

# Mundurucu

Data source: eHRAF

Secondary source

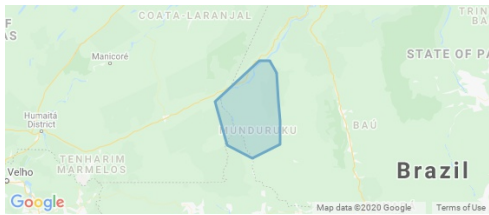
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*\* Secondary Source entry, prepared from a literature review by a Ph.D. RA*

Entry tags: South American Religions, Religious Group

The Mundurucu live in the Amazon valley of Brazil. This entry focuses specifically on the Mundurucu village of Cabrua--located in what is now known as the Tapanjós River region of the Brazillian state of Pará--around the time of 1850. Mundurucu villages are autonomous, but come together for activities such as warfare and important ceremonies. Most Mundurucu villages have at least one religious specialist, known as a shaman, who has a close connection to the supernatural world and is the only individual capable of communicating with supernatural beings. The three categories of supernatural beings are souls of the dead, various malignant/mischievous beings, and the spirit mothers of game animals. The most important category is the spirit mothers of game animals, which include the generic spirit mother of all game animals, as well as specific mothers of various species. These spirit mothers are propitiated through ceremonies (led by shamen) in order to maintain the well-being of the community. For the Mundurucu, religion permeates most aspects of life. Consequently, this entry considers the religious group to be coterminous with society itself.



Date Range: 1850 CE - 1900 CE

Region: Mundurucu Territory ca. 1850

Region tags: South America, Brazil

Mundurucu Territory (focusing on the village of Cabrua) ca. 1850; what is now known as the Tapanjós River region of the Brazilian state of Pará.

## Status of Participants:

✓ Elite    ✓ 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.
- Source 2: Murdock, G.P. & Wilson, S.F. (Jul., 1972). Settlement patterns and community organization: Cross-Cultural Codes 3. Ethnology, 11(3), 254-295.
- Source 3: Murdock, G.P. (1967). Ethnographic Atlas. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Source 1: Tuden, A. & Marshall, C. (Oct., 1972). Political organization: Cross-cultural codes 4. Ethnology, 11(4), 436-464.
- Source 2: Murdock, G.P. & Morrow, D.O. (Jul., 1970). Subsistence economy and supportive practices: Cross-Cultural codes 1. Ethnology, 9(3), 302-330.

Online sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=sq13-011>
- Source 1 Description: Murphy, Robert F. (Robert Francis). 1958. "Mundurucu Religion." Publications In American Archaeology And Ethnology. Berkeley: University of California press.
- Source 2 URL: <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=sq13-005>
- Source 2 Description: Murphy, Robert Francis. 1954. "Rubber Trade And The Mundurucu Village: Chapter 2: Aboriginal Culture." [S.L.]: [s.n.].
- Source 3 URL: <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=sq13-012>
- Source 3 Description: Murphy, Robert Francis. 1960. "Headhunter'S Heritage; Social And Economic Change Among The Mundurucú Indians." Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Source 1 URL: <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=sq13-000>
- Source 1 Description: Burkhalter, S. Brian, and John Beierle. 2003. "Culture Summary: Mundurucu." New Haven, Conn.: HRAF.

## General Variables

### Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes

Notes: "In 1803 the mission of Santa Cruz was established on the lower Tapajós River and was followed by others at Boim and Pinhel" (Murphy, 1958:5-6). "It would be extremely difficult to assay the effect of the Mission of Bacabal upon Mundurucú beliefs, for other avenues of communication with the white Christian population were opening rapidly during this period. As the rubber-extraction industry went into its boom period, permanent trading posts were established on the upper Tapajós and as far south as the waters of the Juruena and São Manoel rivers. And the rubber collectors correspondingly became more sedentary. Whole families settled in the rubber regions and remained there throughout the year. The new Brazilian population settled among and married with the Mundurucú of the Tapajós shores and had occasional contact with the more isolated dwellers of the interior. The latter fell increasingly into the skein of debt relations upon which the rubber economy was and is based, and the structure of their relations with the traders provided the means by which Christianity and other aspects of Western culture were communicated to them" (ibid. pg. 7).



Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

– Field doesn't know

Notes: SCCS Variable 1649 (Frequency of Internal Warfare: Resolved Rating), indicates that no resolved rating could be made (Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004). SCCS Variable 1654, Pacification, indicates that the Mundurucu were not pacified for all or part of the twenty-five-year ethnographic present (Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).



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

– Field doesn't know

Notes: SCCS Variable 1650 (Frequency of External Warfare: Resolved Rating), indicates that no

resolved rating could be made (Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004). SCCS Variable 1654, Pacification, indicates that the Mundurucu were not pacified for all or part of the twenty-five-year ethnographic present (Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence indicating that the Mundurucu would actively proselytize and recruit new members.

Does the religion have official political support

– Yes

Notes: For the Mundurucu, religion does not exist in a distinct, separate sphere of life. Rather, religion permeates all aspects of society. Consequently, this entry considers the religious group to be coterminous with the society itself. In this way, the religion is considered to have political support.

↳ Are the priests paid by polity:

– No

Notes: "The shaman has high prestige, although the respect accorded an individual practitioner is at times mixed with fear when it is suspected that he indulges in black magic. In spite of the high regard in which he is held, he receives no material benefits for his services" (Murphy, 1958:29).

↳ Is religious infrastructure paid for by the polity:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of religious infrastructure.

↳ Are the head of the polity and the head of the religion the same figure:

– No

Notes: The chief and the shaman are typically two separate individuals.

## Size and Structure

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

– I don't know

Notes: "The Mundurucú Indians are a tribal group of some 1,250 people living on the Tapajós River in the state of Pará, Brazil" (Murphy, 1958:1). "Other factors have modified Mundurucú social structure and religion. The population is probably about one fourth of what it was 100 years ago; According to some sources, this decline has been even greater. Martius (1867, p. 390) estimated the Mundurucú population to be 40,000 in 1819, and Tocantins (1877, p. 101) calculated their number to be 18,910 in 1875" (ibid, pg. 11).

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: "The Mundurucú shaman, or mamú, has the ability to deal with supernatural threats through possession of a mystical power latent within him from the time of his birth. His functions within the society are manifold. The shaman performs cures; he is essential to nearly all ceremonies; he propitiates the spirit mothers of the animal world; he rids the community of evil forces; and he can detect lost people and objects. But though essential to the well-being of society, the power of the shaman can be used for evil ends. His status is ambivalent; he maintains a balanced and favorable relation between the human and supernatural worlds, and he is capable of profoundly disturbing this balance. Most Mundurucú villages have at least one shaman in residence, although some have none. The shaman has high prestige, although the respect accorded an individual practitioner is at times mixed with fear when it is suspected that he indulges in black magic. In spite of the high regard in which he is held, he receives no material benefits for his services" (Murphy, 1958:29).

↳ Are leaders believed to possess supernatural powers or qualities:

– Yes

Notes: "The Mundurucú shaman, or mamú, has the ability to deal with supernatural threats through possession of a mystical power latent within him from the time of his birth" (Murphy, 1958:29).

↳ Powers are acquired by individual deeds carried out in past lives:

– No

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

↳ Powers are acquired by individual deeds carried out in the current life:

– No

Notes: Murphy, 1958:30

↳ Powers are inherited:

– Yes

Notes: "One does not seek to become a shaman among the Mundurucú, nor is shamanism the result of a serious illness or an extraordinary experience, as is true in many societies. The power is acquired only through inheritance from the father, and it is believed that all children of shamans are also shamans, although they may not practice the art in later life. For all practical purposes, however, only male children inherit shamanistic power" (Murphy, 1958:30).

↳ Powers are associated with leadership office they assume:

– No

Notes: The possession of supernatural powers is associated with being a shaman, but powers are not acquired by assuming the position. (see Murphy, 1958:30)

↳ Are religious leaders chosen:

– No

Notes: Murphy, 1958:30

## 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 for the presence of scriptures among the Mundurucu.

## Architecture, Geography

Are pilgrimages present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence indicating the presence of pilgrimages.

# 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: "When a Mundurucu dies – man or woman, elder, youth, or child – his spirit, biumbê, passes on to another world, a sort of paradise which they call cabi" (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:37).

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

– Yes

Notes: "The souls of sleeping people sometimes travel harmlessly abroad, and dreams are believed to be the experiences of the soul while away from the body" (Murphy, 1958:27)

Belief in afterlife:

– Yes

Notes: "When a Mundurucu dies – man or woman, elder, youth, or child – his spirit, biumbê, passes on to another world, a sort of paradise which they call cabi. The cabi consists of a boundless plain, in the midst of which stands an ekcá large enough to hold them all" (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:37). "The

soul of the deceased has three possible destinations. Those of men who devoted considerable time to the playing of the sacred trumpets, or karökö, go to Karökökai, the place where the trumpets were first discovered by the women. There they play the instruments and live well, for the forests team with game and the rivers with fish. Men and women who knew the ceremonial dances for the spirit mothers of the game reside in another afterworld, known as Upötcharö, or the land of the game. The animals there have human forms, although the forests are paradoxically thought to be rich in game animals, and they and the Mundurucú souls pass their time in dancing. Both Karökökai and Upötcharö lie in a subterranean land called Karubisese. The Mundurucú believe Karubisese has three locations: below the headwaters of the Juruena River, under the Great Falls of the Cururú River, and west of the Tapajós River beyond where the sun sets" (Murphy, 1958:23-24).

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

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "below" space:

– Yes

Notes: "Both Karökökai and Upötcharö lie in a subterranean land called Karubisese. The Mundurucú believe Karubisese has three locations: below the headwaters of the Juruena River, under the Great Falls of the Cururú River, and west of the Tapajós River beyond where the sun sets" (Murphy, 1958:23-24).

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: See questions below for more details.

↳ Cremation:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of cremation.

↳ Mummification:

– Yes

Notes: "When a Mundurucu happens to die in the course of one of their frequent wars, his comrades cut off his head and mummify it in the accustomed manner. Upon their return to the village, they put it in a special place along with the weapons, horn and ornaments which belonged to the dead warrior. This relic becomes the object of public veneration...These funerary celebrations last for longer than one day. They are held once a year for the first four years following the warrior's death. On the fourth year, the celebration ends with the burial of the head..." (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:50-51).

↳ Interment:

– Yes

Notes: "When one of these [Mundurucu] dies, his relatives dig a grave beneath [his?] own hammock, in the shape of a vertical cylinder. They lower the body into it, head uppermost, folded in the posture of the foetus in the maternal womb" (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:37).

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

– Yes

Notes: "When one of these [Mundurucu] dies, his relatives dig a grave beneath [his?] own hammock, in the shape of a vertical cylinder. They lower the body into it, head uppermost, folded in the posture of the foetus in the maternal womb" (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:37).

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

– No

↳ Corpse is upright (where body is interred in standing position):

– No

↳ Cannibalism:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of cannibalism.

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

– Yes

Notes: "The bodies of the fallen warriors could not conveniently be brought back to their communities, but it was nevertheless considered necessary that certain clans of the complementary moiety have the privilege (or pleasure, as some informants phrased it) of burying the dead of the other moiety, if only symbolically. For this purpose, the humerus of the dead Mundurucú was cut off and the flesh stripped from the bone after the arm was boiled and allowed to dry in the sun [before burial]" (Murphy, 1958:53-54).

↳ Feeding to animals:

– No

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

↳ Secondary burial:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of secondary burials.

↳ Re-treatment of corpse:

– Yes

Notes: "When a Mundurucu happens to die in the course of one of their frequent wars, his comrades cut off his head and mummify it in the accustomed manner. Upon their return to the village, they put it in a special place along with the weapons, horn and ornaments which belonged to the dead warrior. This relic becomes the object of public veneration...These funerary celebrations last for longer than one day. They are held once a year for the first four years following the warrior's death. On the fourth year, the celebration ends with the burial of the head..." (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:50-51).

– Yes

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Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of co-sacrifices in tombs/burials.

Are grave goods present:

– Yes

Notes: "[The Mundurucu] bury with the deceased a few objects he had used in life, such as weapons, feather ornaments, etc." (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:38).

↳ Personal effects:

– Yes

Notes: "[The Mundurucu] bury with the deceased a few objects he had used in life, such as weapons, feather ornaments, etc." (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:38).

↳ Valuable items:

– I don't know

– No

Notes: "All portable personal property is destroyed on the death of the owner" (Murphy, 1960:84).

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for more details.



↳ As cenotaphs:  
– I don't know

↳ In cemetery:  
– I don't know

↳ Family tomb-crypt:  
– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of family tomb-crypts.

↳ Domestic (individuals interred beneath house, or in areas used for normal domestic activities):

– Yes

Notes: "When one of these [Mundurucu] dies, his relatives dig a grave beneath [his?] own hammock, in the shape of a vertical cylinder. They lower the body into it, head uppermost, folded in the posture of the foetus in the maternal womb" (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:37). "When a Mundurucu happens to die in the course of one of their frequent wars, his comrades cut off his head and mummify it in the accustomed manner. Upon their return to the village, they put it in a special place along with the weapons, horn and ornaments which belonged to the dead warrior. This relic becomes the object of public veneration...These funerary celebrations last for longer than one day. They are held once a year for the first four years following the warrior's death. On the fourth year, the celebration ends with the burial of the head...Finally, a vertical grave is dug inside the dwelling of the warrior's family, and the head in whose honor the ceremonies took place is buried there." (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:50-52).

## Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

– Yes

Notes: "Mundurucu religion is animistic in its broadest outlines, although vague and unpersonalized concepts of power pervade belief. Spirits and powers are active agents in Mundurucú life, and the constant manipulation and propitiation of them are essential to the well-being of the tribe" (Murphy, 1958:12). "The Mundurucú spirits consisted of three rough classes. These were souls of the dead, spirit 'mothers' of animals, fish, and plant species, and a variety of malignant beings" (Murphy, 1954:60).

↳ A supreme high god is present:  
– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of a supreme high god.

↳ Previously human spirits are present:  
– Yes

Notes: "Sometimes these spirits [spirits of the deceased] wander through the air and cause

storms. Sometimes the Mundurucu spirit comes down to earth and turns into a matin tapirera to hunt at night" (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:37). "The souls of the dead remain permanently in the afterworld and are not thought to intervene thereafter in the affairs of the living except in one highly limited way. They are not believed to return to the world as ghosts nor are they regarded as a source of danger" (Murphy, 1958:25).

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits can be physically felt:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– No

Notes: "The souls of the dead remain permanently in the afterworld and are not thought to intervene thereafter in the affairs of the living except in one highly limited way. They are not believed to return to the world as ghosts nor are they regarded as a source of danger" (Murphy, 1958:25).

↳ Human spirits have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits exhibit positive emotion:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits exhibit negative emotion:

– No

Notes: "There are no evil spirits [previously human spirits] intent on bringing ruin on the Mundurucu" (Tocantins and Brunel, 1877:37).

↳ Human spirits communicate with the living:

– No

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: "The most important single class of supernaturals believed to be active in the world are the spirit mothers of the game animals. The generic spirit mother of all game animals and the various mothers of certain species must be continually propitiated to maintain the well-being of the community. Moreover, great care must be taken to avoid giving offense to these spirits lest they strike back at the offender. The major Mundurucú ceremonies functioned mainly to secure the benevolence of the spirit mothers, and one of the chief duties of the shaman was to

make periodic offerings to them and thus insure their cooperation" (Murphy, 1958:13-14). "...the Mundurucú believe in other spirits, some of which are dangerous at all times and which attack humans without provocation. The most powerful of these is the class of spirits called Yuruparí...The Mundurucú recognize three types of Yuruparí. The first is said to be composed of the real Yuruparí and includes the souls of people who have been killed by attacks of the Yuruparí. Another type of Yuruparí is that created by sorcerers to accompany their souls on predatory journeys...The last category of Yuruparí includes the fresh-water porpoises that inhabit the Amazonian rivers" (Murphy, 1958:17). "The kokeriwat are a class of spirits that are believed to inhabit the underworld. Although they are extremely mischievous, the kokeriwat are not specifically malevolent toward humans nor are they especially feared by the Mundurucú" (Murphy, 1958:20).

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

– No

Notes: "The mother of the game is not an anthropomorphic personage; it has no form nor does it exist as a mobile and independent entity" (Murphy, 1958:14).

↳ These supernatural beings can be physically felt:

– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings can reward:

– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings can punish:

– Yes

Notes: "The putcha ši [mother of game] punishes humans by inflicting accidents upon them and by robbing their souls. Snakebites, cuts, falls, and all other accidental injuries are looked upon as the vengeance of the putcha ši, and the shaman must be called in to ascertain the reason for the attack. Moreover, subsequent to the accident, the putcha ši directs a malignant object into the body of the injured person, causing him to sicken and in some cases die" (Murphy, 1958:15).

↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

Notes: "Land tortoises bearing the putcha ši [mother of game] are occasionally caught by shamans and kept in secret places near the villages, where they are fed a drink made from sweet manioc and washed with water into which envira cherosa has been rubbed. The food and the delicate scent of the latter vine are gratifying to the putcha ši, and good hunting is thereby assured in the area. There are other shamanistic

techniques for pleasing the mother of the game and thus insuring an abundant game supply, and the major Mundurucú ceremonies are also dedicated to that end" (Murphy, 1958:15). "The mambat ši, or mothers of the rain, are a number of spirits, each of which is believed responsible for a certain type of rain or storm. The Mundurucú believe that the rains are their children and that atmospheric disturbances are the results of their activities" (Murphy, 1958:21).

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion:

– Yes

Notes: "But the putcha ši [mother of game] is a source of danger when offended, and the Mundurucú hunter must observe a strict etiquette toward game animals lest he attract the wrath of their mother" (Murphy, 1958:15).

↳ Mixed human-divine beings are present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of mixed human-divine beings.

↳ Does the religious group possess a variety of supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: "The Mundurucú spirits consisted of three rough classes. These were souls of the dead, spirit 'mothers' of animals, fish, and plant species, and a variety of malignant beings" (Murphy, 1954:60).

↳ Organized by kinship based on a family model:

– No

↳ Power of beings is domain specific:

– Yes

Notes: "The Mundurucú spirits consisted of three rough classes. These were souls of the dead, spirit 'mothers' of animals, fish, and plant species, and a variety of malignant beings" (Murphy, 1954:60).

## 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.

– No

Notes: The mother of game as well as spirit mothers of animals exhibit supernatural punishment. These beings appear to care about humans' behavior towards animals, and not humans' behavior as it relates to social norms. See questions under supernatural punishment for more details.

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

Notes: "The most important single class of supernaturals believed to be active in the world are the spirit mothers of the game animals. The generic spirit mother of all game animals and the various mothers of certain species must be continually propitiated to maintain the well-being of the community. Moreover, great care must be taken to avoid giving offense to these spirits lest they strike back at the offender" (Murphy, 1958:13-14).

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for more information regarding the cause of supernatural punishment.

↳ Done only by high god:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence indicating the presence of a high god.

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: The mother of the game, putcha ši, as well as the mother spirits of animals, are said to cause supernatural punishment (see Murphy, 1958:13-16).

↳ Done through impersonal cause-effect principle:

– No

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for more information regarding reasons for supernatural punishment.

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

– Yes

Notes: "The most important single class of supernaturals believed to be active in the world are the spirit mothers of the game animals. The generic spirit mother of all game animals and the various mothers of certain species must be continually propitiated to maintain the well-being of the community. Moreover, great care must be taken to avoid giving offense to these spirits lest they strike back at the offender. The major Mundurucú ceremonies functioned mainly to secure the benevolence of the spirit mothers, and one of the chief duties of the shaman was to make periodic offerings to them and thus insure their cooperation" (Murphy, 1958:13-14). "But the putcha ši [mother of game] is a source of danger when offended, and the Mundurucú hunter must observe a strict etiquette toward game animals lest he attract the wrath

of their mother" (Murphy, 1958:15).

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

– Yes

Notes: Supernatural punishment is done to enforce group norms concerning game animals. "Mundurucú hunter must observe a strict etiquette toward game animals lest he attract the wrath of their mother" (Murphy, 1958:15).

↳ Done to inhibit selfishness:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:

– No

Notes: "...since one's fate after death is not considered as a reward for socially valued behavior, there is no post-mortem punishment or retribution for undesirable behavior" (Murphy, 1958:24).

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural punishments in this life are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– I don't know

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

– I don't know

↳ Punishment in this life consists of mild sensory displeasure:

– Yes

Notes: "The putcha ši [mother of game] punishes humans by inflicting accidents upon them and by robbing their souls. Snakebites, cuts, falls, and all other accidental injuries are looked upon as the vengeance of the putcha ši, and the shaman must be called in to ascertain the reason for the attack. Moreover, subsequent to the accident, the putcha ši directs a malignant object into the body of the injured person, causing him to sicken and in some cases die" (Murphy, 1958:15).

↳ Punishment in this life consists of sickness or illness:

– Yes

Notes: "The putcha ši [mother of game] punishes humans by inflicting accidents upon them and by robbing their souls. Snakebites, cuts, falls, and all other accidental injuries

are looked upon as the vengeance of the putcha ši, and the shaman must be called in to ascertain the reason for the attack. Moreover, subsequent to the accident, the putcha ši directs a malignant object into the body of the injured person, causing him to sicken and in some cases die" (Myrphy, 1958:15).

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– I don't know

### 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.

## Practices

### Membership Costs and Practices

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

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required celibacy among the Mundurucu.

Does membership in this religious group require castration:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required castration.

Does membership in this religious group require fasting:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required sacrifice.

Does membership in this religious group require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required food taboos.

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: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice.

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: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice.

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

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice.

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: Although participation in large-scale rituals was not mandatory, religious festivals were important events. "Powerful shamans, of whom there are now said to be but few, used to travel magically to the 'Land of the Game' to 'feed' the animal spirits, and the two most important ceremonies also had this purpose. These two rites, called the Araiari and the Dajearuparip were held, as all Mundurucú ceremonials, during the rainy season, and were almost identical but for duration; the former was said to have occupied almost the whole rainy season, while the latter lasted ten days. In both, the game animals were honored and their spirit protectors summoned and offered a food particularly pleasing to them. Annual observance was not mandatory, but either the long or the short festival was usually held every year. Villages usually rotated the duty of staging the rite, and the residents of several communities were invited. A number of powerful shamans were a prerequisite to the ceremony and had to be recruited from many villages, for only they could ward off the attacks of evil spirits that were attracted by the ritual food offerings" (Murphy, 1960:133).

## Society and Institutions

### Levels of Social Complexity

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

– A tribe

Notes: Tuden and Marshall, 1972 (Column 3: Levels of Sovereignty), "absence of effective sovereignty at any level transcending that of the local community, i.e., a stateless society", where effective sovereignty is defines as "the highest level of indigenous political integration at which functionaries have and



commonly exercise the power to enforce important decisions at subordinate levels in the political structure--notably to compel participation in warfare, to collect taxes or tribute, and/or to exact sanctions for major delicts". According to Murdock and Wilson, 1972 (column 15: community leadership) "the community has a single leader or headman but lacks other political offices other than, at most, an informal council of elders". "Each Mundurucú village is an autonomous political unit, and there is no permanent multicomunity decision-making body. However, the Mundurucú feel themselves to be a unitary group and divide humanity into the *we dji nyö*, which can be loosely translated as 'we the people,' and the *pariwat*, a term which is applied to all non-Mundurucú. All the 'people' consider themselves to be related, and their mutual comportment is structured by the kinship system. All, however, are expected to show cooperation and hospitality to each other and to unite in the face of the outside world...The villages had independent subsistence economies, but for an occasional *timbó* fishing trip in which two communities might cooperate. But a number of villages usually participated in war expeditions and the major ceremonies. These occasions provided the opportunity for scattered clansmen to reunite and for people of diverse residence to cooperate in valued activity" (Murphy, 1960:126).

## Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

– No

Notes: "Schools are totally absent. Inhabitants who read and write usually learned to do so in another area or through literate parents. Actually, the Mundurucú are in a better position than their Brazilian neighbors, because both the Franciscan mission and the Indian Service post on the Cururú River offer limited medical and educational facilities to them" (Murphy, 1960:16-17).

Is formal education available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group:

– I don't know

Notes: "Schools are totally absent. Inhabitants who read and write usually learned to do so in another area or through literate parents. Actually, the Mundurucú are in a better position than their Brazilian neighbors, because both the Franciscan mission and the Indian Service post on the Cururú River offer limited medical and educational facilities to them" (Murphy, 1960:16-17).

## Bureaucracy

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

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of a formal bureaucracy within the Mundurucu.

## Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

– No

Notes: According to SCCS Variable 20, Food Storage, no food storage is present (Murdock and Morrow,

1970; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group in question provide transportation infrastructure:

– No

Notes: According to SCCS Variable 14, Routes of Land Transport, unimproved trails are utilized (Murdock and Morrow, 1970; Retrieved from Divale, 2004). Presumably, transportation infrastructure is not present.

Is transportation infrastructure provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

Notes: According to SCCS Variable 14, Routes of Land Transport, unimproved trails are utilized (Murdock and Morrow, 1970; Retrieved from Divale, 2004). Presumably, transportation infrastructure is not present.

### Enforcement

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

– No

Notes: According to Tuden and Marshall, 1972 (Column 10: Police), "police functions are not specialized or institutionalized at any level of political integration, the maintenance of law and order being left exclusively to informal mechanisms of social control, to private retaliation, or to sorcery".

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

– No

Notes: According to Tuden and Marshall, 1972 (Column 9: Judiciary), "supreme judicial authority is lacking at any level above that of the local community".

### Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes

Notes: "Agriculture contributes to more of the local food supply than any other subsistence technique but less than half of the total food consumption" (Column 2: Agriculture) "Fishing contributes more than 10 per cent of the local food supply but less than the amount contributed by one or more other subsistence techniques" (Column 4: Fishing) "Hunting contributes more than 10 per cent of the local food supply but less than the amount contributed by one or more other subsistence techniques" (Column 5: Hunting) "Gathering contributes to the local food supply but in an amount constituting less than 10 per cent of the total food consumed" (Column 6: Gathering). Source of information: Murdock and Morrow, 1970.



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

- Gathering
- Hunting (including marine animals)
- Fishing
- Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards

Notes: "Agriculture contributes to more of the local food supply than any other subsistence technique but less than half of the total food consumption" (Column 2: Agriculture) "Fishing contributes more than 10 per cent of the local food supply but less than the amount contributed by one or more other subsistence techniques" (Column 4: Fishing) "Hunting contributes more than 10 per cent of the local food supply but less than the amount contributed by one or more other subsistence techniques" (Column 5: Hunting) "Gathering contributes to the local food supply but in an amount constituting less than 10 per cent of the total food consumed" (Column 6: Gathering). Source of information: Murdock and Morrow, 1970.