

1. Description

- 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:** Bribri (alternate name Talamanca, speak Bribri language, Chibchan language family)
- 1.2 ISO Code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):** bzd
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):** Costa Rica, Buenos Aires, Talamanca (9.9833° N, 83.0333° W)
- 1.4 Brief History:** With the name of the 'hidden people' the Bribri are one of the few indigenous peoples still living in the Talamanca region of Costa Rica.
"The Bribri are the autochthonous people of the **Talamanca** region, living in the mountains and Caribbean coastal areas of Costa Rica and northern **Panama**. The majority live with running water and a scarce amount of electricity, subsisting on agriculture. (8)."
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:** There are several non-profit organizations in the area that work to help offer education and help families become self-sufficient. There has been a big influence with trade, in that now the Bribri make small money by trading and selling their crops (8).
- 1.6 Ecology:** The Talamanca region of Costa Rica is very rugged and has many mountains. This is where most Bribri live. They live in the islands of southern Costa Rica into the very northern parts of Panama where the terrain is rough and is difficult to reach contact and make your way through the forests. Located near the mountain range, Cordillera de Talamanca, they are surrounded by rainforests and high elevation.
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density:** 11,000 and ethnic population of 12, 172;

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):** maize, beans, and manioc were their main staples, but also included sweet potatoes, pumpkins, peach palms, and cocoa. After colonial times they began to incorporate rice and coffee (3).
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:** hunt fish, birds, and pigs and chickens raised on their land (2).
- 2.3 Weapons:** Lances about 6 feet in length were used as well as bows and arrows. Blowguns are also used in several houses, but not as commonly as bows and arrows (7).
- 2.4 Food Storage:** In each specific home where food was being prepared. They did not store a lot of food rather than just cook it as soon as they harvested or hunted it.
- 2.5 Sexual division of production:** Men did most of the clearing of the land and raising livestock. However, if a woman raised an animal it was hers, and if a man raised an animal it was his. Women mainly did the planting, harvesting, and transporting of crops and were regularly seen carrying loads (3).
- 2.6 Land tenure:** The most rugged and untouched part of Costa Rica, the Bribri are one of the last indigenous tribes to still be out there although they have little contact with the outside world (2).
- 2.7 Ceramics:** None reported. Although the Bribri are found to make beautiful pottery pieces out of selected clay (7).
- 2.8 Specified sharing patterns:** Nothing specified
- 2.9 Food taboos:** No specific data found
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft:** None traditionally until they obtained "cayukas" from foreigners (7).

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): No data found

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): No data found

4. Life History, Mating, Marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): No data found

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): No data found

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): No specific number was found, but they do believe in controlling births because large families are not desired (5)

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): No data found

4.5 Age at first marriage (m and f): No data found

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: No data found

4.7 Percent of marriages that are polygynous/percent of males married polygynously: No data found

4.8 Bride purchase (price)/bride service/dowry: No data found

4.9 Inheritance patterns: None defined specifically

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflicts:

4.11 Homosexual activities/social attitudes towards homosexuals: No data found

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Endogamous

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is it paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? : Not noted

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? : No data found

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process? : No data found

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion/rape: No data found

4.17 Preferential category for spouse: No data found

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms: Not noted

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: No data found

4.20 If mother dies, who raises the children:

4.21 Adult sex ratio; number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: No data found

4.22 Evidence for couvades: No evidence found

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers: No data found

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect: No data found

4.25 Joking relationships: No noted

4.26 Patterns of descent for certain rights/names/associations: Clan distinction is matrilineal, which means that the child is being raised by the mother's clan (6).

4.27 Incest avoidance rules: No data found

4.28 Is there a formal marriage ceremony: No data found

4.29 In what way does one get a name/change their name/obtain another name: No data found

4.30 Is marriage usually within or outside community: Since the Bribri people are very isolated from any other indigenous people, there is only marriage within its tribe, it was known for them to marry outside of their clans

4.31 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges? : No data found

4.32 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: No data found

Warfare/Homicide

4.33 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: No data found

4.34 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: No data found

4.35 Reported causes of ingroup and outgroup killing: No data found

4.36 Number of diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): No data found

4.37 Cannibalism: No data found

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: Relatively small extended families

5.2 Mobility pattern: No movement, very isolated and stabilized

5.3 Political system: Social structure is organized in clans, and each one is composed of an extended family. The clan system is matrilineal, so the child's clan depends on the clan his or her mother belongs to (4).

5.4 Post marital residence: They are matrilineal, so they practice visiting marriage which means the husband and wife live with their separate families and see each other in their spare time (6).

5.5 Territoriality: Nothing specified, but they were very isolated and undisturbed. Not much room to spread out or move with expansion

5.6 Social interaction divisions (age and sex): No data found

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: No data found

5.8 Village and house organization: The Bribri peoples are matrilineal (6).

5.9 Specialized village structures (men's houses): The chiefs live in the largest circular houses. All their houses were regularly circular being 30 to 50 feet in diameter (7). Conical houses are the Bribri's spiritual centers, it symbolizes the Universe (4).

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere: Hammocks are present inside the houses and are usually placed near the fireplace to sleep. Each member of the family has their individual hammock to sleep in (7).

5.11 Social organization/clans/moieties/lineages: The Bribri social structure is divided by clans and each clan is made up of an extended family (6).

5.12 Trade: The Bribri are in contact with the modern world and they do trade goods and make a small amount of money in today's world. In pre-Conquest times they traded between villages with bows, arrows, baskets, and forest products. (3)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies: They do have evidence of having chiefs in their villages

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): They have a shaman or what they call "awa" which only certain clans are allowed to become. It takes 10 to 15 years of training to become an awa and the clan is always chosen from the mother's side, so an awa can never teach their own sons, but instead the sons of their female relatives (6). They believe that illness can come from evil spirits, personal immoral behavior, or witchcraft from envious neighbors. The healing is a combination of herbal medicine and spiritual healing (6). Only the Awa can heal one, by learning special songs that connect them to the spirits.

6.2 Stimulants: No data found

6.3 Passage rituals (birth/death/puberty/seasonal): When women have their first menstruation they are the only ones who are allowed to prepare the sacred drink out of cacao branches (6).

6.4 Other rituals: “For them the cacao tree used to be a woman and Sibú (God) turned into a tree. Cacao branches are never used as firewood and only women are allowed to prepare and serve the sacred drink. Cacao is used in special occasions, ceremonies and in certain rites of passage such as when young girls have their first menstruation. (8)”

6.5 Myths (creation): “The vulture king (Sarcoramphus papa) holds an important place in the Bribri cosmivision. He is the only one that can fly high enough to reach the top of the Universe and thus serves as a link between Sibú and the other worlds. It is believed that while regular vultures, who are his helpers, roost in trees like other birds, the vulture king rises up to sleep with Sibú after eating. (8)”

6.6 Cultural material (art/music/games): Drums are the most important musical instrument to the Bribri. Also used are rattles and small flutes (7).

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Women have a very important place in Bribri society since they are the only ones that can inherit land and prepare the sacred cacao (*Theobroma cacao*) drink that is essential for their rituals. Men's roles are defined by their clan, and often are exclusive for men (8).

6.8 Missionary effect: No data found

6.9 RCR revival: No data found

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: Men have the role of the “oko” which means they are the only ones who are allowed to touch the remains of the dead, sing funeral songs, and prepare the meal for the funerals (6). When one is near death they are removed from their home to a hut a distance away. If they die in their home, they believe they need to burn it down to get rid of the evil spirits. They are buried in the hammocks which they slept in (7).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people: No data found

6.12 Is there teknonymy: No data found

6.13 Brief description of religion: Their religion is based upon all rituals and myths stated above. Very strong beliefs are held in the ‘awa’ and ‘Sibú’

7. Adornment

7.1 Body Paint: Seen in male in female mainly in stripes or rectangular shapes and patterns on the face (7)

7.2 Piercings: None

7.3 Haircut: No specific data

7.4 Scarification: No data found

7.5 Adornment (beads/feathers/lip plates): Men wear necklaces mainly made of teeth, the canine teeth of a tiger are most highly prized. Women instead wear necklaces of glass beads to a very extensive amount that weighs heavily around their necks. Men also wear headdresses made from the most prized down white feathers from the under side of the tail of an eagle (7).

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: No data found

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: No data found

7.8 Missionary effect: No data found

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: No data found

8. Kinship Systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: “Bribri kinship terminology is bifurcate merging for the first

ascending generation; sibling-cousin terminology is of the Iroquoian type; second ascending generation and second descending generation use reciprocal terms that distinguish Ego's mother's side from Ego's father side, and sex. Siblings address each other by the same term when the sex is the same (sister to sister or brother to brother) but vary the term when addressing siblings of the opposite sex (9)."

8.2 Sororate/Levirate: No data found

8.3 Other notable kinship typology (esp. cross-cousin typology): No data found

9. Other interesting cultural features

- There is a group of Bribri women called *Etribata* that today give selective information about their indigenous tribe.

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