

1. Description

- 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: **In Tanzania, Mozambique, and Zambia, Ngoni, Bantu language family**
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): **NGO**
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): **South central, Ruvuma region, south of Songea. Also in Mozambique. 36.26308, -10.68787**
- 1.4 Brief history: **The Ngoni of East-Central Africa originally came from farther south-east which became Swaziland, Natal, and the Transkei. They were pastoralists/horticulturalists. Migrated from Swaziland under the leadership of Zwangendaba. People led by him called themselves Ngoni derived from a term of salutation, Nguni.**
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: **one of many several strong political units in the area.**
- 1.6 Ecology:
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density **170,000 in Tanzania (1987), 53,000 in Mozambique, between 50 and 200 people in a village**

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): **traditional foods brought from the south- *amasi* (milk curds), *ulubende* (cooked blood), and *izinkobe* (stamped maize)**
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: **Cattle (cows, other typical livestock), traditionally lots of different desert animals: giraffe, lion, pigs**
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: **bow and arrow, spear, later rifle**
- 2.4 Food storage:
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: **Men hunt and fight, women work in the hut with the children**
- 2.6 Land tenure:
- 2.7 Ceramics:
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:
- 2.9 Food taboos:
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): **approximately 65.3 in. ,**
- 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):
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: **Couples can and do get divorced. In a *lobola* marriage the children technically belong to the father based on the marriage contract and can claim custody of the children in case of divorce. Reasons for divorce mostly infidelity and the failure of husbands to hand over their wages. Usually a separation of a couple not a formal divorce. More often husband leaves wife. Wives blamed for failing to clean or provide meals or misbehavior of the children. Divorce, however, regarded as too expensive or troublesome. Divorce is looked down upon.**
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: **Many men, especially chiefs, married polygynously. Heads of the Induna houses married polygynously with one greatwife and subsequent other wives.**
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: **marriage concluded through the exchange of cattle, and the term *lobola* was used for the cattle exchanged in this bride price. A woman married in the lobola form of marriage was known as *mlobokazi*.**
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: **Patrilineal in descent and inheritance.**
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): **exogamy was strict for the people with the same clan name. sexual intercourse between two individuals with the same clan name regarded as incest**
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows") **After a marriage has taken place and cattle handed over, if a wife is incapable of bearing children, another one of the wives families daughters may be given, without additional transfer of cattle, as a *nhlanzi*, to produce children for her older sister. Children born considered the first wives mother not the *nhlanzi*'s. *Nhlanzis* also may be given if the family is pleased with the way the husband treats their daughters, even if the first wife can procreate. A compliment to the man as a good husband.**
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin) **Parallel cousin prohibition; prohibition on marriage between children of age mates in the same village. Preferably cross-cousin or non-relation. Marriage used to form a link between leading clans.**
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? **The father. If father dies, father's brother inherits widow without formal marriage ceremony to keep the relationship with that family maintained and to continue to bear offspring for the family. Ceremony of widows "seeing their**

brothers-in-law” after mourning. Beer brewed and burn mourning caps. Widows inherited and offer snuff to one of their husband’s brothers whom she is willing to marry.

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

4.22 Evidence for couvades

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older) **married couples near the same age males usually a little older.**

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

4.24 Joking relationships? Utani

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations **Patrilineal**

4.26 Incest avoidance rules **marriage exogamy**

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? **At the time of the main ceremony bride’s party brings a beast called mcando into the bridegroom’s mother’s house to which the bride would then belong. As soon as these cattle were in the kraal the new wife is able to eat amasi in her husband’s village. The main ceremony (*mtimba*) had three distinct parts. The first part was the preparation of the girl in her own village *ukucong*a; the entrance of her party into the husband’s village and presenting of snuff *ukuqandisa*. The second part, main part of ceremony, the bride is handed over to the husband’s family and village. Mother of bride makes a formal speech declaring that the bride has no father now she is leaving his care. Many feasts and dancing and singing. The next day they spend the morning dancing in the kraal while the husband’s family killed a beast for the feast. During the day’s dancing the leader of the village women took the husband’s spear, came into the kraal with the village party and touched the bride gently on the shoulder. This meant the bride was now one of the village group, and the correct response was for her party to turn their backs and weep to show grief that they lost one of their village members. After the missionaries came they began having wedding ceremonies in churches. The last part of the wedding ceremony was in her new home and marked gradual integration into her new social group. They focused on women’s interaction between both parties to make assimilation into the brides new village easier.**

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?) **Clan exogamy**

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? **Direct courtship by the man; indicated choice by the female; arranged marriages by the parents; and direction of a son by his parents towards a respectful partner. Men of the gogo houses handle all the go-between in the negotiation process.**

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: **land and resource competition**

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): **migratory captured and enslaved peoples they came across**

4.18 Cannibalism?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: **50-200, some used to be in the thousands. Fighting and splitting led to many smaller groups.**

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): **Chiefs are head of clans. Kingdoms founded on conquest so the maintenance of a defensive and aggressive military power was essential. 2 large kingdoms the Swazi and the trans-Zambesi clans formed the Ngoni aristocracy and royal clans. Many groups of small chiefdoms, each containing a dominant agnatic lineage segment to which the chief belonged. Lineages exogamous, members graded in terms of primogeniture and ranking of wives.**

5.4 Post marital residence: **Traditionally patrilocal residence pattern**

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): **Ngoni were migratory for some 70 years moving from south Nyasaland up through Mozambique and Tanzania. Then moving west to Songea and back south. While migrating, the Ngoni captured many different peoples and made them assimilate into Ngoni society. Very conflicting, raiders, warlike and territorial.**

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): **the use of the clan descent name declared how adults addressed each other. Could not speak to any stranger until they knew his clan name except when addressing the paramount. Age-sets – certain responsibilities and activities associated with different groups based on age. Age-set terms: all children- *abantwana*, Young men even if married- *amajaha*, Young girls before puberty- *inkakazana*, young girls past puberty- *izintombi*, all married women- *abafazi*, senior men- *amadoda*, senior women- *amanina* each age-set of young men constituted a regiment in the national army, had it barracks at a royal homestead, and lead by the nominee of a king, usually a prince or chief.**

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: ***utani* used to resolve problems in the social structure and an alternative to extreme respect or avoidance. Sexual joking made between cross-cousins**

5.8 Village and house organization: **House: House system whereby male members in each house form a joint ownership of the cattle in the name of the house, with common economic interests. Village: siting of huts in the village and corresponding social groups formed in the different sections. Traditional ground-plan based on main kraal in the center. Gate of the kraal on the open end of a horse shoe formation with the most important hut, the *indlunkulu*, was at the top of the kraal. On either side of that were the huts belonging to the wives huts of the owner of the village. Then behind the *indlunkula* were the *cigodlo*, the married sons huts and those of his brothers who chose to live with him. Behind each house-group were the *induna* huts associated with the house. In larger villages these *induna***

hut clusters had their own kraal and a similar mini village plan. At the “horns of the village” were the less important families. The Nearer the huts were to the indlunkula the higher the prestige. Gogo house plays essential role in ceremonial and ritual life.

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses): The Kraal was where men of the village met and discussed village matters. The *laweni* or boys’ dormitory, Older boys in the group and young men until they marry aged lived in the *laweni* from as early as 7 years old when a child begins growing his second tooth. These young men stop being children and begin learning how to herd goats and calves.

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: men, women, and children regarded themselves as associated with a house in one of three ways: descent or marriage, family member of the induna who looked after that houses affairs, or they served the house most likely descendants of captives from war assigned to that house. Clan of a person was of great importance for many reasons. Many villages make up a clan lead by the paramount or *inkosi*. The office of the paramount was made up of three Ngoni institutions. First the man who puts the new *inkosi* in place and takes care of the young *inkosi* before he replaces his father. Second the big house from which the heir to the paramount came. The third was the practice of guardianship of the spirit of the hut. Every many owed his allegiance in many places, one to his agnatic lineage and specific part of the lineage within the chiefdom that he belonged, second to his division within the chiefdom hunting wild beasts with fellow men in that division. In the nation every man belonged to a regiment , fought and danced alongside his fellow age-mates in the regiment from every chiefdom. A man is also a member of a head within the regiment. Someone can change their chiefdom but the allegiance to regiment and head are fixed.

5.12 Trade:

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? **Clan hierarchy**

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

6.2 Stimulants:

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

6.4 Other rituals: **circumcision was practiced when the Ngoni left Natal but given up while in Tanzania.**

6.5 Myths (Creation): **Difficult to isolate a comprehensive system of beliefs and say that these were distinctively Ngoni beliefs concerning religion and magic and witchcraft. So many different tribes intermingling and in constant contact with each other.**

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): **Ngoni songs and dance are performed without drums. War dance-*ligubo* danced at the royal village at Paramount and royal sister funerals. *Ngoma* dance performed by young men and girls after the harvest.**

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect: **among the nyasaland tribes in the 1930’s the influence of sixty years of Christian teaching played an important part in medicine, education as well as religion and ethics.**

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: **Ngoni often use a phrase “death cannot cut life” human spirits continue existence after death. This had to be assured by performing the correct burial rites, mourning, and deliberate bringing back of the spirit to the village where it will be guarded. Corpse arranged so that it looks like it is sitting and holding head in hands. Wrapped in skin of a newly killed animal and buried in a circular pit. Body faces south-east to the ancestral homeland. Personal possessions buried with the dead. Grave outside of kraal and after build the kraal around it so cattle may walk and lie there to flatten the land. If a man died, all adults took part, the second day they shave; after 6 months they shave again and cook beer and the widow takes off her white *zitambo* (head bands). After 12 months they take off the black *zitambo* and kill a beast to praise the spirit. Also the time for inheriting the widows. When they take off the white head bands, the brother of the one who died takes sheep dung and spreads it in the houses where the widows are sleeping. At the same time the men cover their hands with cattle dung to tell the widows to cook food for the brothers of the dead man to send to them while they sit by the kraal, before they can see them.**

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) **It was clear that there was a Ngoni cult of their ancestral spirits, which was not shared, and the Ngoni had their own selective methods of relating it to Christian beliefs and practices. As long as the political and social structure, roles of leading men and important women, concept of houses and cattle ownership, and the role of gogo house was maintained the cult of the ancestral spirit’s survival was assured. Eminent ancestors whose spirits were guarded in the village were addressed in times of trouble and offered meat as a form of sacrifice. Emphasis on known and named spirits of the dead. Could not approach their ancestral spirits except through cattle. Divining by an accredited person was a necessary preliminary for sacrificing to and addressing the ancestors.**

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): **women wore traditional bead ornaments on the head and neck and arms, tied cloths on festive occasions like their ancestors wore them at long lengths of soft dressed leather.**

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: **ceremonial dress, war dress of men**

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

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):

Numbered references

1. Barnes, J. A. *Politics in a Changing Society: A Political History of the Fort Jameson Ngoni*. Manchester: Published for the Institute for Social Research, University of Zambia, by Manchester U.P., 1967. Print.



2. Mair, Lucy. *African Marriage and Social Change*. [London]: Cass, 1969. Print.

3. Read, Margaret. *The Ngoni of Nyasaland*. London, NY: Published for the International African Institute by the Oxford UP, 1956. Print.

4. "Ethnologue, Languages of the World." *Ethnologue, Languages of the World*. Web. 05 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.ethnologue.com>>.

5. "Countries and Their Cultures." *Countries and Their Cultures*. Web. 05 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.everyculture.com>>.