

## **1. Description**

**1.1** Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Luleke, a dialect of Tsonga, Bantu language family.

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

**1.3** Location (latitude/longitude): 22.40, 28.60 in Southern Africa.

**1.4** Brief history: During the mfecane and ensuing upheaval of the nineteenth century, most Tsonga chiefdoms moved inland. Some successfully maintained their independence from the Zulu, while others were conquered by Zulu warriors. One Zulu military leader, Soshangane, established his command over a large Tsonga population in the northern Transvaal in the mid-nineteenth century and continued his conquests farther north. The descendants of some of the conquered populations are known as the Shangaan, or Tsonga-Shangaan. Some Tsonga-Shangaan trace their ancestry to the Zulu warriors who subjugated the armies in the region, while others claim descent from the conquered chiefdoms.

**1.5** Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: They came under British rule at the end of the nineteenth century.

**1.6** Ecology (natural environment): Most of the area has poor soil and irregular rainfall, which makes farming difficult.

**1.7** Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: 1,940,000 Tsonga in South Africa.

## **2. Economy**

**2.1** Main carbohydrate staple(s): Corn, cassava, millet, pineapple, inshima, sorghum, pumpkin leaves.

**2.2** Main protein-lipid sources: Cashews, peanuts, beans, meat.

**2.3** Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Spears

**2.4** Food storage: N/a

**2.5** Sexual division of production: Girls' chores are to draw water from wells and fetch firewood, while boys hunt small game and fish. Men farm and women cook.

**2.6** Land tenure: There is no tradition of private land ownership. Land belongs to the community rather than to any individual.

**2.7** Ceramics: Pots are made in various sizes for drawing water, cooking, brewing beer, and storing grain and other foods.

**2.8** Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Relatives share food and eat from the same dish when having meals together.

**2.9** Food taboos: N/a

**2.10** Canoes/watercraft? Canoes.

## **3. Anthropometry**

**3.1** Mean adult height (m and f):

**3.2** Mean adult weight (m and f):

## **4. Life History, mating, marriage**

**4.1** Age at menarche (f):

**4.2** Age at first birth (m and f):

**4.3** Completed family size (m and f): Families can become very large because parents try to have as many children as possible to help with labor.

**4.4** Inter-birth-interval (f):

**4.5** Age first marriage (m and f): I could not find exact ages, but they got married in adolescence.

**4.6** Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Divorce is becoming more and more common.

**4.7** Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Polygamy was traditionally encouraged.

**4.8** Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: A prospective husband had to pay bride-wealth to the family of his bride-to-be, usually in the form of cattle

**4.9** Inheritance patterns: Tradition of inheritance by brothers, in preference to sons.

**4.10** Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Parents and children seem to be very open with each other. People talk freely in the presence of children about matters such as menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth.

**4.11** Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Could not find info on this.

**4.12** Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Endogamy within village.

- 4.13** What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? No partible paternity or other fathers.
- 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)? No.
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape
- 4.17** Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): No evidence of preferential category.
- 4.18** Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Yes.
- 4.19** Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: Yes, sharing was common.
- 4.20** If mother dies, whose raises children? Father.
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
- 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? In the presence of men, a woman is expected to observe traditional female etiquette such as looking downward and behaving humbly.
- 4.24** Joking relationships? Sometimes boys have joking relationships with older male relatives.
- 4.25** Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: Patrilineal.
- 4.26** Incest avoidance rules: Siblings should not have sex.
- 4.27** Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Yes.
- 4.28** In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? When a girl reaches adolescence she trained for her future role as a man's wife. Usually, there was a period of living away from the village, and a short ceremony marked the girl's maturity. She was given a new name to signify her adult status.
- 4.29** Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Within community.
- 4.30** Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? When a boy who has reached adolescence decides to marry, he can find his own bride. However, he must tell his parents and uncles so that they can negotiate with the parents of the girl, since bride-wealth must be paid.
- 4.31** Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: N/a

### **Warfare/homicide**

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:
- 4.15** Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: Boundary disputes.
- 4.16** Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Boundary disputes.
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):
- 4.18** Cannibalism? Could not find evidence for this.

### **5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
- 5.2** Mobility pattern: (seasonality): They would move whenever new fields were need to be cleared.
- 5.3** Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): No chiefs were recognized, but there were certain people who had authority. The *Sikatongo* was a priest who made sure that the spirits would take care of the people and make the crops grow. In every neighborhood (a grouping of several villages), there was also a man called the *Ulanyika*, the owner of the land. The *Ulanyika* was usually the first settler in the neighborhood. He had some influence in his neighborhood, and hunters gave him part of every animal they killed there.
- 5.4** Post marital residence: Husband’s home in his village.
- 5.5** Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): Yes they were territorial.
- 5.6** Social interaction divisions? (age and sex): Girls and boys who have not reached adolescence are encouraged to play together. People talk freely in the presence of children about matters such as menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth. Most parents feel that sexual play between children of the same age is not a matter for concern. However, an older man or woman is not permitted to have a sexual relationship with a girl or boy.
- 5.7** Special friendships/joking relationships: Usually between males and their older male kin.
- 5.8** Village and house organization: Family extends to the wider extended unit rather than the nuclear family of wife, husband, and children. The extended family, much like a clan, shares many tasks, including

farming and the provision of food. In times of trouble, such as famine and drought, the extended family serves as a safety net.

**5.9** Specialized village structures (mens' houses): No, families lived together.

**5.10** Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Lived in huts usually.

**5.11** Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Extended families are like clans.

5.12 Trade:

**5.13** Indications of social hierarchies? Not really other than the Sikatongo and Ulanika having more authority.

## **6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)**

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

**6.1** Specialization (shamans and medicine): The *Sikatongo* was a priest who made sure that the spirits would take care of the people and make the crops grow. In almost all the villages, elders are the keepers of mythical stories.

**6.2** Stimulants: N/a

**6.3** Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): There was a special initiation ceremony and education for children as they reached adolescence. A girl trained for her future role as a man's wife. Usually, there was a period of living away from the village, and a short ceremony marked the girl's maturity. She was given a new name to signify her adult status. The men attended the initiation school for circumcision called Matlala after which they were regarded as men.

When a couple is married, the woman is to move into her husband's village. Polygamy was also traditionally encouraged.

**6.4** Other rituals: Music, dance, and literature are part of daily life. Grandparents tell stories around the evening fire passing on knowledge and principles to the children. Each story can have several different lessons for both the young and the old. The lessons may be as varied as how to act clever, how to be imaginative, how to be smart and get a beautiful girl's attention, how to be successful by working hard, and how to behave in certain situations.

Drumming, singing, and dancing at beer parties, funerals, and naming ceremonies are frequent activities among the Tonga. At beer parties, men and women dance together.

**6.5** Myths (Creation): The stories, usually with animal characters, are told around a fire at night. They convey traditional principles, values, and customs, as well as the origins of the Tsonga people.

One of the stories deals with the beginning of Tsonga society. A local tradition suggests that before the arrival of the British there was a powerful chief in the town of Monze. According to oral tradition, the first Monze chief descended from heaven. He called the Tsonga people to join him and settle in his chiefdom. Most people liked the chief because he had the power to heal, to cause rain, and to keep the peace. He did that by frustrating enemies through his communication with the spirits of the ancestors.

**6.6** Cultural material (art, music, games): Music, dance, and literature are a part of daily life. Boys like to play soccer, and girls like to play netball, which is like basketball.

Pottery, carvings, baskets, and mats are crafted by older men and women for use in their daily lives. Pots are made in various sizes for drawing water, cooking, brewing beer, and storing grain and other foods.

**6.7** Sex differences in RCR: There is a strong belief that children must be taught and trained for adult life. Children are taught proper manners by older people. During their teenage years, boys and girls are encouraged to do their separate chores according to their sex. Girls' chores are to draw water from wells and fetch firewood, while boys hunt small game and fish. But there are times when boys do girls' chores, and vice versa.

**6.8** Missionary effect: Many Tsonga have been converted to Christianity because of missionary work by Europeans. Missionaries demanded that the Tsonga and other people give up traditional beliefs and practices such as polygamy, ancestor worship, and witchcraft. At first, there were only a few converts. In modern times, many Tsonga practiced both Christianity and traditional religious beliefs.

6.9 RCR revival:

**6.10** Death and afterlife beliefs: It is believed that at death each person leaves a shade or spirit, a muzimu. The muzimu commutes between the spirit world and the world of humans.

**6.11** Taboo of naming dead people? N/a

**6.12** Is there teknonymy? No.

**6.13** Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): Witchcraft and sorcery are among traditional beliefs. In modern times many people practice both Christianity and traditional religious beliefs.

### **7. Adornment**

7.1 Body paint: N/a.

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

**7.5** Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Beadwork, formed in geometric patterns.

**7.6** Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: They wear the intricate beadwork for many rituals.

**7.7** Sex differences in adornment: Clothing is used to differentiate the sexes. As soon as children begin to run about, girls are given a dress or a skirt, while boys are given a shirt and a pair of shorts. Children are taught that boys and girls wear different types of clothes; thus, dress marks the beginning of sex identification. Some women in the cities do wear pants and shirts, but most women still prefer traditional women's clothing.

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

### **8. Kinship systems**

8.1 Sibling classification system:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

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

### **9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):**

#### **Sources:**

1. "Tonga." *Countries and Their Cultures*. <<http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Tajikistan-to-Zimbabwe/Tonga.html>>

2. "The Shangaan (Tsonga) People of Southeastern Africa." *People Profile*. <<http://strategyleader.org/profiles/shangaan.html>>

3. "Tsonga and Venda." *Country Studies*. <<http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/48.htm>>