

# Yahgan

also known as “Yámana”

Data source: eHRAF

Secondary source

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*\* Data Source entry, prepared based on data sourced from an external project.*

*\* Secondary Source entry, prepared from a literature review by a Ph.D. RA*

Entry tags: South American Religions, Religion

The Yahgan inhabit the southernmost point of South America, on the island of Tierra del Fuego. They historically lived in small family groupings, which comprised the only form of social organization. Groups were led by family heads and religious specialists called yékamuš (functioning as medicine men and spiritual advisers). There was neither a ruler beyond the family unit, nor an official political leadership office. Religious beliefs permeated many aspects of Yahgan life, so this entry considers the religious group to be coterminous with the society at large. These religious beliefs centered around a supreme high god known as Watauinewa, "master of the whole spirit world which was inhabited by a host of unseen and basically malicious beings, such as ghosts (kushpig) of dead [yékamuš], and spirits of the sea, rocks, and trees" (Beierle, 2003). Although the Yahgan have had contact with missionaries since 1871, there was minimal Christian influence on the native religious system at the time this entry focuses on. This entry focuses on the time of 1918-1924, when the principal ethnographer lived among and recorded information about the Yahgan.



Date Range: 1900 CE - 1924 CE

Region: Tierra del Fuego, Chile

Region tags: South America, Chile

"The nineteenth century Yahgan occupied the southern coast of the island of Tierra del Fuego from approximately the eastern end of Beagle Channel to Brecknock peninsula, encompassing the island south of this line to Cape Horn" (Beierle, 2003).

## Status of Participants:

✓ Religious Specialists    ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

## Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

— Source 1: Divale, W. 2004. Codebook of Variables for the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample. World Cultures: The Journal of Cross-Cultural and Comparative Research.

Online sources for understanding this subject:

— Source 1 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=sh06-000>

— Source 1 Description: Beierle, J. (2003). Culture Summary: Yahgan. New Haven, Conn.: HRAF.

— Source 2 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=sh06-001>

— Source 2 Description: Gusinde, M., & Schütze, F. (1937). Yahgan: The Life And Thought Of The Water Nomads Of Cape Horn. Die Feuerland-Indianer [The Fuegian Indians]. Mödling Bei Wein: Anthropos-Bibliothek.

— Source 3 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=sh06-003>

— Source 3 Description: Lothrop, S. K. (1928). Indians Of Tierra Del Fuego. New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation.

## General Variables

### Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

— Yes

Notes: "First European contacts with the Yahgan may have taken place as early as 1520 when Ferdinand Magellan encountered some of them around the straits which now bear his name, but apparently there was little if any interaction with these people at that time. The first real contacts with the Yahgan occurred in 1624 when Jacques L' Hermite actually visited and described these people... In 1871 the missionary Thomas Bridges and his family arrived in the area to set up a mission station at Ushuaia, a site located on Beagle Channel on the south coast of Tierra del Fuego" (Beierle, 2003).



Is the cultural contact competitive:

— I don't know



Is the cultural contact accommodating/pluralistic:

— I don't know



Is the cultural contact neutral:

— Yes

Notes: Although the Yahgan have had contact with missionaries beginning in 1871, the only Christian influence appears to have been on burial practices. As a result of this influence, the Yahgan perform burials in place of cremation. (See Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1048).



Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

— Yes

Notes: SCCS Variable 1649, Frequency of Internal Warfare (Resolved Rating), indicates that internal warfare seems to occur between one every 3 to 10 years, and once every 2 years (original code 2.75) (Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).



Is there violent conflict (with groups outside the sample region):

— Yes

Notes: SCCS Variable 1650, Frequency of External Warfare (Resolved Rating), indicates that "external warfare seems to occur once every 3 to 10 years" (Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group have a general process/system for assigning religious affiliation:

— No

Notes: Because the religious group is coterminous with the society at large, there is no concept of assigning religious affiliation other than being born into a particular family unit.

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

— No

Notes: Because the religious group is coterminous with the society at large, there is no concept of recruiting new members.

Does the religion have official political support

Answer 'yes' also in cases where the religious and political spheres are not distinguished from one another, but the religious group's activities are tied up with, and supported by, the functioning of the society at large.

— No

Notes: There is no official political leadership among the Yahgan; individual family groups are the only level of hierarchy in the society. Additionally, "...there was neither established religious dogma nor a formal body of beliefs" (Beierle, 2003). However, religious beliefs are tied up with the functioning of society in numerous aspects, making the religious group coterminous with the society at large.

Is there a conception of apostasy in the religious group:

— No

Notes: Because the religious group is coterminous with the society at large, there is no concept of apostasy.

## Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

— Estimated population, numeric: 2900

Notes: Lothrop, 1928:25

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (% of sample region population, numerical):

— Estimated population, percentage of sample region: 100

Notes: Because the religious group is considered coterminous with the society at large, all members of the society belong to the religious group.

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:

— No

Notes: "The amazing simplicity revealed in the Yamana way of life is, naturally, also apparent in the religious realm. Except for specific prayer formulas, their outward religious activity is remarkably limited. They have no actual portrayal of their Supreme Being or particular places reserved for his worship, nor do they have any kind of sacrifice. A priesthood and religious ceremonies are also lacking" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:976). "Actually, conditions in the simple social organization of our Fuegians are more orderly, principled, and peaceful than many Europeans might believe, although they neither have a police force and courts of justice nor are under the leadership of chiefs" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1031). Religious specialists, called yékamuš, are present and act as medicine men/spiritual advisers. Yékamuš are "believed to have considerable influence upon natural forces" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1298). They are called to the position by a spirit (ibid, pg.1313), and taught by experienced elders. The yékamuš are not united as a group or in society-each acts independently and with superiority within an individual family grouping (ibid, pg. 1301). The yékamuš have no legal distinction, and act to help with illness, protect against malevolent forces, and support the overall well-being of the family group.

## Scripture

Does the religious group have scriptures:

Scripture is a generic term used to designate revered texts that are considered particularly authoritative and sacred relative to other texts. Strictly speaking, it refers to written texts, but there are also "oral scriptures" (e.g. the Vedas of India).

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence indicating the presence of scriptures. Additionally, "...there was neither established religious dogma nor a formal body of beliefs" (Beierle, 2003).

## Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

— No

Notes: "The amazing simplicity revealed in the Yamana way of life is, naturally, also apparent in the religious realm. Except for specific prayer formulas, their outward religious activity is remarkably limited. They have no actual portrayal of their Supreme Being or particular places reserved for his worship, nor do they have any kind of sacrifice" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:976).

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

— No

Notes: "The amazing simplicity revealed in the Yamana way of life is, naturally, also apparent in the religious realm. Except for specific prayer formulas, their outward religious activity is remarkably limited. They have no actual portrayal of their Supreme Being or particular places reserved for his worship, nor do they have any kind of sacrifice" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:976).

## Beliefs

## Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer "no" only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body. Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

— Yes

Notes: "Conceptions of the human soul and of its continued life after death are closely interwoven, and the customs of mourning, for which our Yamana have created definite forms, are connected with the," (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1032).



Spirit-mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other body parts:

— Yes

Notes: "[The Yahgan's] idea of life and of being alive coincides with the possession of a soul. The soul is the true principle of life and, as such, it may exist by itself or be united with the human body. Hence, according to the clear conception of the Yamana, it is a being in itself, and thus something entirely different from a body" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1033).



Spirit-mind is conceived of as non-material, ontologically distinct from body:

— Yes

Notes: (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1033)

Belief in afterlife:

— Yes

Notes: "The Fuegians do not waver in the one assertion that at death the [soul] leaves the body and continues a life of its own. Once soul and body have been separated by death, that is, as was said on page 1034, by the intervention of Watauinewa, any subsequent union is forever excluded. After that the soul stands alone, whereas the corpse decays" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1036).



Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group:

— No

Notes: "It must be admitted, however, that they do not conceive of the other world as a secure situation or a definite place" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1036).

Reincarnation in this world:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of a belief in reincarnation.

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

— Yes

Notes: Formerly, cremation was the most commonly used method for treating corpses. As a result of Christian influence, burial is the most commonly used method for treating corpses at the time this entry focuses on. See questions below for more details.

↳ Cremation:

– Yes

Notes: "This happens in any case; 'the dead are always...wrapt up in skins either when buried or burned' /cited in English/, as Bridges (a):206 confirms. Nowadays the body is straightened out and the arms are placed at the sides, because burial in the ground is now the exclusive custom" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1047).

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 1800 CE - 1900 CE

↳ Mummification:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of mummification.

↳ Interment:

– Yes

↳ Corpse is flexed (legs are bent or body is crouched):

– No

↳ Corpse is extended (lying flat on front or back):

– Yes

Notes: "Nowadays the body is straightened out and the arms are placed at the sides, because burial in the ground is now the exclusive custom" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1047).

↳ Cannibalism:

– No

Notes: "Even the young Bridges (a):207 came across traces of this belief: 'Cannibalism is unknown, but they have reports that it is practised by some people far to the westward, whom they call Hapúnanóoshiaúla' /cited in English/" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1161).

↳ Exposure to elements (e.g. air drying):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of exposing corpses to the elements.

↳ Feeding to animals:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence indicating the presence of feeding corpses to animals.



Secondary burial:

– Yes

Notes: SCCS Variable 1850, Secondary Bone/Body Treatment: Original Scale, indicates that secondary burial is present (Schroeder, 2001; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of co-sacrifices.

Are grave goods present:

– No

Notes: "...it has been customary from ancient times to destroy all the possessions of the deceased, by consigning them to the flames, throwing them into the sea, or placing the individual pieces in the grave with the corpse...These things are in no way meant as actual burial accessories; the survivors are guided solely by the desire to destroy in one way or another everything that belonged to the deceased" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1054).

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for more details. Additionally, see Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1047-1056 for a full description of burial practices.



As cenotaphs:

– No



In cemetery:

– No



Family tomb-crypt:

– No



Other formal burial type:

– Yes [specify]: unmarked graves close to the hut

Notes: Burials take place "not far from the hut" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1052). The Yahgan "prefer to bury the corpse in a sandbank lying off the shore or in a low hill of coarse gravel...the spot is made to look exactly like the surroundings so as to be unrecognizable" (ibid, pg.1053).

## Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

— Yes

Notes: A supreme high god as well as water spirits (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1167), forest giants (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1171), and guardian spirits (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1180) are present.

↳ A supreme high god is present:

— Yes

Notes: "Much of the religious life of the Yahgan centered on shamanism and theism (the belief in a supreme being called WATAUINÉWA)..." (Beierle, 2003).

↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic:

— Field doesn't know

Notes: "Since he is incorporeal, no one has a perceptual idea of his person...There are no pictorial or material representations of his person" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:968).

↳ The supreme high god is a sky deity:

— Yes

Notes: "His abode is always far away from the earth and, in the invariable phrase, 'high up there' in space" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:969).

↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld):

— No

Notes: "His abode is always far away from the earth and, in the invariable phrase, 'high up there' in space" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:969).

↳ The supreme high god is fused with the monarch (king=high god):

— No

Notes: There is no monarch or high ruler among the Yahgan.

↳ The monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:

— No

Notes: There is no monarch or high ruler among the Yahgan.

↳ The supreme high god is a kin relation to elites:

— No

Notes: There is no elite class among the Yahgan.



↳ The supreme high god has another type of loyalty-connection to elites:

— No

Notes: There is no elite class among the Yahgan.

↳ The supreme high god is unquestionably good:

— I don't know

Notes: "Despite the decided arbitrariness with which Watauinewa now and then obviously interferes with the fate of individual human beings, he is generally regarded as benevolent and good" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:974).

↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world:

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

— Yes

Notes: "...he is described as omniscient, so to speak. 'He sees everything. — He knows what everyone is doing. — He also observes how a person behaves in secret [unobserved by his countrymen]!' (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:969).

↳ The supreme high god knows what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):

— Yes

Notes: "...Watauinewa also holds the fate of men in his hands" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:971).

↳ The supreme high god has deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

Notes: "Moral duties with their compulsory demands are not suspended in mid-air, but, as has just been said, rest on a firm foundation, from which the sanctions for either a dutiful or a faulty act derive their effectiveness. The Yamana definitely express their conviction that Watauinewa sees to it that his rules are observed and that he punishes serious transgressions" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1030).

↳ The supreme high god can punish:

— Yes

Notes: "Moral duties with their compulsory demands are not suspended in mid-air, but, as has just been said, rest on a firm foundation, from which the sanctions for either a dutiful or a faulty act derive their effectiveness. The Yamana definitely express their conviction that Watauinewa sees to it that his rules are observed and that he punishes serious transgressions" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1030).

↳ The supreme high god has indirect causal efficacy in the world:

"Indirect causal efficacy" refers to not being seen as consciously, directly and actively intervening in the human world, but their overall well being or general attitude has effects on, e.g., quality of harvest, success in war, health, etc.

— Yes

Notes: "In the same manner he bestows good and bad weather. If he wants to chastise someone, he has him tormented by storm and rain; if he favors someone, he will let him be accompanied by sunshine. He brings success in hunting to the men and success in gathering to the women, but sometimes he also arranges that they both come back empty-handed" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:970).

↳ The supreme high god exhibits positive emotion:

— Yes

Notes: "Despite the decided arbitrariness with which Watauinewa now and then obviously interferes with the fate of individual human beings, he is generally regarded as benevolent and good" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:974).

↳ The supreme high god possesses hunger:

— Field doesn't know

Notes: "The Yamana have no conception whatever of how Watauinewa actually lives — that is to say, his dwelling, food, weariness, sleep, etc. — and they have nothing to say on the subject. They definitely know that he has a very unique manner of existence; this is enough for them and they have no desire to find out about details" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:975).

↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living:

— I don't know

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

— I don't know

Notes: The Yahgan believe in previously human spirits in the sense that they believe in the survival of the soul after death. However, no one knows what happens to the soul after death, so there is not an extensive belief in previously human spirits. See Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1038.

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

— Yes

Notes: Water spirits (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1167), forest giants (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1171), and guardian spirits (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1180) are present. These beings do not play a significant role in the religious beliefs of the Yahgan, so limited details on their character are present.

- ↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:
  - I don't know
- ↳ These supernatural beings can be physically felt:
  - I don't know
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world:
  - I don't know
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:
  - I don't know
- ↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:
 

"Indirect causal efficacy" refers to not being seen as consciously, directly and actively intervening in the human world, but their overall well being or general attitude has effects on, e.g., quality of harvest, success in war, health, etc.

  - Yes

Notes: "He [the water spirit Lak<sup>o</sup>ma] does not merely attack a canoe and its occupants. It is also within his power to cause high waves and threatening storms if he wants to endanger a vessel" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1167).
- ↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion:
  - I don't know
- ↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion:
  - I don't know
- ↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger:
  - I don't know

## Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

– Yes

Notes: "One could probably describe as religious activity in its wider sense the firmly established, equable mental attitude of deep veneration toward Watauinewa that the individual maintains. Not everyone is always conscious of it, but in some way it has a decisive influence on him to move along

certain paths and to be led by universally valid principles. In its effect within the religious sphere this veneration is comparable to what a conscience is in the field of moral obligations, namely, a sort of leitmotiv by which the individual person is led. This mental attitude is the reason for the unchanging acquiescence of the Fuegian to the demands of the moral law. He submits to it without contradiction, although he cannot explain it in any other way than by repeating the well-known saying: 'Watauinewa sees everything. – He wants everyone to conduct himself in the way that has always been customary among us Yamana!'" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:977).

↳ There is supernatural monitoring of prosocial norm adherence in particular:

Prosocial norms are norms that enhance cooperation among members of the group, including obviously "moral" or "ethical" norms, but also extending to norms concerning honouring contracts and oaths, providing hospitality, coming to mutual aid in emergencies, etc.

– Yes

Notes: "The [moral] laws that our Yamana observe are clear and easy to understand, simple and definite. They are headed by duties toward the Supreme Being. After all, these duties in their entirety are derived from him as originator, and he carefully sees to it that they are carried out" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1024).

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

Notes: "Moral duties with their compulsory demands are not suspended in mid-air, but, as has just been said, rest on a firm foundation, from which the sanctions for either a dutiful or a faulty act derive their effectiveness. The Yamana definitely express their conviction that Watauinewa sees to it that his rules are observed and that he punishes serious transgressions" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1030).

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Notes: The ethnographic examples of supernatural punishment describe only the high god, Watauinewa, as the agent of such punishment.

↳ Done only by high god:

– Yes

Notes: The ethnographic examples of supernatural punishment describe only the high god, Watauinewa, as the agent of such punishment.

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– No

Notes: The ethnographic examples of supernatural punishment describe only the high god, Watauinewa, as the agent of such punishment.

↳ Done through impersonal cause-effect principle:

– No

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

– Yes

Notes: "Moral duties with their compulsory demands are not suspended in mid-air, but, as has just been said, rest on a firm foundation, from which the sanctions for either a dutiful or a faulty act derive their effectiveness. The Yamana definitely express their conviction that Watauinewa sees to it that his rules are observed and that he punishes serious transgressions" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1030).

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: "No one, however, speaks of punishment which the culprit is to expect in the other world because in general the Yamana maintain that they do not know what form of existence the soul has there" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1030).

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for more details.

↳ Punishment in this life consists of crop failure or bad weather:

– Yes

Notes: "If he wants to chastise someone, he has him tormented by storm and rain; if he favors someone, he will let him be accompanied by sunshine. He brings success in hunting to the men and success in gathering to the women, but sometimes he also arranges that they both come back empty-handed" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:970).

↳ Punishment in this life consists of sickness or illness:

– Yes

Notes: "By way of punishment he (the high god Watauinewa) sends a serious illness; he liberates a person from it, but only occasionally" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:970).

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic evidence.

## Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of messianic beliefs.

Is an eschatology present:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of an eschatology.

## Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: "The social life of our Fuegians and the behavior of individuals, regardless of age and sex, are regulated by definite, unchanging principles that obligate all tribal members without exception. They alone assure the tranquil continuance of the tribal society and guarantee peaceful coexistence for all its parts" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1022).

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: "One could probably describe as religious activity in its wider sense the firmly established, equable mental attitude of deep veneration toward Watauinewa that the individual maintains. Not everyone is always conscious of it, but in some way it has a decisive influence on him to move along certain paths and to be led by universally valid principles. In its effect within the religious sphere this veneration is comparable to what a conscience is in the field of moral obligations, namely, a sort of leitmotiv by which the individual person is led. This mental attitude is the reason for the unchanging acquiescence of the Fuegian to the demands of the moral law. He submits to it without contradiction, although he cannot explain it in any other way than by repeating the well-known saying: 'Watauinewa sees everything. — He wants everyone to conduct himself in the way that has always been customary among us Yamana!'" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:977).



Are specifically moral norms prescribed by the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: "The laws that our Yamana observe are clear and easy to understand, simple and definite. They are headed by duties toward the Supreme Being. After all, these duties in their entirety are derived from him as originator, and he carefully sees to it that they are carried out" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1024).



Specifically moral norms are linked to impersonal cosmic order (e.g. karma):

— No



Specifically moral norms are linked in some way to an anthropomorphic being:

— Yes

Notes: "The laws that our Yamana observe are clear and easy to understand, simple and definite. They are headed by duties toward the Supreme Being. After all, these duties in their entirety are derived from him as originator, and he carefully sees to it that they are carried out" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1024).

↳ Specifically moral norms are have no special connection to metaphysical:  
– No

↳ Moral norms apply to:  
– All individuals within society

Notes: "The social life of our Fuegians and the behavior of individuals, regardless of age and sex, are regulated by definite, unchanging principles that obligate all tribal members without exception" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1022).

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the religious group:

Virtues here are normatively-desirable, internalized habits, dispositions or behavioral ideals.

– Yes

Notes: See below for particular virtues emphasized by the Yahgan.

↳ Selflessness / selfless giving:  
– Yes

Notes: "Diligence and industry, a sense of order and cleanliness, compatability and a quiet nature, unselfishness and constant willingness to help, moderation in eating, and respect for tribal custom in its many details are qualities which the society as a whole expects from each of its members" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1025). "Personal unselfishness and constant helpfulness, which are regarded as the chief virtues..." (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1026).

↳ Respectfulness / courtesy:  
– Yes

Notes: "Diligence and industry, a sense of order and cleanliness, compatability and a quiet nature, unselfishness and constant willingness to help, moderation in eating, and respect for tribal custom in its many details are qualities which the society as a whole expects from each of its members" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1025).

↳ Moderation / frugality:  
– Yes

Notes: "Diligence and industry, a sense of order and cleanliness, compatability and a quiet nature, unselfishness and constant willingness to help, moderation in eating, and respect for tribal custom in its many details are qualities which the society as a whole expects from each of its members. Their sense of modesty is well developed" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1025).

↳ Diligence / self-discipline / excellence:

– Yes

Notes: "Diligence and industry, a sense of order and cleanliness, compatability and a quiet nature, unselfishness and constant willingness to help, moderation in eating, and respect for tribal custom in its many details are qualities which the society as a whole expects from each of its members" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1025).

↳ Cleanliness (physical) / orderliness:

– Yes

Notes: "Diligence and industry, a sense of order and cleanliness, compatability and a quiet nature, unselfishness and constant willingness to help, moderation in eating, and respect for tribal custom in its many details are qualities which the society as a whole expects from each of its members" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1025).

## Practices

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### Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence indicating the requirement of celibacy.

Does membership in this religious group require castration:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence indicating the requirement of castration.

Does membership in this religious group require fasting:

– Yes

Notes: Fasting is required in preparation for initiation rites (see Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:645-647).

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

"Adults" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition of a human who is 18-years-old or older and who is legally responsible for his/her actions, then please specify that difference in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Notes: "The amazing simplicity revealed in the Yamana way of life is, naturally, also apparent in the religious realm. Except for specific prayer formulas, their outward religious activity is remarkably limited. They have no actual portrayal of their Supreme Being or particular places reserved for his worship, nor do they have any kind of sacrifice" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:976).

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:



"Children" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition, please specify that different in the Comments/Sources: box below.

— No

Notes: "The amazing simplicity revealed in the Yamana way of life is, naturally, also apparent in the religious realm. Except for specific prayer formulas, their outward religious activity is remarkably limited. They have no actual portrayal of their Supreme Being or particular places reserved for his worship, nor do they have any kind of sacrifice" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:976).

Does membership in this religious group require self-sacrifice (suicide):

— No

Notes: "The amazing simplicity revealed in the Yamana way of life is, naturally, also apparent in the religious realm. Except for specific prayer formulas, their outward religious activity is remarkably limited. They have no actual portrayal of their Supreme Being or particular places reserved for his worship, nor do they have any kind of sacrifice" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:976).

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of property/valuable items:

— No

Notes: "The amazing simplicity revealed in the Yamana way of life is, naturally, also apparent in the religious realm. Except for specific prayer formulas, their outward religious activity is remarkably limited. They have no actual portrayal of their Supreme Being or particular places reserved for his worship, nor do they have any kind of sacrifice" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:976).

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of time (e.g., attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.):

— No

Notes: "The amazing simplicity revealed in the Yamana way of life is, naturally, also apparent in the religious realm. Except for specific prayer formulas, their outward religious activity is remarkably limited. They have no actual portrayal of their Supreme Being or particular places reserved for his worship, nor do they have any kind of sacrifice. A priesthood and religious ceremonies are also lacking" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:976).

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

i.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale "ceremonies" and "festivals."

— No

Notes: "The amazing simplicity revealed in the Yamana way of life is, naturally, also apparent in the religious realm. Except for specific prayer formulas, their outward religious activity is remarkably limited. They have no actual portrayal of their Supreme Being or particular places reserved for his worship, nor do they have any kind of sacrifice. A priesthood and religious ceremonies are also lacking" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:976).

## Society and Institutions

### Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

This question refers to the wider society in which the religious group is located.

— A band

Notes: The Yahgan "...do not recognize any person as having the authority to rule either the whole society or the larger groups within it, no matter what names are applied to such persons in higher social organizations. This by no means strange phenomenon is confirmed not only by the independent position of the individual family and its freedom to settle anywhere, but also by the definite testimony of many observers" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:634).

## Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of formal education.

## Bureaucracy

Do the group's adherents interact with a formal bureaucracy within their group:

— No

Notes: The Yahgan "...do not recognize any person as having the authority to rule either the whole society or the larger groups within it, no matter what names are applied to such persons in higher social organizations. This by no means strange phenomenon is confirmed not only by the independent position of the individual family and its freedom to settle anywhere, but also by the definite testimony of many observers" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:634).

## Taxation

Does the religious group in question levy taxes or tithes:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of taxes or tithes.

Are taxes levied on the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of taxes or tithes.

## Enforcement

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

— No

Notes: "Actually, conditions in the simple social organization of our Fuegians are more orderly, principled, and peaceful than many Europeans might believe, although they neither have a police force and courts of justice nor are under the leadership of chiefs" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1031).

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

— No

Notes: "Actually, conditions in the simple social organization of our Fuegians are more orderly, principled, and peaceful than many Europeans might believe, although they neither have a police force and courts of justice nor are under the leadership of chiefs" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1031). "Similarly there is no authoritative judge over all the people; everyone must seek his own justice. He finds aid and support among his circle of kinsmen in cases of legal disputes" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:635).

Does the religious group in question enforce institutionalized punishment:

— No

Notes: "Similarly there is no authoritative judge over all the people; everyone must seek his own justice. He finds aid and support among his circle of kinsmen in cases of legal disputes" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:635).

Does the religious group in question have a formal legal code:

— No

Notes: "Although tribal members are not united under a common chief (p. 601), they nevertheless feel and act homogeneously, guided and obligated by one and the same tradition which, though unwritten, is like a book of laws. No one would venture to neglect it and go his own way or even less to oppose it with scornful comments" (Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1026).

## Written Language

Does the religious group in question possess its own distinct written language:

— No

Notes: The Yahgan language appears to have been written only after the arrival of missionaries (see Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1401).

## Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for a formal calendar. For a description of time designations among the Yahgan, see Gusinde and Schütze, 1937:1384-1388.

## Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes

Notes: The Yahgan rely predominantly on fishing, with hunting as a secondary form of subsistence. Gathering makes a supplemental contribution to the diet. Source of information from Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1962-1971), retrieved from Divale, 2004; Variables 203-207, 232.



Please characterize the forms/level of food production [choose all that apply]:

– Gathering

– Hunting (including marine animals)

– Fishing

Notes: The Yahgan rely predominantly on fishing, with hunting as a secondary form of subsistence. Gathering makes a supplemental contribution to the diet. Source of information from Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1962-1971), retrieved from Divale, 2004; Variables 203-207, 232.