

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

Ju|'hoansi or !Kung, San language Hei//kum, in the Khoisan family (2)

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): ktz (1)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

Namibia/Botswana, !Kung live in the tropical open woodlands of southern Angola (2). roughly 22.9576° S, 18.4904° E

1.4 Brief history:

Dutch explorers reached the Cape of Good Hope in the 1600's finding two kinds of people, one of those being the !Kung. The Dutch named them Bosjesmans, meaning Bushmen, a term they were known as of recently when people began calling them San. As white settlement expanded in the 1700's genocidal warfare against the San escalated, but the San persisted and kept on surviving, despite the white men's premature thoughts of their extermination (3).

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

Especially in the past 30 years westerners and other African neighbors have affected and changed the !Kung lifestyle. There are now cattle and goats, they live in mud houses instead of huts, and the homes no longer point towards each other, they point toward the animals and are formed in more of a line than a circle. Milk and meat from domestic stock is now the main source of their food and the change in food patterns has also led to higher blood pressure and cholesterol and even some cases of heart disease. Heavier smoking, alcohol consumption, along with other changes has changed the Dobe in profound ways. The !Kung are now poverty ridden and no longer forage or change living patterns. All the things that made them who they are as increasingly changed with the pressure of the outside world (3).

1.6 Ecology:

The Dobe area is flat, dry, and sandy. Most of the soil in the area is loose sand overlaying limestone (4). It is also 1000 to 1200 meters above sea level (3).

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

A population of under 1000. 8-15 huts with 20-50 people, occupied for 3-6 months. A typical camp is a rough circle of grass huts around 10-30 meters in diameter arranged around a central clearing (3).

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

mongongo (fruit and nut), all done !kung agree that it is their most important vegetable food. It is available in all month of the year and is easy to collect (3).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

kudu, gemsbok, wildebeest, ant bear, warthog, porcupine, hare, guinea fow, or small antelope (3).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

Bow and arrow, spear, knife, springhare hook, and rope snares (3). Minor tools consist of the digging stick and fire-making equipment.

2.4 Food storage:

Digging sticks are used for gathering while “several ingenious multipurpose containers” are used for carrying (3).

2.5 Sexual division of production:

women mostly gather and take care of the children while men do a lot of hunting. Women are skilled at knowing what plants are useful and which are highly dangerous (3).

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics:

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

Sharing equally is extremely important to the !Kung and if people do not feel equal it can cause “bitter wrangling amongst close relatives.” Meat insulation is one of the central practices that aim to maintain egalitarianism (3).

The !Kung, for the majority of their existence with some changing patterns of recent, engage in reciprocal altruism for many reasons including an insurance policy in case of future need and means of reducing inequality (6).

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

female- 148cm (4)

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

female- 42 kg (4)

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

15-17 (6)

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

female 16-20, male 24-30 (6)

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

around 3.4 years (6).

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

female 12-16, male 18-25 (3)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

fairly high, the word for separation is *sa sarakwe* (4). Close to half of all first marriages fail among the !Kung.

When divorce does occur the initiative comes from the wife most frequently and since there is no legal bond divorce is just mutual consent (3).

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

The !Kung are mainly monogamous (93%), 5% are polygamous marriages, and 2% are polyandrous marriages.

All 7 polyandrous men were healers (3).

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

Bride service, especially when the girl is very young and cannot yet leave her parents hut (3).

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

Land rights or ownership of a *n!ori* (named place) are given to both men and women. Rights can be given to a spouse if the marriage persists and to children through birthright. A parent can also make a claim through their child who bears a birthright even if their marriage has ended. Land rights offer little advantage and don't seem to hold a major factor in marriage choice (4).

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

Elders are usually not taken care of, even though they take care of so many in the community. Though they are a part of the community, no one takes care of them and so they are neglected when it comes to food and resources (3).

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?

Fathers are recognized for their semen (4).

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)?

No (4)

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape:

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

“The prohibited spouses are identified on two criteria: consanguinity, and the name taboo.” Consanguinity extends to first cousins; one may not marry anyone who is descended from one of his/her grandparents. Name taboos state that one cannot marry another with the same name as their parent or sibling (4).

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

In a marriage both the male and female “may expect to receive reproductive, sexual, and economic services from the other”, if the services are not met than the marriage can end in divorce (4). Sexual play is a normal part of childhood and virginity basically doesn’t exist to the !Kung. Almost all kids have sex by age 15 and before they ever get married to someone. Girls and boys both have the freedom to play sexually at any age (3).

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring:

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

Father or grandmother when mother dies, if there is a divorce the kids stay with the mother but still have ties with the father (6).

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?

Avoidance kin must be shown respect and reserve. Those in an avoidance category can never be married, even if unrelated. The language surrounded avoidance kin is also much more reserved and shows respect (3).

4.24 Joking relationships?

Behavior can be very different toward joking kin than that of avoidance kin. Joking relatives act in relaxed fashions and speak on familiar terms. Language and kin names towards joking relationships are relaxed (3).

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

4.26 Incest avoidance rules:

Incest taboos against marrying a father, brother, son, uncle, or nephew. A girl may not marry a first or second cousin. She also can’t marry a boy with the name of her father or her brother. A boy cannot marry someone with his mother or sisters name (3).

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

The marriage ceremony involved forcibly carrying the girl from her parents’ hut to a specially built marriage hut, “and the anointing of bride and groom with special oils and aromatic powders” (3).

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

After the mother examines a child after it's birth and decides it is normal enough to live, it will receive a name and be accepted into the village. Naming rules state that parents can't name a child for themselves, they must name them for their own parents, parents' siblings, or their own siblings giving preference to someone who has not yet had a child named after him/her (4).

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Usually preferred to be inside of a community, especially with men. Women from other territories are sometimes 'stolen' and made brides (3).

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

Sometimes parents or other interested kin of spouses do the selecting and other times the spouses do the selecting themselves, in second marriages (4). All first marriages are arranged by parents beginning soon after a child is born. It can often involve a decade or more of gift exchange before the children are actually married. "Typically a boy's mother would approach a girl's mother and propose a marriage" (3).

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Women almost never have a say in their first marriage; they will show their displeasure by kicking and screaming. There have been cases of girls attempting suicide rather than allowing a marriage to be consummated, though there are no documented successful suicides (3).

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

throughout their history is low (3). There has been fighting amongst each other and sometimes an outside group, but there is no special war officer or any prestige related to fighting (2).

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

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

murder in-group is usually related to men fighting over a women, but seldom occurs.

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

4.18 Cannibalism?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): The !Kung tend to move each season to different watering holes, in different areas with specific foods that might be available. Three main reasons set people in motion: exhaustion of local food resources, visiting and receiving visitors, and conflict within the group (3).

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

until recent years the !Kung were an egalitarian society were everyone was equal except maybe in the instance of their age (3).

5.4 Post marital residence:

a marriage is recognized by both spouses building their own hut together (4).

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

There are very few social statuses, one being relative age. Even in the language (kin terms) there is reference when speaking to someone about being younger or older (3).

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization:

Households consist of 1-9 people with 227 households and 34 villages gathered around sources of water (4).

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

living groups consist of bilaterally organized groups of people who live in a single settlement and who move together for at least part of the year. At the center of each camp "is a core of related older people-usually siblings or cousins-who are generally acknowledged the owners of the waterhole" (3).

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

They sleep in huts with their family or spouse (4).

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

5.12 Trade:

Whoever owns the arrow that killed the animal will ultimately be the owner of the meat and will be able to distribute it. Men trade arrows in the *hxaro* trade network. One man will give another his arrow, once the meat is caught both men will share the meat. "Women may own arrows too, trade them with men, and become owners of meat" (3).

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

Age is the only indicator of social difference (3). Groups of people own land and not individuals.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

there are healers that partake in healing trances. These healers use *n/um*, or spiritual medicine/energy given by the gods, to heal. There can be both men and women healers, though there are usually more men healers. Becoming a healer isn't very difficult, half of the men become healers while a third of the women do (3)(5). The healers aren't directly related to religion but use ideas from their religion in their actions (2).

6.2 Stimulants:

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

after death the body is placed into a grave and painted stones are put upon the grave (9).

6.4 Other rituals:

the Giraffe Dance is where healers activate their *n/um*. It boils up and rises through spinal cord and explodes in the brain, feeling like enormous power and energy coursing through his or her body. "The legs are trembling, the chest is heaving, the throat is dry. And strange visions flood the healer's senses." There is a clear division of labor throughout this healing dance ritual where women stand in a circle around the fire and sing strong and sustained while the men healers dance around them. The men insist the women's singing is crucial to the success of the dance (3)(5).

6.5 Myths (Creation):

there are several creation stories that all revolve around a central theme of people and animals all living together in a single village led by an elephant K"au and his wife Chu!ko (3).

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

beadwork has been a longstanding tradition that San speakers are known for. Rock paintings exist from older generations and were seen as early as 1752. The !Kung partake in both rock engravings and colorful rock wall paintings (8). Music and singing is also a large part of their culture in a variety of ways (7).

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

men and women are fairly equal when it comes to religion or ceremonies, though some ceremonies come with roles both genders are important and needed (3)(2).

6.8 Missionary effect:

the !Kung "are pragmatic about other belief systems." They are interested yet fearful of the practices of their African neighbors and of disease theories and treatments brought by Europeans. There is much less European effect on the !Kung than there is from the African neighbors who believe in sorcery (3).

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

//gangwasi is the term for the ghosts of recently dead people and many are 'known' to hover near the Ju villages causing illness or misfortune (3). "Death is a passing into a spiritual realm that is distinct from the material realm." The misfortune from spirits is seen as them aching for their kin and so trying to cause their deaths to rejoin with them (2).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) There are forces beyond the natural order including a high god, a lesser god, and some minor animal spirits that bring both luck and misfortune, successes and failures (3).

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

Haematite is still the favorite pigment for personal adornment (8).

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

there are a few different ceremonies for haircutting including a baby's first haircut and a special Choma haircut for boys after their scarification (10) (11). Haircuts are rights of passage for both men and women when they are young and when they become adults (10).

7.4 Scarification:

the boys scarification is a vertical line down the middle of their foreheads (11).

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

ostrich egg shells are used in waistbands, necklets, wristlets or head ornaments. "Conus shells and other species perforated for uses as pendants or components of necklaces." Bone, ivory, seashell and ostrich-egg shell were also used in the manufacture of pendants or sequins (9).

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: Older brother is *!ko*, older sister is *!kwi*, younger brother is *twin*, younger sister is *tsin*

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): Joking relationships are *k"āi*, which means to joke or to play, while avoidance is *kwa*, which means to fear or respect. The universe of kin is divided up differently for men and women with reference to both their joking and avoidance kin. It is very complex and fascinating! (3)

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Language

-“All Khoisan languages are predominantly mono and bisyllabic and tonal, and they contain click consonants” (2).

-They don't use numbers over 3 in their language (4).

Weather Conditions

-mid December to April is the rainy season, while June and July nights sometimes reach freezing point. Around those times the !Kung modify the day to sleep in the sun and stay awake at night by fire. In September and November it frequently reaches up to 110 degrees F during the day (4).

Pregnancy (infanticide)

-women should or can give birth alone so the mother can control infanticide. Before the baby is named at the scene of the birth the mother will examine the baby carefully for birth defects. If it deformed the mother must smother it. This is a regular and necessary part of the process of giving birth. !Kung do not consider birth to be the beginning of life and therefore do not consider infanticide murder. The beginning of life is after the baby is given a name and accepted as a social person into the village (4).

Marriage

-is defined by making a house and living in it together (4). It is very laid back and even 'divorcing' is easy and simple (3).

Conflict

-the !Kung distinguish three levels of conflict: talking, fighting, and deadly fighting. These include verbal abuse, an exchange of blows, and fighting with weapons (3).

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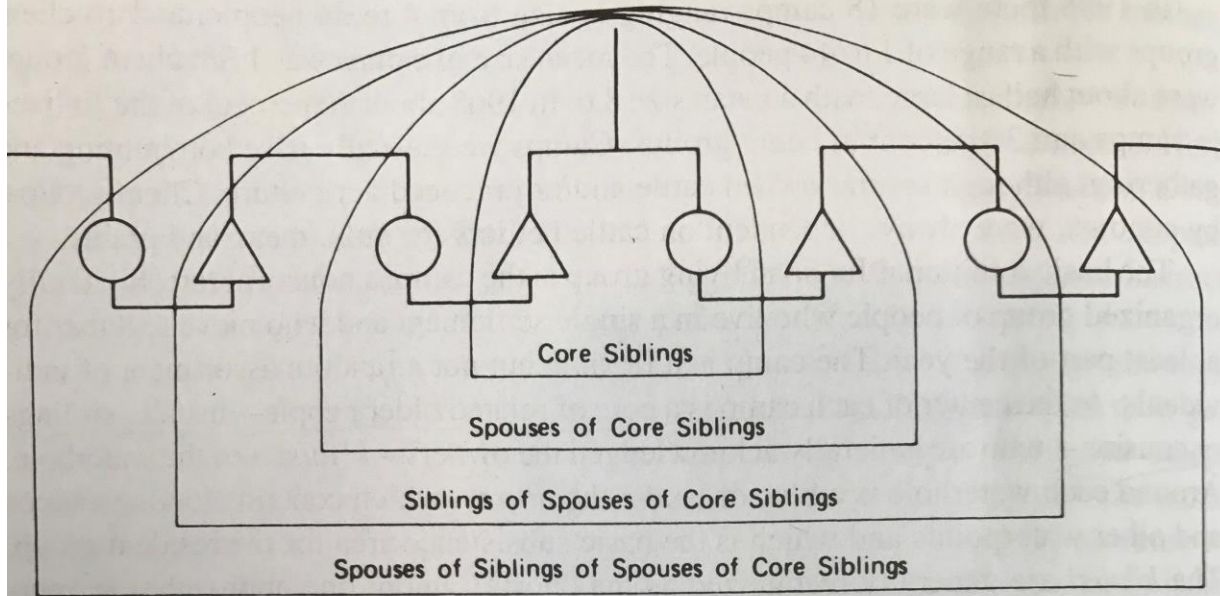


Figure 5-1. Groups are formed through chains of siblings and their spouses, and their siblings and their spouses.

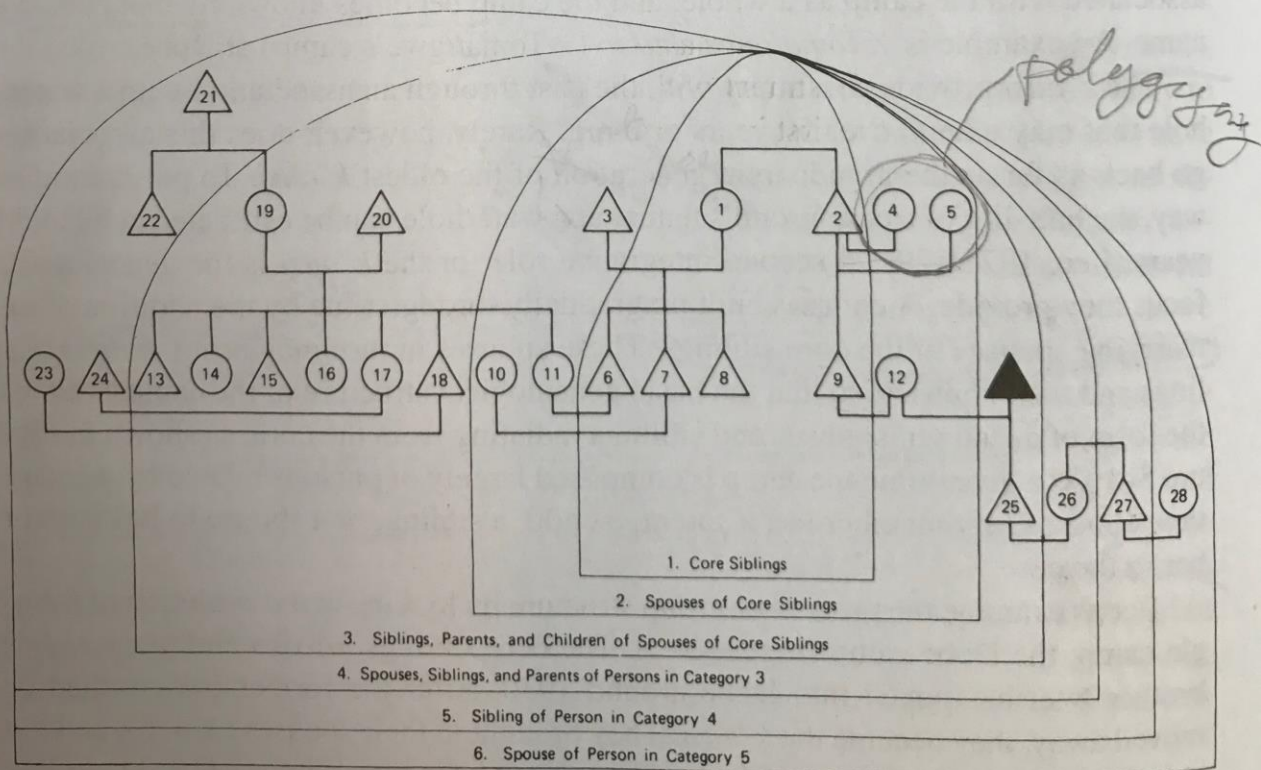


Figure 5-2. The evolution of the main Dobe camp to 1964.