

## 1. Description

1.1 **Name of society, language, and language family:** Island-Carib, Traditionally the men spoke a Carib language and the women an Arawak language

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

1.3 **Location (latitude/longitude):** N 16° 9' 7.3638"/ W 61° 30' 48.9733"

1.4 **Brief history:** Island Carib people had a reputation as being cannibals even before they had made contact with Europeans. This is because on one of Christopher Columbus' voyages he made contact with some Arawaks of Hispaniola, and although he could not speak their language, he gathered from their signing that their neighbors were violent man-eaters (Boucher 1992). When the Spanish colonists began to arrive in large numbers, they worked to convert the people to Catholicism. Today there are only about 3000 Island Carib left and they live on a small territory on the island of Dominica. Most others were either killed by European illnesses or have assimilated into society over generations(Wikipedia).

1.5 **Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:** The European settlers of the island effected the Island Caribs in that their traditional religion is no longer practiced and many of their people have assimilated to the new culture (Wikipedia).

1.6 Ecology:

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

## 2. Economy

2.1 **Main carbohydrate staple(s):** Manioc (Breton 1635-1647)

2.2 **Main protein-lipid sources:** tortoise and tortoise eggs, some birds and crabs (Breton 1635-1647)

2.3 **Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:** Bow and Arrow (Boucher 1992)

2.4 **Food storage:** baskets are made for manioc storage (Breton 1635-1647)

2.5 **Sexual division of production:** Men do the hunting and fishing and clear out areas for small gardens. Women take care of the children and the home, make the food, and plant and tend to the gardens (Breton 1635-1647)

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics:

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 **Food taboos:** Yellow tortoise eggs (Breton 1635-1647). There are also ritual food taboos on new fathers and the immediate family of a sick person (Taylor 2009)

2.10 **Canoes/watercraft?:** Canoes are present (Breton 1635-1647)

## 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:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

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

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

4.10 **Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:** The children are raised mainly by the mother. If the father wishes to leave his wife, he may simply go and leave his children under her care (Breton 1635-1647).

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 **Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):** Since cross cousins are preferred, marriages often happen within the community. However, women may also be captured from near-by tribes to be made wives (Breton 1635-1647).

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):** Cross cousins preferred (Breton 1635-1647)

4.18 **Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?:** Killing of unfaithful wives was not unheard of (Boucher 1992)

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?:

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

4.22 **Evidence for couvades:** Couvades are very prevalent. After the birth, the men will withdraw from society and fast. The length of the couvade depends on the child's birth order and sex. For a first-born male, the father may retreat and fast for three months eating only cassava and drinking only cassava beer. For females or additional children the couvade can last as little as a week. After the fasting period the father must eat no fish or birds (except for female crabs) in fear that the child will be harmed or develop deformations that cause them to resemble the animals eaten by their father. This lasts until it is clear that the child is healthy and sturdy (Taylor 2009)

- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)
- 4.24 **Kin avoidance and respect?:** Kin are to be avoided when sick. It is believed that a healthy visitor may cause more harm (Taylor 20019)
- 4.24 Joking relationships?
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
- 4.26 **Incest avoidance rules:** Taboo on marrying one's children, sibling, or parallel cousin (Breton 1635-1647).
- 4.27 **Is there a formal marriage ceremony?:** No (Breton 1635-1647)
- 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?): Since cross cousins are preferred, marriages often happen within the community. However, women may also be captured from near-by tribes to be made wives (Breton 1635-1647).
- 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:
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):
- 4.18 **Cannibalism?:** Rumors of cannibalism among the Island Carib were begun and perpetuated by Christopher Columbus. On one of his voyages he made contact with some Arawaks of Hispaniola, and although he could not speak their language, he gathered from their signing that their neighbors were violent man-eaters, and when he went to see for himself he came across some human bones, which he thought confirmed this information. However, he did not know that it was a normal practice of the people to preserve bones of kin. Hard evidence for cannibalism among the Island Carib has never been presented.

### **5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):
- 5.3 **Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):** Chiefs are chosen based on age and how many men they have killed in battle, but these men often hold little influence outside of war situations(Breton 1635-1647).
- 5.4 Post marital residence:
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:
- 5.8 **Village and house organization:** Family-oriented huts with one large central area surrounded by smaller huts for individual families (Breton 1635-1647).
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):
- 5.10 **Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?:** In hammocks, often with a fire built underneath (Breton 1635-1647)
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:
- 5.12 Trade:
- 5.13 **Indications of social hierarchies?:** No outright social hierarchies, although older men are held in more esteem (Breton 1635-1647)

### **6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)**

- 6 Time allocation to RCR:
- 6.1 **Specialization (shamans and medicine):** There is a sort of shamanic role found in the Island Carib people. These men and women (called *boye*) are selected from a young age to devote themselves to certain deities for life. When a person in the village is ill, they may call upon the *boye* to inform them of their fate. The *boye* are also trusted to inform on war (Breton 1635-1647).
- 6.2 **Stimulants:** Tobacco (Breton 1635-1647)
- 6.3 **Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):** Birth, death, and puberty rituals all involve intensive fasting. After the birth of a child, both the mother and father will fast. Usually they take no food or drink at all for the first few days and take only cassava cakes and cassava beer. The mother will only fast for about a week, but the father may be restricted for up to three months. Similarly, when a death occurred, the deceased's family would take place in a ritual fast lasting one to two months. The immediate family would also cut their hair in a sign of mourning. Puberty rights also began with a fast. Girls upon menarche and boys upon adolescence would fast for one to two months. After the fasting, the boys would undergo ritual scarification (Taylor 2009) and a celebration is held that involves much drinking of cassava beer (Breton 1635-1647).
- 6.4 **Other rituals:** The *boye* conduct a ceremony on the sick where they come into the person's hut late at night, lights some tobacco, and call upon their deity to determine whether or not the person must die. If the person must die, the *boye* and deity do nothing for him, but if he is to live, they work together to drive the sickness out. This may involve blowing on the infected areas or sucking on sores and pretending to go outside to vomit up the poison (Breton 1635-1647).
- 6.5 *Myths (Creation):*
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):
- 6.7 **Sex differences in RCR:** Both men and women may become *boye* and lead healing rituals (Breton 1635-1647)
- 6.8 **Missionary effect:** The traditional religion is no longer practiced. Most Island Caribs are Catholic (Wikipedia)

- 6.9 RCR revival:
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy?
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

## 7. Adornment

- 7.1 **Body paint:** Red paint made from annatto is used for protection against sun and insects. Black paint around the eyes is also used in certain ceremonies (Boucher 1992)
- 7.2 **Piercings:** Ear and lip plugs (Boucher 1992)
- 7.3 **Haircut:** Long with bangs cut at the middle of the forehead (Breton 1635-1647)
- 7.4 **Scarification:** Present
- 7.5 **Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):** A woven crown with feathers attached is sometimes worn as well as a sort of headband.
- 7.6 **Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:** Black paint on eyes for some ceremonies (Boucher 1992).
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment:
- 7.8 Missionary effect:
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

## 8. Kinship systems

- 8.1 Sibling classification system:
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate:
- 8.3 **Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):** Parallel cousins are considered to be siblings and are therefore not eligible for marriage. Cross cousins, however, are preferred marriage partners (Breton 1635-1647).

## 9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

### Numbered references

1. Cannibal Encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs 1492-1763 by Phillip P. Boucher in 1992
2. "The Meaning of Dietary and Occupational Restrictions Among the Island Carib" by Douglas Taylor in volume 52 issue 3 of the American Anthropologist 2009.
3. "An Account of the Island of Guadalupe" by Raymond Breton in 1635-1647, now in the Historie Coloniale- Volume 1
4. Wikipedia: "Carib People": [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carib\\_people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carib_people)