

1. Description

- 1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: State:Kogi, Language: Igala, Family: Yoruboid branch of Volta- Niger
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): IGL
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): between latitude 6 30' and 7 40' east
- 1.4 Brief history: The main origin of Igala country isn't 100%; however, there are historians that believe the Igala derived from the Yoruba, Benin, or Jukun. All of these groups are tightly woven together and have many common traditions and lineage. Igala eventually won their freedom over the Jukun to become an individual kingdom. (The story very much resembles our own). Yoruba and Igala people are so close that they also marry into others tribes, and share common royalty.
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: As of 2008 there are 2,034 schools in the state of Kogi. The government consists of a Monarchy like setup with 1 king. Powerful neighbors include Yoruba, Nupe, Benin, and Jukun.
- 1.6 Ecology (natural environment): The region contains vegetation between the southern forests and the northern dry Savannah. The rivers Okura, Ofu, Anambra, Onukpo and Amara Rivers provide great fertilization to the land giving it a swamp like tenure. This region experiences on average of 50 inches of rainfall annually.
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Igala country covers about 12,740 square kilometers and averages a density of about 4 persons per kilometer. Most of the Igala people live in the Benue state. Population is divided rather evenly around Idah on the Niger and Ankpa in the Northeasy.

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): crops such as yams, oil palms, cocoyam, maize, pumpkins, cassava, millet, guineacorn, bennised, and beans
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Elephant, Antelope, Fish, Bison
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Hunters used bows, iron-tipped and poisoned arrows, matchets, and lever guns
- 2.4 Food storage: Storage was used by drying and salting meats and dehydrating vegetables.
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: Trading in town is often left to the woman. Food, pottery, waist-beads, and soap are normal items for trade. The Men do the more serious trading (long distance) with commodities such as horses, glass-beads, and textiles.
- 2.6 Land tenure:The land is mostly flat, providing a Savannah to the north, and a swampy type forest to the south.
- 2.7 Ceramics: The Igala people were incredibly good at creating ceramics, and lots of pottery can be found at excavation sites. The three main stages used to create pottery were obtaining the materials, preparation of the clay, forming and decoration. Soup pots, water pots, and necked pots. They were pre decorated before the firing. Decorations included grooves, carved rouletting, and blunt incisions. Many old pieces of pottery were found and recorded from the site of Umekete.
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Most Igala villages have markets which are held every 4 to 8 days. There are also long distance trades. The rivers flow right through Igala country which provided them as an excellent outlet for Savannah and Forest grown goods.
- 2.9 Food taboos: I could not find much information about the food taboos. I did find information about how the Ata does fast occasionally, and is not allowed to eat for an extended period of time.
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft? The Igala people make great use of canoes and boats to do help with the fishing and trade industries.

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): M 5'4.5 W 5'2.1
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): N/A

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): 12
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Female 19, Male 22
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): A Standard household for the Kogi state is 4 people, usually consisting of 54.6 % male and 45.4 % female. Pg4 http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/ext/latest_release/ssd09.pdf
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):Often only one child, when there are more. The span is 2-3 years.
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):Female 18, Male 22
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Married : 32.7 % Divorced 1.8% Seperated 1.2% Widowed 4.0 % and Not Married 59.4%
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Polygynous relationships are unheard of and close to nonexistent to the Igala.
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: There is a traditional style marriage ceremony, in which both parents of the bride and groom, bring presents to the ceremony. The Groom's family asks to take a flower (the groom) and the bride cannot be wed without the consent of her parents.
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns:N/A
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Woman to be married had to move in with the husband. Bride parent's had to agree with such, but often caused conflict between villages.
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: N/A
- 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")
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: sexual abuse occurs, but is severely punished in villages, and will be prosecuted.
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)- None

- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Women are allowed many freedoms, but the men usually have control to either stop things not desired.
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: None
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? The siblings and Father will be put in charge of caring for the children
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: None
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older) Middle Aged men most likely fathers.
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? Igala respect each other very much, especially if you are an elder of the village. The Igala people must respect each other especially in a monarchy type government. Each member contributes equally to the village.
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: Incest is highly illegal. One way for kinship of other tribes of Igala are through marriage.
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Formal Ceremony that require gifts (described in rituals section)
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? The parents both take credit for naming the children.
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Outside of the community, most of the village is either related or married in by another family member,
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Marriages are not arranged, but they must be approved by the bride's family in order for the groom to take her to his village.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: None, unless there is conflict between brides family. Often conflict is resolved. Royal Family has more problems with this than average Igala clans.

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: N/A
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: The Igala – Jukun war was started from an ourgroup wanting to come for the kingdom Igala people. Jukun forces were sent by Aku Uka to discipline the Ata. After a successful Igala victory, Attah Ayegba appointed members of his family as top political figures. Attah Ayegba helped the people declare their independence as a Kingdom, instead of being branches of Jukun.
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: In group killing not acceptable. Out-group killing due to warfare in the Igala-Jukun and Igala-Benin wars.
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): External relations after 1900 lightened, as colonization from the European's had pushed the conflict between the surrounding groups. The local lineages sometimes intertwine and become part of different lineages. It is not uncommon to find a Benin and Igala people together. Trading is also done frequently along the rivers.
- 4.18 Cannibalism? None

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: Clans vary in different size, usually based on political recognition. They range from hundreds to thousands of members. The Achuda and Royal Family have thousands of members.
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): The Igala people stay in one central area.
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):
- 5.4 Post marital residence: The family would reside with the husband's village, and become part of his lineage.
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): The territorial units are called a ja. Hamlets are the basic residential unit, which are a cluster of homesteads and a single community. Senior Hamlet leaders settle disputes between villages and are recognized as Onu Ewo.
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions? (age and sex): Woman were not to be included in most politics and higher status in the political spectrum belonged to older males. Young men or women could not partake in law making processes for the Kingdom.
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:
- 5.8 Village and house organization: Village and house organization was constructed of strictly family. You could either be born into the lineage as well as married into it.
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): None
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? N/A
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: The Political organization of Igala people are based on to interwoven systems of territorial and organizational. Each Clan has its own head member. This is commonly the oldest male in the tribe, and he mediates between living and dead members of the clan. Usually these clans are not localized, but spread all over the land. They represent political parties with a head unit. Many villages combined create a district, These districts are all controlled by the "Ata" or King.
- 5.12 Trade: Trade is very welcome, especially in villages where they have distinct markets where people can exchange goods. The rivers provide easy access to goods and shipping.
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? There is a king if the Igala people, called Ata. He is the political head figure. However, there is also a second in command. This is the leader of the nine biggest tribes (Igala Mela) and he is called the "Achadu". Below that are Clan leaders, and then to tribe leaders. There is also a high court known as the Idah. The Idah members are appointed by the Ata.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6.0 Time allocation to RCR: There are many ceremonies and rituals dedicated to spirits and cleansing. Igala country pays tribute to ancestors as well through the year. The king, Ata, is involved in nearly every ritual, and he is the one to lead it.
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Medicine is used in many ceremonies for cleansing (white magic). The Ocho is a festival of renewal. Many different chiefs come to one gather ground and used the medicine, and make sacrifices to the earth. There is a lead Igala chief that makes sure no one is trying to bring dark (evil) medicine to the ceremonie. He is in charge of protecting the king from the dangerous powers of medicine and sacrifice.
- 6.2 Stimulants: Sharing a meal is used in all Igala rituals.
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): When a child is born, there are 3 incisions made on the side of their face to help identify them.
- 6.4 Other rituals: Ata often makes sacrifices to the ancestors. He does this by taking a kola nut and breaking it into several pieces. This is a way for the king to summon a "spiritual communion". There is a sacred bowl called the ane, which holds and represents Igala country. During ceremonies two former enemies will enter a promise never to do harm to each other. After they both drink, they become purified. If one were to break the promise, there would be deadly consequences.
- 6.5 Myths (Creation):
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): There are many figures that help represent the Igala people. An Ajibo is a brass staff that looks much like a head. The staff represents the symbal of Ata authority. The Okwute is a solid bronze staff that is decorated with human heads as well. This staff represent the links between 2 ancient kingdoms.
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Men mostly lead the ceremonies since they are the head political figures.
- 6.8 Missionary effect: 50% of Igala are muslims followed by a minority of Christian/Islam. They have taken up parts of these religions with the sharing of meals, and afterlife beliefs.
- 6.9 RCR revival: The item Atekpa is a medicine that is used in nine pots. It is used to cleanse spirits and separate good from evil.
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: The Igala are highly influenced by the ancestors. They all share the common belief that after death,
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? None
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy? None
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: During revival, all Igala chiefs paint their face with a copper color to represent authority.
- 7.2 Piercings:
- 7.3 Haircut: Braids created on the bottoms of longer hair, dressed with colorful beads
- 7.4 Scarification: 3 scares on the cheeks of all Igala people.
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Wore glass beads, fragrances, soaps and oils.
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: Masquerades were worn during ceremonies along with beads and leather outfits.
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: Woman often wore vibrant copper pins in their hair. These pins had intricate designs. These were thought to bestow power.
- 7.8 Missionary effect: None
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: revival is very important to the Ata. During the ceremonies he uses as many as 26 highly decorated staves to symbolize different thing, such as ancestors, friendship, hope, and cleansing.

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

One interesting fact that I had found was during the war against the Jukun, a shaman had told the Ata that he must sacrifice his daughter in order to bring good fortune and win the war for independence. The Ata didn't take the warning lightly, and had 9 guards bury his daughter alive in a well.

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