

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

- **Heiltsuk. Language Bella Bella. Language family Wakashan**

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

- **hei**

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

- **52° 10 N, 128° 10 W**

1.4 Brief history:

- **The Heiltsuk were a type one HG group who thrived near salmon streams in British Columbia and protected their salmon sources at all times, often engaging in warlike scuffles with neighboring tribes. They were very ritualized and performed in depth ceremonies mostly during the winter months. They were eventually overcome by missionaries and European settlers who outlawed many of the traditions and forced the Heiltsuk to join their modern society. There are hardly any Heiltsuk people left in the area, and those who are still around don't practice the traditions of the people. (1)(4)**

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

- **Since the early 20th century the Heiltsuk have been type 2, with many outside influence. They are primarily Christian now, their children attend school and there is a Heiltsuk hospital. The people receive government benefits and are integrated into society almost fully now. (1)**

1.6 Ecology:

- **The Heiltsuk lived near major salmon streams and protected their 'territory' year round. The area has a very wet climate, with evergreen forests. (1)**

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

- **In the mid 17th century the total population was about 1600, about 4000 people per clan. (2)**

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- **Seaweed and whatever they may find while they were travelling. There were no 'main' carb staples, because they revolved around the salmon streams and focused most of their time on them, so they didn't focus much on finding a really stable carb staple. (1)**

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- **in the spring: herring eggs, and halibut, red cod, and clams. In the summer and early fall salmon, and in the winter deer and mountain goats (1)**

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

- **They used spears, bow and arrow, and knives gigs. (1)**

2.4 Food storage:

- **Food is smoked and dried as methods of preservation. (1)**

2.5 Sexual division of production:

- **Men hunt and fish, women gather, prepare food and preserve food (1)**

2.6 Land tenure:

- **Land wasn't 'owned' by any certain family, but the land the clan lived on was said to be owned as the clan as a whole. Family plots weren't owned, but visitors were still expected to ask permission to come onto it. (1)**

2.7 Ceramics:

- **There is lots of evidence of ceramics and pottery and other forms of art from the Heiltsuk tribe that I found just through pictures in my readings, but no information on how often or types or anything like that.**

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

- **Every year during the Winter Ceremony villages shared/traded their furs, preserved goods, shells and seaweed with the whole clan when they all came together. (1)**

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

- **Canoes were used for fishing and for ceremonial purposes, especially marriage ceremonies. (1)**

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):

- **about 12 (4)**

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

- **about 15 (4)**

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

- **Reduced to about 4-5 when the missionaries arrived. (4)**

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- **8-5 for females, 12-25 for males (4)**

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

- **Many polygynous marriages before missionaries, but when missionaries arrived, polygyny was banned. (4)**

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

- **Initial bride price was doubled by the woman's parents, exclusive of her dowry. This raised capital on the part of the groom and status on the part of the bride. (1)**

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

- **When a death occurred the possessions were burned and placed with the body during the death ceremony. The land and names goes to the sons starting with the oldest to the youngest, then to the clan itself. In the case of divorce: if the husband ends the marriage the wife gets the children and the dowry is returned. If the wife was cheating however, the husband keeps the kids, the dowry, and may demand his wedding gifts. (4)**

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

- **When missionaries arrived and children were made to go to school, parents didn't understand the information the kids were learning and therefore would get frustrated and unsupportive. (4) Girls were taken away from their families by missionaries because their mothers didn't give them a proper moral climate. Boys on the other hand were under the authority of their fathers learning to hunt and fish. (4)**

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

- **Exogamy was the rule for most people, however endogamy was practiced frequently by nobility in order to keep privileges within the immediate family. (1)**

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:

- **Common, some girls were used as prostitutes and as a way for a family to gain more wealth. This was battled strongly by the Methodist missionaries. (4)**

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin):

- **Cross cousins from different villages is the prime category (1)**

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

- **No, some women even used for prostitution and to help gain family wealth by sleeping with old men in high ranking positions. (4)**

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

- **Grandmothers, and sometimes both grandparents. (4)**

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

4.22 Evidence for couvades

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

- **No, the families are always close even after marriage because they share wealth within the family and gain wealth through names as family members die or gain higher position in the house. (1)**

4.24 Joking relationships?

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations:

- **Matrilineal was basic, but other models were used as well. Chiefly male names usually were inherited from the maternal grandfather or the mother's brother. Among chiefs, bilineal primogeniture was common (sons inherit from fathers and daughters from mothers). Also, feelings of the name holder and the heir's ability to afford the name were taken into account. (1)**

4.26 Incest avoidance rules:

- **Cross cousins in different villages were ideal, as to keep the wealth and goods in the family. However, cross cousins are the closest family to be married. Many people remained unmarried so they don't have to share family wealth. (1)**

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

- **Marriage was called wina, and was always in the style of a war party. The men of the house of the bridegroom arriving to the brides village by canoe, feigning attack, and engaging in a semiserious battle. This was the case even when the couple was from the same village, the bridegrooms party still arrived by canoe, maintaining the fiction. (1)**

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

- Names are associated by clan and are given by the political figures of the clan. High ranking names are only allowed to be given to high ranking members. Those with high names are born, adopted, or married into them. By having a high name they had more privileges and were higher in social status. Through their lifetime they were allowed to be given more names, and better, more chiefly names, which would give them a higher status. The path of given names depends on many factors and cannot be described by specific rules. This left room for strategy. In the late 19th century, after population loss created a surplus of names, the influx created new means of value. Since there were so many high ranking names available, they didn't mean as much. Chiefs gain a new name every 10 months of holding their position, a normal career would consist of 5 or more names. (1)

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?):

- **Outside the community. The groom would travel and live in the brides village (1)**

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

- **Yes, arranged by the parents or kinsman of the couple (1)**

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

- **No**

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

- **Outgroup: revenge, trespass, arguing over salmon streams. Ingroup: violation of customs, especially women mourning practices. (3)**

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

- **Revenge, trespass, violation of custom, and seasonal shortages of food (3)**

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

- **Belle Coola, Haida, Tsimshian, and Kwakiutl were regular war rivals of the Heiltsuk. (3)**

4.18 Cannibalism?

- **Cannibal dance: performed by men going through puberty. Believed a spirit was within them causing the action, but was actually just high on shrooms. The initiate would dance, then be brought a known deceased member of society and eat part or all of the body. The person would run crazy for four days until he was tamed and purged with salt water. Then be tied to a pole and periodically pass out. When finally tamed the cannibal wore rings around his head and neck with replicas of skulls. He was forbidden from sexual relations and from the food production and preparation process during the ceremony. (1)**

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- **When many villages came together for the winter ceremonies the group size was around 800. (1)**

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

- **Stationary during the winter months, partially nomadic during non-salmon seasons and stationary at the salmon streams during summer months. (1)**

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

- **The Heiltsuk society was organized into four clans: Raven, Eagle, Killerwhale and Wolf. The Wolf clan had no chiefly titles associated with it, the other three contain titles and privileges. The names within the clans were strictly and permanently ranked, as were the clans themselves. The clans counted names as members, rather than counting people. (1)**

5.4 Post marital residence:

- **Flexible, there are examples of both virilocal and uxorilocal residence. (1)**

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

- **No 'defined' boundaries. The salmon streams were the most protected areas and were highly guarded by the Heiltsuk. (1)**

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

- **Men and women divided, and children divided. Boys learn with fathers, girls with mothers, until puberty when the new adults join society and their social classes. (4)**

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization:

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

- **Men's houses aren't any more special, but specialized village structures include houses for the political leaders (house), and the Chief's cabin. (1)**

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

- **In the winter and the salmon months they sleep in cedar houses when they go back to their main village, but for the gathering seasons they travel and camped and made do with bark structures. (1)**

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

- **Within the individual clans the basic social unit was the 'house'. People in the house gained their status from access to names, stories and privileges. Primarily a set of names, those with access to the most 'chiefly' names ranked highest. Mostly men in the house held the names with political power over clans and houses, but a few noblewomen did hold high names. Women were also the preferred method of transfer for certain masculine chiefly names. (1)**

5.12 Trade:

- **They trapped mink in the spring and traded the fur with neighboring villages during the Winter Ceremony. (1) They also traded preserved food and artwork, shellfish and seaweed. (1)**

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

- **Social hierarchies based on names in families, houses, villages, and clans. Organization in order : Head Chief, Chief, Noble, Commoner, Low class. (1)**

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- **Common people were allowed to participate in ceremonies with Shamans just to make them feel like they were a part of the ceremonial process, but they really weren't. (1)**

6.2 Stimulants:

- **Stimulants were seasonal changes, death, and puberty for the most part. (1)**

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

- **Death rituals include mourning as soon as the person becomes ill, and then once they die, management of pollution and disposing the elements of the person (soul, body). Then the person is reincarnated, and the names and privileges are passed down. Those close to the deceased were purified and the deceased undergoes a secondary burial. Ceremonial objects from the Winter Ceremonial were placed into the coffin, the body lay for four days while female relatives wailed and sang and cut themselves with shells and knives. The female relatives would later have their hair pulled out by male relatives. The deceased's possessions were burned as a way to transport them to the underworld. (1) Puberty rituals for women include being removed from society and the food production process. For men, see cannibalism. (1)**

6.4 Other rituals:

- **Winter Ceremonial: consisted of two dance societies, one based on when the world was turned upside down and when supernatural beings preyed upon humans the way humans preyed upon salmon the rest of the year. The other was based on the relationship of living chiefs to an empyrean realm and the ancestral spirits. It marked the beginning of the 'secular season', the spring and summer time of bountiful salmon. Fool dancer, Ghost dance, Thieving dance. All dances in which the initiate supposedly leaves the real world to travel to either a heaven or an underworld and comes back to life days later. (1)**

6.5 Myths (Creation):

- **The dancers were being possessed by spirits and delivered back to earth days later. (1)**

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

- **All dances were masked, emphasizing possession. All dancers had a whistle, representing the breath of the possessing spirit. The music played was generally low toned repetition of a single word. (1)**

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

- **Only men participated in possessive dances, women were forced to mourn the death of a family member, and to mourn the death of a husband for at least 10 months before allowed back into regular society. (1)**

6.8 Missionary effect:

- **After they converted to Christianity there were no more spiritual rituals, no possessive dances. (1)**

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- **Reincarnation. (1)**

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

- **Instead of naming dead people, they were actually stripped of their names, and the names were given to whoever was in line to receive it. Sometimes the spouse would receive the names, but often the people of the house would decide what would happen with the names. (1)**

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.):

- **Although they didn't 'worship' totems per se, they did make them and used them to call their spirits, which would start the ceremonial dance for whoever the spirit chose to 'posses'. So they would worship the people who were possessed by the spirit in hopes that the spirits would choose to leave the tribe in good health and with a good year for salmon. (1)**

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

- **Only during ceremonies (1)**

7.2 Piercings:

- **High ranking members only(1)**

7.3 Haircut:

- **Haircuts were based on the social class of the member of the tribe. The chiefs didn't cut their hair, and the hair got shorter and shorter as the social class went down, slaves had their hair cut as short as possible. There was no facial hair to speak of. (1)**

7.4 Scarification:

- **High ranking members had tattoos, and some members of society had flesh wounds from the cannibals biting them during cannibal ceremonies (1)**

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

- **High ranking members had ornamentation (1)**

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

- **Body paint, beads, and other ornamentation. (1)**

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

- **Women were only adorned during mourning and menarche. (1)**

7.8 Missionary effect:

- **Adornment of all sorts essentially disappeared when missionaries showed up, because ceremonies were stopped. (1)**

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

- **Siblings ranked highest to lowest: oldest to youngest boys, then oldest to youngest girls. (4)**

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

- **Widows and widowers would marry a single sibling of the deceased spouse if one was available. (1)**

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

1. Harkin M. *The Heiltsuks: Dialogues Of Culture And History On The Northwest Coast* [e-book]. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
2. Harkin M. *Endangering Discipline: Discourse and Counterdiscourse in the Methodist-Heiltsuk Dialog* [e-book]. Ethnohistory: University of Wyoming.
3. White J. *Handbook of Indians of Canada* [e-book]. Marianopolis College.
4. *Heiltsuk (Bella Bella)* [e-book]. Historica Canada