Black Carib Domestic Organization in Historical Perspective: Traditional Origins of Contemporary Patterns

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In a highly influential study of the domestic organization of the Black Carib of Livingston, Guatemala, Nancie Gonzalez (1969) identified two basic household types characteristic of that population: one form, comprising 54.7 per cent of her sample, centered upon a married couple, with or without children; the other, comprising 45.3 per cent of her sample, focused upon consanguineal rather than affinal kinship ties (Gonzalez 1969:68). Gonzalez then related the high level of adaptability of these forms of domestic organization to contemporary economic conditions. In particular, she associated the high incidence of consanguineal households with conditions demanded by the migratory wage labor characteristic of this economic hinterland of eastern Central America.

Having established this functional correlation between household organization and current economic patterns, Gonzalez further opined that the origins or development of consanguineal households among the Black Carib was relatively recent, apparently meaning the nineteenth century. She offered two reasons for this position: first, the Black Carib, in Gonzalez's opinion, are a "hybrid population" of mixed bloods with purportedly "shallow cultural roots" who are divorced from their traditional parent cultures (a "neoteric society"; cf. Gonzalez 1970b); second, this population has been forced to adapt to economic conditions which require men to be absent from home for considerable periods of time pursuing low-paid labor opportunities (Gonzalez 1969:9-17).

In this paper I examine Black Carib domestic organization within a wider historical framework than was employed by Gonzalez. On the basis of ethnohistorical data I argue that contemporary Black Carib domestic organization shows strong structural similarities not only with earlier Black Carib but also with Island Carib domestic arrangements as they were recorded in the mid-seventeenth century, when the first sustained and reliable observations of Island Carib culture were made by Europeans. Recognition of organizational similarity, in turn, suggests the hypothesis that contemporary Black Carib domestic organization may be the latest manifestation of residential and organizational formats that existed for centuries among Carib forebears of the present Central American population.

I contend that the functional adaptability of social forms to specific ecological conditions should not be confused with their structural origins, and that the functional concept of adaptation must be accorded a temporal dimension of some depth if cultural processes are to be properly recognized (Helms 1976). Recognition of these truisms is particularly important for the study of peoples such as the Black Carib. In some respects the Black Carib currently resident in eastern Gua-

temala, coastal Belize, and Honduras are properly identified as an ethnic group that was produced by European contact and, therefore, conveys features diagnostic of so-called colonial tribes or neoteric societies (Gonzalez 1970b). In other respects, however, it is necessary to recognize the possibility of continuities with ancestral societies of the Lesser Antilles (Gullick 1976). The difficulty lies in ascertaining which perspective best illustrates which aspect of contemporary Black Carib culture. With respect to domestic organization it will be apparent that the functional aspects of Gonzalez's explanation are not incompatible with the historical interpretation offered in this paper. Rather, the two positions are intended to be complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

The historical facts that have produced this analytical problem are fairly well known and need be summarized only briefly here. From approximately 1500 to 1660, during the years of intermittent European contact with the Lesser Antilles (1500-ca. 1630) and of early attempts at colonization (ca. 1630-1660), most of the indigenous Island Carib, or Callinago, who survived slave raids, massacres, and European-introduced diseases gradually coalesced onto the islands of Saint Vincent and Dominica. During this time they also accepted in their midst a considerable number of fugitive Africans, including captives seized on raids to the Greater Antilles (previously settled by Spaniards), slaves escaping from European plantations that had been established on the Antillean islands, and survivors of wrecked slave ships (Young 1971:6-7, 18; Labat 1970:137; Taylor 1949:382; 1951:18). This mixed population came to be called "Black Carib" by Europeans, in contrast to the indigenous population, which was termed "Island" or "Red" or sometimes "Yellow" Carib.

During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Black Carib, generally supporting the French, became embroiled in French and English rivalries over control of Dominica and Saint Vincent. After a series of troublesome raids against English settlements, many Black Carib were restricted to a portion of the island of Saint Vincent. Finally, in 1797, they were deported by the British to the Bay Islands off the coast of northern Honduras (Young 1971; Gullick 1976:6). In succeeding centuries the Black Carib spread along the mainland coast of the Bay of Honduras, from Black River in northeastern Honduras to Stan Creek in Belize (Taylor 1951:15-27; 1946; Coelho 1955:23-41; Solien 1959:300; Gullick 1976:28-37).

Eighteenth century European observers noted that the African men finding refuge with the indigenous Island Carib adopted many Carib cultural practices (Young 1971:8; cf. Taylor 1951:28; Gullick 1976:112-113, 120-121). Some anthropologists studying the twentieth century Black Carib also have stressed indigenous Carib elements still extant within Black Carib culture (e.g., Taylor 1951). Others, however, have emphasized African features introduced by the Negro component of the population (see Coelho 1955:246-257, 264-274). The trend at the present is to regard the Black Carib, or Garifuna as they now identify themselves, as an Afro-American people (Solien 1959; Whitten and Szwed 1970:44). Yet Taylor (1951) pointed out over a quarter-of-a-century ago that a number of Black Carib cultural features are basically derived from those of the Island Carib. He specifically noted continuity in linguistic forms, subsistence techniques, division of labor, and particular aspects of ritual and religious belief (Taylor 1951:28, 38, 41, 55, 84, 139-142; cf. Gullick 1976:112-113).

Many of the characteristic features of contemporary Black Carib domestic organization can be identified in traditional Carib society, too. In asserting this, I differ from Taylor (1951:74, 139) who states that Black Carib social organization reflects considerable cultural change; while Island Carib society is characterized by scattered communities composed of matrilocal extended families, Black Carib society, in Taylor's opinion, is characterized by the common-law conjugal family. Taylor differs from Gonzalez in the emphasis placed on consanguineal ties and

associates social structure with model personality. Arguing that it would have been very unlikely that St. Vincent Negroes, as immigrants, had the same model personality as the Carib, he (Taylor 1951:29-30) contends that they, by definition, could not have conformed to traditional Island Carib social organization. Nonetheless, Taylor (1951:74, 139) holds that the wider consanguineal family, and particularly maternal relatives, have "retained great importance among the Black Carib." He also sees reflections of former matrilocal residence in surviving kinship terms and notes similarities between contemporary Black Carib and earlier Island Carib domestic arrangements in the event of separation of husband and wife (Taylor 1951:83-84, 96).

In focusing on similarities between contemporary Black Carib and earlier Black Carib and Island Carib domestic organization, I again part company with Gonzalez. In a paper emphasizing similarities between contemporary Black Carib culture and that of West Indian Negro society, Gonzalez (Solien 1959:302) considers it likely that "the most probable sources" of much of contemporary Black Carib culture, including "the present-day family form" (which in her opinion is noteworthy for its unstable marital unions as well as its emphasis on consanguineal ties and maternal relatives), lay in non-Carib Negro groups of West Indian Negro culture encountered on the coast of eastern Central America by the deported Black Carib. She suggests this resulted from contact with rural Creole of British Honduras (Belize), with Haitians and Jamaicans living on the coast with whom some intermarriage with Black Carib is indicated, with Negro settlers descended from escaped slaves, and with the heavy influx of West Indian Negroes seeking work in the banana industry of the early twentieth century (Solien 1959:306, 307).

The possibility that Black Carib family form has been influenced by the social organization characteristic of West Indian Negro society cannot be casually dismissed, for parallels in social organization do appear. These similarities, however, could also reflect adaptation of the several societies to comparable ecological or culture contact conditions. Certainly, more definitive evidence is needed before West Indian Negro culture can be accepted as the probable source of contemporary Black Carib domestic organization. Further substantiation is particularly necessary in light of statements by Gullick (1976) to the effect that intermarriage between Black Carib and other Negro populations in Central America was limited, at least during the nineteenth century, and given the similarities, documented below, between Black Carib domestic organization and that of earlier Carib society.[1]

CONTEMPORARY BLACK CARIB AND TRADITIONAL ISLAND CARIB DOMESTIC ORGANIZATIONS

Gonzalez's research has shown that the most effective and enduring domestic relationships in contemporary Black Carib society tend to develop among consanguineal kin. Strong emphasis is placed particularly on maternal relatives, producing a high degree of matrifocality within the household and family (Gonzalez 1970a). The most lasting relationships are those between mother and child and between siblings. Although marriages officially accounted for close to 55 per cent of Black Carib households in Gonzalez's study of Livingston, affinal unions are frequently entered into lightly, with little or no ceremony, and are "brittle and unenduring" (Gonzalez 1969:68). When they dissolve, the children almost invariably remain with the mother. Consequently, the fundamental and enduring core of the household group is composed of a woman and her children or several related women (mother and daughter or several sisters) and their children. Sometimes the male sexual and economic partners of these women will be in temporary residence with them, but such men generally spend only a short time—one night to a few months—in the household. They then depart; perhaps to take a job in

another town, perhaps to reside for a short while with another woman, perhaps to return to their own "home," usually meaning their mother's or sister's house. Given the frequency with which connubial liaisons dissolve, sons and brothers (who may or may not have female partners and children living elsewhere) emerge as the most permanent male members of many households. The individual residences of the consanguineal women (mother and daughters, or sisters) composing the household may be physically arranged, adjacent to a cleanly swept common yard, as a compound composed of the separate kitchens and sleeping quarters of the various female (mother-child) units (Gonzalez 1969:68-89).

The domestic arrangements favored by Black Carib today are structurally quite similar to the various modes of domestic organization reported in the earliest ethnohistorical literature pertaining to the indigenous Island Carib of the Lesser Antilles. The most accurate primary data concerning the traditional culture of the Island Carib derive from the writings of Father Raymond Breton, a French missionary who spent eighteen years (1635 to 1653) in Guadeloupe and Dominica. During five of the last thirteen years of his residency on these islands Breton lived alone among the Caribs of Dominica, observing practices firsthand and developing a significant degree of linguistic proficiency (Taylor 1951:33-34). The data compiled by Breton or, rather, that portion of his work which has survived through the narratives of de la Paix, du Tertre and others (see also Labat 1970) have been interpreted by various ethnologists, including Douglas Taylor whose ethnohistorical studies are particularly useful for our purposes. The following summary of Island Carib social organization thus derives largely from Breton's data and from Taylor's analyses.

ISLAND CARIB SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

It is useful to recognize two distinct yet inter-related dimensions in traditional Island Carib social organization: the particular sociopolitical forms associated with positions of male community leadership; and the social behaviors followed by the majority of the population, that is, women, children, and adult men other than leaders. Regarding general practices common to most of the population, Breton's accounts indicate that control over women was an important factor according a man prestige and political significance. Carib men could acquire women by several means. A wife could be obtained through the operation of the traditional kinship system, which designated patrilateral cross-cousins (for male ego, a FaSiDa) as preferred marriage partners and recognized the union by a brief ceremony. Such liaisons were not enforced, however, and did not always develop if the parties involved found it personally unsatisfactory (Taylor 1946:198; 1953). Alternatively, a man might simply marry a woman of his choice, by a simple ceremony, provided she and her parents consented. Women could also be acquired through surprise raids launched against enemy villages. Boys captured in such raids were enslaved, adult men were ritually killed, and women captives were given by the victorious young warriors to their fathers and grandfathers to serve as slaves and wives, without benefit of ceremony (Breton 1958:13, 24; Breton and de la Paix 1929:69, 71). Finally, a noted leader might be offered a girl by her parents and would accept her for fear of otherwise offending them (Taylor 1946:183).

Residence was uxorilocal for most Carib men upon formal marriage to either a patrilateral cross-cousin or another woman of personal choice (Breton 1958:23). Exception to this preferred pattern was allowed, however, for those men who became heads of extended families and of communities (and also to one or more of their sons). They brought their wives to their own place of residence (Taylor 1946; 1953:117). An extended family composed a village or settlement. This community included the family head (or "captain," as the French called him) residing virilocally with his wives and their unmarried children, his married daughters, and his uxorilocally resident sons-in-law, who cleared gardens, built houses,

and went fishing with their father-in-law (Breton 1958:23, Breton and de la Paix 1929:61; du Tertre 1667: section 9; Labat 1970:104, 105). To the extent that the village family leader and his sons and sons-in-law were successful in raids the village also contained captured women, who technically became wives of the family headman. Sons and daughters of these women became legitimate members of the community, too (Breton 1958:24; Labat 1970:103), and the husbands of these daughters swelled the ranks of men affiliated with the family-village headman.[2] We may assume that sisters of the headman and their husbands would also live in the same settlement (unless the husbands of such well-connected women were family headmen themselves). Furthermore, if any of the headman's sons by a legal Carib wife or by captive women (see note 1) married the daughters of their father's sisters, as would be allowed by patrilateral cross-cousin marriage strictly defined, they, too, might remain in the community, technically following uxorilocal residence even as they also lived in their father's settlement. Eventually the husbands of daughters' daughters might also be in residence. From the perspective of an extended family headman-cum-village leader, control over married daughters, granddaughters, and sisters apparently was desirable, and prestigeful, because it offered means to influence the husbands and sons associated with these women (du Tertre 1667:16; Taylor 1951:28, 29).[3]

European observers report that a Carib settlement was physically composed of a clearing containing a large community work house or men's house and smaller structures nearby. Each of these smaller units provided living quarters for a wife and her young sons and growing daughters. Mothers (and grandmothers) and children thus composed residential units separate from the men (Breton and de la Paix 1929:61-62; Labat 1970:87-89). Unmarried adolescent boys slept in the men's house, where all men ate and spent their days when in the village. Women rarely entered this house except to serve the men, who rested there "peacefully in perfect harmony without quarrels or noise" (Breton 1958:15; Breton and de la Paix 1929:58; Labat 1970:96-97, Taylor 1953:119). Married men visited their wives' homes to sleep, to see their small children, and to bring contributions of game and fish to augment the manioc and other root crops grown by women.

The frequency with which a man visited a wife depended on the number of women whom he held as wives and where these women lived. The majority of husbands had only one wife, but polygyny was not uncommon, for some men had two wives living in one or two settlements (Breton 1958:24; Labat mentions sororal polygyny, 1970:76-77). In addition, "it happens quite often when they are in another island that they do not bring their women with them. They obtain new ones only for the time that they expect to live there" (Breton 1958:24; but see Labat's (1970:77) description of women and children traveling with the men). As we have seen, captive women could be taken as additional wives, particularly by village headmen. In fact, polygyny was practiced most extensively by village and family headmen, who had as many as six or seven wives, some of whom may have lived on different islands (Breton and de la Paix 1929:58). A polygynous husband ideally visited his several wives on a rotational basis, "from month to month" (Breton 1958:24). Each wife served her husband during the month that was hers, then was expected to yield him to another (Breton 1958:24; Breton and de la Paix 1929:58). Sometimes, however, "a man stays a full year with another, abandoning the one he had chosen previously," a practice which could spark jealousy among wives (Breton 1958:25; Breton and de la Paix 1929:58).

Separation from a wife apparently was not difficult; at least no official form of divorce is recorded (Breton and de la Paix 1929:58-59; Taylor 1946:187). In fact, according to Breton (1958:23), "some men [were] fickle in love and often change[d] mistresses." In the words of du Tertre (1667:17), "They like to be as free to abandon their wives as they are to choose them, and this is the reason why they leave them whenever they please." If a husband left a woman, or if he died,

the woman endeavored to keep the children, for when these sons and daughters reached maturity they would become the mother's source of support (Breton 1958:282; Breton and de la Paix 1929:60).

EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURY BLACK CARIB DOMESTIC ORGANIZATION

During the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, the virilocal residence characteristic of seventeenth century Island Carib community leaders apparently declined, cross-cousin marriages eventually disappeared, and ceremonial affinal ties were reduced in favor of common-law associations among mid-twentieth century Black Carib. Virtually all other marital and domestic practices followed by the majority of Island Carib men and women in the mid-seventeenth century are paralleled in later Black Carib domestic arrangements in spite of changes in the sociopolitical and economic life of the indigenous population following European conquest and settlement of the Lesser Antilles.

Data pertaining to Carib community life and domestic organization during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are sparse and fragmentary. Yet they are sufficient to allow a general picture to be gleaned from various European accounts. Gullick (1976) has researched much of this material, and many of the data examined below are readily found in his publication on Black Carib culture history from 1763 to 1945.

One of Gullick's major sources for the last half of the eighteenth century is an account by George Davidson, published in 1787 ("The Case of the Caribbs in St. Vincent," ed. Thomas Coke). According to Davidson, "every district of two or three miles has its particular chief,[4] who, however, has not the smallest shadow of authority except in time of war" (quoted in Gullick 1976:22). These headmen may have directed communal economic activities, such as fishing with poisonous weeds (Gullick 1976:20). Some of them may also have been recognized by European authorities for purposes of negotiations and treaty ratification, particularly if they had learned a European language and etiquette (Edwards 1801:415, 450; Young 1971:37, 75, 93-94, 106-107; but compare Taylor 1946:182).

Whether district leaders also were heads of extended families, as in the prior century, is not indicated. Yet it is quite likely that their positions involved kin ties of some sort, for in certain instances Carib leaders are described by Europeans as "family heads" and as "patriarchal," or as representing a "tribe" or "family" (Young 1971:22, 107). It can be tentatively assumed, therefore, that at least some followers of Carib leaders were affiliated to their "chiefs" in the traditional manner by ties of consanguinity or affinity (Young 1971:118). Unfortunately, the general settlement pattern and, more specifically, the marital residence practices followed by these leaders is not indicated. This data gap is unfortunate for most of the characteristic features of Black Carib domestic organization could easily be derived from the marital and residential customs associated with Island Carib culture if the virilocality traditionally followed by a community patriarch declined.[5] It is quite likely, nonetheless, that Carib leaders continued to practice polygyny, for such is recorded for Carib society in general in the late eighteenth century. Separate residences for each wife and perhaps cross-cousin marriage are also indicated in this statement by Davidson, who describes how, when a husband is "in the situation of taking more wives (generally cross-cousin or nieces) he obtains them from their parents. Many of them have four or five. On that event they build separate houses for each wife, spending their time alternately with them" (quoted in Gullick 1976:24). Davidson further records (Gullick 1976:24) that husbands would leave one wife for another when she became old or ugly, but that a father was conscientious about the care of his children and an abandoned wife could not marry again until her husband's death.

In Gullick's (1976:116, 22) opinion, it is possible that war-captive slaves were

still taken as wives during this period, which saw frequent hostilities among Black Carib factions as well as between Carib and European. Labat (1970:137), in fact, mentions Negroes "stealing" Carib women and girls. Gullick (1976:16, 123) also seems to imply that the communal men's hut no longer functioned, since men slept with their wives at night and moved from hut to hut accordingly, though these practices were recorded in the seventeenth century and would not be incompatible with the use of a men's house. Uxorilocal residence is not specifically described, but the addition to Carib society of considerable numbers of escaped or captured African men, who presumably were without local kin ties, might be expected to have enforced traditional uxorilocal residence and to have encouraged continuation of the strong ties between mothers and children.

Change or preservation of traditional forms of social organization during the late eighteenth century might also be related to adjustments in the Carib economy following European contact. Here again data are more suggestive than definitive. Yet it is significant that, as both Taylor (1951:55), and Gullick (1976:13) have noted, in many respects the traditional Carib division of labor remained virtually unchanged during this time. That is, prior to European contact Island Carib women had been responsible for agricultural work, an occupation which generally kept them at home. In contrast, men, who contributed to subsistence as hunters and especially as fishermen, favored a roving life, visiting women in other settlements or on other islands, or venturing on seafaring excursions to the Greater Antilles or to the South American mainland that could take them several hundred leagues away from their home islands (Fernandez de Ybarra 1907:438, 441, 445; Breton 1958:14, 29; du Tertre 1667: section 10; Labat 1970:102). During the eighteenth century, prior to deportation, women continued their agricultural pursuits while men still hunted and fished. During this time, the roving propensities of Carib men also may have been favored by guerrilla warfare against Europeans (Gullick 1976:13, 16-21; Young 1971:21).[6] Conservatism in the division of labor, of course, suggests the likelihood of continued selection for traditional forms of social (and particularly domestic) organization adapted to these labor practices.

During the nineteenth century, after becoming established in coastal Honduras, Black Carib men still favored fishing pursuits and still lived away from home for as long as five-to-eight months at a time, working as laborers in Central American lumber (mahogany) camps. Black Carib women continued to tend to subsistence agriculture, although they also periodically sold or exchanged garden produce in the larger towns of Honduras and Belize (Gullick 1976:50-64, 44; Young 1847:123–127). This practice had begun on Saint Vincent in the eighteenth century, if not before (Young 1971:99, 115; Gullick 1976:21). Domestic organization, like the general division of labor, also continued to follow previous formats, although, as Gullick (1976:28) notes, "this period, especially the beginning, suffers from a lack of documentary evidence." Nonetheless, we do have limited data from the report by Thomas Young, who visited the Carib settlements in northern Honduras in 1839 and provided the first account of the Black Carib in their new homeland. Young (1847:123) states that

> Polygamy is general amongst them; some having as many as three or four wives, but the husband is compelled to have a separate house and plantation for each, and if he makes one a present he must make the others one of the same value; and he must also divide his time equally among them, a week with one, a week with another, and so on.

Gullick (1976:69) is of the opinion that cross-cousin marriage may still have obtained, although according to at least one source marital unions may have been somewhat short-lived (Gullick 1976:65). Young (1847:135) also mentions the continued association of sons with their natal families, particularly as support in old age. The communal men's house apparently had by now definitely dis-

appeared. Separate residences for husband and wife may have continued, however, since there is some evidence that husbands built houses for themselves while wives' huts were constructed nearby or in different settlements (Gullick 1976:58, 62, 123).

CONTEMPORARY BLACK CARIB DOMESTIC ORGANIZATION RECONSIDERED

The data reviewed above, though scanty, nonetheless suggest that a number of the marital and residential practices followed by the Black Carib in the nineteenth century were broadly comparable to those characteristic of Black Carib and Island Carib society on the Antillean islands during previous centuries. They are also comparable to the practices characteristic of twentieth century Black Carib domestic organization.

During the early decades of the twentieth century, both cross-cousin marriage and polygyny were still practiced by the Black Carib, although now a man seldom kept more than one wife in the same village. Nonetheless, the husband continued to live with each wife in turn and was expected to treat them equally (Gullick 1976:84, 103). Today, cross-cousin marriage is no longer followed, but Black Carib men associate with several common-law wives, sometimes sequentially but sometimes concurrently (polygyny in contemporary guise) and circulate among the households of their women who, in turn, remain closely associated with female relatives (Taylor 1951:73; Coelho 1955:90-93). Again, as in former centuries, a man is encouraged to develop close ties with his mother and sisters (Gonzalez 1969:59-60; Taylor 1951:74). Indeed, he is likely today to regard his mother's household as his home and to frequently return there. This suggests that the mother's household may be regarded as paralleling or replacing the traditional Carib community men's house and the separate husband's house described for nineteenth century Black Carib as a place of refuge and relaxation for a man (Gonzalez 1969:64).

The Black Carib division of labor also continues along well established traditional patterns, albeit with adjustments. During the present century men have continued to fish and have sought seasonal wage labor jobs (particularly at port towns serving commercial banana companies such as United Fruit), but they have also become involved with diversified cash crop agriculture (cacao, rice, beans, bananas, and other fruits) (Gonzalez 1969:30-44, 51; Coelho 1955:94-104, 115-118). Women have continued agricultural production for subsistence and periodic sale (Taylor 1951:57-61; Coelho 1955:116-118), but many women now leave their villages for months at a time to take seasonal wage-paying jobs in fruit canneries or to work as domestics in the larger towns of coastal Honduras, Guatemala, or Belize (Taylor 1951:74, 55; Coelho 1955:119).

The current mode of domestic organization characteristic of the Black Carib seems admirably adapted both to the diverse economic activities characteristic of the present day and to the conditions of economic marginality that make such diversity necessary. As Gonzalez has documented, given the uncertainty of men's labor opportunities and cash contributions, wives and children frequently find it preferable to remain with, or to return to, the household or residential compound of the wife's mother or of a married sister. This residence pattern not only opens access to the financial contributions of brothers and sons but also frees the husbands and fathers associated with these women to fully exploit job opportunities wherever and whenever they may occur without threat to household stability. The consanguineal household or compound also facilitates co-operative agricultural activities, particularly the time-consuming production of bitter manioc, a traditional staple which women have always prepared with group labor (Gonzalez 1969:70, 88-89; Beaucage 1966:187-188; compare Breton 1958:35). In addition, the consanguineal household encourages individual women's participation in the job market by providing a stable and secure home with an older sister or mother

for the children of a younger woman who wishes to leave the village to find work (Gonzalez 1969:13). There is no question, then, that a high frequency of consanguineal households reflects current economic conditions. But it does not necessarily follow that this type of domestic organization originated in response to current economic conditions, as Gonzalez asserts.

On the contrary, the ethnohistorical data pertaining to the seventeenth century Island Carib and to the eighteenth and nineteenth century Black Carib call into question Gonzalez's (1969:9-10, 16) claims that Black Carib domestic organization, and specifically the consanguineal household, is of recent origin and that contemporary Black Carib society reflects a "shallow" and "traditionless" (Neoteric) culture whose people, having been recently uprooted, lack or have discarded their traditional roots in native Antillean culture. Without denying that relocations and cultural disruptions have occurred in the past and have had an effect on Carib life styles (Solien 1959:301; Beaucage 1966), the data reviewed here indicate that twentieth century Black Carib domestic organization also evidences strong similarities with earlier Island Carib and Black Carib societies. I suggest, therefore, that in spite of the vicissitudes of centuries of contact, contemporary Black Carib domestic organization, including consanguineal households, may be more accurately viewed, not only as adaptive to the difficulties inherent in marginal involvement with a modern industrial economy but also as traditional Carib marital and residential patterns in modern form.[7]

NOTES

1. One of the non-Carib "Negro" populations on the coast of eastern Central America when the Black Carib first arrived at the turn of the nineteenth century were the Miskito Indians of eastern Nicaragua. By 1800 this mixed population of indigenous natives and Africans had expanded its territorial range from the Cape Gracias a Dios area of Nicaragua to approximately the Río Negro in eastern Honduras, where Black Carib settlements begin today (Helms 1971:17, 18; Solien 1959:300). Miskito domestic organization, which derives from the aboriginal social organization of native peoples of the Miskito Coast, probably was generally matrilocal by this time (Helms 1971:25). As such, groups of consanguineal women may well have served as crucial core elements in domestic organization. At the present time, however, the nuclear family household predominates in Miskito social organization with most individual husband-fathers affiliated by marriage (Helms 1976). Given the commonality of female core groups, there might be some possibility that Black Carib family form has been influenced by Miskito social organization (Taylor 1951:40), but there are no firm data and no compelling logical reasons for assuming so, given the variation in the manner and degree by which men are related to female core groups and in light of the structural similarities detailed here between Black Carib domestic organization and that of earlier Island Carib society.
2. These children, whose maternal relatives were absent, in effect were legitimized by becoming part of the father's kin group. In this context sons of war-captive mothers would have a patrilateral cross-cousin available for preferred marriage. Daughters, however, being without MoBrSo, would be unrestrained by kinship guidelines for marriage, and it is possible that headmen used these girls to arrange politically useful alliances.
3. The headman's position probably benefited both from the large number of men who might reside uxorilocally in his settlement, rendering him more formidable to his enemies (du Tertre 1667:16), and from the quantity of garden produce (especially manioc) grown by the efforts of his several wives, daughters, and granddaughters, which allowed the extravagant hospitality expected of the headman at feasts.
4. Gullick (1976:19-22) notes that these small districts were further organized into larger "tribes," each of which probably recognized a "high chief" such as the two highly acculturated brothers who owned and managed cotton plantations in the British manner and served as go-between with European leaders.
5. The only eighteenth century statement known to me that specifically mentions Black Carib residence indicates both scattered dwellings located at great distance from each other and more densely settled communities. No information is given regarding marital residence practices (Young 1971:27, 38; Atwood 1791:246-247).
6. It is possible, too, that, at least in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century, traditional Carib raids on other native enemy settlements increased in frequency in an effort to acquire native resources to exchange with foreign missionaries for European goods (du Tertre 1667:21).
7. In this interpretation the attempts by some Carib men and women to establish nuclear family

households appear as the significantly newer development in Black Carib society (Gullick 1976:125-126). This purportedly ideal household arrangement (Gonzalez 1969:14, 15), however, is not easily attained. As Gonzalez (1969:13) indicates, it is difficult to meet the cash demands of a nuclear family household with the relatively limited earnings of only one man or one couple but compare Wiest (1974:205). The willingness of wives as well as of husbands to engage in migratory wage labor is also detrimental to the nuclear household (Gonzalez 1969:13). I would further suggest that the frequent failure of contemporary nuclear family households among the Black Carib can be attributed at least in part to the long-standing precedent for separate lodgings for husbands and wives.

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