

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Boloki, Baloki, Boleki, Buluki, River Ruki (1)

1.2 ISO code: bkt

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): 0.90, 18.70

- Democratic Republic of the Congo; Equateur Province. Settlement exists on both sides of the Congo River upstream from Mbandaka. (1)

1.4 Brief history:

- No written history. (2, p. 162)
- Thought to have originated with the first movements of Bantu (2, p.159-160) c. 1500 BCE in the Western Bantu expansions (3).

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

- The primary religion among contemporary Boloki is Christianity. (4)
- Latinized Alphabet. (1)
- Language shift towards Lingala. (1)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment): Swamp-forest and wetland. (5)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: 4,200 total population. (1)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- Small game – antelope, coypu (river rat), gazelle. (2, pg. 234)
- Fish – No varieties named. (2, pg. 145)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Spears, knives, and occasionally guns. (2, p. 68)

2.4 Food storage: No specific information found.

2.5 Sexual division of production:

- Males fish, hunt, and work as blacksmiths; females farm, cook, and make ceramics. (2, pg. 140-148)

2.6 Land tenure:

- Land is owned by those who clear it for farming. (2, p. 110)
- Land surrounding a village is owned by the people of the village; land ownership is communal. (2, p. 109)
- Sons inherit land from their fathers; the eldest son inherits the larger portion of property. (2, p. 111)

2.7 Ceramics:

- “The pottery made by Boloki women divides itself easily into three kinds: 1. Saucepans of various sizes but only one shape. 2. Wine pots from 6 inches high to 2 and 3 feet high and broad in proportion. 3. Firepans or hearths for carrying fire in their canoes while travelling.” (2, p. 87)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: None specified.

2.9 Food taboos:

- During a wife’s pregnancy, a father is prohibited a certain set. This set of foods varies from father to father. (2, p. 132)
- “There is not a single article of food that is not taboo to someone...” (2, p. 294)

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

- Boloki make use of canoes in fishing and travel. (2, p. 235-245)

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): “The Boloki man is above the average height...” (2, p. 160) No specific mean found for men or women.

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): No statistic found.

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): No age given.

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): No age given.

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): None.

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- No specific age is given for males; however, Weeks always refers to husbands as “men” indicating post-pubescence. (2)
- “Young girls and even babies are betrothed in marriage...” (2, p. 122)
- Weeks mentions a “suitable age” for girls to marry, but does not specify a number. (2, p. 122)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: No number given.

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: No percentage given.

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

- A bride is worth the price of two male slaves and two female slaves. (2, p. 123).

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: No information provided.

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?: No explanation found.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”): No explanation found.
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?
- “...among the Boloki it appears that every family has what is called a *liboma*, it may be a pool in the bush, or in the forest, or on an island... wherever the *liboma* may be it is regarded as the preserve of the unborn children of the family.” (2, p. 129)
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape:
- “They would fondle their women, yet treat them contemptuously as inferiors...” (2, p. 78)
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): None.
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?: No.
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: None.
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?:
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: No statistic given.
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: None.
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): None.
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?: None.
- 4.24 Joking relationships?: None.
- 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?:
- “On the marriage money being completed the man takes a brass bracelet, and in the presence of witnesses he puts it on the child’s arm, saying, ‘This is my wife.’” (2, p. 122)
- 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?):
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?
- Men petition the father or, in the case of free women, propose to them directly. (2, p. 122-123)
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: None found.

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: No statistics found.
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: No statistics found.
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:
- In-group: John Weeks notes that some slave wives had been murdered out of anger on the part of their owners. (2, p. 78)
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):
- “The Boloki are proud of their name and their origin; and the neighboring tribes acknowledge their courage and endurance, and prefer their friendship to their enmity.” (2, p. 166)
- 4.18 Cannibalism?
- John Weeks refers to Boloki as, “erstwhile cannibals” who sometimes murder their slave wives and, “invite their neighbors to feast with them on the body.” (2, p. 78)

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: No statistic given.
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):
- Boloki have chiefs; associated with abundance of goods or wives. (2, p. 163-164)
 - Witchdoctors are considered authoritative and dangerous. (2, p. 127)
- 5.4 Post marital residence:
- In the betrothal period before marriage, intended husbands build homes. (2, p. 124)
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):
- Women are considered inferior. (2, p. 78)
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:
- 5.8 Village and house organization:
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses):
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:
- 5.12 Trade:
- No markets. (2, p. 114)
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6.0 Time allocation to RCR:
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- *Nganga* or medicine men are of little variety. (2, p. 276)
- Women can be witch-doctors. (2, p. 280)

6.2 Stimulants: None found.

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

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation):

- Traditional Boloki religion recognizes a supreme being named Njambe. (2, p. 246)
- Some believe that Njambe created the world and withdrew to allow it to function on its own. (2, p. 247)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- Some traditional Boloki religious thought appears to hold that the deceased are reborn as *liboma* or that deceased spirits carry on having “spirit children” who become *liboma*. (2, p. 130)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?: No.

6.12 Is there teknonymy?: No.

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.):

- Traditional Boloki religion is more or less deistic; medicine men and witch-doctors can manipulate the spirits who are involved on earth for the benefit or detriment of members of the community.

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

- “I have noticed three kinds of tattooing among the Boloki. (1) A single line of elliptical punch-marks running from temple to temple just above the eyebrows. (2) A cock’s comb (called *likwala*) running from the tip of the nose in some, and from between the eyebrows in others, to the crown of the head. (3) A cock’s comb plus a palm leaf on each temple, or some other marking.” (2, p. 167)

7.2 Piercings:

- Ear piercings. (2, p. 132)

7.3 Haircut: No information found.

7.4 Scarification: No information found.

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

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

- Males have right ear lobes pierced, females have left ear lobes pierced (left is a symbol of inferiority). (2, p. 132)

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: Placed special emphasis on the eldest son. (2, p. 111)

8.2 Sororate, levirate: Sororate. (2, p. 130)

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

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

1. Ethnologue.com - Boloki: http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=bkt
2. Weeks, John H (1913) *Boloki And Other Congo Tribes or Among Congo Cannibals*. London: Seeley, Service, & CO. Ltd.
3. Wikipedia - Bantu Expansion: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bantu_expansion
4. joshuaproject.net - Boloki, River Ruki of Congo, Democratic Republic of: <http://www.joshuaproject.net/people-profile.php?rog3=CG&peo3=10919>
5. Wikipedia – Mbandaka: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mbandaka#Geography>