

## Ethan Colbert

Anthropology 4680

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Questionnaire 1: Ticuna

### 1. Description: ISO 639-3: tca

Alternate Names: Magüta, Tikuna, Tukana, Tukúna. According to the text of Curt Nimuendaju's The Tukuna, early explorers and friars who journeyed to the New World chronicled a people they called the Tikuna while later European arrivals wrote about the Tukuna people. It is also important to note that Peruvians will use the first form, Tikuna, when referring to the Ticuna people while Brazilians will use either form interchangeably (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 1).<sup>i</sup>

**1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:** Ticuna, Ticuna, and Ticuna. Ticuna is believed to be an independent language.<sup>ii</sup>

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

**1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):** Historically, the Ticuna people were located between 71° 15' to 68° 40' W in Western Brazil and Eastern portions of Peru and Colombia.<sup>iii</sup>

**1.4 Brief history:** In their creation myth, the Ticuna originated from the Eware ravine near the Colombian-Brazilian border.<sup>iv</sup> As neighboring tribes fell to European invasion and disease, the Ticuna expanded their territory. This newly acquired territory included that formerly held by the Omagua near the Amazon River and the banks of the Río Putumayo that had been inhabited by Arawak, Mariaté, Yumana, and Pasé Indians. To the west of the Ticuna, still today are the Peba and Yagua Indians. As Europeans continued to pour into the region, the Omagua were caught in the crossfire of the Portuguese and Spanish missionaries and by the deadly epidemics. The population of the Mayoróna also decreased. Brazil's six year long conflict with Paraguay (1864-1870) led to a decrease in population size for the Ticuna as they too were caught in the crossfire of a European conflict. Towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, rubber tapping became a major industry in this portion of the Amazon. The Ticuna became the main source of labor for the rubber tappers. Of the Ticuna people, those living on Brazilian soil were forcible relocated as rubber tappers became the owners of the formal tribal lands and the "employers" of the Ticuna people. A 1932 a war between Colombia and Peru erupted, causing the Ticuna to leave the left bank of the Amazon for the right bank. In the 1940s farmers and city dwellers began to colonize the Amazon Trapeze. A significant development of region's economy in the 1950s was a bonanza in the export of hides and animals.

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

"Besides preaching, the church began to build schools in the area in the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s and is still in charge of the education that is imparted to the Indians. In the 1970s there were two important trends that affected the Ticuna of Brazil as well as those of Colombia: a considerable population increase and the concentration of people in villages all along the Amazon. In the 1980s an incipient messianic movement, founded and propagated by Brother José Francisco da Cruz, involved almost the entire Ticuna population in Brazil and Peru and, to a lesser degree, of Colombia."<sup>v</sup>

### 1.6 Ecology:

The natural habitat of the Ticuna people was located between 71° 15' to 68° 40' W in Western Brazil and Eastern portions of Peru and Colombia. According to the Maps of the World, the climate of Western Brazil and Eastern Peru and Colombia can be described as one of the driest and hottest regions in their respective countries especially during periodic droughts ("Brazilian Climate," 2012).<sup>vi</sup> The rainfall in these regions are mostly confined to Brazil's larger rainy season, lasting from December to April.

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

#### Population Size:

There are a few rough estimates for the number of Ticuna living today. The latest census taken for the Ticuna population was in 1984 that found there was an estimated 18,421 Ticuna living in Brazil and 5,635 in Colombia in 1986.<sup>vii</sup>

#### Homes:

According to folklore, the original Tukuna habitation was a large, isolated communal, multi-family circular dwelling referred to as a Maloca. Despite being a patrilocal society, the Malocas were ruled and considered the realm of the female Ticano. This means that Malocas would be passed from mother to daughter. (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 11-18).

The Malocas were drastically altered with the arrival of the mosquito nets. Once it became unnecessary to build walls, the practice was abandoned and instead the Malocas became open, rectangular shelters. There was one other big alteration in the construction of the Malocas – stilted homes. Once the Ticuna spread out along the Solimoes, many found their dwellings were often flooding. To avoid this, they simply either raised their houses up on stilts. (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 11-18).

#### Village size:

Most villages today will have between 70 or upwards to 1,500 citizens. The most populous villages are located on Brazilian soil. ("Ticuna cultural summary," n.d.)

**Home Range Size and Density:** No information was found regarding either of these subjects. One can only suspect that the larger villages are more dense than those smaller villages.

## 2. Economy

### 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

The main carbohydrate staple for the Ticuna people is manioc, which is typically consumed after being ground down into a flour-like texture (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 14). Other diet staples are maize, various kinds of bananas and plantains and fruit trees. ("Ticuna cultural summary," n.d.)

## **2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:**

The main protein-lipid source of food is wild game including fish (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 14-15). When hunting, Ticuna hunters prefer to kill mammals because of the amount of meat they supply. They are also known to hunt birds or reptiles. The Ticuna also collect beetle larvae and ants. ("Ticuna cultural summary," n.d.) With game scarce, the predominate number of Ticuna have turned to fishing. (Nimuendaju, 1952, Page 26)

## **2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?**

The Ticuna's weapon of choice is actually a blowgun, in which they are quite skilled in using. ("Ticuna cultural summary," n.d.)

## **2.4 Food storage:**

Within the Ticuna household, there are trunks purchased from Neobrazilians, and large woven carrying baskets (Nimuendaju, 1952, Page 18) or the Sacupaia nut (Nimuendaju, 1952, Page 17) that are used for food storage.

## **2.5 Sexual division of production:**

Within the garden system there are specific tasks that everyone must accomplish. The men are responsible for getting the fields ready and for planting the maize, while the women are responsible for the planting of everything else and for the harvesting of the crops. Everyone living in the Malocas are responsible for bringing in the kindling. (Nimuendaju, 1952, Page 21-22)

## **2.6 Land tenure:**

None. It appears to be patrilocal in terms of the land ownership, but matrilineal in terms of the house.

## **2.7 Ceramics:**

Storage materials referred to as igacabas (Nimuendaju, 1952, pg 15) are often decorated with floral patterns (Lathrap, 1970, page 186).<sup>viii</sup>

## **2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:**

### **2.9 Food taboos:**

There are two taboos within the Ticuna population. The first one is they don't like hot water, in particular water that has been setting in a Sacupaia nutshell or within another carrying container. They like their water as fresh as possible, often resulting in several trips to a spring or to a river bed. The second involves the planting of maize. The planting of maize is accompanied by a ceremonious seriousness that is not observed for any of the other plants. The kernels are placed first of all in a gourd of water. The planter then takes a little of this water in his mouth and sprays it over the kernels in order to make them savory. Until the plants reach a certain height, he must submit to rigorous taboos. He can't go near the fire, or eat or touch fish, or blood or any object the color of blood. Also, if a pregnant woman plants maize, the plant also becomes enciente and it will produce twin ears. (Nimuendaju, 1952, pg 21-23)

### **2.10 Canoes/watercraft?**

With landlocked and isolated settlements, the Ticuna were forced to be foot Indians. All ingarapes (the tributaries of the left bank of the Solimoes) were inhabited by these Indians who designed an elaborate trail system to get from one village to another. It wasn't until the Omagua gave the Ticuna tribe their first canoe that they ever saw one. Today, the Ticuna are excellent craftsman in canoe making and far superior on the riverways than any rival tribe. With the arrival of the canoes into their society, they have given up their trails and allowed them to become overgrown with brush. (Nimuendaju, 1952, pg 19-20)

## **3. Anthropometry**

### **3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):**

There is conflicting information regarding the height of the Ticuna. The following quote comes from Nimuendaju's work. "The Tukuna men are of average stature. According to Barbosa Rodrigues, the mean height of six men and six women measured in Tonantins was 149 centimeters and 145 centimeters respectively" (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 1). Nimuendaju later explains he does not believe those figures to be very accurate, however he offers no alternative.

### **3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):**

There is no information regarding the adult weight of the Ticuna.

## **4. Life History, mating, marriage**

### **4.1 Age at menarche (f):**

No specific age given.

### **4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):**

No specific age given.

### **4.3 Completed family size (m and f):**

There was no specific data on family size or the number of children a woman was expected to birth.

### **4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):**

Per tradition, after a birth the husband must sexually avoid his wife for one year (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 70).

### **4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):**

The age at the time of the marriage is generally the girls decision. The girl may marry as soon after the puberty ceremony as she wishes. (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 93).

### **4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:**

Divorce is infrequent in the Ticuna culture (“Ticuna cultural summary, n.d.”)

**4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:**

Despite the Ticuna tradition of polygynous marriages, has now given way to monogamy (“Ticuna cultural summary, n.d.”)

**4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:**

It is not the custom to give or to demand presents from either the bride, her parents, or the bridegroom (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 94).

**4.9 Inheritance patterns:**

According to Nimuendajú (1952, 64), inheritance is from father to son and from mother to daughters. Objects used by one sex may not be inherited by another sex. In cases of a rare divorce or adultery, the entire property would revert back to the woman who would then deliver it to her children as she sees fits.

**4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:**

There is insufficient research done to conclude that there are parent-offspring interactions and conflict.

**4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:**

There is no mention of homosexual activities or the Ticunas’ social attitude towards homosexuals.

**4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):**

“The basic rule governing moieties is based on moiety exogamy. Marriage must take place between members of different moieties. Formerly, the preferred form of marriage was for the maternal uncle to marry his niece. The most common form of marriage in 1990s is between people of the same generation. The practice of cross-cousin marriage, which was permissible under traditional rules, was considered incestuous by the Catholic missionaries (“Ticuna cultural summary, n.d.”).”

**4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?**

There are other father figures who are recognized throughout the lifetime of a child, but not to the level of partible paternity. The primary male figures in a child’s life are their maternal uncles and their maternal grandfathers. For young men, these are the men who teach them how to hunt. For young women, their maternal uncle is the one who guides her into the process of being a young woman (i.e. puberty) and the necessary ceremonies. (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 90, 94)

**4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”)**

This was not addressed in any of the research materials.

**4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?**

This was not addressed in any of the research materials.

**4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape**

Issues of sexual coercion and rape never occur within the Ticuna society. The idea was completely foreign to them until it was introduced through a folklore story shared from a Neobrazilian. (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 93)

**4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)**

As was stated earlier in the report, the most common form of marriage for well into the 1990s and still practiced today is a marriage between people of the same generation. This replaced the idea of a cross cousin marriage. (“Ticuna cultural summary, n.d.”).

**4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?**

There is insufficient evidence to say that females enjoy sexual freedoms. According to the literature reviewed, it could be hypothesized that this is a very prude society so much that neither male or female enjoy sexual freedoms. (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 93)

**4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring**

There is limited evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring. In order for a man to take have an extramarital “help mate” to deal with occurrences of infertility, the wife must first give permission. Many times the wife simply refuses. In the case of improper extramarital activities, the cuckolded husband confronts the offender and they may fight. (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 95)

**4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?**

When the mother dies, the children and widower would either remarry or move in with a maternal family member or relative. (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 97)

**4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females**

Unable to find data to conclude the exact or to even estimate the adult sex ratio.

**4.22 Evidence for couvades**

There is no evidence or mention of a couvade scenario occurring in the literature consulted.

**4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)**

There is no mention of a distinction for potential fathers.

**4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?**

In terms of kin avoidance and respect within the Ticuna culture.

**4.24 Joking relationships?**

None.

**4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations**

As stated above, the property rights for the land are passed along from fathers to sons, while the Malocas belong to the mother and are passed along from mother to daughters. (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 64)

**4.26 Incest avoidance rules**

The issue of incest is avoided with the current marriage policy of cross cousin marriage. (“Ticuna cultural summary, n.d.”).

**4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?**

There is no mention of a formal marriage ceremony in any of the items consulted for this questionnaire.

**4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?**

There is no mention of a changing your name, how you obtain another name, in any of the items consulted for this questionnaire.

**4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)**

There is reason to believe that for the majority of the Brazilian Ticunas there would be no reason to marry outside of your community since they are so much larger than their Peruvian counterparts who reside in much smaller communities. This is just a hypothesis as there is no mention of a scenario like this in the items consulted.

**4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?**

Marriages are still arranged in terms of the bride has little to no say in who she marries. The maternal uncle will receive any and all marriage offers but it is up to him to chose one. He then in turns asks the mother, his sister, for her opinion. Since this individual will marry her daughter and then move into her Malocas, she has a very strong impact on it. There are even instances where the mother rejected the offer and selected her own suitable candidate. (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 95)

**4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:**

See above.

**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):**

**4.18 Cannibalism?**

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

**5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:**

**5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):**

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

**5.4 Post marital residence:**

Post marital residences are shared with the brides family in their Malocas (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 95).

**5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):**

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

**5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:**

**5.8 Village and house organization:**

**5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):**

There are no mentions of any specialized village structures (i.e. mens' houses).

**5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?**

According to the text, as their housing situation changed due to flooding so did their sleeping arrangements. The Ticuna now sleep in large hammocks (Nimuendaju, 1952, page 20).

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

**5.12 Trade:**

**5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?**

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

**6 Time allocation to RCR:**

**6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):**

**6.2 Stimulants:**

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

**6.4 Other rituals:**

**6.5 Myths (Creation):**

**6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):**

**6.7 Sex differences in RCR:**

**6.8 Missionary effect:**

**6.9 RCR revival:**

**6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:**

**6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?**

**6.12 Is there teknonymy?**

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

**7. Adornment**

**7.1 Body paint:**

**7.2 Piercings:**

**7.3 Haircut:**

**7.4 Scarification:**

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

**7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:**

**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.):**

**9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):**

Numbered References

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<sup>i</sup> Nimuendaju, C. (1952). *The tukuna*. (Vol. XLV, p. 1, 11-18, 19-20, 21-23, 64, 70, 90, 93-95). Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.

<sup>ii</sup> "South America:Ticuna - Orientation ." [www.everyculture.com/South-America/Ticuna-Orientation.html](http://www.everyculture.com/South-America/Ticuna-Orientation.html). Every Culture (Advameg, Inc.), n.d. Web. 24 Feb 2013.

<sup>iii</sup> "South America:Ticuna - Orientation ." [www.everyculture.com/South-America/Ticuna-Orientation.html](http://www.everyculture.com/South-America/Ticuna-Orientation.html). Every Culture (Advameg, Inc.), n.d. Web. 24 Feb 2013.

<sup>iv</sup> Fajardo Reyes, Gloria Myriam. *Mitos de los hombres de Negro*. 1989. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1989. Web.

<sup>v</sup> Fajardo Reyes, Gloria Myriam, 1986. *Visión etnográfica de los ticuna de San Martín de Amacayacu*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

<sup>vi</sup> *Brazilian climate*. (2012, December 21). Retrieved from <http://www.mapsofworld.com/brazil/information/climate.html>.

<sup>vii</sup> *Ticuna cultural summary*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/ehrafe/cultureDescription.do?owc=SQ20>

<sup>viii</sup> Lathrap, D. (1970). *Ancient peoples and places: The upper amazon*. (1st ed., Vol. 70, p. 186). London, England: Thames and Hudson.