

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

-Ejagham, alternative name Ekoi. Ejagham language and language family is Niger-Congo. But, there are different dialects of the language listed by "Ethnologue:" Southern Ejagham (Ekin, Qua, Kwa, Aqua, Abakpa), Western Ejagham, and Eastern Ejagham.

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

-ETU

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

- Latitude: 5 9' 37" Longitude 8 3' 36"

1.4 Brief history: The history of Ejagham is not written, but passed on orally. Through this we know that early Ejagham people were brave and skilled warriors that lived peacefully, for the most part, with their neighbors. From 1500s on they had to face slave traders. At the turn of the twentieth century first Europeans began to settle in Ejagham country and divided into German and British territory; the British part was called Nigeria and the German portion Cameroon. The Ejagham fought in the beginning and tried to resist, but in the end they were forced to surrender. In 1918, when Germany was forced to surrender its' territories Cameroon was split in half between Britain and France. The Ejagham would not gain national freedom until 1960, when Cameroon and Nigeria became independent states. Even though, the Ejagham remain separated by the boundaries of the two nations.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: The European had great influence on the Ejagham people. It divided their territories and today many face obstacles because of it. For example, when a family member from Cameroon wants to visit someone in Nigeria they have to get accustomed to the new currency and laws.

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

-Ekoi villages are built near rivers or streams. Around the village are crops and beyond that lay forests.

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

-There are 150 villages and small towns, which are connected by roads or footpaths. Coconut trees will indicate the vicinity of a village, and a huge silk cotton or Mboma tree will stand in the entrance. Villages are described as small. Sizes of house vary depending on the wealth of male head.

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Grains, yams, corn, sweet potato, cassava, banana, and other vegetables.

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Fish, buffalo, elephants, wildcats, antelopes, rhinos, pythons, crocodiles, and monkeys.

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

- Flintlock gun (from white people), spear, club and crossbow. Also, there is a very interesting oral history that reveals a different type of weapon used by the Ekoi people. It is said that early in history, the Ekoi people owned war charms, which they used to confuse or hypnotize their enemies. For example, they used scarecrows as puppets and held them with strings. They put these on the battlefield and jiggled them to make them seem alive, so the enemy would shoot at them. While the enemy was distracted they would capture them.

2.4 Food storage: They tend to especially store grains during dry season. These are usually stored in small house along side the fields.

There is also cocoa and coffee plantations, and although they generally sale that, they will store it in pottery as well before selling it.

2.5 Sexual division of production: Generally women would farm and fish while the men hunted and helped with certain aspects of farming, such as cutting down bushes.

2.6 Land tenure: In the Ekoi tradition land cannot be sold because it belongs to the first settlers, even if it has been abandoned for a 100 years. But, rights to settle can be bought.

2.7 Ceramics: There are different types of pottery, from jars for food to water pots, and they are for domestic use only. They come in varying shapes and sizes and are beautiful. We would use them as decorations

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

- If men hunt together there is sharing within the community, but there are stories that illustrate men hunting and women farming only for themselves and their family.

2.9 Food taboos: Neither men or women are allowed to feed on scavenger birds such as vultures. The kingfisher is forbidden food.

Women may not eat wildcat, crocodile, and the first thing caught by her husband. There are also very strong taboos about distribution of animals killed in a chase. For example, "after the town hunt, one fore and one hind leg of each beast killed must be given to the townsfolk. The neck becomes the property of the man who stood nearest during the kill, the tail belong to the mother of the hunter, one leg and the back to the father or the head of his house, while the head and remaining and fore legs are left to the actual slayer."

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? They used canoes.

3. Anthropometry

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

Ammaury does not provide this Anthropometry information. But he does provide other information about the size. For example:

Head: L-191, B-146, IND-76.2

Face: L 61, B 139 IND. 43.5

Nose: L 45, B 43, IND 95.9

-Judging from the pictures and the type of work required, Ekoi people are well built and maintain a healthy weight.

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): Some children are taken as wives at age young as 8, but they do not conceive till teenage years. So I would take an educated guess and say the menstrual cycle starts around 12-13.

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Usually soon after marriage, which means somewhere around teenage years.

- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f):** the Ekoi people are patrilineal group. Everyone related to the father, grandfather, or great grandfather are family and sometimes this can go up to a 100 people. The wives aren't considered family since they belong to their own father's family.
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):** This is dependent of live births and/or life span of child. For example, there is a story (this book is filled with stories for the most part) that a women who gave birth and her child dies within days. These women became pregnant twice after, in what seems like a relatively short time and both those times her child passed away yet again. There are other stories of women with only 2 children and some stories with 6. I believe it is very varied in this culture.
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):** Usually during the teenage years.
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:** There is no actual number, but it is stated that divorce is very easy for a women. The most common way is to rub white chalk on both your wife's hand. Also a women can get a divorce by giving a slave to husband instead of her.
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:** Polygynous marriages are a custom.
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:** A men that wishes to marry an Ekoi women has to serve her people for a period of 2-3 years. For example, he can help clear bushes for a few seasons. He is also expected to give gifts depending on his ability.
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns:** It is by male, and the men's brother inherits everything. His wife may inherit if the husband designates it to her, but only if they have children.
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:** The mother is in complete charge of the children, so if she decides to leave the children go with her.
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:** Sexual contact is heterosexual. No information about homosexuality found.
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):** There are no marriage restrictions by the Ekoi.
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?** Paternity is not partible, there is only one father.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")** A mother's role is to be careful throughout her life (restriction from certain foods) in order to ensure a healthy child.
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?** No
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape?** Females are supposed to be fully faithful; therefore I did not find any pattern of rape. But, young girls can be tricked into taking "gifts" and when accepted the men take them to their compound. For example, when 8-year-old Baii accepted a ring from Etim, his relatives took her to his compound.
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)?** None that is visible.
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?** Females enjoy a lot of freedom, but not sexually. They are expected to be faithful, but they can easily divorce their husbands.
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring?** No
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?** The father and other wives.
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females:** Men seem to be married to multiple women in most cases, and although there is no actual statistics.
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades:** The father will not eat elephant flesh from the moment he finds out that he is having a child. Also, after the birth of the child a mother is secluded for 1-2 months and the father is unable to visit.
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older):** There is only one father. A woman is strictly faithful to one husband.
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?** The elders of the group are very respected.
- 4.24 Joking relationships?** There is a sense animosity between in laws. For example, a mother in law may convince her daughter to divorce her husband.
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations:** Patrilineal. A family s created from the father's line. Anyone related to the father, grandfather, or great grandfather is a part of the family. Ute states that a wife is not a part of a husband's family, but rather her fathers'.
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules:** There are none. According to Talbot "there are practically no marriage restrictions among these people." "It is not even forbidden y native law for half brothers and sisters to marry, thought cases of these kinds are very rare."
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?** Yes. After the accepting of gifts by the brides family, there is a public proclamation before the chiefs and other people. There is also a bell that is rung around the town for this purpose. "Oho Oho Owe," are words used in the ceremony and they mean "our own."
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?** A child's first name is given based on the day, time, or place of birth. For example, "should it be born on a native Sunday it would be called "Edet" if a boy and "Ared" if a girl. If the child is healthy for a year then the name is permanent, but if he/she falls ill then the child is taken to the diviner who chooses a name. The name of the father or fathers brother is added to the surname.
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)** There are no marriage restrictions, although it seems Ekoi people marry each other.
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?** Parent can arrange marriages, but in the end if the woman does not agree then there is no marriage.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:** Sometimes there is competition among men for the same girl, and when that happens men usually try to win her affection through magic rites. For example, they may put a curse on the other man vying for her attention.

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

-None found

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

- Fighting was usually outgroup. It could be that a village fought another village or another group of people. Also, Amaury states that before the coming of British rule, the Ekoi people fought quite a bit. At one point there was resistance to British and German rule.

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

-Land, resistance(Europeans), other personal conflicts.

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

-They had trade networks with neighbors, especially western Cameroon.

4.18 Cannibalism? No

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- A village usually comprises of several large families.

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

-The Ekoi tend to live in the same place year around unless some disaster or misfortune causes them to move.

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

The village is governed by a council of elders, which comprises of the oldest living member of each family. They also have a village chief called *ntuifam etek*. The council of elders is responsible for creation of laws and decision-making. Also, some of the clubs have members that help the elders govern. They are usually sent by the elders to enforce laws. For example, they may be asked to punish criminals. So, they wear masks and run around the village until their work has been completed.

5.4 Post marital residence: A daughter lives with her parents and moves in with her husband's family after marriage.

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

-The Ekoi people used coconut trees as a sing on boundary for their village.

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

-The Ekoi had clubs for boys, girls, and mix races. There are age restrictions and these clubs are very exclusive. They hold meetings, have aims they want to reach, and some even have great secrets. In order to enter a club, a person has to apply and be accepted, and then he/she will pay an entrance fee. Also, in the Ekoi community, age is equal to wiser. Therefore, the older generation is to always be respected. Younger siblings always have to listen to the older siblings even if they are only a year apart.

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

-The members of the clubs form special relationships.

5.8 Village and house organization: A few coconut trees indicate the vicinity of the village. In the entrance there is a silk cotton or mboma tree. At the center is the community hall where the meetings take place, and behind it are charms to protect the village. Houses are built along the main road with gardens behind them.

5.9 Specialized village structures (men's' houses): There is a special place for women called the "fattening house," Usually before marriage a women will be secluded from everyone and be taken care of in a fattening house to prepare her for marriage. She also does this after giving birth if her parents are wealthy enough. There is also the community center where meeting take place.

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

-They sleep in rooms within the house. Usually the beds are made of clay, the same material as the house.

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

-Organized by villages. There are 150 villages and their own council of elders governs each.

5.12 Trade:

- Amaury states "They have almost secured a monopoly of trade with the South-Western Cameroons, where they find a ready market for salt, tobacco, cloth, and hardware from Calabar, which they themselves purchased in exchange for fowls, dried meat, sleeping mats, rubber and palm kernels."

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

-The Ekoi held slaves, although by the time Amaury wrote the book it was scarce, since the British government condemned it. Yet, the Ekoi people understood a distinct difference between those that were born free and born slave. Sometimes slavery would result from debt and one can be free upon the repayment of debt.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

-There are medicine men called the diviners that help heal them.

6.2 Stimulants:

-Palm wine that Amaury describes as "no more intoxicating then cider." Also imported liquor is used for libations at funeral ceremonies and at "plays" in honor of dead chiefs.

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

-Puberty initiations are very similar for men and women. It is based on joining different clubs, as you get older, you raise up to a different club. The major difference is men began their initiation at age 10 and girls after they have given birth.

-Birth: When the mother is ready to give birth, she is secluded and no man is allowed in the house except the father and his male relatives. After she has given birth, she is secluded in her parents' house with her child for about 2 months. At this time the husband

makes offerings to his juju and does the women. They also name their child according to the day, time, or place of birth. This name does not become permanent unless a child has been sick free for a year.

- Funerals were very important to the Ekoi people, since they held great reverence of their ancestors. The more important the member of the group the more elaborate a ceremony usually will be. But, generally the corpse is cleaned and dressed. They are buried while libations are made.

6.4 Other rituals:

- Other rituals include sacrificial rituals to Juju (grains, meat).

6.5 Myths (Creation):

- "Two gods Obassi Osaw and Obassi Nsi made all things between them (the earth and sky). Osaw fixed his dwelling place in the sky while Nsi came down to earth and lived there. After this separation Nsi grew in power, "for when a child is born it falls to the earth, and when a man dies he returns to the earth, whence all things have sprung."

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

_ The Ekoi are known for their realistic masks, which are important to a number of clubs. Dancing is also a very important aspect of Ekoi culture. The Ekoi people have many artwork including pottery, paintings and some beaded jewelry.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

-In certain rituals women will hold back. For example, in a funeral it is usually the men that give libations etc.

6.8 Missionary effect:

- Missionaries came in the beginning of 1900s to transform the Ekoi into Christians. Many did not understand the Ekoi religion and equated certain aspects as being related to the devil. For example, the missionaries did not understand "njom" or charms that Ekoi people raised to protect them and ward away the devil. But, missionaries did not understand this and in one village a missionary cut down njom. Today, although they still hold their original beliefs, there is also a church in almost every Ejagham village.

6.9 RCR revival:

- Their religion still exists.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- "When a man's body decays, a new form comes out of it, in every way like the man himself when he was above ground. This new shape goes down to lord Obassi Nsi, carrying with it all that was spent on its funeral in the world above."

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

-No evidence of it.

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

-No evidence found of it.

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

-It is a mixture of ancestral worship and nature worship.

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

White, red and yellow during dances.

7.2 Piercings:

-Ears pierced

7.3 Haircut:

-The shave their heads and as hair grows about an inch make designs using a chalk, which is then left standing against a clean shave background.

7.4 Scarification:

- According to Amaury, they used to practice facial scarification, but it has does out. And, since his time in the villages, he has yet to see a single child marked. But, there is "ghost marks" on your arms that are the shape of circles. It is so that after death the shost can remove them and sell them to the spirits in exchange for food.

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

-Feathers for hair, dress and sometimes masks, beads for jewelry.

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

-Masks and sculptures that are put on top of neck or head. Also feathers and painting after a female has left "fattening house."

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

-Different types of masks.

7.8 Missionary effect:

-Introduction of Church and the cross

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

-Original masks, piercing still remained.

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

-Elder sibling has authority.

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

-After death of a spouse a men or a women is allowed to marry whomever they choose. There is no cultural pressure.

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

- The Ekoi people named their children's surname after their father or father's brother's name.

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

-The Ekoi people had a fear of witchcraft. At times they felt that their mother, daughter, sister, might be with in disguise. They sought protection from these witches using charms and other protections. This is very interesting because it reminds me of the western fear of witches; an aspect we seem to have in common with the Ekoi people.

-They believe in second sight (which is also a common belief among many westerners). They believe in contact with the afterlife.

Also, they believe that dogs have second sight.

- I feel that these two concepts are interesting because they exist in our western society. It is interesting to think that many of us share beliefs with people whose cultural life hasn't really changed in, arguably, centuries.

Numbered references

1. Ute, Rosenthaler. *Ejagham*. 1st ed. New York: Rosen Publishing group, 1996. 6-55. Print.

2. Talbot, Amaury. *In the Shadow of the Bush*. London: William Heinemann , 1912. 1-478. Print.