

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

Yaaku people (also Yiaku, Mugogodo, Mukogodo Maasai), formerly called Il Mwesi (10:29), speak the Yaaku language, (also Yiakunte [7:8]) an East Cushitic language. (1:27)

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

MUU

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

37.16321, 0.39323

The Yaaku live in an area called Laikipia, on the northeastern edge of the Laikipia Plateau and in and around the Mukogodo Hills, near Doldol, a village near the town of Nanyuki in North Central Kenya (1:28, 31), in a district called Pore (6:146).

1.4 Brief history:

The Yaaku are thought to have lived in the Mukogodo forest for over 4,000 years (8:2). They were once hunter-gatherers, though for decades have now lived as a group within the Maasai. Around the mid 1920s to 1930s they transitioned from being Cushitic-speaking hunters, gatherers, and beekeepers to being Maa-speaking pastoralists (though they didn't hold cattle in the same status as Maasai). They either obtained livestock or failed to marry. They adjusted to Maasai language and culture but remain a lesser status due to their former hunter-gatherer mode of existence. As of 1963, the Yaaku were in decline (1:27-31).

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

The transition of the Yaaku to Maa-speaking pastoralists was a result of navigating two forces: British colonialists and Maasai pastoralists (1:35). In 1930s they were "deproclaimed" by British Law under the Carter Commission. Their ethnic identity was removed and lands divided into different districts. (7:1)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

The land is comprised of hills covered by dry forest with cedar and olive trees (1: 28).

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

The population was 200 during the cave period (pre 1920s) (3:224), 1000 in the late 1980s (1:30), and there are now 15 current speakers and semi-speakers (7:8).

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

Plant foods, honey (1:30).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

Small wild animals such as the rock hyrax (1:30), buffalo, giraffe and antelope, and occasional rhinoceros (3:226).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: U/K

2.4 Food storage: U/K

2.5 Sexual division of production: U/K

2.6 Land tenure:

Honey keeping was the basis of delineating family and clan territories, and the apiaries contributed to determining the size of land needed (7:8).

2.7 Ceramics: U/K

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: U/K

2.9 Food taboos:

All clans save the Sialo refused to eat elephant meat as it is akin to cannibalism due to the similarity of arrangement of mammary glands in elephants and humans (1:29). They kill any animal but will not eat any carnivorous animals (10:31).

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? U/K

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): U/K

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): U/K

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): U/K
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): U/K
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): U/K
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): U/K
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): U/K
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: U/K
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:
Polygyny is highly desired (as is more children) (3:227), and there is greater polygyny in wealthier men (5:347).
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?
Bridewealth was paid in beehives prior to 1909. Many began to marry non-Mukogodo in order to attain livestock bridewealth. The last beehive bridewealth was paid around 1931 (1:37).
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns:
Patrilineage (1:28)
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:
Sons die at a higher rate due to tendency to favor daughters over sons (2:279), but there is no evidence of deliberate infanticide (4:423).
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: U/K
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):
The lineages are currently exogamous (1:30). There may have been some Mukogodo and non-Mukogodo marriages before 1900 (1:30), but they usually married mostly among themselves (5:346). More exogamous marriages began after 1909 in order to attain livestock bridewealth instead of beehives. (1:30).
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? U/K
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”) U/K
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? U/K
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape U/K
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin) U/K
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? U/K
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring U/K
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? U/K
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
2.5:1 male to female (1:37)
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades:
No.
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older) U/K
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? U/K
- 4.24 Joking relationships? U/K
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations U/K
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules U/K
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? U/K
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? U/K
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)
Women often marry outside of the Mukogodo in order for the family to attain the bridewealth. The Mukogodo men must pay more for non-Mukogodo women making their marriage outside the community more difficult. (4:20)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? U/K
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: U/K

Warfare/homicide

- 4.31 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: U/K
- 4.32 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: U/K
- 4.33 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: U/K
- 4.34 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

Forced government relocations brought IIng'wesi, Digirri, Mumonyot, Maasai, and Samburu to Mukogodo lands, and gave them incentive to marry Mukogodo (3:226)

4.35 Cannibalism?

No.

All clans save the Sialo refused to eat elephant meat as it is akin to cannibalism due to the similarity of arrangement of mammary glands in elephants and humans (1:29).

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

The population was 200 during the cave period (pre 1920s) (3:224), and 1000 in the late 1980s (1:30).

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

Currently, men often spend a few months to a few years working in cities and on commercial farms, often to pay bridewealth (5:346).

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

Clans (1:28).

5.4 Post marital residence:

Virilocal (3:225).

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

Honey keeping was the basis of delineating family and clan territories, and the apiaries contributed to determining the size of land needed (7:8).

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): U/K

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: U/K

5.8 Village and house organization:

The Yaaku primarily lived in rock shelters (1:30).

5.9 Specialized village structures (men's houses): U/K

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? U/K

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

The Yaaku were organized into four clans and thirteen patrilineages (3:225, 1:28). The men are divided into *laiok*, *moran*, and *moruak* based on age, and have right and left handed generations (6:146).

5.12 Trade:

Land could be exchanged between clans as a fine for a youth impregnating an uncircumcised girl, or for an anti-social crime such as murder (7:11).

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

No.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR: U/K

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

They have no medicine man of their own, but consult a Mweru *laibon* called Lakaibe (10:31).

6.2 Stimulants: U/K

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

The Yaaku circumcised their sons from at least the mid 1800s (5:346).

6.4 Other rituals:

Females have clitoridectomies (before marriage), though this may be a recently adopted practice as a result of Maasai influence, however, informants are adamant that their ancestors have always performed them (1:40, 3:225).

6.5 Myths (Creation): U/K

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): U/K

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: U/K

6.8 Missionary effect: U/K

- 6.9 RCR revival: U/K
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: U/K
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? U/K
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy? U/K
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): U/K

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: U/K
- 7.2 Piercings: U/K
- 7.3 Haircut: U/K
- 7.4 Scarification: U/K
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):
The women currently wear jewelry closely identified with Maasai. (1:41)
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: U/K
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: U/K
- 7.8 Missionary effect: U/K
- 7.9 Types of clothing: U/K

8. Kinship systems

- 8.1 Sibling classification system: U/K
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate: U/K
- 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): U/K

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

The peak of the mountain Ol Doinyo Llassos is considered the holiest site for the Yaaku (1:28).

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