

1. Description

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

- Gikuyu, Gikuyu/Kikuyu/Gekoyo, Niger Congo

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): 639-3

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Kenya (1° 00'N and 38° 00'E)

1.4 Brief history:

- “The country of the Gikuyu... is in the central part of Kenya. It is divided into five administrative districts: Kiambu, Fort Hall (Murang’a), Nyeri, Embu, and Meru. The population is approximately one million. Owing to the alienation of agricultural and pastoral land, about 110,000 Gikuyu live mostly as squatters on farms on European land in various districts of Kenya. The rest of the population inhabits the Gikuyu Reserve and the towns. The Gikuyu people are agriculturalists; they herd flocks of sheep and goats, and, to a less extent, cattle, since their social organization requires a constant supply of stock for such varied purposes as “marriage insurance,” payments, sacrifices, meat feasts, magical rites, purification ceremonies, and as means of supplying clothing to the community.” (1pxv-xvi)

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

- Missionaries:
 - “Among ourselves, a large part of the character and moral training of our children is considered to be among the normal duties of the parents – and long may it remain so. There are, too, many Kikuyu parents, especially among the genuine Christians and among those who still retain faith in their ancient beliefs who try to train their children to become fit members of the adult community. But there are countless other Kikuyu children today for whom ‘education’ means only book learning and who are growing up without any real preparation for good citizenship and the responsibilities of modern life. On this failure of the education system that we have introduced, in place of the old tribal one, a heavy responsibility for the troubles of today must rest.” (2p77)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

- “Kikuyu is a land of great natural fertility, although soil deterioration has caused serious problems. The soil is usually deep and rich, derived from soft volcanic tuffs that supported dense forest down to the time of the incoming Kikuyu. It is retentive of moisture on account of its fine-grained texture, and remains moist even in time of drought: it is also light to work.” (3p17)
- “Before the Kikuyu spread over their present lands the area was densely forested, but today almost the only forest left is an almost continuous fringe, eight to fifteen miles in width, on the lower slopes of Mount Kenya... Most of the country of the Kikuyu is deforested.” (3p17)

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

- Population size:
 - 1,026,341 (3p12)
- Density (Average density per square mile)
 - Kiambu: 777
 - Fort Hall: 515
 - Nyeri: 536
 - Embu: 163
 - Meru: 188
- Sub-clan size (mbari)
 - “The smallest mbari consisted of 32 persons, and the largest of 5,000. The mode lies between 101 and 200 people.” (3p27)

2. Economy

“The chief occupations among the Gikuyu are agriculture and rearing of livestock, such as cattle, sheep and goats. Each family, i.e. a man, his wife or wives and their children, constitute an economic unit. This is controlled and strengthened by the system of division of labour according to sex. From the homestead to the fields and to the tending of the domestic animals, every sphere of activity is clearly and systematically defined. Each member of the family unit knows perfectly well what task he or she is required to perform, in their economic productivity and distribution of the family resources, so as to ensure the material prosperity of the group.” (1p52)

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- The main carbohydrate staples are yams, sweet potatoes, maize, millet, and various kinds of beans. (1p53)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- The main protein-lipid sources are sheep and goat, but occasionally bull and oxen. (1p63, 1p87)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

- “The most important weapons are: (1) spears; (2) swords; (3) bow and arrows; (4) shields; (5) a variety of clubs and knobkerries; and (6) slings.” (1p82)
- “...the chief use for the weapon is hunting, and in former days it was used in tribal wars.” (1p84)

2.4 Food storage:

- Food and cattle is stored in the hut of wife/wives.
 - “...the woman’s hut is strictly used for her private purposes and family matters.” (1p81)

2.5 Sexual division of production:

- Men
 - “Men plant bananas, yams, sweet potato vines, sugar-canes, tobacco, and also provide poles for propping up bananas and yams.” (1p53)

- "...men clear the bush and cut big trees, and also break the virgin soil with digging sticks or hoes." (1p53)
- "Cutting drains or water furrows and pruning of banana plants, as well as making roads and bridges, is the work of men." (1p53)
- "Tending of cattle, sheep and goats, and also slaughtering and distributing the meat and preparing the skins, is entirely the men's duty." (1p53)
- "Wood-carving, smith's work, bee-keeping and hunting are men's occupations." (1p53)
- Women
 - "Women plant maize, various kinds of beans, millet and sweet potato vines." (1p53)
 - "...prepare the ground for sowing seeds." (1p53)
 - "Harvesting is done chiefly by the women." (1p53)
 - "Dress-making, pottery and weaving of baskets is exclusively women's profession." (1p53)

2.6 Land tenure:

- "According to the Gikuyu customary law of land tenure every family unit had a land right of one form or another. While the whole tribe defended collectively the boundary of their territory, every inch of land within it had its owner." (1p22)
 - Buying and Selling Land
 - "After land was bought from Ndorobo, any man who held such land, through purchase or inheritance, had full rights to sell it outright or give it to any one as he liked without consulting any one, except the elders who acted as the ceremonial witnesses in all land transactions. By inheritance we mean a single son inheriting the land from his father who had no other relatives." (1p32)
 - Land Inheritance
 - "After the death of the father the land passed on to his sons, the eldest son took his father's place. At this juncture the system of land tenure changed a little, there was no one who could regard the land as 'mine.' All would call it 'our land.' The eldest son who had assumed the title of moramati (titular or trustee) had no more rights than his brothers, except the title; he could not sell the land without the agreement of his brothers who had the same full cultivation rights on the pieces of land which they cultivated as well as those which were cultivated by their respective mothers." (1p32-33)
 - Ceremony of Marking the Boundary
 - "In analysing the Gikuyu system of land tenure the most important aspect and deciding factor as to the ownership of land is the ceremony of marking the boundary...It was only when the purchaser had paid or agreed to pay the number of sheep and goats required as the price of the land, that the two parties concluded an agreement in the form of a ceremony. This was done in the presence of the principal elders of the district who acted as witnesses." (1p38)

2.7 Ceramics:

- In the pottery industry all the work, from start to finish, is done by women; the digging of the clay, beating and softening it, the moulding and drying, the burning of the pots, and finally, marketing- all these are entirely the tasks of women. Men are debarred by custom from approaching the moulding-place, especially when the work is in progress. Men are not allowed to touch any material associated with this work. The presence of a man at the moulding-place is said to have a bad effect on the articles and causes the pots to break when they are put on the fire." (1p84-85)
- The pottery industry is not carried all the year round, but is restricted to certain seasons. The most favourable time for making earthenware vessels is during the time when crops are nearly ripe, and again after the harvest...The industry is carried on with two purposes in view: firstly, to satisfy the family's wants; and secondly, for marketing. The latter is the most important and deciding factor as to whether pots are to be manufactured or not, for unless the potters are satisfied that there is a good market for their articles they will not undertake the task." (1p85)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

- None found

2.9 Food taboos:

- "Sexual intercourse must not take place... whilst food is being cooked, or the food will have to be thrown away, for an act of this nature renders the food unclean and unfit for human consumption. Anyone eating such food will have thahu (defilement), and will have to be cleansed by a mondo mogo (witch doctor), for it is feared that unless this is done, disaster will befall such a man." (1p81)

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

- None found

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

- Neither men nor women's height is specified, but they are said to be of medium height only. Women are of medium stature. (3p53)

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

- Neither men nor women's weight is specified, but they are said to be slender, slightly built, strong and muscular. Women are of slender build. (3p53)

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

- Age is not specifically mentioned but menstruation is necessary to proceed with the fourth stage of marriage.
 - “After all the arrangements are made in regard to rorecio, the maturity of the girl is discussed. The boy’s parents say to the girl’s parents: ‘Is your daughter grown-up?’-meaning: ‘Has she menstruated yet?’ At the end of the discussion a final day is fixed on which to sign the marriage contract.” (1p162-163)

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

- No specific age is given but women get married as young as 15 year old and “...they regard the procreation of children as their first and most sacred duty...(1p158)” which means that Gikuyu women probably have children as young as 15.

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

- It is not mentioned how many wives a man should take but he should have four children.
 - “And, therefore, a family is constituted by a permanent union between one man and one woman or several women...The Gikuyu tribal custom requires that a married couple should have at least four children, two male and two female.” (1p157-158)

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

- Women generally have children every 3 years. (1p158)

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- “Women generally marry between the ages of fifteen and twenty, while the majority of men start marrying from the age of twenty-five.” (1p170)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

- A specific percentage is not given, but divorce is rare.
 - “Among Gikuyu divorce is very rare, because of the fact that a wife is regarded as the foundation-rock on which the homestead is built...According to the Gikuyu customary law, a husband may divorce his wife on the grounds of (1) barrenness; (2) refusal to render conjugal rights without reason; (3) practicing witchcraft; (4) being an habitual thief; (5) willful desertion; (6) continual gross misconduct. A wife has the same right to divorce her husband on these grounds except (6) owing perhaps to the system of polygamy. Besides the above mentioned grounds, she can divorce her husband for cruelty, ill-treatment, drunkenness and impotence.” (1p176-177)

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

- Specific percentage not given, but on average there are two wives per household.
 - “The Gikuyu customary law of marriage provides that a man may have as many wives as he can support, and that the larger one’s family the better it is for him and the tribe.” (1p167)

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

- The Gikuyu prefer not to call the exchange of livestock bride purchase but bride insurance.
 - “Far from being a purchase, the handing over of such stock was a guarantee of good faith and of the belief on the part of the grooms family that the young man would make a good husband in accordance with law and custom. On the bride’s side, the acceptance by her family of the stock was equally a guarantee that they, for their part, believed that the girl would make a good wife. If by any chance the marriage was later to break down as a result of the failure of the young man to behave properly, then his family would be liable to forfeit all ‘marriage insurance’ stock, while the wife would be permitted to go back to her own people. On the other hand, if the marriage proved a failure owing to the girl’s instability and through her fault, her family would have to hand back not only the stock received as marriage insurance but all the computed...offspring.” (2p15-16)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

- “...property shall be divided among the sons so that each son will share in the property associated with his mother and her hut; this includes cultivated land, livestock and movable property.” (3p46)
- “the Kikuyu inheritance by will is so much the rule that no fixed custom as to distribution can be laid down, but that ‘the father’s power to make a will may be said to be confined to bequeathing his property to his immediate heirs only, so that it is in practice only the distribution which he decides’.” (3p47)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

- “It is etiquette for a son or daughter to talk to the father in a gentle and polite tone, and the parent, except when reprimanding or correcting his children, is required by custom to reciprocate the compliment in the same way as his children extend to him.” (1p11)
- “The great attachment and respect shown to the mother by her children is due to the fact that she is their nurse, and has daily closer contact with them than the father. She feeds and looks after the clothing and ornaments of the children. When they are in trouble, they first go to their mother, to appeal or confess to her. If the matter needs the attention of the father it is the mother who takes it before him and tactfully explains the children’s needs to her husband.” (1p11-12)

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

- “...the practice of homosexuality is unknown among the Gikuyu. The freedom of intercourse allowed between young people of opposite sex makes it unnecessary, and encourages them to acquire experience which will be useful in married life.” (1p156)

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

- “Within clans are smaller units, the mbari, and these, or a group of these, are exogamous” (3p24)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?

- The role of men in the conception is simply to be potent and to render a family with their wife/wives, which denotes status amongst clan members, and to be a disciplinary figure once the child is born. (1p11-12)

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)?
- None found
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape
- The occurrence of rape is not specified, but compensation is rendered to the woman's guardian. (3p24)
 - "Rape is a private delict against the woman's guardian whether she is married or unmarried: it is regarded as being of the same degree of seriousness in either case." (3p42)
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)
- The Gikuyu people are allowed to choose any woman they choose to marry so there is no familial preference. (1p159)
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?
- No, women do not enjoy the same sexual freedoms as men do. The woman is punished if she is found committing adultery.
 - "...it is an offence for a wife to invite a man secretly to her hut, even a member of the age-group. To do so would be regarded as committing adultery... Any man who is caught breaking this rule is punished by the kiama, and sometimes the husband takes the law into his own hands, and before the kiama punishes the offender he is given a good beating by the outraged husband." (1p175)
 - "The wife, too, is punished. She is taken back to her parents who, in order to establish good relationships, have to pay a fine of one or two he-goats to the husband. The fine is followed by a feast of beer-drinking between the two families." (1p175)
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring
- The only gift giving mentioned to extramarital partners is in conjunction with marriage.
 - "He approaches his parents, and after consultation with them, arrangements are made to visit the girl and her parents. If accepted, he proceeds to pay the dowry and other gifts connected with marriages." (1p170)
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?
- None found
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
- No specific number was found, but since women marry at younger ages than men "there are more women of marriageable age than men, which helps to balance the system of polygamy." (1p170)
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades
- None found
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)
- None found
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?
- None found
- 4.24 Joking relationships?
- None found
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
- "The Gikuyu society is organized and functions under the patrilineal system. The father, who is the head of the family... The father is the supreme ruler of the homestead. He is the owner of practically everything, or in other words, he is the custodian of the family property." (1p10)
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules
- None found
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?
- Yes, there is a formal marriage ceremony.
 - "At every marriage ceremony the spirits of the families of the bride and bridegroom were joined to the living members of the family in the religious act that set the seal on the marriage, so that the respective families were united in blessing the marriage by the consent of all the members of the family both living and in the spirit world." (2p42)
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?
- None found
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)
- Marriage is accepted whether it is in or outside of the community. (1p157)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?
- Marriages are not arranged.
 - "In the Gikuyu community boys and girls are left free to choose their mates, without any interference on the part of the parents on either side." (1p159)
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:
- None found
- Warfare/homicide**
- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:
- Unknown
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:
- The missionaries sparked violence in Gikuyu communities. (2p59)
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:
- Missionaries were converting Gikuyu members into Christians and forcing them to denounce any past practices. (2p59)

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

- The Gikuyu have external relationships with the Masai and the Wakamba. (1p67)

4.18 Cannibalism?

- None found

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- Village group size not found but district population size is as follows:
 - Nairobi: 51,475; Thika: 21,439; Nanyuki: 23,287; Trans-Nzoia: 2,219; Uasin Gishu: 12,907; Nakuru: 130,303; Laikipia: 28,068; Mombasa: 3,304. (3p12)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

- Many Kikuyu are leaving; average annual increase of males was 2.56% (1936-1944), with a total increase in Kikuyu Districts being 1.84% (1936-1944). (3p13)
 - "It is important to note that there has been a high degree of movement of Kikuyu, both between Kikuyu districts, and between the previous Kikuyu reserves and Nairobi and other districts (in particular the Rift Valley areas). Figures showing the rate of increase of population in Kikuyu are not satisfactory." (3p13)

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

- "For all tribal, as distinct from sub-clan, affairs for purposes of law, religious worship, warfare and all else affecting members of the tribe irrespective of their sub-clan status, the ridge was the most important administrative unit of this second pattern in social organization, which had been set up to co-ordinate the affairs of each ridge within one of the three major territorial divisions of Kikuyu territory." (2p35)
- "The senior council of nine or the kياما kinene of each ridge was appointed by the subsidiary councils of nine which controlled the affairs of the various mwaki or subsidiary divisions of a ridge." (2p35)
- "There were, of course, occasions when there were disputes, or when religious matters arose which affected persons other than those belonging to a particular ridge, and then a special ad hoc council of nine would be convened for the occasion. On it would sit representatives of each and all the ridges involved." (2p36)

5.4 Post marital residence:

- "Within the homestead enclosure each wife had her own hut; where there were several wives the husband had a hut of his own." (3p27)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

- "We have already seen that the land of the Kikuyu was divided into three main divisions: Muranga (Fort Hall), Nyeri and Kiambu. These ranked as bururi and they were territorial units with convenient geographical boundaries forming the major divisions of the Kikuyu country. Each of these three major units was further divided into a large number of smaller territorial units called rugongo. These consisted of all the land lying between two lesser geographical boundaries such as streams. The word rugongo means, strictly, a ridge and in many cases it was simply the ridge of land lying between and separating two streams and probably extending for 20 to 30 miles." (2p34)

5.6 Social interaction divisions? (age and sex):

- There are few restrictions between the Gikuyu people. From a young age boys and girls are engaging in intense social intercourse because they feel as though this is "the very foundation stone upon which to build a race morally, physically and mentally sound. For it safeguards the youth from nervous and psychic maladjustments." (1p151)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

- Friendship
 - "Each wife is free to choose anyone among age-group and give him accommodations for the night. This is looked upon as purely social intercourse..." (1p174)

5.8 Village and house organization:

- House organization
 - "In the centre of the hut was the fireplace of three tones. The wall space was partitioned off by sticks into small compartments, containing the beds made of planks or interwoven sticks, and store-places. The outer compartment among the Kikuyu was used for the goats at night..." (3p28)
- Village organization
 - "...they lived in very small villages each containing the homesteads of a joint family of up to three generations. Married sons usually set up their own homesteads on their fathers land if there was room for them. Each married woman had her own separate hut and garden, but mutual help in agricultural work was general." (3p28)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

- "In Kikuyu the 'bachelor hut' (thingira) was characteristic. Routeledge states that it might stand apart from the homestead, and was the sleeping place of the boys from several homesteads, as well as the 'guest-house'. It may be assumed that there was one thingira for each joint family, perhaps attached to the homestead of its head. The thingira was used for the pre-marital sexual relations of warriors and girls." (3p27-28)

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

- The Kikuyu lived in huts.
 - "...a Kikuyu hut was built of such materials and in such a way that its removal to a new site was an easy matter... The walls of the typical Kikuyu hut were built of heavy, hand-hewn planks of cedar and wild olive, while the rafters were made of ant-proof hardwood and the roof was thatched with bracken overlain by a thick layer of grass. No nails were

used in the construction and all joints and fastenings were made with vegetable fibres. The hut so built was solid but could be taken to pieces and moved easily.” (2p11)

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

- “There is no specific information about the internal composition of the clan except that it is divided into sub-clans, which are in turn sub-divided, the smaller segment being the mbari.” (3p24)
- “It is impossible to say definitely that there are descent-groups of any certain size which operate in specific situations, but it seems that clan meetings take place which are wider than the mbari and narrower than the sub-clan, which must be of fairly large size, although there is no specific evidence on this point. Beecher states that each sub-clan has ‘certain characteristic customs of its own’, but he does not say what these are. There is some evidence that clans have certain distinctive features as well as different totemic beliefs.” (3p24-25)

5.12 Trade:

- “There has always been considerable internal trade among the Kikuyu; large markets have been, and are, an important feature of Kikuyu life, except among the northern tribes. Markets are held in any open space chosen in accordance with the convenience of a scattered population, and in more populous districts are frequently not more than seven miles apart. Traditionally a market is usually held on such a site every fourth day, and the dates are arranged so as not to clash with similar functions in the neighborhood. Feuds and fighting stopped on market days, and the markets were “policed” by members of the warrior grade.” (3p19)
- “Spears and swords, tobacco, gourds, honey and ochre were traded with the Masai for livestock...Exchange between the Kikuyu and Kamba depended on seasonal harvests, since the two tribes produce much the same goods...The southern Kikuyu had contact with the Arab and European ivory traders who flourished during the last century.” (3p19)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

- There are no reported hierarchies amongst clans; all clans are of equal status but some clans have chiefs or a recognized headman. (3p24)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

- A specified regimen I never specified, but their culture is inundated with religious ceremonies and rituals. (1p222-258)

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- “A medicine man is initiated by the corporation of medicine men of the district, and in particular by his own sponsor among them. The initiation is public and includes immersion in a river; he is later given medicine gourds and instructed in divination. Irregular practitioners are poisoned. The medicine man practises for private clients, and his role has three principal aspects: he can purify from thahu (ritual uncleanness); he can act as a diviner; he makes charms and medicines and counters disease, he also acts as ritual adviser in the age-set system.” (3p65)

6.2 Stimulants

- “Gikuyu religion, in the wider sense, enters into magical and herbal practices...apart from herbs used for purely medical purposes, for curing diseases of both human beings and animals, there are varieties of herbs used for magical purposes.” (1p270)

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

- Second birth ceremony
 - “Prior to this second birth ceremony a baby was regarded as merely flesh and blood which had not yet assimilated the spiritual element of the family to which he belonged. He was not yet the corporal residence of a spirit and therefore death prior to the ceremony had no bearing on the spirit world. But once a ‘second birth’ or ‘spiritual birth’ ceremony had been performed (and this was usually between the ages of one to two years, though sometimes a good deal later), if death took place inside a hut the spirit would haunt the hut until it found another home.” (2p20)
- Initiation ceremony
 - “The Gikuyu name for this custom of rite de passage from childhood to adulthood is iura, i.e. circumcision, or trimming the genital organs of both sexes. The dances and songs connected with the initiation ceremony are called mambura, i.e. rituals or divine services.” (1p129)
 - “When time for the actual initiation ceremonies, of which the circumcision operation on the males and the comparable female operation was only the ‘outward and visible sign’, the whole ceremony was planned to extend the education of the young people to fit them for citizenship and the responsibilities of adult life.” (2p23)

6.4 Other rituals:

- The Harvesting Ceremony
 - “When the crops have ripened and are almost ready for harvest, it is time to offer a sacrifice to Mwene-Nyaga for his generous gift of rain which has now brought prosperity to the community. The elders of the ceremonial council, including seers and diviners, whom we may call high priest, meet to decide what will be most acceptable to the deity. The sacrifice of this nature is practically always a lamb, and its colour is determined by the colour most prevalent in the maize cobs about to be harvested. If in the majority of maize fields it is found that the mixture of white and chocolate, or black and yellow, is most prominent, the elders will decide that a lamb of those colours is the one for the occasion.” (1p247)
- Communion With Ancestral Spirits

- The Gikuyu believe that the spirits of the dead, like living human beings, can be pleased or displeased by the behaviour of an individual or a family group, or an age group. In order to establish a good relation between the two worlds the ceremony of communing with the ancestral spirits is observed constantly.” (1p256)
- The gifts which an elder gives to the ancestors’ spirits, as when a sheep is sacrificed to them, and which perhaps seem to an outsider to be prayers directed to the ancestors, are nothing but the tributes symbolizing the gifts which the departed elders would have received had been alive, and which the living elders now receive.” (1p256)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

- The Gikuyu believe that “when mankind started to populate the earth, the man Gikuyu, the founder of the tribe, was called by the Mogai (the Divider of the Universe), and was given as his share the land with ravines, the rivers, the forests, the game and all the gifts that the Lord of Nature (Mogai) bestowed on mankind”(1p5). They believe that Gikuyu was sent to the land given to him and was provided with a wife whom only conceived 9 daughter for him. He then prayed to Mogai about his unhappiness because he had no male heirs and was given nine men who married Gikuyu’s daughters. The families grew and the names of the original daughter became the Gikuyu peoples clan names. (1p6-8)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

- “Kikuyu musical instruments consist of single-membrane drums (apparently of foreign origin), flutes, whistles, side-blown horns, rattles and bells. Flutes and whistles are played by men only, and it is taboo to play them inside a hut.” (3p23)
- “The Kikuyu have many dances, which may be distinguished by the age and sex of the dancers; for example, those danced by uninitiated boys, by warriors, by women only and by men and women together.” (3p23)
- There are various initiative and physical games, including games with miniature weapons, a board game similar to the Swahili mbau is common. There are many riddles and series of questions and answers which must be learnt by rote.” (3p23)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

- The only significant difference is that men are usually ritual officiates.
 - “...men are believed to be endowed with powers...” (1p232)

6.8 Missionary effect:

- “Among the reasons for the early hostility to the work of the missions was the fact that once a youth had become a Christian he would refuse to participate in what had been taught were heathen sacrifices, while on the other hand many Kikuyu ceremonies of religious worship and sacrifice to the ancestral spirits were invalid unless all the male members of the family were present. Fathers, therefore, strongly resented the wish of some of the young men to join the missions and there were many cases where a young man lost all of his inheritance and was disowned on becoming Christian.” (2p59)

6.9 RCR revival:

- There has not been any revival of religion, very few Kikuyu people still hold on to ancient practices.
 - “Under conditions as they are today among the Kikuyu, young boys and girls get little of the education in behavior, native law and custom, and character training that were all part of the organized tribal educational system...The emphasis is placed on the pupils acquiring enough nook knowledge to pas examinations...” (2p76)

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- “The Kikuyu mainly think of life after death as organized on the same lines as life here on earth; all earthly life has its spiritual counter part and both are connected in the living person or institution.” (3p61)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

- Yes there is a taboo in speaking the name of the dead.
 - “When dead, a person may not be spoken of nor his name mentioned.” (3p60)

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

- Teknonymy does exist to a small degree in Gikuyu society.
 - “The members of his children’s age-grade address him in the same manner as his children do. It is considered impolite to address the father by his own name or names; his children speak of him as ‘my or our father,’ other children address him as ‘father of So-and-so.’ Unless he is a rascal, they dare not mention his name in private or in public, except when mentioning it in a collective sense, that is, in referring to the family group, such as Mbari ya Moigai (Moigai’s family), or Ng’undo ya Moigai (Moigai’s land, etc. The mother is called maito (my or our mother), nyina (his, her or their mother), nyokwa (your mother).” (1p11)

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

- “...we find that Kikuyu religious beliefs seem to represent three distinct religious concepts which sometimes overlap and sometimes are interlocked. First, there is the belief in Murungu or, as he is also called, Ngai, who is God, supreme, almighty, unseen but all pervading, having four ‘homes’ in the four sacred mountains of the Kikuyu (Kenya, the Aberdare Range, the Ngong Hills, and Juja Hill). While residing at one and the same time in these four mountains, he is yet present everywhere. This God of the Kikuyu was anthropomorphic and had many human attributes; whereas he liked to be worshipped from time to time in acts of communal worship and sacrifice, he could nevertheless be spoken to and prayed to, by any individual.” (2p39)
- “The second pattern of Kikuyu religious belief was that which was wholly concerned with the worship and placating of the departed ancestral spirits. It must here be explained that the Kikuyu believed that a person had two kinds of spirit, one of which on his death passed into the company of the family ancestral spirits, while the other was a sort of communal family spirit which was both single and yet multiple. This family spirit was present as a separate entity in every member of the family who had undergone the ‘second birth’ or ‘spiritual birth’ ceremony in his or her childhood, and yet a part of the same family spirit was always in the air, hovering near and waiting for the birth of a new member of the family to take up corporal residence through the sacred rite of the ‘second birth’ ceremony until death should intervene.” (2p41)

- “The third pattern that can be discerned in the fabric of Kikuyu religious practice is that which is connected with the belief in certain spirits that are not in any way ‘human’, nor yet linked with the concept of God-the spirits of such things as trees, large isolated rocks, waterfalls, and also epidemic diseases. Possibly this animistic religion was the oldest of the three superimposed and often interlocked patterns of belief...it was less a matter of worship than of placating an unseen and little understood supernatural force that was not connected with God or the ancestral spirits. This animistic aspect of religion was reflected in a very large number of ceremonies...” (2p43)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

- Physical Initiation
 - A woman specialist, known as the moruithia, who has studied female circumcision from childhood has her face painted black and white for the physical initiation. (1p140)
- Men
 - “Adolescents sometimes adorned their faces with red and blue paint.” (3p54)

7.2 Piercings:

- Men:
 - “Ear ornaments consisted of various wire and iron rings and discs attached to the cartilage and a cylinder of wood in the lobe. The lobes were pierced before circumcision. The Kikuyu proper did not file their teeth nor pierce the nose or lips.” (3p53)

7.3 Haircut:

- The Great Ceremonial Dance (Matuumo)
 - “The day before the physical operation is performed the girl is called early in the morning to have her head shaved by the sponsor.” (1p133)
- Men
 - “...there were several styles for the hair – string, feathers or mud being added to the hair to lengthn or coulour it.” (3p54)
 - “Men’s war-dress was copied from that of the Masai; the hair was dressed into a pigtail, war marks and special ornaments we worn and a Masai-type shield and spear were carried.” (3p54)
- Women
 - “A woman shaved her head entirely except for a small tuft at the back of the head and this was removed when old. Hair was left to grow if she was sick.” (3p54)

7.4 Scarification:

- Men
 - Men sometimes had three or four raised scars on the loins. (3p54)
- Women
 - “Women sometimes adorned the abdomen with small raised scars. Among Northern tribes, especially the Mwimbi, women cicatrized their necks and bodies.” (3p54)

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

- Women
 - From initiation to marriage women wore a brow-band of beads and discs; a necklace was the first betrothal present; an iron collaret was a marriage present from her father-in-law, and copper ear-rings, the sign of a woman with an uninitiated child. A bead girdle was worn by all women. Armlets, anklets and most ear ornaments were similar to those wore by men.

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

- The Great Ceremonial Dance (Matuumo)
 - “All her clothes are removed, she is given a massage, after which her naked body is decked with beads lent to her by women relatives and friends...The girl is provided with a bell (kegamba) which is tied on her right leg just above the calf, or sometimes above the knee, to provide rhythm to the procession and also for the dance.” (1p133)
- Korathima ciana (Blessing the Children)
 - “It includes marking certain symbols upon the forehead cheeks, round the eyes, the nose, the throat and the navel of the initiates with a sort of white chalk called ira (snow) obtained from Mount Kenya (Kere-Nyaga), the adobe of the gods.” (1p132)

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

- The major differences lie in the jewelry and ornamentation the women receive and wear and the face painting boys wear in adolescence. (3p54)

7.8 Missionary effect:

- Since the entrance of the Europeans both men and women now wear full clothing. (3p53)

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

- There has yet to be a revival of adornment amongst the Kikuyu, indigenous dress and ornamentation has been mostly lost. (3p53)

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

- “The first male is regarded as perpetuating the existence of the man’s father, the second as perpetuating that of the woman’s father. The first and second female children fulfill the same ritual duty to the souls of their grandmothers on both sides. The children are given the names of the persons whose souls they represent.” (1p158)

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

- Levirate
 - “...the Kikuyu practise leviratic marriage (or if a widow goes elsewhere to have sons in concubinage they belong to the dead man)...” (3p47)

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

- None found

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- Love Magic
 - There are two kinds of love magic, each of which serves an important function in the field of love. There is magic which exerts its power on behalf of the seeker after the love of many (moreria or monyenye), and the magic which helps him who seeks the love of one (mothaiga wa rwendo). (1p273)
- Burial
 - The body of unimportant people “were placed in the bush, or the body might be left in the hut, a hole being made for hyenas to enter” so that their remains are eaten. (3p60)

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