

1. Description

- 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Kwaio, Kwaio < Kwaiic < North Malaita < Malaita < Cristobal-Malaita < Southeast (Solomonic?) < Eastern Oceanic (Austronesian) (1, p.12)
- 1.2 Location: Central Mountains of Malaita, Solomon Islands (1, p.8)
- 1.3 Brief history: 1868, 2 men were taken from canoe, returned with steel tools etc; Many were taken to work on plantations (1, p.21) in exchange for goods ("cloth, twist tobacco, and gewgaws such as mirrors... "steel tools and firearms. Blood feuding escalated; several ships were looted and burned by strongmen as retribution for treatment on plantations (including the Borealis) (p.22)
- 1.4 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Missionaries returned with plantation workers. 1906-1920 South Sea Evangelical Mission enclaves established. 1911 first missionary was assassinated; punitive mission killed five villagers. 1922 "Australian District Officer W.R. Bell sought to extend the Pax Britannica to the then 'wild' east Malaita coast." October 1927 Bell, British cadet, and thirteen Solomon Islanders were killed by Kwaio; "punitive expedition led... to the death of more than a hundred people from the interior;" "systematically desecrated sacred things and places" many sought refuge in Christian Villages. Work on plantations became important on path to adulthood. Increased resentment by traditionalists through the 30's, conversations with U.S. soldiers increased resentment of British, development of underground movement and political confrontation. Mass arrests, repression of movement and gunboat diplomacy. 1953 onward and educated elite developed culminating in independence in 1978. (1, pp.20-29)
- 1.5 Ecology: "Dense rainforested slopes." (2, p.14) Most of Malaita is mountainous, no coastal land along east coast, flat shelf on the west coast; long stretches are relatively sheltered by mangrove islands or reefs. Only northernmost strip on east is sheltered from heavy seas (1, p.7)

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Taro
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: "Birds, insects, fish, cuscus opossums, and other morsel of protein-rich foods were only periodic supplements to a mainly vegetarian diet." (1, p.14)
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: "many have bows and arrows and killing clubs, as well as long machetes." (2, p.15) "...for decades there have been no Snider rifles." (2, p.16) Spears (2, p.23)
- 2.4 Food storage: "packets of fish" (1, p.23) "forest fibers (used to make ropes and cords, nets for trapping birds and fishing, bags, and lashings)." "relied heavily on giant bamboo (used for water and cooking containers, and in tons, torches and knives, and building construction).
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: "Men act as priestly intermediaries to ancestral ghosts and stage elaborate ritual cycles; women perform the bulk of the daily work of subsistence gardening, carrying water and firewood, cooking and cleaning, and caring for children. Men conduct interminable political discussions and litigation, as they had once staged blood feuds, while women work." (3, p.28) "responsible for the menstrual area... the food... the way people live [in her clearing]." (2, p.27) "pig herd jointly kept by father and mother." (1, p.36)
- 2.6 Land tenure: "Clearing primary forest with crude chert adzes and fire." "Children inherited these rights collectively, but with women marrying out, primary rights were held by and transmitted through men." "There is also a countervailing cognatic ideology, voiced in some contexts, that insists that ties through mother and maternal uncle are as strong and binding as those through father, and confer the same rights." (2, pp.23-24)
- 2.7 Ceramics: None
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: "an entrepreneurial feastgiver." (1, p. 11) neighbors take part in pig sacrifice and are sent pork (p.129) payment for curing non-kin of valuables and a feast (p.117)
- 2.9 Food taboos: Sweet potatoes are low status, "A woman can never eat a fo?ota (sacrificial) pig" (1, p.81)
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft? "Early European accounts mention the absence of canoes on the vast, almost landlocked harbor." (2, p.21) "Kwaio epics tell of how Toobebe and Afio were taken from their canoe near 'Aioo Island.'" (2, p.33)

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): Men ~ 160 cm, Females ~ 150 cm
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): "adolescence" (1, p.38)
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Unaddressed
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): "87% of observed households represented nuclear families" (4, p.992) Single father and mother, number of children seems to vary.
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): "Although a child begins to get pre-masticated solid food in the second half of the first year, he or she may continue to nurse for two or three years. Birth of a subsequent sibling will substantially displace a nursing child and may lead to full weaning." (1, pp.30-31)
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): 30+ for men, 16-25 for women (1, p.18)
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Divorce rare
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: "Marriage, with rare exceptions, was serially monogamous." (1, p.18)
- 4.8 Arranged marriage, bride purchase/service, dowry: "Marriage involves large-scale reciprocal prestations from the groom's kin, conceived as bridewealth, and foodstuffs of lesser value from the bride's kin." (4, p.992)
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: "there is a cluster of descendants in the male line who hold primary rights, with a senior man acting as steward and spokesman; and other descendants through one or more female links who hold secondary rights." "There is also a countervailing cognatic ideology, voiced in some contexts, that insists that ties through m other and maternal uncle are as strong and binding as those through father, and confer the same rights." (2, p.24)
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: "Once [the young boy] acquires linguistic competence, he can cause illness or misfortune with a stylized curse directed at an adult." (1, p.33) "Some - [the young girl's] urinating in the house or clearing rather than the women's latrine - are matters that can be excused and even laughed at in a transitional period before a girl is fully continent, but they are soon to be a matter of life and death." (1, p.32) Parents rarely teach children taboos directly; instead they learn about *adalo* and the way of the world by observing how adults behave.
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: unaddressed. "many adults of both sexes (20-30 percent) never marry." (4, p.992) Homosexuality is not otherwise addressed; society seems very sexually reserved (killings often occur when sexual taboos are broken.)
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Must marry outside of fourth cousin, only marrying of other Kwaio is addressed in sources.
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? No evidence.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows") ." "men give birth to ancestral spirits through rituals that are *abu* to an inimical to women as women give birth to humans through rituals that are *abu* and inimical to men." (2, p.27) The Kwaio understanding of the birth process is not addressed; things related to menstruation and birth are very tabooed.
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? No evidence.
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: "They were powerless to resist male aggression directly.... Women were direct or indirect victims - as targets of life-threatening sexual aggression and invasion." (2, p.32)
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): "Ideally, cognatic kin who are fourth cousins or closer (bilaterally reckoned) should not marry." (4, p.992) "The most common and favored pattern was for the man to bring home a girl with whom he had a chaste dating relationship... Child betrothal, and 'seizure' of a girl on behalf of an older (or reluctant) man, were less common variants." (1, p.18)
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?: No "The threat of sudden death made sexual adventuring tremendously dangerous, adultery almost suicidal." (1, p.226)
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: None, adultery is a grave crime.
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?: father if there is a teenage daughter to help perform household tasks, otherwise kin of the father or mother (4)
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: "the mean number of adult men per descent group was 8.68, the range from 3 to 20."

- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: Men are not allowed to talk to woman after birth for a period of time (1, p.125)
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): None
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?: Very serious consequences for Incest (see below)
- 4.24 Joking relationships?: “Older children may curse one another in jest, and with impunity.” (1, p.33) Otherwise would be a very grave offense; possible to have close friendships? Hamlets are generally composed of several nuclear families, which are endangered by each other’s taboos, likely have a very close relationship.
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: “there is a cluster of descendants in the male line who hold primary rights, with a senior man acting as steward and spokesman; and other descendants through one or more female links who hold secondary rights.” “There is also a countervailing cognatic ideology, voiced in some contexts, that insists that ties through m other and maternal uncle are as strong and binding as those through father, and confer the same rights.” (2, p.24)
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: “Adulterous or incestuous relationships were usually dealt with by the summary killing of both parties, although an adulterous wife was sometimes spared (on the cultural premise that a man is the active instigator of sexual intercourse).” (1, p.19)
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?: Yes, “Marriage involves large-scale reciprocal prestations from the groom’s kin, conceived as bridewealth, and foodstuffs of lesser value from the bride’s kin.” (4, p.992)
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?: During the birth ritual, women are not addressed by their name but are instead referred to by *suniai* (6, p.386)
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?): Communities are primarily composed of nuclear families and descent groups; very strong taboos against incest, so most marriages are preferred to be outside the community.

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: Unknown
- 4.15 Outgroup vs in-group cause of violent death: Blood feuds central to the society, “Killings were more often executions of victims ambushed on paths or in gardens or clearings than feats of warrior prowess in combat, but there was a good deal of the latter too. A group with a grievance – accusing another group of the theft of a pig or valuables, or angry over a curse or insult – sometimes marched into the clearing of their adversaries, demanding compensation. An angry squaring off of warrior leaders could lead to mortal combat, and leave several men dead on each side.” (2, p.30)
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: “Quite often, homicide victims were women – not only victims of actual or attempted seduction, but women accused of theft, or sisters of men who had violated rights or reputations of other groups by curses or seductions.” (2, p.31) “Women were often killed for things men did... Or a man would proposition a girl, and then men would say, “Let’s kill her.”(p.32) “If a virtuous girl was propositioned (even by an eligible suitor), she was supposed to go into her father’s men’s house to report it: she would then have to be killed by her own kin. Adulterous or incestuous relationships were usually death with by the summary killing of both parties, although an adulterous wife was sometimes spared (on the cultural premise that a man is the active instigator of sexual intercourse).” (1, p.19)
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): “In Uru Harbor and in several coastal colonies, there were some saltwater people who bartered fish with mountain dwellers.” “Peoples of the coastal slopes and ridges netted tiny fish, using lift nets and bamboo rafts, gathered shellfish for food and shells for manufacture of valuables, and prepared salt and lime. Trade with peoples of the further bush was carried on as much by these downhill people as by the saltwater people, who spoke a different dialect.” (1, p.14)

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: “Kwaio settlements ranged in size from 2 to 28, with a mean of 9.95. The number of component households ranged from 1 to 8, with a mean of 2.19.” (1, p.18)
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): “Residence is quite fluid, and settlements are usually moved every two or three years.” (4, p.991)
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): “There is little formal political structure beyond the segmentary opposition of descent groups. Typical Melanesian ‘big men’ arise, especially in the realm of mortuary feasting, and can command an obligated following in some situations. This status is far from formal, and many descent groups have no ‘big men.’” (4, p.992)
- 5.4 Post marital residence: Patrilocal with Uxorilocal secondary (Ethnographic Atlas)
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): “To live in the same clearing is to place lives mutually in mortal danger, since a pollution violation in one household can bring disaster on another; usually only those who grew up together take such mutual risks. But a narrow strip of vegetation, even one a few inches wide, insulates one clearing from another in terms of pollution danger.” (2, p.23) “The landscape is divided into named land tracts, each with a remembered history, over which particular people have rights...A land tract, usually between three and ten hectares, represented a single complex of cultivation.” Each area also has an ancestral shrine (2, pp.23-24) Evidence of defensive structures (2, p.21)
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): “Only men (and boys) can enter the men’s houses and shrines; only women (and infant boys) can enter the *kaakaba* (menstrual area) and *bisi* (menstrual hut).” (2, p.23)
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: “Older children may curse one another in jest, and with impunity.” (1, p.33) “The pipers joke between tunes, stirring and stretching to keep warm, stroking thighs almost raw from slapping.” (2, p.15)
- 5.8 Village and house organization: “dwelling houses, built on bare earth, with piggins under the eaves; men’s house (sometimes two, one sacred and one secular) in the upper clearing – like the dwelling houses, with tiny raised doors for defensive purposes; menstrual hut (sometimes two or more) in the lower clearing, symbolically a mirror-image of the men’s house.” (2, p.23)
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (men’s houses, menstrual huts, ancestral shrines (6, p.385)
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Mats on the floor of houses.
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: “Descent groups” are the primary social organization; rights to land are transferred, primarily through the male line but also through the female line. There is a great deal of flexibility and variation. (4, p.991)
- 5.12 Trade: “Some groups apparently specialized in the production of adze blades for barter, but otherwise there was little trade within the mountains. The peoples of the interior obtained fish, salt, and other marine products from colonies of “saltwater people” along the coast, through barter and purchase (using strung shell valuables...); regular markets were apparently held for such trade.” (2, pp.22-23)
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? “Each ‘descent group’ has a religious officiant ... who sacrifices pigs, plays the key part in rituals, and maintains genealogical knowledge. He in turn is backed by a secondary officiant (often a potential successor) who sacrifices the pigs that women eat at feasts and conducts some phases of collective rituals.” (2, p.25)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6 Time allocation to RCR: Mostly minor rituals, but are performed frequently; men seem to have few other duties (women are responsible for the majority of subsistence activities). R/C/R integrated into taboos and daily activities.
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): A “bespelled poultice made from the bark of a tree with a tall, straight, unblemished trunk that resembles the way the limb is supposed to heal” is used for broken bones, A “highly slippery substance” is prepared for a difficult birth, and “highly scented aromatic herbs” are used to attract wealth. (1, pp.55-56) “[Fuamae’s] psychological instability was regarded as a manifestation of ancestral power: he was virtually a shaman in a society that does not institutionalize the role.” (1, p.203)
- 6.2 Stimulants: None
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):
 Death: distinction drawn between a person who has been murdered and one who has died of natural causes: the former requires vengeance (blood feud) while the latter is followed by elaborate ritual and feasting. A wake is held on the 10th day after the death, and the 10th day after that, etc. until the 100th day when a feast is held “with a larger-scale presentation of puddings, fish, and often other prestations” by kin. Mourning continues, “men allow facial and head hair to grow, and people are generally unkempt,” for several months until a mortuary feast is given. (1, pp.145-146)

Birth: "After a woman gives birth, she and the baby enter a taboo state that closely parallels the priestly seclusion following high sacrifice. They remain in a birth area surrounded by forest far below the hamlet, strictly forbidden for men to see. Like the secluded priest, the new mother may be referred to as *suniai* instead of by her name, and her needs are attended to by a younger woman. Over the following weeks, a series of desacralization rituals are performed to allow mother and child to reenter first the menstrual area and, later, the family area." (6, p.386)

6.4 Other rituals: Sacrifices are most commonly performed for purification/expiation, most often due to a woman urinating or menstruating in a house or clearing (1, p.128)

6.5 Myths (Creation): "We sprouted from the earth like leaves: the land is like our mother. We sprouted from the earth – and death originated along with us humans. It's as though they put us here and they put dying here along with us All the things we die from sprouted, along with us, from the earth along with leaves and stones and trees. It's as though the earth created death along with us humans." (1, p.41)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): panpipes (2, pp.14-15)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: "women play important parts in rituals, especially those following crematory sacrifice and death of a priest; they are excluded from shrines." "men give birth to ancestral spirits through rituals that are *abu* to an inimical to women as women give birth to humans through rituals that are *abu* and inimical to men." (2, p.27) "the pigs are killed – the fo'ota and purificatory pigs by the priest, in the shrine; the women's pigs by the 'women's priest' at the margin of the clearing." (1, p.166)

6.8 Missionary effect: Many have converted to Christianity, though the Kwaio are strikingly traditional.

6.9 RCR revival: Very strong politically motivated revival to fight colonialism (1, p.25)

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: Dead relatives are *adalo*, or 'ancestral spirits', and "are beings that help and punish: the source of success, gratification, and security, and the cause of illness, death, and misfortune." *Adalo* observe the breaking of taboos and must be sacrificed to or conversed with through divination. "*Adalo* are seen to have ongoing social relations, based on friendship, jealousy, rivalry, and kinship, as humans do in life." (1, p.103) "A living person has a 'shade' (*nunu*); and it is in this noumenal manifestation of the person's being that remains, after death, a presence in the community. A shade comes into being, Kwaio think, with the birth of an infant." "Most Malaita peoples conceive of two soul components, one of which goes to a Land of the Dead, while the other remains as an ancestral spirit in the community." (1, p.105) "A man dies and his shade becomes an *adalo*.... When we (women?) die, our flesh just rots" (1, p.107)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? No evidence; most likely not

6.12 Is there teknonymy? No evidence; most likely not

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: None apparent

7.2 Piercings: Ears (various pictures from sources 1 and 2)

7.3 Haircut: Cropped short in men and women (very tight curls)

7.4 Scarification: None apparent

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): "ornaments of shell and dolphin teeth; married women wearing little pubic aprons." "Some of the men are naked or wearing fighting belts." (2, p. 15)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: During the sacrifice of a pig, the priest and his assistants will "put on cowrie shell ornaments and fighting belts. They take up their old weapons, clubs, and spears." (1, p.135)

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: pubic aprons in women, fighting belts in men.

7.8 Missionary effect: Society seems very traditional; T-shirts and shorts are seen, possibly influenced by missionaries?

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: The society has remained relatively conservative; some western clothing has entered (dresses and shirts), but much has remained traditional. "when they were at a mortuary feast or marriage feast, when they were so obviously following ancestral ways in sacrificing pigs and exchanging strung-shell valuables – and when I wanted to photograph them... they put on their new shorts and T-shirts." (2, p.16)

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: "The Kwaio of Malaita classify the kin of any individual as *futalana*." (7, p.347)

8.2 Sororate, levirate: No evidence.

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): Cousins referred to by Hawaiian system (Ethnographic Atlas)

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Very strict consequences for female fluids and sexual taboos. Blood feuding is common; families put out bounties (in pigs and beads) for vengeance against offenders. Pigs are kept small so large pigs don't have to be sacrificed (would represent a much higher level of investment). The Kwaio are strikingly traditional; R.M. Keesing, who has been described as Marxist, is the primary anthropologist responsible for much of our knowledge of the Kwaio. His interest may be a result of their seemingly successful avoidance of strong missionary or western influence. The Kwaio believe in ancestral spirits, *adalo*, which are angered when taboos are broken and must be appeased by sacrificing pigs at the ancestral shrines.

10. Warfare

"Kwaio epics recount assaults on fortified *labu* refuges by massed warriors led by a shield-carrying champion; modes of attack and defense are still a lively part of oral tradition." (2, p.21) Outside of this traditional story telling, most violence seems to be a part of blood feuding resulting from moral insults (theft or the breaking of sexual taboos).

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