

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Marubo; Marubo Language; Pano Language Family

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Area: Amazonas, in the Javari river basin, Brazil ([Map](#)). The Marubo live on the upper course of the Curuçá and Ituí rivers, in the Javari basin, situated in the Amazonian municipality of Atalaia do Norte. The region is full of small hills, with peaks often linked by ridges and covered by tropical rainforest.

1.4 Brief history: The Marubo were encountered by Whites when the latter occupied the southwestern part of Amazonia during the rubber boom, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Misson Schools which teach the Marubo language.

1.6 Ecology: The Marubo live on the upper course of the Curuçá and Ituí rivers, in the Javari basin, situated in the Amazonian municipality of Atalaia do Norte. The region is full of small hills, with peaks often linked by ridges and covered by tropical rainforest.

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: 1,043 (in 2000)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): maize, sweet manioc (aipí cassava) and banana

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Although lines and hooks are sometimes used, fishing is typically done using a plant mixture called “huaca.” Huaca is processed by adding the plant (*Lonchocarpus floribundus*) to clay and fermenting the mixture. When dissolved in a body of water such as a lake, huaca depletes the oxygen and the fish float to the surface and are harvested. Fish, turtles, wild pigs, and monkeys (see food taboos).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: In present day, shotguns are used in place of traditional blowguns or bows and arrows.

2.4 Food storage: evidence of ceramics

2.5 Sexual division of production: Men are responsible for clearing forest for the swiddens, making holes for the planting of banana trees with digging sticks, hunting, and making canoes, log drums, benches and wooden mortars. Curing chants and shamanism, activities which require a constant supply of tobacco and ayahuasca, are also male tasks. Women are responsible for tending swiddens, harvesting bananas and manioc, making pottery, sleeping hammocks (with wide meshes) woven from palm fibre, and the close-fitting cotton skirts. Also cooking, notable for the variety and elaborate nature of the meals, as well as the order and appropriate occasion for their presentation. They spend much of their time fabricating gastropod shell beads, used to make necklaces, pendants and chest bands, indispensable elements in Marubo attire. Body painting, whether aesthetic or magical in aim, is done by women.

2.6 Land tenure: Land is owned collectively by the society as a whole or perhaps by each local group.

2.7 Ceramics: women make pottery

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: The Marubo live communally and share a large hut called a maloca. They also eat communally.

2.9 Food taboos: The primary game species are two varieties of monkeys, the woolly monkey (*Lagothrix lagothricha*) and the spider monkey (*Ateles belzebuth*). Curiously, other species of primates are considered inedible.

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Men are in charge of making canoes

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):

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: Most marriages are “stable”. – No evidence of divorce

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: “Sororal” polygyny is frequent but most marriages are monogamous.

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

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

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”)

4.15 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): There is a preference for marriage with the daughter of the *koka*, a term applied to a kin category that includes, among others, the mother’s brother and the sister’s son.

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? Other members of the domestic group
- 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: Strictly Matrilineal
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: they do not marry outside of their sections. They
- 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:
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: The extent of Marubo contact with other Indian groups before the arrival of Whites is unknown. At the beginning of the present century, some Marubo lived near the Remo Indians on the upper Javari. In 1960 a group of Mayoruna attacked a small expedition of Marubo who were looking for turtle eggs on the Rio Curuçá, abducting three women and killing at least one man and a child. Some time after this event the Marubo, armed with guns obtained from the Rio Juruá Whites, mounted an expedition on the tributaries of the left bank of the Curuçá, returning after having killed some Mayoruna.
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):
- 4.18 Cannibalism? In the past, the deceased were cremated and their bones were crushed up and consumed as a paste by the family.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: Frequently a local group coincides with a domestic group and occupies a single large hut, the plan of which is a decagon with two parallel sides much longer than the others. Two small doors opposite each other are located in the angles formed by the shorter sides. The palm-thatched (*Phytelphas macrocarpa*) roof slopes from the ridge to the ground. It is supported by four parallel lines of wooden pillars, the two innermost of which are higher, creating a central rectangular space. Between this space and each of the hut's longer sides there are three or four square areas, the angles of each marked by two long and two short pillars, separated from each other by a space of 3 meters. Each of these squares can be occupied by a nuclear family, with its hammocks and cooking fire. Generally this hut is inhabited by fifteen to thirty-five people and stands on the top of a small hill.
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): House-owners who gain prestige for their moderate and peaceful way of acting, sponsor festivals, cultivate peace and become sought out as advisors merit the title *kakáya*.
- 5.4 Post marital residence: communal maloca. The wife moves in with the husbands section.
- 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: Anyone arriving for the first time at a place inhabited by the Marubo would make a mistake in attempting to estimate the population by the number of constructions. In fact, the only construction actually inhabited is the oblong long house in the centre, located on the top of the hill and covered by ivorypalm straw from the ridge of the roof to the ground. This is where the village residents sleep, prepare meals, eat, receive visitors, sing curing chants, and observe the shaman's sessions. Other constructions are located on the surrounding slopes, erected on stilts with their floors and walls made from rufflepalm bark and thatched roofs.
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): Men clear trees for building swiddens for storage. Malocas house communal groups but have only one owner who sleeps near the opening.
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Woven hammocks
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: The Marubo divide into eighteen sections, each a group of kin related in a female line of alternate generations. Although the Marubo prefer to think in terms of these sections, for us it is easier to group them two by two, taking each pair as a matrilineal clan. In other words, the system of sections among the Marubo operates as in the following example: a woman belonging to the 'Red Macaw People' section gives birth to children of the 'Wood Rail People' section; in turn, her daughters will once again produce children of the 'Red Macaw People' section. In this way, the generations will alternate over time. The 'Wood Rail People' cannot marry the 'Red Macaw People.'
- 5.12 Trade: Trade with other Indian societies is nonexistent but with Whites it is very important. The Marubo earn some cash or obtain White items by working for missionaries or by extracting rubber and wood and raising chickens (and sometimes pigs) for the riverboat traders.
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? Maloca owners (the man who initiated the building of it) get special privileges

Note: Marubo society is organized on an egalitarian basis according to sex, age, and kinship.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): When one of the few Marubo shamans is present, frequently at night, his right-side soul travels to some yové huts, where a series of yové come successively to occupy his body, animating it and making it talk, sing, and dance. Although the shaman's performance can be promoted for practical purposes such as curing, its main purpose seems to be to arrange contact by men and women with the yové. / Long curing chants over the body of a sick person or a pot of porridge the patient will eat are common treatments. Curing singers use tobacco powder and *Banisteriopsis caapi* juice before each chant. The shaman, who use the same substances, invites some of the spirits he receives to cure the patient. The subcutaneous application of the secretion of the frog *Philomedusa bicolor*, the touching of a species of stinging nettle, and the bite of the ant *Dinoponera grandis* are used to dispel laziness and to bring good luck in hunting. A resin colored with *Bixa orellana* is used to paint aching parts of the body. Many medicines are prepared from plants.

6.2 Stimulants: Tobacco

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): Rites of passage ceremonies per se do not exist in the Marubo culture as compared to the Ticunas. However, men are not permitted to use tobacco snuff and ayahuasca until they have attained an age of about thirty years. Prior to this age, young Marubo men are limited to serving the needs of older men. There is a distinct division of labor between man and women, with men responsible for clearing the forest for plantations, hunting, making canoes, and carving drums. In addition, shamanism and traditional medicine are all male tasks. women are responsible for harvesting crops, cooking, creating pottery, and weaving hammocks

6.4 Other rituals: The Marubo practice various ceremonies and rituals, one of the most interesting being the Ceremony of Áco. Áco begins with the transportation of a giant log from the forest to the “maloca” (big house). The log is not dragged on the ground as one might suspect. Instead it is carried on the shoulders of the men. It is a difficult task and the men use sticks to support themselves as they make the strenuous journey. While the men are transporting the log, the women flirt and tease prospective mates by tickling them. In the maloca, the log is carved into a drum by the men, while the women dance and sing, praying to their dead ancestors for success in hunting and bountiful harvests.

6.5 Myths (Creation): The only hint of information found regarding “creation” is that, The land was created by Kana. Voã; the flora were created by Kana Mari (the same name as the rodent *Dasyprocta aguti*), who it appears also made the river and its living beings; cultivated plants were created by Oni (the same name as the *Banisteriopsis caapi*, meaning "the single one"). Slaughtered animals' meat and bones were the main raw material for these creations. Human beings emerged from the ground near the mouth of a big river, each section through a different hole. In the long walk up the river basin, the Marubo learned the items of their culture, several of them from animals.

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): The wooden structure of a hut, the delicacy of the strings of beads, the details of liana or string tying and knotting, the variety of cooked dishes, and persistence in reciting chants are all expressive forms.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: In the past Marubo practiced osteophagia after the incineration of a corpse. Today they bury the body. At physical death the soul on the right side takes a path to reach a certain celestial layer (there are several layers above and below the ground where humans live). If the dead person had lived according to Marubo rules, , which wait for it along the way and try to destroy it or transform it into one of them. If the soul overcomes all the obstacles and reaches the end of the path, a mythical being, whose name is the same as that of a species of monkey (*Pithecia monachus*), will change its skin for a new one and the soul will be transformed into a yové.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): The Marubo admit the existence of two categories of spirits: the yové, which have human appearance and engage in social life, are generally benevolent, immortal, highly adorned, powerful, and healthy; and the yochi, which are like humans or animals but are harmful and lack adornments and social life, although they are powerful and immortal. Human beings have several souls, but probably these coalesce into two—that of the right side and that of the left side.

7. Adornment; Marubo women spend much of their time making beads from snail shells. These beads are used to create the nose ornaments that characterize the Marubo. In addition, gastropod shell beads are used to make necklaces, chest bands, and the pendant crowns that are distinctive elements of Marubo attire. All body painting, whether for ceremonies or merely esthetic, is performed by women.

7.1 Body paint: evidence of the use of body paint.

7.2 Piercings: evidence of nasal piercings

7.3 Haircut: Unkown, however “Marubo” is thought to be a translation of “the bald ones”.

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): nasal piercings that wrap around head and various beaded necklaces and bracelets.

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: Generally, each kinship term or one of its variants is applied to people of alternate generations; there are some distinctions between the term a person applies to members of his or her own matrilineal unit and the others. The crossing of these two sets leads to four clusters of kinship terms. The Marubo are reticent in declaring their personal names; these are transmitted, like section membership and the distribution of kinship terms, through alternate generations.

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://indian-cultures.com/Cultures/marubo.html>
2. <http://www.amazon-indians.org/page20.html>
3. <http://www.everyculture.com/South-America/Marubo.html>
4. <http://www.everyculture.com/South-America/Marubo-History-and-Cultural-Relations.html>
5. <http://pib.socioambiental.org/en/povo/marubo/751>

Note: Division of labor: Division of labor is based on gender only. Men hunt, fish with hooks, clear wooded areas for new gardens, and do some kinds of agricultural work, such as planting bananas or storing maize in the dwelling hut. They build houses, make certain kinds of baskets, and sing curing chants. Women cook, make beer, care for children, draw water from streams, make pottery and beads, weave, and collect wild fruits and do other kinds of agricultural work, such as the gradual harvesting of manioc and bananas. Men and women together poison the streams for fish and harvest the fruits of the cultivated palm. There is at least one part-time specialist, the shaman.

Note: Kinship: Every Marubo is member of a section. Each section has a name. A person never marries a member of his or her own section or his or her mother's section and always belongs to the same section as his or her mother's mother. Thus, it is possible to suppose the existence of matrilineal units, each formed by two sections.

Note: Ceremony: Major rites mark the maize harvest, the visit of invited domestic groups for a big meal or to drink beer, and the arrival of a new wooden drum into the hut. There is no information about initiation rites.