

1. Description

1.1 Name of society: Northern Tepehuan (Tepehuán del Norte) Language/Language Family: Uto-Aztecan, Southern Uto-Aztecan, Sonoran, Tepiman. Some also use a Tarahumara variety (1).

1.2 ISO code: ntp (1).

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): “The Northern Tepehuan, who speak a Uto-Aztecan language are scattered throughout southern Chihuahua south of the Rio Verde occupying about 10,500 square kilometers within the municipios of Guadalupe y Calvo and Morelos” (2, pg: 306). Latitude: 28.38; Longitude: -106.5 (3).

1.4 Brief history: “The Tepehuan of Chihuahua are the northern descendants of an aboriginal group whose broad territory ranged from north of the Río Verde in Chihuahua southward through Durango into the contemporary states of Nayarit and Jalisco. Archival evidence suggests that at the time of the arrival of the Spanish conquerors, the Tepehuan were probably the largest and most important tribe in the Sierra Madre Occidental. About half a millennium before the Conquest, their ancestors hunted and gathered in the desert region near the border between Arizona and Sonora before migrating, along with other Southern Uto-Aztecan groups, southward into the mountainous regions of northwestern Mexico, where they began to rely on farming” (5).

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: “The Jesuits previously ministered to the Tepehuan in central and southern Durango. They entered the northern territory in 1610 and began congregating the Tepehuan into mission towns, and, by 1708, had established missions at Baborigame, Nabogame, and Guadalupe y Calvo. Over a hundred years of isolation followed the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. The overextended Franciscans, now responsible for the whole region, maintained modest sway. The Jesuits returned at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Tepehuan are usually described as "nominally Catholic," given that the religion practiced is an amalgamation of Hispanic and indigenous elements. Some indigenous groups do not practice any form of Catholicism. Perhaps the most important consequence of Tepehuan relations with the Church is the local acquisition of European plants, livestock, and technology” (5). They have been quickly acculturated, especially those that live in the more northern lands. They now live mostly in Missions and some scattered villages (7).

1.6 Ecology: “The Northern Tepehuan live within a much-dissected portion of the Sierra Madre, and their lands may be roughly classified as either canyon country or rolling upland, there being within these subdivisions a great variety of individual physiographic features and concomitant types of vegetation. The average elevation is about 7,800 feet, with much deviation from this average in some areas. Two distinct annual periods of precipitation may be identified, the rainy season from March until late August, and a somewhat drier period during the remainder of the year. Tepehuans...state that only portions of their land ever experience really serious drought—especially upon the great mesas that form the heartland of the upland Tepehuan country” (2, pg: 306).

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: “The number of Northern Tepehuan cannot be determined, there being no agreement as to definitions of Indian and Mestizo, not only among Indians and Mestizos in southern Chihuahua but also among government census takers. Published figures range from between 3,000 and 4,000 to 8,000; the higher figure is based upon an extensive survey made in the heartland of Northern Tepehuan country where aboriginal connections are denied even where they patently exist” (2, pg: 307). Ethnologue.com reports the population size of the Northern Tepehuan to be around 6,200 (2005 census) (1).

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): “Corn dishes constitute the principal foodstuff among the Tepehuan, the important dishes being variants of gruels, tortillas, tamales, and parched corn. More than 95 percent of the Tepehuan families practice some type of agriculture, and the basic crops are corn, beans and squash. Relative antiquity of these crops among the Chihuahua Tepehuan is demonstrated by analogues of contemporary items found in the Rio Zape site in northern Durango, a site that is clearly within Northern Tepehuan aboriginal territory, which has been dated to about A.D. 600” (2, pgs:307-308). Due to harsh winters only corn can be grown annually (7), but beans and squash have also found more recently (8).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: “Hunting and fishing are important not only as supplements to the diet of corn, beans and squash but also because of their significance as sport. A cottontail, several species of squirrel, an armadillo, a small black mole, a large gopher, several species of rats, skunks, puma, jaguar, jaguarundi, ocelot, nutria, ring-tailed cat, raccoon, coati, gray fox, coyote, wolf, peccary, and deer are hunted, either as sources of skin or food, or because the creatures are known to prey upon stock and crops” (2, pg: 309). “Fish do not serve as a significant element in the Tepehuan diet but do provide variety” (2, pg: 309). “European stock surely reached the Northern Tepehuan when Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries appeared in what is now southern Durango and southern Chihuahua in the seventeenth century. However, it appears that Tepehuan south of Rio Verde did not commonly use oxen as draft animals until during the nineteenth century” (2, pg: 309). Deer, squirrel and some rabbits. Today they mostly work for food when crops fail (8).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns: Historically only used traps and Bows (8).

- 2.4 Food storage: "Field or garden products are generally stored in cribs, which may be integral parts of log houses or else constructed apart from the habitations. Tepehuans who live immediately south of the Rio Verde, in very hot country, sometimes construct round or square storage huts of stone and mud mortar, topped by a conical frame covered with brush" (2, pg: 308). They grew crops in small scale fields, so food storage outside of the house was not necessary (8).
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: Men primarily do the hunting, however hunting is not common and often done by traps, so both men and women work in the fields or gardens (8).
- 2.6 Land tenure: "Field plots utilized by the Tepehuan are small and generally located either upon edges of the mesas that dominate so much of Chihuahua south of the Rio Verde or along arroyos that trend downward from those mesas to the canyons. Few Indians utilize canyon floodplains, due to the lack of good soil there. The relative infertility of southern Chihuahua upland soils requires preparation of new field plots every few years; these plots are cleared with a metal ax and tilled with wooden plow drawn by oxen. That stone axes may have anciently served in clearing plots is suggested by the occasional appearance of such articles in fields" (2, pg: 308). Of the Northern Tepehuan about 95% are agriculturalists but the land is harsh and often plagued with crop failure (7).
- 2.7 Ceramics: "Canteens, dippers and bowls are manufactured from fruits of at least six cultivated varieties of the bottle gourd. The indispensable pottery is manufactured from clay obtained from arroyos. A coiling technique is employed in making ollas, which range in size from very small containers used in storing seeds to large containers used for fermenting tiswin" (2, pg: 310).
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Many households have their own gardens, and sharing is not very common in this respect. When one family does poorly, often that is the case for all and they must hunt and work for their food for their own family. The spoils of hunting trips were ceremoniously shared among the group if there was ample return (8).
- 2.9 Food taboos: Dogs are very valuable and held in high regard in their culture, so in spite of their availability they are not to be eaten (7). There are also a plethora of plant life that prove to be harmful and should only be used for medical purposes (8).
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft: No, in fact the Tepehuan did quite poorly when relocated to coastal lands by the Spanish (7).

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): The Tepehuans tend to be physically large and strong; no legitimate mean has been obtained (7).

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):

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Whether or not males were married polygynously or not is unclear, however men were not required to have sex with just their mate as has been made clear by their use of war spoils and their orgies (9).

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

4.9 Inheritance patterns: The only thing that was to be inherited was the land owned for agriculture and it often was passed on to the offspring that lived with the previous generation (8).

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

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")

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

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Accounts are given of Tepehuan warriors stealing women from neighboring peoples and torturing them, this likely included rape (9).

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

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?: Celebrations included orgies, which to some extent provides sexual freedom. However due to the lack of hunting and gathering men were gone less often providing women less opportunities to have sex with other men because of the presence of their mate (9).

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?: Grandmothers would raise the children in case of parental death. Riba recounts of old women caring for children as their own in several of his entradas (9).

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

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

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?)

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

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: In the Tepehuan rebellion of 1616 many Spaniards were killed, there is no information on in group killings, however the ferocity and effectiveness of which the attacked the Spaniards suggests that they were very good at warfare and had been so for a long time. The span of their territory also suggest prowess on the battlefield (9).

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: The only case of out-group killing that is available for study was that of hatred towards the order of the Jesuits. They killed all they could who displayed Christian symbols. The cause for this killing was the attempt at taking their land in the name of Jesus Christ, thus they harbored a will to kill Jesus and his followers (9).

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): The Tepehuan were very hostile and warlike. Their closest neighbors were so intimidated by the Tepehuan that accounts are given of the Tepehuan warriors walking into neighboring villages without any resistance and taking women back to their homes (9).

4.18 Cannibalism?: In all of the recounts of the Tepehuan's devilish ways cannibalism is never mentioned, thus I doubt it existed as these recounts tend to be quite thorough in all that the Tepehuan were doing wrong (9).

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: No specific numbers are ever given, but the group sizes must be relatively large given the context of the writing and cultural habits (8) (9).

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Primarily sedentary (8).

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Currently there is an extremely elaborate hierarchy that is clearly a blend of aboriginal and colonial customs, so it is safe to say that there was undoubtedly a political system. Evidence supports that officials were voted (not like a ballot as much as the group stands together and screams the name of who the wish to be in charge) on by the group and those chiefs appointed other officials. Today these officials must be elected many times (often times within the same year) (8).

5.4 Post marital residence: My assumption would be virilocal, since men seem to be the head figures of the tribes. Only men are chiefs and it seems like it is a very patriarchal group which makes me think they are most likely virilocal (3).

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): Due to the sedentary nature of their agriculturalism, they tend to be rather territorial, but no real conflict has developed, barring the Spanish conquering their land (8).

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): Elderly men are highly revered and often the ones that preside over the voting for chiefs (8).

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization: “Upland Tepehuan dwellings are constructed of timber, whereas canyon dwellings are built with stone held together by mud mortar. Log structures may range in size and complexity from simple dwellings about 12 feet square, characterized by open-ended gable roofs of logs covered with shingles anchored by stones, to large multi-roomed structures with high gabled rooms” (2, pg: 312). Mean house size of 3.4 persons (8). “Houses are of horizontal pine logs with interlocked corners and gable shingled roofs, almost exactly like American frontier log cabins except for the lack of chimneys. That resemblance is so great, and the houses so untypical of Mexico, that one naturally suspects such influence and origin. However, they were characteristics sixty years ago in Lumholtz’s time [1895]” (6, pg: 223).

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses): For their races they require the runners to stay in a special “team hut” (8).

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Officials do not hand down their power from generation to generation (8).

5.12 Trade: Today they often work for Mestizos for food when crops fail, however there is no evidence to suggest that before the Spanish conquered their lands that any trade took place. Where they lived allowed them to be quite self-sufficient (8).

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?: There are no social hierarchies aside from the elected officials. The herbal medicine man and older men do enjoy the luxury of local prestige, but no real family based hierarchy is mentioned. Today they elected officials are given badges to show their position of power, this is however an obviously recent development (8).

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR: ceremonies and rituals seem to always last 24 hours, however there is not specific time of year that these rituals take place. They happen before things like hunts or big games/races (8).

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): “They obtain relief from discomforts caused by ailments...through use of poultices, infusions, and teas prepared from roots, leaves, stems, or seeds of at least 56 plant families. Many unidentified specimens are also used” (2, pg: 310). There is an herb doctor, known as the matukami, but often herbal remedies are administered without consulting him. More serious illnesses often result in the attention of the matukami (8). “Religious ceremonies may still be performed in isolated places, but were rare even in Lumholtz’s time. They differed markedly from those of the Southern Tepehuan...Here the men and women gathered monthly at night, it is reported. They sang and drank native beer until the god Tuni, their brother-in-law, stamped on the roof. Entering, but only visible to the shamans, he drank the beer and, in a merry mood, gave them advice on how to procure rain and avert evil. Then, the female deity, Mother Moon, took his place and delivered homilies to the women” (6, pg: 223).

6.2 Stimulants: “Tobacco smoking is relatively ancient among the Northern Tepehuan [it] is demonstrated by the appearance of a native term for *chupador de tabaco* (‘tobacco sucker’) in the eighteenth-century vocabulary. Tobacco is smoked in corn shucks. The utilization of a pipe is denied” (2, pg: 308). “Corn beer, *tesguin*, is enjoyed, but peyote seems to be unknown” (6, pg: 223). Pyrolaceae is taken in the morning to stimulate awareness (very high in caffeine). There are a variety of other unidentified herbal specimens that are used as stimulants. Herbal stimulants are majorly consumed by making them into a tea (8).

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

6.4 Other rituals: “Drinking of tiswin, dancing and food offerings placed before a cross are characteristic of fiestas held at the scattered rancherías; these ceremonies are held to insure good crops, to honor the dead, and to promote health of men and animals” (2, pg: 307). Twenty four hour period of dancing before a hunting trip began (8). On days of celebration there were feasts and drunken orgies (9).

6.5 Myths (Creation): “A creator is recognized, there being helpers who apparently represent ancient figures among the aborigines. *Kukuduli* is the master of the deer and determined whether or not such an animal is brought down...Another god is *ugai*, a spirit that manifests itself as a light in the sky at the death of someone. There is a spirit that creates wind” (2, pg:307). “God, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and the saints are mixed in native pantheons in both regions, alongside such figures as the Deer God, mountain spirits, the Morning Star, and a culture hero resembling Quetzalcóatl of Aztec myth” (4). **See also 6.1. (6, pg: 223).**

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): “Reed flutes, a rasping stick, drums, violins, and rattles fashioned from gourds serve in making music that is an integral part of celebrations held by the Northern Tepehuan” (2, pg: 313). “In [a] game of chance the knuckle bone of a deer is tossed into the air. Points are awarded according to the position of the bone after it falls to the ground” (2, pg: 312). “Northern Tepehuan women weave blankets; otherwise, no traditional crafts are practiced” (4). “One aboriginal element that is retained is the ball

race which is performed today almost exactly as recorded by Lumholtz [in 1895]. Men, women, and children have separate races, the women running with a stick and ring instead of kicking a ball” (6, pg: 223). There was a custom of sorcery and worship of stone idols (9). Games are very important, music and dancing are also important parts of RCR (8)(9).

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Women do not play the mens racing game of kickball, but have their own running game that they play (8).

6.8 Missionary effect: Effectively demolished all of the old religion and replaced it with Catholicism, some indians have taken to general atheism. The only real ceremony and ritual left are unrelated to religion (8)(9).

6.9 RCR revival: None to speak of. Even the old Indians can no longer recount what old religion was as it has been gone for literally centuries (8)(9).

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: Riba recounts of an old man claiming that he was immortal and would never die, it is hard to generalize this as an accepted belief, as it would obviously be proven false with time, but it seemed worth mentioning here (9).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion: “Northern Tepehuan are nominally Roman Catholic, and their religious concepts represent elements of Catholicism introduced by Franciscans and Jesuits...A creator is recognized, there being helpers who apparently represent ancient figures among the aborigines. Contemporary rituals are essentially Christian in origin, there being an emphasis upon making the sign of the cross and the use of phrases such as *nombre de Dios*...the Tepehuan follow essentially standard Catholic dramas during the Christmas season, Holy Week and the October Fiesta of San Francisco” (2, pg: 307). Perez de Ribas describes the natives as having laid down offerings in front of stone idols (9).

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: During ritual dances blood was used as body paint, but tattooing and general body paint were not things encountered by the Spanish upon their arrival (9).

7.2 Piercings: No accounts are given of any piercings when the Spanish arrived, so I assume not (9).

7.3 Haircut: “Hair is generally worn by men in the form of a page boy, and in the form of braids by women and girls” (2, pg: 311). “A photograph taken by Lumholtz in 1895 shows the [Tepehuan] men wearing *calzones*, and hair of shoulder length, held back by large handkerchiefs or scarfs” (6, pg: 223).

7.4 Scarification: There was no intentional scarification, but scars from hunts and battles gave a man prestige (8)(9).

7.5 Adornment: “Necklaces fashioned from red seeds of *Erythrina glabelliformis*, grass seeds and shells traded in from the west are worn by the women. These articles are strung upon pita fiber cordage” (2, pg: 311). Necklaces of grass seeds and reds seeds of a colorin or small shells from traders, worn on a pita fiver thread (8). “Clothing consists of white cotton jacket and pants for the men who do not wear commercially made clothing; women wear homemade but nontraditional printed cotton dresses or skirts and blouses” (4).

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: Ceremonial clothes and body paint for hunts and war time (9).

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect: They now wear more modern clothes for those of them that live in missions (7).

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: There is no cultural revival around at the date of my resources, but hair and jewelry have remained the same by accounts of elder Indians (8).

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):

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From our research, we would conclude that the Southern Origin theory is correct. Given the vast amount of land that the Tepehuan had to hunt and the abundance of hunting resources, we find it highly unlikely that a group who originated as hunters and gatherers in the north would try to sustain themselves on small plots of crops that suffered frequent failure. Also notice that if the Southern Origin theory is true, the agriculturists who moved would keep what they knew to work. For example, their crops, complex social structure, sedentary lifestyle, and warlike nature. Even though the land was clearly more effective for a nomadic hunter and gatherer type group these people continued to live on a lifestyle that was not optimal, but what they knew to be effective for their ancestors. The presence of hunting and gathering could easily have been obtained through war with neighbors. Even more interesting is that after they obtained hunting technology they still lived on agriculture and hunted as a supplement. This evidence even further supports a Southern Origin theory. We think it clear that these people carried what they knew to be effective with them, agriculture, and adapted/stole hunting technology from their northern neighbors during warlike encounters; this leads us to believe that the most likely spread of the Uto-Aztecan family is from the Southern Americas.