

Questionnaire (put reference #:page # after each entry)

1. Description

- 1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Karo or Kara. They belong to the Omotic language family. They speak the same language as the Hamar (4).
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): kxh
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): They live along the east banks of the Omo River in southern Ethiopia: 4.8004 degrees N, 35.9671 degrees E.
- 1.4 Brief history: The Karo people are a small group of about 1000-3000 people. They considered the masters of body painting in which they engage in when preparing for a dance, feast or celebration. They are physically attractive because of their elaborate body decorations and modifications (8).
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Neighbors include the Hamar (to the South East), Bana (to the East), Bashada (to the East), The Mursi (to the North) and Nyangatom (to the west across the Omo river). They have had no recorded missionary influences.
- 1.6 Ecology (natural environment): They live on the banks of the River Omo, south of the Omo-Mago junction.
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: They are a small tribe with an estimated population between 1,000 and 3,000.

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): The crops that are grown by flood retreat cultivation are sorghum, maize and beans. Only small cattle are kept because of the tsetse flies.
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: fish
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: The Karo men carry AK-47s. They are major weapon distributors. Few men are ever seen outside the community without them (6).
- 2.4 Food storage: There is no evidence found supporting this practice.
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: The women and girls grow the crops, do the housework, collect the water and look after the children. The men work the crops, defend the herds and plough with the oxen.
- 2.6 Land tenure: No information found.
- 2.7 Ceramics: The tribe does not work with ceramics. However, they do work with clay, making clay hair buns.
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:
- 2.9 Food taboos: No information found.
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft?: They fish.

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): No information was found.
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): No information was found although pictures suggest most people are thin but not weak (14).

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): Specific information not found.
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Girls get married whenever the scarification process is complete. Men marry once they complete the bull-jumping ceremony. The ages of either gender is not given (7).
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Varies, depending on how many wives the man has.
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): No information was found.
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): Information not found.
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: divorce is allowed but must be negotiated.
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Men in the tribe may have as many wives as they want provided they can afford them. Typically, a man will marry only two or three women.
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Marriage in this tribe requires "bride wealth" – a payment made to the woman's family – generally consisting of goats, guns and numerous cattle.
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: It is a patriarchal society so the sons inherit.
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: No conflict evidence found. The women take care of the children.
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: No evidence of homosexuality. Heterosexual activities are common.
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Exogamy is often practiced. Marriage between the Karo and Kwegu tribes happens often (9).
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? "Other fathers" are not recognized because children born of wedlock are killed and intercourse with anyone except the spouse is considered an insult and shame to one's family.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows"): No information was found on this topic.
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? No information found on this topic.
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: No specific information found, although instances have been hinted at.
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin) No information was found to show a preference of spouses. However, the tribe believes that a woman scarifies her chest and stomach to be considered beautiful by the men.
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? No. This is supported by the fact that children born of wedlock are considered an abomination (5).

- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: None. The Karo tribe kills infants born out of wedlock as that is seen as dire abomination and an unpardonable shame to one's family (5).
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?: Another wife or closest kin on the mother's side.
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: No evidence found.
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? If a tribe member has a child out of wedlock, they are considered to have brought great shame upon their family and it is an unpardonable act in the tribe (5).
- 4.24 Joking relationships?: Temporary marriages are established by oral contracts before witnesses.
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations:
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: No evidence found in support or against this.
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Yes. However, details were not found.
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? No information was found on this topic.
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) The Karo people often intermarry with the Kwegu tribe (9).
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Typically, the female chooses the man she wants to marry during a dance. No other evidence was found for marriages performed otherwise.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: Nothing supporting this claim was found.

Warfare/homicide

- 4.31 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: Numbers were not found but pictures depicting battle scars on men showed a high number of kills by every male photographed.
- 4.32 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: conflicts over grazing land, revenge killing,
- 4.33 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Causes of out-group killing are cattle raids, conflict of grazing lands and revenge killing. No evidence of in-group killing was found.
- 4.34 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): They peacefully co-exist with their neighbors but at times get into conflict with the Mursi (7).
- 4.35 Cannibalism? Not practiced. No evidence found to prove otherwise.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: A typical Kara village has 20 to 30 huts around a meeting place and also enclosures of branches to keep cattle and goats.
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): No evidence was found to suggest the tribes travel.
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Men put feathers in their clay buns when they become elders of the village.
- 5.4 Post marital residence: No reference was found.
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): Tribes have their own grazing land but they commonly are the cause for out-group disputes. Villages do not have defined boundaries.
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): As children, the boys and girls play together. It is assumed that once they obtain maturity (for which an age was not found), the girls help the women with chores and the boys help take care of the cattle.
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: Temporary marriages are established by oral contracts before witnesses. No other evidence of other special friendships or relations were found.
- 5.8 Village and house organization: Every karo family own two houses-the conical shaped Ono which is the principal living room of the family and the flat roofed Gappa which is the center of several house hold activities
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): They have special men's houses called "chifo" where they go to rest (10). They also have a ceremony house, called Marmar where married men speak of important matters to the tribe (11) (12).
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? The men and women sleep on the ground. Men use their headdress as pillows.
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: The society is patriarchal.
- 5.12 Trade: The Karo tribe is considered a weapons distributor (6). They also exchange grains and clay pottery with the Hamar for livestock (13).
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? Each Karo village has a group of elders.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6.0 Time allocation to RCR: The tribe performs the bull jumping ceremony once every year (7).
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): No mentions of shamans were found however, each village has at least one midwife who also knows some basic traditional medical knowledge.
- 6.2 Stimulants: No evidence of stimulant usage was discovered.
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): A young bride's puberty is celebrated through scarification. Cuts are made into her abdomen and ash is then rubbed into it to promote healing. The scars enhance her desirability. (National Geographic magazine, Volume 196 V, 1999).
- 6.4 Other rituals: The bull jumping ceremony is one where the males jump over bulls. The ones who are able to do so prove they are capable of marrying (7) (11).

- 6.5 Myths (Creation): The Karo believe that all members have to be physically perfect for the tribe to survive and that anomalies, like twins, a cleft lip or a baby's teeth coming through the wrong way, must be dealt with by leaving the child to die. This belief is called Mingi. (Taboo, National Geographic TV, UK).
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): At the end of the harvest and at times of initiations and marriages, the Karo come together to enjoy dances. During the moonlight dances, the men leap joining one another in long lines towards the women, who come forward one by one to select the man they favor. Afterwards the men and women, coupling themselves, perform rhythmic and pulsating dances, thrusting their hips against one another. These dances often lead to marriage. They also have a ceremony of jumping over lined cattle, similar to that of the Hamar. A young who is able to jump over a large number of cattle proves that he is able to marry.
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Only males are allowed to participate in the bull jumping.
- 6.8 Missionary effect: No evidence of missionary effects was found.
- 6.9 RCR revival: No evidence was found to suggest a slack in RCR, ergo evidence of a revival was not found either.
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: No mention of specific beliefs was found.
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? No information was discovered regarding this taboo.
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy? No evidence was found.
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): They are mainly followers of ethnic religions. However, Christianity makes up about 4.30% of the population.

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: They paint their bodies and faces with white mixed with yellow rock, red iron ore and charcoal to make its color like many other tribes in the Omo valley.
- 7.2 Piercings: A number of the Karo women sport a nail or nail-shaped object sticking out of their chin. Some men and children practice this too (11).
- 7.3 Haircut: Men always shave their head while women plait their hair into many braids and decorate them with beads. The clay hair-bun, sported by both men and women can take up to three days to construct and is usually re-made every three to six months.
- 7.4 Scarification: The women scar their chest believing it makes them beautiful. The men's scars represent an enemy or dangerous animal killed. The scars are cut with knives and have ash rubbed into the wounds to create a raised effect.
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Facemasks are worn at times and they have clay hair buns with feathers in them. Red clay mixed with butter is put into their hair
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: For weddings, a bride's beauty is enhanced by tattooing her abdomen with different symbols.
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: For women, the adornment and scarification is to enhance their beauty. For men, the hair-bun and scars signify kills made (human or animal).
- 7.8 Missionary effect: No recorded evidence of missionaries in the area was found.
- 7.9 Types of clothing: Men wear only a piece of cloth wound around the waist, knee high with a extra cloth slung over the shoulder. Women wear only a pleated cowskin skirt.

8. Kinship systems

- 8.1 Sibling classification system: No evidence of a classification was found.
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate: No evidence found.
- 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. <http://13suns.com/Ethiopia/South/Karo.html>
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