

Yawalapiti

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Yawalapiti, yawalapiti, arawak (10)

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): YAW (10)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): N/A

1.4 Brief history: They were first contacted in 1887 by the German anthropologist Karl von den Steinen in 1887. At the time they were on the upper Tuatuari River, but left the “village of tucum plants” due to attacks by either Manitsawa or the Trumai in the 1930s. They occupied a site previously held by the Mehinako in the mid-1940s. They separated among various tribes but between 1948 and 1950, they reorganized the ancient site of the lakes where they left at the beginning of the 1960s moving to Emakapuku.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: It is less than 2% evangelical. Some evangelical resources are available, but there has been no active church planting within the past two years. (2) There has been some issues of deforestation and dams being built on the Xingu River (14)

1.6 Ecology: The Yawalapiti live in the Mato Grosso region of the Xingu National Park (3). The Xingu National Park Their village has forest cleared out and is very dusty (11).

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Population is 156 (1)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): The major staple is manioc, which is consumed in the form of bread, toasted flour, flatcakes, or toasted in circular pans (1)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Fish is the main source. A few birds are considered edible, including jacu, curassow, macuco, and doves. Monkeys are also occasionally eaten. (1)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: There are descriptions of some spears created by the Yawalapiti. They are long wooden shafts that are pointed at both ends. One end has a large bone point while the other has a reed extension. These are used for fishing, which are done in lagoons or bayous. (8)

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production: The manioc is planted by men, but women will pull up the roots, squeeze out the poison, and prepare the manioc. Men and women both cook the fish, although manioc is entirely female work. Women fetch the water for the village; they spin cotton, weave hammocks and prepare dye used in body ornaments. Men make baskets, ceremonial instruments and take care of all the woodwork. Men build the houses. (1)

2.6 Land tenure: Only gardens and manioc plantations are considered individual property. The regular land is not considered individual property. (1).

2.7 Ceramics: Women make ceramics, and they are traded between villages (7)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: The relations based on the sharing of physical substance, established through procreation, are very important in forming social groups and categories. Thus, parents, children, and brothers/sisters (but not spouses) are connected throughout their lives.

2.9 Food taboos: Land mammals are considered sub-spirits and are therefore deemed unfit to eat. (1). Also, there is a belief that what you eat is what you are, and eating red meat is associated with being violent and warlike (4).

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?: The Yawalapiti do know how to make and use canoes (11, 13)

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): N/A

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): N/A

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): N/A

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): N/A

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): N/A

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): N/A

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): N/A

- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: N/A
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: N/A
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: N/A
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: N/A
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: The Yawalapiti will rarely beat or their hit their children. They believe this will not enforce better behavior. On the contrary, they think it will lead to violent behavior (6)
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: N/A
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): It has actually become fairly common for there to be intervillage marriages, with many Yawalapiti Indians marrying those from other tribes (1).
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?: Children are conceived through repeated sexual activity. More than one man may contribute to the formation of a child and be recognized as the “genitor” (1).
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”): The mother’s role is to receive the semen inside her and provide a good place for pre-natal development. They believe that what a mother eats is fed to the child while she is pregnant. (1).
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?: Male sperm is the substance that forms a baby exclusively. It shuts off the blood that women have in the bellies and the blood becomes round inside the woman to form the fetus. (1).
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: N/A
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): Marrying between relatives is taboo (7).
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?: N/A
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: N/A
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?: N/A
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: N/A
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: N/A
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): N/A
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?: N/A
- 4.24 Joking relationships?: The Yawalapiti have a strong joking and laughing society (7).
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: N/A
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: It is taboo to marriage between relatives (7).
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?: Yes. During the ceremony, the girl’s bangs are cut to her eyebrows after they have grown out to symbolize her new vision of the world as a responsible adult (7).
- 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 between relatives is taboo (7)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?: Marriages are usually arranged the time a girl is two or three and is promised to a boy. (7)
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:N/A

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: N/A
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: N/A
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: The Yawalapiti are a very non-violent, peaceful group (1).
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): There is a lot of trade, intervillage ceremonies and intermarriages between other tribes. (1)
- 4.18 Cannibalism?: N/A

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: In the Reuters news story in 2003, there were 15 large huts in the village. (12)
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): N/A

- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): The owner of the village, known as putaki wikiti, represents the group in interactions with other groups.(1)
- 5.4 Post marital residence: The prestigious class known as the amulaw live virilocally, while the common people live uxorilocally. (1)
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): Women bathe separately from men, except when with husbands or close family (11)
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: N/A
- 5.8 Village and house organization: Circular, with the communal houses arranged around a plaza that is cleared of forest growth. (1)
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): There is a house that is in the center of the plaza that is specifically where the sacred flutes are hidden. The men talk on the benches in front and they paint themselves for ceremonies. (1) In one ethnographer's study he found more detailed information. The men's house had no door or furniture. There were only two logs running lengthwise to the house place raised from the ground. The house was reserved for ceremonies and guests (8).
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?: They sleep in hammocks, using buriti fibers that the women weave. (1)
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: The amulaw are the prestigious group, who are decided upon based on hereditary. They are leaders of domestic groups and are known as domestic groups. They have special roles in ceremonies that take place between villages (1).
- 5.12 Trade: They engage in trades with other members of the upper Xingu (1)
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?: Most of the upper Xingu Indians are very respectful and obedient. There are two categories of behavior: "pariku" or shame and "kamika" or respect. Pariku occurs when there is a confusion of roles in hierarchies (women in the midst of men). It helps to create order in hierarchical positions. (1)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR: N/A

- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): They believe spirits cause sickness, help shamans, are owners of certain animals, and meet humans in the forest. The spirits are invisible and only appear to sick and shamans in a trance. All sickness comes from contact with the supernatural. (1) Shamans and their families are known for being attacked by those who have become sick. (11)
- 6.2 Stimulants: Tobacco is the preferred substance(1).
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): There is a well-known death ceremony, known as "Kuarup". It marks the end of mourning and sends the dead spirits to heaven. It is celebrated when someone in the chief's family dies. However, when Orlando Villas Boas died, they celebrated it. (12)
- 6.4 Other rituals: During a lunar eclipse, young men will be whipped as the earth's shadow passes over the moon as the eclipse is a symbol of re-awakening. Shaman will predict the eclipse. The tribesmen have to remain in high spirits or the supernatural spirits will punish them. They rid themselves of old fears by running into the dark and the men play their flutes. A flute procession and day of dances, among men and women follows the day after an eclipse. (11)
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): The creation of humans came by Kwamuty, who blew tobacco smoke over wooden logs, brining them to life. He created women, and the mother of Sun and Moon. (1)
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): The Yawalapiti are known for using and playing flutes. Anthropologist V.M. Petruccio found that in a ceremony, two clowns used pipes made of bamboo as a flute. They consisted of three pieces, the longest measures over one and a half metres. The flutes produce three notes. In ceremony, each of the men play what may be called the lead part, while the other plays the accompaniment. (8) An interesting taboo with the flutes is that women are permitted to hear the flutes, but prohibited from seeing them. (8). Therefore, they are stored in the men's house (3) The yawalapiti also do sportive wrestling matches between villages, known as huka huka, in the center of the village (1).
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Traditionally, women did not partake in any of the huka huka wrestling matches, but women have actually gotten involved with wrestling recently (11).

- 6.8 Missionary effect: It is 30% Christian, but less than 2% evangelical. Some evangelical resources are available, but there has been no active church planting within the past two years (2).
- 6.9 RCR revival: N/A
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: They believe the souls of the dead reside in the sky. The chief of that 'realm of the birds' is the two-headed vulture. (SA).
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?: There is not believed to be a taboo of naming the dead, as during the Kuarap festival of the dead, they will speak of those that have passed because they view the passing of the dead as the beginning of life as well.
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy?: N/A
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): The mythic world is a past that is not strictly connected to the present. Myth is used to prove behavioral models and ceremonies are used for replicating those models. Ritual is a time when normal life is closer to myth, although it will never be able to reach it (1).

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: During ceremonies, men will wear red body paint, brightly colored head ornaments, and feather arm bands when playing flutes (9).
- 7.2 Piercings: N/A
- 7.3 Haircut: When a girl begins menarche, she is secluded until her bangs cover her face. During the marriage ceremony, her bangs are cut. Other than women having bangs, there are no specialized haircuts in the village. (7)
- 7.4 Scarification: N/A
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): They will wear tons of beads and feather arm bands during ceremonies (11).
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: An example of a Yawalapiti mask consists of a tightly woven piece of cloth, bearing a painted design in black and white, suggesting the face. Grass is attached to it on every side, so that when the mask is worn, the grass falls to the knees. (8)
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: During ceremonies and rituals, men will wear the feather arm bands. Only men will wear the head dresses (1).
- 7.8 Missionary effect: N/A
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: N/A

8. Kinship systems

- 8.1 Sibling classification system: Because siblings share ties of genetics, they are affected by what occurs in each other's bodies (1).
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate: N/A
- 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): N/A

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Due to numerous inter-village marriages, only four or five individuals speak Yawalapiti. Most speak Kuikuro. There is an interest in bringing the language back and they wish to build an indigenous school. In 2002, they sent representatives to participate in Training of Indigenous Teachers, which is sponsored by the ISA (1).

Numbered references

1. <http://pib.socioambiental.org/en/povo/yawalapiti/1627>
2. <http://www.joshuaproject.net/people-profile.php?peo3=16010&rog3=BR>
3. <http://www.joelbomane.com/yawalapiti/>
4. “Lessons from Documented Endangered Languages” <http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=PkiHGzDjI0C&oi=fnd&pg=PT115&dq=yawalapiti&ots=moBSu804yK&sig=FYMTLlkRao6AgtkcnTNKNvCXV9Y#v=onepage&q=yawalapiti&f=false>
5. <http://penn.museum/documents/publications/expedition/PDFs/35-3/Fieldwork.pdf>
6. “Amazonian Indians”
http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=1IV7cNjMGZkC&oi=fnd&pg=PA8&dq=yawalapiti&ots=CypFQ2_BOJ&sig=6axtx34WJ3Xx-iRnw8MVDTCeM_8#v=onepage&q=yawalapiti&f=false
7. <http://www.amazon-indians.org/page16.html>
8. Petrucco, V.M. “Primitive Peoples of the Matto Grosso Brazil” Museum Journal: Volume 23, No. 2, 1932
9. http://books.google.com/books?id=JviwpZeH984C&pg=PA22&lpg=PA22&dq=yawalapiti+body+paint&source=bl&ots=cUgCUqIGnh&sig=rnoPd4RSst5D9cqp_IaXhr10Riqc&hl=en#v=onepage&q=yawalapiti%20body%20paint&f=false
10. http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=yaw
11. “Spirits of the Eclipse” Film: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3kR3Vouej0&feature=player_embedded#!
12. “Brazil Indians Send White Activist’s Spirit to Heaven”
Reuters: <http://www.powmadeak47.com/new3/new3braz030728nat.html>
13. Image: http://en.scanpix.no/spWebApp/preview.action?search.offset=2&search.rid=1110751&search.rbase=DIV&search.searchId=1642973242&search.previewNumResults=17&search.rbase=SF_01&search.tabId=historicalHeritage&search.advanced.dateCreated=2003-11-07
14. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIQ-yHk6Jiq>)