trade. When the Spanish conqueror Pedro de Alvarado and his troops reached Guatemala in the mid 1520s, the Tzutujil put up a fierce resistance, but they could not stand up to the superior technology or the Europeans or the devastation wrought by smallpox, mumps, and measles. The Tzutujil underwent a catastrophic population decline in the sixteenth century, dropping from perhaps 100,000 people to only a few thousand. Late in the 1500s, Franciscan missionaries relocated many Tzutujil to their present day capital Santiago Atitlan (11). The Spaniards came to Tzutujil villages in 1524, but they could not get anybody to go to their church, so they demolished the old temple and used the stones to build a new church on the same site. (This was a common practice.) However, the Tzutujil people are crafty. They watched as the old temple stones were used to build the new church, and they memorized where each one went. As far as the Tzutujil were concerned, this strange, square European church was just a reconfiguration of the old. The Catholic priests abandoned the village in the 1600s because of earthquakes and cholera then came back fifty years later. By then, the Indians knew the priests destroyed everything relating to the native religion. For four and a half centuries, the Indians kept their traditions intact in a way that the Europeans could not see or understand (13).

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Most Tzutujil people are currently Roman Catholics, but their Christianity is generally overlaid upon the native religion (2). The people are closely related to those of the neighboring Cakchiquel and Quiché (1). The Spanish congregations had a powerful impact on the Tzutujil, particularly in precipitating the loss of their ancestral lands. Virtually all of the lowland piedmont lands were lost to Spanish coffee plantations, while the Tzutujil held on to some of the highland property. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the entire Tzutujil population was gradually depressed into a class of peasant cultivators who were largely absorbed by the Spanish political system. Although Guatemalan politicians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries transformed Tzutujil land holdings from communal to individual forms of proprietorship, the Tzutujil have been very conservative in recent years, keeping their individual holdings despite intense demands from other Guatemalan farmers and corporations. By the 1980s, the Tzutujil population numbered nearly 90,000 (11). The missionaries, the businessmen, and the politicians brought in tin, lumber, and sturdy houses. Now the houses last, but the relationships do not (13).

1.6 Ecology (natural environment): Various earthquakes (14: pg. 58). Have mountains and lowlands. Has wet lands and large forestry.

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Population of about 50,000 (10)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Corn (maize), beans, and squash (1,2)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Sheep, pigs, and chickens (1)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Very peaceful society. prior to 1979, most people had never heard a gunshot. (13)

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production:

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics: Sculpture and relief carving. (2)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? On mainland, used slash-and-burn agriculture, but they used advanced techniques of irrigation and terracing. (2)

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):

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): Could only marry after male initiation, in which they were exposed to the spiritual aspects of the female for the first time. (14: pg. 20)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Divorce did occur. (14: pg. 211)

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: None (14: pg. 99)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Both man and women have tasks they have to complete for their in-laws before they can get married. (14: pg. 99-100)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Limited conflict, conflict occurs when trying to find a mate. (14)

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Usually endogamy. (14: pg. 80-100)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? Every child born into the village had already been born into and passed through the four layers of creation (tree, heartwood, xylem, and bark), one layer at a time. In each of these consecutive creations, the child received an essential layer of his/her own physical and spiritual composition. After having received and lived these four layers of lives, the child was given form and born into this fifth layer of the Earth Fruit, the world of form, this world. (12)

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): Spouse is based on whom the female prefers, cross cousins are not pressured to be the spouse. (14)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Before marriage, it is very common for the girls to have sexual relations with various men. When a male tried to court women and the parents disapproved, the boys would come late at night and have secret bird calls with the girl so the girl knew to come out. Girls sometimes had as many as five or six cow-eyed young men. (14: pg. 79)

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? The father will still take care of the children if the mother is to die. (14: pg. 150)

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: Seeing that marriage is monogamy the ratio of men to women is about 50/50. (14: pg. 100)

4.22 Evidence for couvades: No

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): Initiated over non and if the boy has abilities, such as farming, fishing, and making things with their hands. (14: pg. 20)

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: Matrilineal succession (14: pg. 79)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Yes, but eloping does occur and is cheaper (14: pg. 99). Marriage ceremony consisted of the male and his family sitting on one side of the room and the female and her family sitting on the other side of the room. Speeches are made then the man and women kneel in front of their parents and are asked why they are marrying. They are then interrogated by their in-laws. The couple then kneels in front of each of their relatives separately, receiving their blessing and advice. This is repeated for hours until the parents and in-laws bless them fully. They then both fed each other a little canyon water than spill the rest on the ground to feed God. They then live for two days in one of their family’s empty compounds. (14: pg. 100-102)

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?) Marriage is preferred to be within community to keep the rituals alive. (14)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Girls choose a husband from among the young men who were admired by the community as a whole for their village-preserving abilities, such as farming, fishing, and making things with their hands. (14: pg. 20)

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries whom: If relatives were unbending on a couple to marry the couple would elope on the twenty-third of July. Hard to accomplish in a crowded village though and lead to generational feuds. (14: pg. 99)

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: Outgroup death was much more frequent (13)

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: when the U.S.—backed death squads came, more than eighteen hundred villagers were killed within seven years: shot, beaten, tortured, poisoned, chopped up, starved to death in holes, beheaded, disappeared. prior to 1979, most people had never heard a gunshot. (13)

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Very close to neighbors, Cakchiquel and Quiché. (2)

4.18 Cannibalism? No evidence of cannibalism.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Live on farms and come into the central village for fiestas and markets. (3)

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Priests are the most influential (4). They have a chiefs system (13).

5.4 Post marital residence: After the two days of a “honeymoon” in either houses compound the wife moves in with the husband on the husband’s compound, but they have their own house. (14: pg. 100)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): Men are not supposed to know the development of women or what they go through as they become human. Women and men both compose the sacred group of elders in the Tzutujil and women and men both have say in decisions and are ranked upon experience. (14: pg. 29)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization: Live in municipios, districts or communities oriented around central villages. Not permanently inhabited, members of municipio rather than Tzutujil or Guatemalan. 1 In the village, people used to build their houses out of traditional materials, using no iron or lumber or nails, but the houses were magnificent. Many were sewn together out of bark and fiber. Like the house of the body, the house that a person sleeps in must be very beautiful and sturdy, but not so sturdy that it will not fall apart after a while. If your house does not fall apart, then there will be no reason to renew it. In addition, it is this renewability that makes something valuable. The maintenance gives it meaning. (13)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Have mystical groups of village sacred leaders consisting of men and women that are dedicated to the making of ritual and public decisions for the village welfare (14: pg. 17). To become a hierarchy you had to serve the spirits, which caused you to fall behind financially. Every year of serving the spirits set you back three years economically (14: pg. 50).

5.12 Trade:

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? Priests are the upper class and priesthood is passed down through the families. (4)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Have Shamans that are considered healers or doctors (13). Nicolas Chiviliu Tacaxoy was the most legendary and powerful Mayan shaman in the highlands of southwestern Guatemala (14: pg. 9).

6.2 Stimulants: Booze (14: pg. 16) Tobacco (14: pg. 25)

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): Whenever someone dies, that person's spirit has to go on to the next world. If that person has not gone through an initiation and remembered, where she came from and what she must do to go on, then she won't know where to go. In addition, when a person dies, her spirit must return what has been taken out to feed her existence while she was on earth. All of the old burial rituals are about paying back the debt to the other world and helping the spirit to move on. Burial ceremonies where all can mourn. 13 The Tzutujil call themselves Vinaaq which means "Named Being" or "twenty", which stands for ten toes and ten fingers, this signifies the concept of being completed/being an adult (14: pg. 4). Tzutujil is not a matter of race, but of memory. At birth, you forget how to talk to the spirits. Through initiation rituals, you are jolted into remembering the language of the spirits. The layers of initiation included; birth to adolescence, adolescence to child rearing, child rearing to grandchild rearing, grandchild rearing to adult, and adult to death (14: pg.5).

6.4 Other rituals: Torture and human sacrifice were fundamental religious rituals of Mayan society; they were thought to guarantee fertility, demonstrate piety, and propitiate the gods, and, if such practices were neglected, cosmic disorder and chaos were thought to result. The drawing of human blood was thought to nourish the gods and was thus necessary to achieve contact with them (2). Self-sacrifice or self-mutilation was also common; blood drawn by jabbing spines through the ear or penis, or by drawing a thorn-studded cord through the tongue, was spattered on paper or otherwise collected as an offering to the gods (6). Dances by old women and sacrifices of live dogs (by throwing them down from the temple pyramid) were some of the activities that occurred during the Maya New Year's festival (5).

6.5 Myths (Creation): All human beings come from the other world, but we forget it a few months after we're born. This amnesia occurs because we are dazzled by the beauty and physicality of this world. We spend the rest of our lives putting back together our memories of the other world, enough to serve the greater good and to teach the new amnesiacs – the children – how to remember. Often, this lesson is taught during the initiation into adulthood (13). The world did not come out of a creator's hand, but grew out of this hollow place and became a tree whose fruit was diversity. Human beings weren't on that tree, but everything that was on that original tree eventually went into human beings. (13)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): The Tzutujil is really big into music. Music is how they communicate with the spirits. They have their own style of guitar and flute. Music is played throughout all ceremonies. (14: pg. 20-80)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Initiation is different for boys and girls. Boys are taught how to be men and women are taught how to take care of their wombs, grinders, and cooking pots, and the taboos and many things that are not the business of chiefs or men (14: pg. 287). Women do become spiritual officers and chiefs along with men (14: pg. 36). Sacred leaders were usually husband-and-wife teams. Up-and-coming sacred house officers were called ajmajma, meaning "farmers", if they were men, and Tixel, or "parent", if they were women. (14: pg. 46-47)

6.8 Missionary effect: Missionaries extended cash loans to the as-yet uninitiated young men, provided the men accepted the new religion and denounced the old ways. Missionaries told the young that the old songs, clothing, forms, and initiation rituals were the work of demons and ignorance and would keep them in poverty. Women now wanted the boys that could buy them things, not the ones that were being initiated. (14: pg. 20-21)

6.9 RCR revival: The old songs and belief of initiation was dying until Martin Prechtel, an American accepted into the village, learned the ways of the old songs and guitars and made it cool again for the youth of the Tzutujil, so the females would like the boys who learned it and the boys would want to learn the olden ways (14: pg. 23). Prechtel later revived their religion by forming the group of sacred leaders again and became the head of initiating boys into adults. (14: pg. 209-211)

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: Tzutujil seek initiation to the next stages of life to avoid becoming a ghost once they died. Tzutujil believe that the dead row themselves to the other world in a canoe made of tears and oars made of delicious old songs. The grief of loved ones energized the soul of the deceased. The deceased travel to the other side of the ocean, Beach of Stars, where their ancestors receive them and the deceased is initiated further in that world into the next layer of life. It takes 400 days of initiation to become an ancestor. If not enough mourning is done the deceased will not complete the journey and will return to the living as a ghost that destroys the souls of living relatives. Another way to become a ghost is if you hadn't become fully initiated while alive. (14: pg. 7)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy? No

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) Mayan religion, which was based on a pantheon of nature gods, including those of the sun, the moon, rain, and corn (2). Bacab, in Mayan mythology, any of four gods, thought to be brothers, who, with upraised arms, supported the multilayered sky from their assigned positions at the four cardinal points of the compass. (The Bacabs may also have been four manifestations of a single deity.) The four brothers were probably the offspring of Itzamná, the supreme deity, and Ixchel, the goddess of weaving, medicine, and childbirth. Each Bacab presided over one year of the four-year cycle. The Maya expected the Muluc years to be the greatest years, because the god presiding over these years was the greatest of the Bacab gods. (8)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): An important part of Mayan decoration was provided by feathers from birds of brilliant plumage, which were skillfully incorporated into the weaving processes. (3)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: Bright red and purple headcloths worn by the thirteen Sacred House chiefs during initiation rituals. Lady Chiefs wore white and purple gowns spread out sumptuously and tent like around them, a twenty-four-foot-long ribbon headdress wound around their twisted hair like red halos (14: pg. 35). During initiation into adulthood, the boys wore long sashes that would drag on the ground and once they are initiated, the sashes are worn well above the knees (14: pg. 36). Only hierarchy members could wear red, purple, black, and white checked hand-woven headcloths, but only after completing several years of service to the spirits. (14: pg. 46)

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: loincloth for men and a cloak when needed; a loose sleeveless dress or blouse and skirt for women. (3)

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.): No signs of cross-cousin typology.

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

1. Built great stone buildings and pyramid temples, worked gold and copper, and made use of a form of hieroglyphic writing. (2)
2. A priestly class was responsible for an elaborate cycle of rituals and ceremonies. (2)
3. The Mayan Calendar was based on a ritual cycle of 260 named days and a year of 365 days. Taken together, they form a longer cycle of 18,980 days, or 52 years of 365 days, called a "Calendar Round."
4. women and men talk differently when speaking tzutujil. (13)
5. As Christians are born with original sin, Mayans are born with original debt. In the Mayan worldview, we are all born owing a spiritual debt to the other world for having created us, for having sung us into existence. It must be fed; otherwise, it's going to take its payment out of our lives.
6. The Mayan way of dealing with this is to give the ancestors a place to live. You actually build houses for them – called "sleeping houses" – and put your ancestors in there. (13)
7. Tzutujil is very big into music and song to interact with spirits and keep in touch with the earth. (14: pg. 19) Playing the flute and guitar is a male thing (14: pg. 31)

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