

1. Description

- 1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Bongo/Babongo, multiple languages spoken influenced by Bantu neighbors, include Tsogho, Punu, Nzebi
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): N/A – not a Bantu people, but influenced by Bantu neighbors in Gabon
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): -3.10, 12.00
- 1.4 Brief history: Pygmies, previously hunter-gather nomads in Gabon, foragers; 20th century saw them starting to settle villages; previously before settling, noticeably different from Bantu peoples but that has since changed; Bantu neighbors consider them almost animals, subhuman
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Languages influenced by Bantu peoples in Gabon, and since settling they have acquired very similar physical characteristics
- 1.6 Ecology (natural environment): Forest
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Estimated to be 12,000 but there is no definite number

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Honey, mushrooms, fruit, wild vegetables
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Game, fish, crabs, armadillo
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?
- 2.4 Food storage: n/a
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: Men hunt game and women help grow in a process of subsistence agriculture, prepare meals; women grow corn and potatoes; with help of children they forage for food
- 2.6 Land tenure:
- 2.7 Ceramics: n/a
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: n/a
- 2.9 Food taboos: n/a
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft? n/a

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): 1.2 – 1.5 m, previously smaller Pygmies but after sexual contact with neighboring Bantu people have become taller
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): 1.2 – 1.5 m, previously smaller Pygmies but after sexual contact with neighboring Bantu people have become taller

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): n/a
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): No definite age, but marriage and procreation happens around teen years
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): n/a
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): n/a
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): n/a
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Divorce is rare; man/woman seen as mating partners for life
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: No figures
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: n/a
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: n/a
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: n/a
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Homosexuality not accepted
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): N/a
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? Fathers are expected to stay with family for life
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”) n/a
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? n/a
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Not uncommon
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin) n/a
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Limited to inside marriage; not uncommon instances of rape
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring n/a
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? N/a
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females N/a
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades n/a
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older) n/a
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? n/a
- 4.24 Joking relationships? n/a
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations N/a
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules n/a
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? n/a
- 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?) Within community is encouraged for both sexes; discouraged to marry a neighboring member of Bantu tribe

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Parents arrange marriage

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: n/a

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: n/a

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: n/a

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: n/a

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Live near neighboring Bantu tribes, but Bantu peoples look down on Bongo peoples; however, there has been sexual contact though it is discouraged, especially on the side of Bantus

4.18 Cannibalism? n/a

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Previously were nomads, but now remain in settled villages

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Divided into clans with chief in top position of authority

5.4 Post marital residence: Men, not women, join the female's family/dwelling upon marriage

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): n/a

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):n/a

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: n/a

5.8 Village and house organization: Live in camps that include up to 8 huts that can house up to 20; huts made from material gleaned from surrounding forest

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): Men have special huts; in the front of the hut is placed a large pole that represents the male genitalia and only males who have been initiated (no boys) may enter

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Sleep in huts

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: n/a

5.12 Trade: n/a

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? n/a

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR: n/a

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Treatment and medicine performed by N'gana, the name for the spiritual leader of the village who is trained to have strong knowledge of spells to cure disease/illness

6.2 Stimulants: Use Ibogo plant for hallucinogenic purposes

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): After death, they believe a person's spirit will stay in the village and can be malevolent, but ritual overrides this – The deceased body is washed in the home and wrapped in cloth, then it is taken to its burial place in the forest by the men; to symbolize the purification of the village and the non-threat of the spirit, women paint faces white then perform dance and song to send the spirit out of the village; funerals last three days

6.4 Other rituals: Utilize the strong and sometimes fatal Iboga, a hallucinogenic plant in religious rituals; it is worshiped "as the source of spiritual knowledge"; eating it gives power to see future and has healing properties, used as a stimulant before ceremonies and hunting trips – using it allows them to communicate with nature; boys become men in an initiation ceremony, involves consuming Ibogo in presence of Bwiti religious leader; has visions which allow the male to discover "true self" and "vividly revisit the consequences of past actions"; this is done for 24 hours before the male is taken by other men to a river where he is suspended over water; later dance and song is performed by the village; it lasts 3 days

6.5 Myths (Creation): Believe they were the world's first population; believe in the forest are "malevolent and benign" spirits that can be summoned by drums

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): Music is a large part of religious ceremonies and rituals – for instance, music drives out malevolent souls of deceased Bongo people during 3-day long funerals, and music used to celebrate a boy's initiation into becoming a man

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Previously women could not be religious leaders, but now are able to

6.8 Missionary effect: There have been instances of Christian missionaries accompanied by soldiers, but most still remain Bwiti

6.9 RCR revival: Bongo people are strongly involved in the Bwiti religion

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: Described in 6.3, believe spirits of deceased remain in village and must be cleansed through ritual burial, song and dance and face painting during a funeral that last 3 days

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? N/A

6.12 Is there teknonymy? N/A

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): Bwiti religion; Bongo people believe they are scorcers; frequently utilize Iboga plant for hallucinogenic purposes that give visions into future, act as stimulant before hunting trips; believe intoxicants help see deeper into themselves and nature; spiritual leaders can be male or female and that leader occupies significant position in the village

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: n/a
- 7.2 Piercings: n/a
- 7.3 Haircut: n/a
- 7.4 Scarification: n/a
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): n/a
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: Faces painted white during funeral ceremonies
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: n/a
- 7.8 Missionary effect: n/a
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: **n/a**

8. Kinship systems

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

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

1. Piya Bouanga, Pierre: Interivew with Kaya a Mbaya, a Babongo Woman; University of Wisconsin Press
2. BBC documentary: The Babongo; last updated March 2008f