

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: **Amahuaca**

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): **They are sparsely settled on the Inuya and Sepahua rivers and on headwater streams of the Javari, Juruá, Purus, and Piedras rivers in a deeply dissected limestone plateau on the border of Peru and Brazil. Annual rainfalls of 177 to 203 centimeters between October and April support unbroken tropical forest with abundant game.**

1.4 Brief history: **Amahuaca formerly occupied a vast area east of the Ucayali River from the Tapiche River south to the Urubamba. Repeatedly raided by Panoan Conibo, Shetebo, and Shipibo, as well as Arawakan Piro in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, the Amahuaca withdrew eastward to the higher land. In the 1890s prospectors entered that area with thousands of Piro and Campa helpers, seeking workers to collect rubber. When the Amahuaca resisted, many were killed and many others died of introduced diseases. Survivors fled further east down the Purus River but soon returned to headwater streams to escape advancing Brazilians. In the 1940s a few joined logging crews on the upper Ucayali River, where they formed a village on Chumichinia Island. Between 1953 and 1968 a Protestant missionary attracted some seventeen families to Varadero, the site of an old rubber camp later occupied by a Peruvian army garrison. About the same time Dominican missionaries also attracted some families to the lower Sepahua River.**

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: **some Christian beliefs have been adopted, which include simple burial.**

1.6 Ecology:

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density **Until the end of the nineteenth century the Amahuaca were very numerous (perhaps as many as 9,000), but their number has been reduced to less than 500 in Peru and not more than 250 in the Brazilian states of Amazonas and Acre.**

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): **Manioc is the main. Minor crops include sweet potatoes, peanuts, yams, *pijuayo* (peach palms), and papaya in addition to cotton, tobacco, *achiote* and *huito* for pigments, gourds, *barbasco* for fish poison, arrow cane, ayahuasca, and several medicinal herbs. They also eat palms hearts, nuts, seeds, small fruits, and fungi are gathered from the forest. Bananas and plantains are also eaten. Plantains are boiled or roasted.**

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: **The most abundant game are several species of monkeys, peccaries, deer, and tapir and several types of large rodents, anteaters, armadillos, turtles and their eggs, and large non-carrion-eating birds.**

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns: **Bows and arrows with barbed or unbarbed bamboo blades or *pijuayo* points. Steel axes and knives have replaced the traditional T-shaped axes and wooden sword clubs, but clamshells, bamboo, and rodent teeth are still used as cutting tools.**

2.4 Food storage: **doesn't specify**

2.5 Sexual division of production: **men hunt, and clear gardens to plant fruits and veggies. They also build houses, make benches, and tools. While the women plant the fruit and veggies, get fresh water, get firewood, butcher game and cook food, and most importantly care for the children.**

2.6 Land tenure: **the senior male is said to own the land, gardens are individually owned only while in cultivation. Fruit trees are owned by whoever planted them, and hunting can be done by anyone in any part of the region.**

2.7 Ceramics: **clay is used to make storage units for men's tools and weapons**

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? **Canoes cannot make it through the waters so they use rafts made of balsa logs. In certain areas where the Amahuaca are found they do use canoes, Purus, Sepahua, and Ucayali.**

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): **doesn't specify, but marriage isn't consummated until her first menarche.**
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): **Family size is strictly controlled with birth control, abortion, infanticide.**
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): **Men are usually older, while women are usually very young**
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: **Polygyny, especially sororal, is not uncommon, and both levirate and sororate are encouraged.**
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: **nothing is really inherited; if something were to ever be inherited it would be tools and weapons.**
- 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") **A deformed baby is thought to be sired by an incubus spirit.**
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? **Women are not allowed sexual freedoms.**
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? **If someone is an orphan then they are adopted by relatives, but often foster children are treated like slaves. Suspected adultery by an outsider is sometimes avenged by murder, which may lead to bloody reprisal. Some men claim that adultery and other insults are punished by slashing the offender on the nape of the neck with a claw-shaped bamboo knife.**
- 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)? **If the father of the desired woman refuses to give his daughter, he may be killed and the couple elope.**
- 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:
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): **The Amahuaca distrust and fear outsiders, especially Yaminahua, Cashinahua, and Culina. In response to rumors of intended violence, men may visit the supposed enemies, with bows and arrows in hand as always, and kill them by ambush or other means. In hand-to-hand combat men use knuckle-dusters made of the vegetable ivory of yarina palm nuts and long, narrow, finely pointed, wooden swords.**
- 4.18 Cannibalism? **Yes when family members die the relatives practice cannibalism**

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: **Hamlets of fifteen to twenty closely related people are located on high ridges near permanent streams, separated from other settlements by several hours' walk. Each nuclear family occupies a separate house in the midst of a garden plot adjacent to gardens of other families. Houses are open rectangular shelters with pent roofs thatched to a few feet from the ground with *yarina* palm leaves.**

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): **Settlements are moved every year to ensure productivity, adequate game, and security from enemies.**

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): **there is a senior male that is acknowledged, but there is also a head man who is there to watch over gardens, teach cultural norms, prevent internal hostility, and authorized avenging raids**

5.4 Post marital residence:

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):

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

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

5.12 Trade: **Game is shared and surplus craft items are sometimes traded within a hamlet. Among people from separate groups, bows and arrows, skirts, food, and tobacco leaves may be exchanged to establish and reinforce friendly relations. No currency is used.**

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): **There is a healer known as hawaai. He can pretty much cure anything with herbs, and smoke. He can also retrieve lost souls with his jaguar.**

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): **when their family members die they practice endocannibalism. Puberty signals a period of formal instruction in hunting skills for boys and household duties for girls. Before being considered adult, a boy is encouraged to dream of being instructed by the spirit of an animal alter ego. He must also build a house, clear a garden plot, and succeed in hunting.**

6.4 Other rituals: **At about the age of 3 years a youngster's ears and nasal septum are pierced for ornaments. Adolescent boys are expected to participate in an ordeal of wasp stings. Harvests of the main crops are marked by festivals to which relatives from a neighboring hamlet are invited. After many days and nights of singing and dancing to ripen a crop, a large quantity of soup is jointly prepared by men of the host group and served to all.**

6.5 Myths (Creation): **The Amahuaca believe that Indian peoples were first nonhuman animals and that they themselves originated from a *xopaan*, the gourdlike fruit of a begonia. Their principal culture hero, Rantanga, is equated with the sun and regarded as the source of fire, cultivated plants, and stone axes, as well as the creator of animals. Themes of Amahuaca myths include floods, earthquake, holocaust, an arrow-cane ladder to the sky, ancestral twins, the sun and moon as incestuous siblings, and female frog spirits with *vagina dentata*.**

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): **Various geometric designs are painted in red and black on the body, on bamboo arrow blades, and on headbands and are incised on wooden clubs and occasionally on ceremonial bowls. The only musical instruments are small three-hole bamboo "flutes" (recorders) and tiny musical bows.**

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: **The body of a deceased person is buried temporarily in the house floor and then cremated after relatives arrive from other communities. The ashes are reburied and charcoal from the funeral pyre is thrown into the river. Fragments of charred bones and teeth are ground, mixed with soup, and consumed by the closest relative. To remove all reminders of the deceased and discourage the spirit from lingering, personal possessions are burned or broken, including garden crops and the house built by the deceased. Spirits of dead relatives are thought to fly to a place in the sky near the sun, where hunting is easy and they visit with others who have preceded them.**

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) **Celestial bodies, including aurora borealis, are spirits of people who once lived on earth. Angry spirits of the dead ancestors can kill the living with epidemic diseases. They pretty much believe ancestors are very powerful and animals hold powers as well.**

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: **Several patrilaterally related nuclear families make up a hamlet. In the recent past several such extended families lived near one another as a named localized aggregate, or clan. Kinship is cognatic except for the mainly patrilineal clan affiliation. Formerly, succession to leadership also tended to be patrilineal.**

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

1. <http://www.everyculture.com/South-America/Amahuaca.html>
2. http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=amc
3. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amahuaca>
4. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3458001139.html>