

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family

Kogi, Kogi, Chibchan

Alternate names for the Kogi include Coghui, Cogui, Kagaba, Kaggaba, Kogui

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

kog

1.3 Location: Colombia

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (in northern Colombia), particularly the northern slopes of the valleys of the Palomino, San Miguel, and Garavito rivers¹

1.4 Brief history

The Kogi were once part of the Tairona, an agricultural chiefdom which was devastated by the arrival of the Spanish. Warfare and conflict with the Spanish resulted in the destruction of their large cities, execution of chieftains and priests, and abandonment of their terraced fields and stone-paved roads as they fled into the mountains.⁶ The Kogi are one of the surviving remnants of the Tairona and retain some of its former system of social hierarchy.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors

Permanent mission stations were founded in the 18th century and many Kogi “became nominal Catholics but otherwise continued to resist changes in their religious and cosmological beliefs.”¹ The ancient Muica of the Bogota highlands are likely to have influenced Kogi culture, as have the present-day Tunebo Indians.¹

1.6 Ecology

Mountain valleys at altitudes between 1,000 and 2,000 meters above sea level

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s)

Plantains, bananas, sweet manioc, cucurbits, beans, other fruit trees (maize was an important source of food pre-contact, but now is used infrequently and often in ceremonial contexts)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources

Some chickens, pigs, and cattle, but very little game or fish are available – the lack of protein resources leaves the Kogi in a chronic state of malnutrition³

2.3 Weapons

2.4 Food storage

Food can be carried or stored in pottery and gourds.

2.5 Sexual division of production

Men, women, and children all help to burn and clear the fields, then to plant and weed them. The harvesting is primarily done by women. Men tend the agave plants which they use to make bags, nets, and ropes

2.6 Land tenure

Nuclear families own garden plots around their houses (of which they may own up to 4 or 5), which are situated at different altitudinal levels that allow them to take advantage of several different ecological systems

2.7 Ceramics

Present, usually utilitarian and devoid of ornamentation

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns

2.9 Food taboos

There are many food taboos for priests in training. They must eat sparingly; avoid foods that are fatty, spicy, and protein-rich; should primarily eat 'white' foods (white potatoes, white manioc, white beans, etc.); and can eat only a certain kind of naturally occurring green rock salt.³ No evidence was found for food taboos in the general population.

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

No evidence for watercraft

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f)

Adult males: just over five feet⁴

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f)

4. Life history, mating marriage

4.1 Ate at menarch (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

Most marriages are monogamous. Polygyny is rare but a young man might marry a much older woman and later on marry a young girl because of the frequent scarcity of the latter.

In this situation, the first wife stays on as a 'cook.'¹

4.8 Arranged marriage, bride purchase/service, dowry

4.9 Inheritance patterns

"Fields, houses, and domestic animals are passed from father to son and from mother to daughter. Tairona heirlooms, lime containers, and other ritual objects are male property; bone needles, cooking vessels, or necklaces of Tairona beads are female property."¹

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict

Children are expected to be obedient, to respect their elders, to be quiet, be self-controlled, and share food.¹

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals

There is some evidence of homosexual activities in ritual context, such as two priests having intercourse while impersonating the Sun and Moon.³

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?

No evidence of partible paternity

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 incremental process (i.e. semen builds up over time)?

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

Rape is condemned and very rare

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

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring
- 4.20 If mother dies, who 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
 - Parallel descent
- 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, or obtain another name?
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)
 - Marriage is only to other Kogi; they do not intermarry with their Creole or Colombian neighbors¹

Warefare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warefare
 - None reported
- 4.15 Out-group vs in-group cause of violent death
 - None reported; murder is condemned, though non-lethal fistfights are common.
- 4.16 Reported cases of in-group and out-group killing
 - None reported
- 4.17 Number, diversity, and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations)
 - The Kogi have peaceful relationships with other societies. They trade with their Creole neighbors and occasionally visit and trade with Colombian villages and towns. Their traditions mention past warfare with the invading Spanish and other tribes, but very little lethal conflict since the Spanish conquest.¹

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size
 - Five to more than fifty single-family houses make up a village. These houses are not permanently occupied as each family has multiple houses at different altitudes. The villages “are simply gathering places where neighbors come together periodically, perhaps twice a month, to exchange news, discuss community matters, perform some minor rituals, or to trade with visiting Creole peasants.”³
- 5.2 Mobility pattern (seasonality)
 - The community has one central village but each family moves up and down the mountain seasonally to their various houses and garden plots to exploit the different ecological systems.
- 5.3 Political system (chiefs, clans, etc., wealth or status classes)
 - Social hierarchy is important among the Kogi, who have religious and intellectual elites. Most settlements have a headman. They also have priests (*mamás*), who undergo a lengthy training period of (ideally) 18 years, to learn specialized knowledge that carries great prestige.

5.4 Post-marital residence

Neolocal: nuclear family households are the rule

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense)

5.6 Social interaction divisions? (age and sex)

The Kogi have a strict separation between the sexes. Husbands and wives typically sleep in different huts when living in their fields, with one hut occupied by the husband and the other serving as a kitchen, store-room, and place for the wife and children.³ While in the village, men stay in the temple while their wives and children stay in family huts. There is some degree of sexual division of labor. Harvesting is done by women while only men participate in weaving (which they use to make simple garments that are worn by both sexes).

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships

5.8 Village and house organization

No evidence of any particular spatial order to houses. Villages have both temples and houses.

5.9 Specialized village structures (men's houses)

While staying in the village, men spend the night in the temple, talking, singing, or listening to the elders. Women and children sleep in their family hut.

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

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

Lineages are important in the social hierarchy of the Kogi. Some lineages have lordly or priestly status, some claim descent from the Tairona, and others are of mixed heritage or "trace their lineages to historical or mythical groups that were not related to the Tairona."¹

5.12 Trade

The Kogi trade with their Creole neighbors, selling domestic animals and cakes made of raw sugar made of boiled cane juice. The Kogi also trade with Colombian villagers to get bushknives, metal pots, and salt. They are largely self-sufficient, in part due to their austere lifestyle.

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

The Kogi still retain the system of rank inherited from the Tairona. Some lineages claim higher status. Priests have high status, greater than that of headmen, and often settle disputes. High status is associated with esoteric knowledge along with moral and ethical qualities, such as being antimaterialistic.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR

The Kogi are very religious, however no time estimates were found.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Priests

Priests are carefully selected and highly trained according to strict rules. Boys who will become priests are usually taken from their family before the age of five for training, which lasts up to 18 years. During training, the boys are subject to very strict rules concerning food, avoiding sunlight, and avoiding women. They are educated in political and ecological issues and expected to adhere to high moral and ethical standards.

Temples are supervised by one or two priests.

6.2 Stimulants

Men chew coca leaves, which are grown near settlements.

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

The Kogi have an annual ritual cycle of four solstitial and equinoctial ceremonies which correspond to the start of the rainy or dry season. There are rituals throughout the life cycle, including at birth, puberty, and death, which are presided over by local priests.

6.4 Other rituals

There are many private ritual actions, especially making offerings to the Mother (their creator goddess), public confessions, dietary or sexual restrictions, and pilgrimages to sacred sites.¹

6.5 Myths (creation)

The Kogi have a creator goddess, called the Mother (*Gaulčováng*), who is a benevolent being and the beginning and end of individual existence. “The creation began in total darkness in the primal sea where the Mother created the universe after a number of pre-existent images she had conceived in her mind.”³ She created a nine-layered universe, a nine-tiered temple, and a nine months-phased human womb. “The Mother impregnated herself with the phallic hardwood stick she had used in her androgynous stage to extract lime from a gourd container, and consequently gave birth to the first human being (*Sintána*)”³

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games)

Sacred rattles and flutes (*kuizis*), especially used in an ensemble of two flutes and a rattle⁵; masks, pectorals, or wristlets of gold or tombac are worn during some ceremonies

6.7 Sex differences in RCR

Only men may become priests and only men enter temples

6.8 Missionary effect

Many Kogi have nominally adopted Catholicism, but continue to practice and resist change to their traditional religious rituals.

6.9 RCR revival

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

7. Adornment

Generally speaking, the Kogi are an austere people with a limited and plain material culture, including a general lack of adornment. Some items (such as cloth bags) have lineage specific markings, but most items are crudely made and utilitarian.³

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

Men wear pectorals and gold or tombac wristlets during important ceremonies.

7.7 Sex differences in adornment

No evidence of adornment for women, but men have some adornments.

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.)

Traditionally Hawaiian typology

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them)

Numbered references

1. <http://www.everyculture.com/South-America/Kogi.html>
2. http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=kog
3. Reichel-Dolmatoff, Gerardo (1990). The sacred mountain of Colombia's Kogi Indians. Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill
4. Cabot, Thomas D., Walter A. Wood and Frank B Notestein (1939). The Cabot Expedition to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta of Colombia. *Geographical Review* 29.4 (1939): 587-621.
5. List, George (1991). Two Flutes and a Rattle: The Evolution of an Ensemble. *The Musical Quarterly* 75.1 (1991): 50-58.
6. Reichel-Dolmatoff, G. (1982). Cultural Change and Environmental Awareness: A Case Study of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia. *Mountain Research and Development* 2.3 (1982): 289-298.