

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Kairiru, Language family – Schouten

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): East Sepik Province, Kairiru islands, mainland coastal villages between Cape Karawop and Cape Samein; north and west Mushu Island. 3°33'S 143°38'E, Papua New Guinea

1.4 Brief history: Kairiru Island was first colonized by Australia. During World War II, Japanese troops took control of the area and were stationed on the island. Any Australians on the island were forced to leave. During the war, the people suffered. They were forced to leave in extreme secrecy and fear to avoid Allied troops attacks, and to conceal the Japanese forces living there. After the war, Australia took control again, and the island of Papua New Guinea became independent and sovereign.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Missionaries put an end to tribal warfare and integrated a few inhabitants into the colonial economy as plantation workers and mission helpers. The primary influence is Catholicism. Many missionaries tried to spread education, and as a result the Kairiru language suffered, as many islanders were learning the neighboring language of Pidgin.

1.6 Ecology (natural environment): The climate is very warm, humid, and tropical. Much of the island is covered in rainforest, with a few grasslands in drier patches.

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: There are 3,507 Kairiru speakers. They are spread across several islands of Papua New Guinea, specifically on the Karesau Islands. Most inhabit small villages, and do not travel far from their birthplace.

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): The main carbohydrates are starchy vegetables. Most commonly found are wild sago, breadfruit, yams, taro, sweet potatoes, and rice.

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: The most common sources of protein are fowl, pork, and meat from marsupials, turtles, and cassowaries.

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Bows and arrow are used to hunt game.

2.4 Food storage: Unknown.

2.5 Sexual division of production: Both men and women work in home gardens, however men tend to the cash crops whereas the women focus on harvesting crops to feed their families. Women do all of the cooking, and both men and women tend to the children. Men who do “women’s work” are stigmatized and ostracized by society.

2.6 Land tenure: Most land is owned by kin groups. Individuals are not allowed to own property. Some individuals may own certain crops, but they can’t own the land the crops grow on.

2.7 Ceramics: Unknown.

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Resources are sometimes shared within kin groups, but not within entire villages.

2.9 Food taboos: Food taboos are usually temporary, and are most commonly placed on pregnant women. It is also common for certain animals and plants to be involved because of their importance to certain kin groups.

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Islanders use sail canoes to get from one island to another.

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): Unknown, but approximately 40% of the population experiences some degree of stunted growth.

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): The average BMI for males is 22.5, and for females is 22.1.

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): Unknown.

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Unknown.

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Unknown.

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): The inter-birth interval is approximately 3 years.

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): A specific age was not given, but both men and women tend to get married quite “young”.

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Very few end in divorce, women tend to elope with lovers or commit suicide rather than getting a divorce. However, even in the areas with heavy Catholic influences have recorded some divorces.

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Approximately ten percent of marriages are polygynous.

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Bride prices have gone up with inflation, and larger and larger amounts of money are required on average to suffice the bride’s family.

4.9 Inheritance patterns: Most land and property is passed down from parents to offspring. Depending on the circumstance, nieces and nephews may also receive inheritances.

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Both parents tend to the children and share equal roles in raising them. Corporal punishment is not practiced, and children are allowed a lot of freedom.

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Unknown.

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Clan exogamy is required.

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? Unknown.

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”): Mothers are highly regarded by the members of the community and much praise and celebration is given the mothers after they have given birth.

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? Unknown.

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Unknown.

- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): The most desirables spouses have a lot of money and inheritances and come from “ideal” bloodlines.
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Unknown.
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: Unknown.
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? Other members of the kin group will raise the offspring, primarily aunts/uncles, and sometimes grandparents.
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: Unknown.
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: Unknown.
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): Generally, the older a potential father is, the higher social status he has received and the more attention they are given.
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? Unknown.
- 4.24 Joking relationships? Unknown.
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: The most commonly recognized form of descent is matrilineal.
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: Unknown.
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Yes, a few areas even participate in semi-Christian ceremonies due to the high concentration of Christian missionaries in the area.
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? Unknown.
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Marriage is preferred to be within the community, and is the same for both males and females.
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Parents arrange marriages for their offspring.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: There is a new trend in high competition amongst women over desirable men. There is competition between different families over who gets to marry those of high status.

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: It is a very low percentage. Warfare appears to have been essentially eliminated due to the influence of missionaries.
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: There is some “gang-like” conflict between different kin groups. These conflicts between small groups sometimes lead to murder.
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: No strong research on in-group killing.
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Neighboring societies commonly work together on large harvests of cash crops, and sometimes men travel freely between societies for trade and marriage opportunities.
- 4.18 Cannibalism? No.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: Unknown.
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Unknown.
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): The political leaders came to power based of their relative social status. Highly desirable men with “ideal” qualities are somewhat “elected” by the people to govern them.
- 5.4 Post marital residence: Once married, men move from bachelor houses into houses with their new wives, and subsequent children. It isn’t uncommon to find immediate family members also living within the same household.
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): Unknown.
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): Unknown.
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: Unknown.
- 5.8 Village and house organization: Unknown.
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses): Unmarried men live together in mens’ houses, and women who have given birth are isolated in special huts to keep themselves and the baby healthy.
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Hammocks
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: All the members of a particular kin group contribute to clan decisions. Women always marry outside of the land, and lineage is matrilineal.
- 5.12 Trade: Europeans were said to have traded with islanders during times of colonization. Now, there is a heavy trade between indigenous peoples of other nearby islands.
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? Most people are perceived to be of relatively equal status. There are a few high-status members of the community, but there doesn’t appear to be a large disparity between groups of people, as there would be in a class system.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6.0 Time allocation to RCR: Not specific; but religious rituals are practiced frequently by all members of the community.
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): It is believed that all people posses magical powers for their own healing. Much of the prayer and effort is directed at healing.
- 6.2 Stimulants: Unknown.
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): Both males and females undergo a ritual once they reach puberty, to help them gain fertility. Females are forced to live separately from society in a hut during their first menstruation, whereas males tend to undergo more

physical and painful rituals. Sacrifices are performed to try and prevent death from occurring, and also to free the trapped spirits of a deceased person. Mother and baby are isolated in a hut soon after birth, to ensure the health of both.

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation): Unknown

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): Music is involved in many religious ceremonies.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Although each individual is said to have magical powers, if there is a religious leader, it will almost certainly be a male.

6.8 Missionary effect: There is a very strong Christian influence in the area. Missionaries are all over the area teaching the locals Christian beliefs. Many took to the missionaries' teachings and have integrated them into a hybrid religion that contains both "magical" and Christian ideas.

6.9 RCR revival: Unknown.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: The Kairiru people believe that the spirit remains trapped in the body after death, and must be freed or the spirit will never make it to the afterlife. The afterlife is believed to be a place not far from where they are living, and spirits are "encouraged" to stay close to their people.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? Unknown.

6.12 Is there teknonymy? Unknown.

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): Magic is the primary belief. Each person is believed to possess magical powers for love, harvesting, and healing. Witches are also common, and deviant females are usually labeled as such.

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: Body paint is very commonly used in special ceremonies, such as marriage, and during past times of warfare.

7.2 Piercings: Males are said to wear some form of earring.

7.3 Haircut: Unknown.

7.4 Scarification: Unknown.

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Feathers tend to be worn both those few individuals of high status, to separate themselves from the rest of society.

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: Body paint and feathers are used during most religious ceremonies, particularly marriage.

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: The only information found described men wearing all of the earrings, feathers, and body paint, indicating that they are the primary users of such adornment.

7.8 Missionary effect: Unknown

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: Unknown

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: Unknown

8.2 Sororate, levirate: Unknown

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): Cross-cousin marriage is not necessarily desired, most marriages occur between clans who were previously unrelated.

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

1. <http://www.everyculture.com/No-Sa/Papua-New-Guinea.html>

2. Smith, Michael French. *Hard times on Kairiru Island: Poverty, Development, and Morality in a Papua New Guinea Village*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1994. Print.

3. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7941009>

4. <http://www.jstor.org/pss/40330495>