



The Ecology of the Barí: Rainforest Horticulturalists of South America

Stephen Beckerman, Roberto Lizarralde

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Inhabiting the rainforest of the southwest Maracaibo Basin, split by the border between Colombia and Venezuela, the Barí have survived centuries of incursions. Anthropologist Roberto Lizarralde began studying the Barí in 1960, when he made the first modern peaceful contact with this previously unreceptive people; he was joined by anthropologist Stephen Beckerman in 1970. *The Ecology of the Barí* showcases the findings of their singular long-term study.

Detailing the Barí's relations with natural and social environments, this work presents quantitative subsistence data unmatched elsewhere in anthropological publications. The authors' lengthy longitudinal fieldwork provided the rare opportunity to study a tribal people before, during, and after their aboriginal patterns of subsistence and reproduction were eroded by the modern world. Of particular interest is the book's exploration of partible paternity—the widespread belief in lowland South America that a child can have more than one biological father. The study illustrates its quantitative findings with an in-depth biographical sketch of the remarkable life of an individual Barí woman and a history of Barí relations with outsiders, as well as a description of the rainforest environment that has informed all aspects of Barí history for the past five hundred years. Focusing on subsistence, defense, and reproduction, the chapters beautifully capture the Barí's traditional culture and the loss represented by its substantial transformation over the past half-century.

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