

Kikongo

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Bantu, Benue- Congo, Niger-Congo language family

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): 15.82766/-0.22802

1.4 Brief history: It wasn't always the Democratic Republic of Congo. The states that are present today are the results of colonizing powers in the XIXth century. It goes back to more than 500 years, and its traditional territory is the Atlantic coast and moderate interior of the present Democratic Republic of Congo & Northern Angola. The Kingdom of Kongo was composed of 6 provinces: Mpemba, Mbata, Nsundi, Mpangu, Mbemba and Soyo, plus 4 vassal Kingdoms: Loango, Cacongo and Ngoye, at the North of the N'Zari river, and Ndongo, at the South of the Congo River.

1.6 Ecology (natural environment): Congo is a mixture of coastal plains, mountain regions, plateaus, valleys, but mostly rain forest (70%). The highest point, at 1,020 m, is Mont Nabeba in the Mayumbe Mountains. The major rivers are the Congo River at the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Kouilou-Niari River.

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: 3,000,000 in Democratic Republic of the Congo, 5,000,000 in total countries.

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: The future bride's family will offer gifts to the groom's family that they would like to receive back. This may include cash, batiks for the women and new suits for the men, hoes, machetes, Aladdin lamps, several cases of beer and soft drinks, jars of palm and banana wine, peanut butter, blankets, sheets, and animals such as goats, pigs, and chickens. But all this isn't to buy the bride; she isn't being bought or forced into marriage. They are free to refuse.

4.9 Inheritance patterns: There's usually nothing being passed down generation after generation because there are no family names given

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: The mother raises the kids, while the father takes no part in it. Sometimes the children would be alienated from their father and won't have any ties with him. The mother becomes the only legal owner.

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? The father doesn't help to raise his children. When it was polygamy, there were multiple wives having multiple children but were fully responsible for the kids.

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Yes, it's usually held on a Saturday afternoon. Sometimes both the groom and the bride would be absent and so the wedding will be taken place with substitutes, since it's seen as a union of the families. Even when there are just substitutes the wedding is conducted traditionally.

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? When a child is born the father names them or by someone that is well respected on either side of the family. But naming isn't important to pass down lineage, because later on if the grown up child doesn't like the name, he/she can change it.

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) People from the surrounding areas are attracted to the wedding. Members of the two families would come from great distances to attend, if they can afford it.

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Marriages are arranged by the maternal uncle. The man says that he's ready to start a family, and then it's the uncle's task to search for a good woman.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): The chief must be wise, intelligent, spiritual, and a good public speaker. He should also be the oldest member of the group, but if the oldest isn't fit it would go to someone younger that does.

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): Two different subgroups: masculine and feminine. Men and women don't live together in the same house, even when they're a married couple. Married men sleep in the "big house" or nzo yayinene, while their wives live in the "kitchen house" or kikuku. The husband eats at the table in his own room, while his wife eats on the floor of her house. Each person has a specific responsibility depending on their

age and gender. Men aren't in power because they're a man, nor are women considered weak because they're women. This doesn't give men the right to abuse women.

5.8 Village and house organization: Luvila, all various known and unknown clan sections. There isn't a single chief of a luvila and its village size can be unknown. Kanda is the term for a small section of a clan. A kanda does have a head chief.

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? Relationships are defined by bloodline and then by being a senior or junior status. Mostly shown through mother and child, the blood of the family descends from the mother.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.4 Other rituals: This isn't really a ritual but it is a belief: the fear of kindoki, or witchcraft. Kindoki deals with good and bad powers. This is suspected when there are two families (that were joined by marriage) and one is facing death while the other is prospering. If the two joined families don't settle things peacefully, there's a risk that the lineage will be severed.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Women were created to bare children and carry on the lineage. Man was created to protect and lead the family.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: Death disrupts the communal harmony. Death due to old age is accepted as being normal and natural.

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) Christianity is widely accepted because they share the same beliefs, as in the belief to treat everyone with respect as family regardless if they're tied by blood.

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: Some sibling go without knowing that they're related unless someone recognizes the village and/or clan that the person came from. Once the information has been exchanged, family members can acquaint themselves to each other.

8.2 Sororate, levirate: "Mother" includes not only the biological but also the sisters and brothers too. The child can call both the mom and the aunts mama and they expect to receive certain gifts from them.