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1. Description

- 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: The Pirahã groups are direct descendents of the Mura, which classifies them as Murá-Pirahã. Their self-designation is “hiaitsihi, category of human beings or bodies (ibiisi) that differs from whites and other Indians” (2) “
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): myp (3)
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Amazonas, along Maici and Autaces rivers (3)
- 1.4 Brief history:
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Little influence has been accounted for in the case of the Pirahã. A lack of counting system, and a lack of desire for anything that is of another culture (besides tools) has allowed them to stay relatively unassimilated to western culture and materials. (1)
- 1.6 Ecology:
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density 420 (2010, #2), 360 (2000, #3)

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Cassava (Pg. 13, #1)
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Fishing (Pg. 13, #1)
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Bows and arrows, and shotguns. (1)
- 2.4 Food storage: None
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: Men fish, Women gather, both tend gardens. (1)
- 2.6 Land tenure: Maici River
- 2.7 Ceramics: None
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Unless a person is ostracized, food sharing is common. (1)
- 2.9 Food taboos: None, although an occasional anaconda may be killed it is typically not eaten. (Pg. 113, #1)
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft? The Pirahã are located along the Maici River, which has many Caboclos and other Brazilian boat-owning traders that transact with the local Pirahã groups living near the river's edges. (1)

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): No data.
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): No data.

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): Puberty is the preferred age to pass before marriage since older men will marry younger girls. These men may have sexual contact with pre-pubescent girls as long as the child is not forced or harmed. (Pg. 103, #1)
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: The Pirahã groups are promiscuous, so extramarital relations are not looked upon with much hostility, but divorce is not unheard of. They practice a voluntary penance where a man will lay his head in his wife's lap and allow her to whack him in the head for hours. This is done with no overt anger and both parties giggle and laugh with each other through the process. (Pg. 104, #1)
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: No data
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: No data
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: The Pirahã does not place much value on material objects beyond those that will help them in the immediate moment. The materials that they collect through life usually accompany burials, but these tend to be few in numbers and minuscule in proportion. (1)
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Parents in this society are unlike those of western cultures. Children must learn on their own not to do silly things such as play too carelessly with sharp objects or move too close to fire. This style of parenting leads to being reprimanded after an accident instead of being babied. This society prefers its members to be tough, so tough learning is necessary. (1)
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Endogamy is preferred as outsiders are not looked upon favorably and although one might enter a Pirahã community they will never be seen as a Pirahã. Just as those that practice endogamy will never be seen as anything other than a Pirahã by the Pirahã. (Ch. 8, #1)
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? No data.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”) No data.
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? No data.
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Gang rape has been recorded to keep promiscuity a norm. (1)
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin) Refer to 4.24
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Promiscuity is a social norm, so women enjoy the same sexual liberties as the men. (1)
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? Depending on if the father is near, he may care for the child if it has past the suckling stage, but if the child is unhealthy the father will deny it as well as all other females because they do not want to take milk away from their children to raise another. The child will be left to die, or in a recorded case, the father will give the child enough cachaça alcohol to kill the baby. (Pg. 95, #1)
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: No data.
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades No data.
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older) No data.
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? Due to a lack of kinship vocabulary there is a smaller number of kinship restrictions in Pirahã society. “Baíxi – parent, grandparent, or someone to whom you wish to express submission temporarily or permanently; Xahaigí – Sibling (M or F) This can also refer to any Pirahã of the same generation and in some contexts, to an Pirahã at all if he or she is contrasted with outsiders; Hoagí or Hoísai – Son; Kai – Daughter.” The Pirahã have one of the simplest kinship systems in the world and the terms stated above are the only kinship distinctions. This has allowed men to marry their half-sisters. (Pg. 86, #1)
- 4.24 Joking relationships? The Pirahã are a very smile-prone group, so joking is common. (1)
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: The Pirahã way of life, lack of material objects and lack of present tense words has nearly made patterns of descent non-existent because they do not believe what they have not seen for themselves or have heard from someone who is/once was alive at the same time has said. They may know who their close relatives are and those of the older generation but at some point in the lineage it becomes hear-say from someone who is not known by anyone still living and is thus intangible.
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules Refer to 4.24
- 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? Pirahã names will change every 5 to 10 years because they feel they are too old or unsuitable to describe a person. For outsiders a name will be given to them for similarities to a Pirahã in the group because they do not like to pronounce foreign names. “The Pirahãs change names from time to time, usually when individual Pirahãs trade names with spirits they encounter in the jungle.” (Pg. 9, #1) “During life, they receive further names from beings dwelling in higher and lower layers of the cosmos, responsible for the creation of their souls and destinies, as well as names from war enemies.” (#2)
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Refer to 4.12
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? No data.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: No data.

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: No data
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: Refer to 4.16
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Certain Pirahã have at times deemed river traders and neighboring groups as inferior interlopers and have driven the Apruinã from nearby settlements. Those Apruinã of the Sete and Aprígio settlements along the Maici River were forced to turn to servitude underneath Caboclos and have nearly all, if not everyone, have died by this point. (Ch. 8, #1)
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Relationships have been peaceful at most because the Pirahã abhor violence amongst themselves and prefer to avoid it amongst others, but under the effects of alcohol and intruders deemed inferior, violence can occasionally happen. (1)
- 4.18 Cannibalism? None

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: 100 and 120 (2)
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): None.
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): The Pirahã does not have a socio-political structure because they prefer to ostracize an individual that steps outside cultural norms. This may be for a few days where food is not shared or in the case of interlopers violence may be encountered.
- 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: A Pirahã house is usually raised on stilts, half walls, no doors, no privacy except for the storage room and for the children. (Pg. 9, #1)
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): None.
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Hammocks and ground (1)
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:
- 5.12 Trade: The rivers on which the Pirahã group live, especially the mouth of the Maici, are frequented by river traders and other fisherman. The group has no use for modern materials other than tools. “They have resources in Brazil nuts, latex, sorva, kopaiba and other jungle resources.” (Pg. 144, #1)
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? None.

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: "There are two types of ritual: shamanism and festivals. Both have the intention of placing the social domain into relation with the supernatural domain, but shamanism is the society's most important ritual, while festivals, qualified as 'big' and 'small,' are complementary rituals. ... The 'Big Festival' and the 'Little Festival' have the same reason for existing: placing the cosmos in operation. In Pirahã perception, both rituals are performed with the intention of provoking sounds, making a noise, sufficient for the demiurge Igagai, dwelling on the second celestial level, to hear them, becoming aware of their existence and of the exact place where they are found." (2)

6.5 Myths (Creation): The Pirahã is a group that does not believe in what they cannot claim that someone has witnessed. They have no perfect tense in their grammar so they do not think in terms of the far future or far past. This creates a lack of an origin creation story because no one was alive, or knows anyone who was alive to see the beginning. (1)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): The Pirahã plays a game with Porpoises that swim through the Madeira and Maici river systems. Canoes of fisherman will paddle as fast as they can in order to touch the Porpoises that they are chasing with their paddles. The Porpoises are said to play back with the fisherman because they come close but stay just out of reach of the fisherman. (Pg. 12, #1)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect: Daniel L. Everett's as well two other missionaries have allowed for a greater understanding of the complex language spoken by the Pirahã as well as leading the FUNAI to place a reservation on the lands of the Pirahã for them.

6.9 RCR revival: No data.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: No data.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? None

6.12 Is there teknonymy? No data

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) The Pirahã have a strong connection to spirits in the forest and believe that they are everywhere. They also will act out what a spirit might say, and will later deny any recollection of such events. (1)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: None.

7.2 Piercings: No data.

7.3 Haircut: No data.

7.4 Scarification: None.

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): None.

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: Western clothing can sometimes be used for ritual acts that may be interpreted as theatre-like to the western mind-set, but to Pirahã, the symbolic act of changing one's appearance from a person who wears relatively little clothing is one of deep ritual connections to the spirits in which they believe exist. This expression is similar to many western beliefs in spirit-like entities such as angels, miracles and God. (1)

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: No data.

7.8 Missionary effect: No change.

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: No data.

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: The Pirahã have one of the world's smallest kin classification systems. Refer to 4.24.

8.2 Sororate, levirate: No data.

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): No data.

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

1. Everett, Daniel Leonard. Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle. New York: Pantheon, 2008. Print.
2. Gonçalves, Marco A. "Pirahã." Introduction. Socioambiental, Jan. 2000. Web. 15 Apr. 2013. <<http://pib.socioambiental.org/en/povo/piraha>>.
3. "Pirahã." Welcome. Ethnologue, n.d. Web. 07 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.ethnologue.com/language/myp>>. Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.), 2013. Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Seventeenth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.: Languages of the World, Seventeenth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL