

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Karaja

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Karajá people live in a 180-mile-long area in central Brazil, in the Goiás, Mato Grosso, Pará, and Tocantins provinces. They currently reside in 29 villages in the Araguaia River valley, near lakes and tributaries to the Araguaia and Javaés Rivers, and the Ilha do Bananal.

1.4 Brief history: In 1673 the tribe first encountered European explorers. In 1811, the Empire of Brazil, based in Rio de Janeiro, waged war against the Karajá and neighboring tribes. The Karajá and Xavante retaliated by destroying the presidio of Santa Maria do Araguaia in 1812. During the mid-20th century, the tribe was overseen by Brazil's federal Indian bureau, the Serviço de Proteção aos Índios or SPI. In the 1980s and 1990s, Karajá community leader, Idjarruri Karaja, campaigned for better education, land rights, and employment opportunities for the tribe. Karaja also brought electricity and telecommunications to the tribe in 1997.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: missionary contact not very successful, local government contact more successful, made agreement to secure Karaja land

1.6 Ecology: use of river and surrounding land for hunting and agriculture

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Earlier in the 20th century, there were 45,000 Karajá. As of 1999, there were 2500-3000 Karajá. In 2010, there were 3,198 Karajá.

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Crops are diverse and include bananas, beans, manioc, maize, peanuts, potatoes, watermelons, and yams.

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: fish, birds, turtles

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: bow and arrow

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production: Men are responsible for defending the territory, clearing swiddens, domestic and collective fishing trips, the construction of dwellings, formalized political discussions in the Aruanã House or the men's plaza, negotiations with non-indigenous Brazilian society and the performance of the principal ritual activities, since they are equated symbolically with the important category of the dead. Women are responsible for the education of children until the age of initiation for boys and in a permanent way for girls, focusing here on domestic tasks such as cooking, collecting swidden products, arranging the marriage of children (normally managed by grandmothers), the painting and decoration of children, girls and men during the group's rituals, and the manufacture of ceramic dolls, which became an important source of family income in the aftermath of contact. On the ritual plane, women are responsible for the preparation of foods for the main festivals and for the affective memory of the village, which is expressed through ritual wailing of a special form when someone becomes ill or dies. Body painting is symbolically important to the group. Women undertake body painting. Men are painted with different designs, depending on their age grades, using genipap juice, charcoal soot and annatto dye. Some of the more common patterns are black stripes and bands on the arms and legs. The hands, feet and face are painted with a small number of designs representing natural species, especially fauna.

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics: ceramic dolls are commonly made for export

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Mention of accomplished boatmen, canoes

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: none

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

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

4.9 Inheritance patterns: offspring will most likely work the same things as their parents

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: women teach their children, men teach older boys how to work

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: not evident

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?

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows"): Mother and caretaker

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

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: no

- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? [yes, story of possible extramarital partners](#)
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: [possibility of extramarital offspring](#)
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: [no](#)
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?
- 4.24 Joking relationships?
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations:
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules:
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? [Yes](#)
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) [outside community, male and female must speak different dialects.](#)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? [Women arrange marriages, usually handled by grandmothers](#)
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: [no](#)

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):
- 4.18 Cannibalism? [No](#)

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): [down by the river during the dry season, then move up hill during wet season](#)
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): [chief](#)
- 5.4 Post marital residence:
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): [River defines the boundary and where they reside, island](#)
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:
- 5.8 Village and house organization: [village hierarchy](#)
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): [temporary village](#)
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:
- 5.12 Trade:
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? [Yes](#)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6 Time allocation to RCR:
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): [shaman](#)
- 6.2 Stimulants:
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): [ritual wailing when someone dies](#)
- 6.4 Other rituals: [seasonal festival performances](#)
- 6.5 Myths (Creation):
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): [art, music](#)
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:
- 6.8 Missionary effect: [Christian/Jesuit missionaries](#)
- 6.9 RCR revival:
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: [soul goes to heaven or hell](#)
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy?
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): [60% Christian 40% ethnic religions](#)

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: [paints made from genipap juice, charcoal, and annatto dye.](#)
- 7.2 Piercings:
- 7.3 Haircut:
- 7.4 Scarification: [An object unique to the Karajá was a scarification instrument made of wood. To use it, the instrument was heated with tobacco embers and applied to the cheeks right below the eyes. The circular scar left as a result is considered an identifying tribal mark.](#)
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): [feathers, headdresses](#)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: he society has a strict hierarchy and adheres to tasks based on the age of the tribe member. For example, at the age of 45 both parents of Karajá children have to disregard their body ornaments and accept the status that comes along with old age.

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them): They are a very artistically talented tribe making ceramic dolls and animal figures called litjocos, masks, baskets, and beautiful feathered caps. With the very first contact of the Karaja, these special dolls and animal figures (litjocos) were noted by the chronicler. In the past this was exclusively women's work. They were originally made as children's toys. They were also used as a cultural teaching tool. They portray every day life in the community, animals of the forests and fish of the rivers. One of the most famous figures of the Karaja is a set of male and female dolls. The female figures reveal their notions of feminine beauty in heavy thighs and voluptuous lower bodies. Karaja sculptures also portray the magical side of the Karaja with figures such as; Arena, Adjoromani, and Kboi, special heroes of the mystical world of the Karaja.

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