

1. Description – ISO 639-3: ngp

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

- Ngulu, Ngulu (aka Geja, Kingulu, Nguru, Nguu, Wayomba, Wangulu), Niger-Congo (1)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

- Tanzania (-6.20, 37.50)

1.4 Brief history:

- “The Ngulu are matrilineal Bantu people inhabiting northwestern Morogoro and western Handeni Areas of Tanganyika.” (2pg360)
- “The Ngulu say that their name derives from the root *-ngulu*, “mountain” or “hill” and Ngulu I met agree agreed about this etymology.¹² Some, however, went on to say that the term may originally have been an abuse given by the Zigua people to their neighbours, the Ngulu, for the Zigua and Ngulu are very closely related, the main difference allegedly due to the fact that the Ngulu separated from the Zigua in earlier times because of quarrels and fighting...” (10p41-42)
- The size of their land is roughly 2,500 square miles. (2pg360)

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

- “Ngulu still speak in terms of the ideals of the matrilineal society which they appear to have had prior to the disintegrative influence of colonial rule, a cash economy, Christianity, and Islam.” (2pg362)
- “Although today, after generations of Islamic and Christina influence, Ngulu sometimes speak of a general category of human beings (*wanadamu*, Swahili, children of Adam), irrespective of sex, this seems alien to their way of thought.” (2pg385)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

- “The Nguru primarily inhabit the coastal highlands of northeastern TANZANIA.” (8pg230)
- “...moved from the plateau and lowlands to the mountains.” (10pg42)

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

- The population size since 1987 has been 132, 000. (1)
Possibly up to 200,000 people. (8p2300)
- “Today, many Ngulu live in isolated homesteads, but there are still many settlements probably as large as those said to have universal in the past.” (2pg361)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- Maize, millet, sorghum, sugarcanes, cassava, castor, sweet potato, pumpkin, and mountain rice (1)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- Beans, peas, peanuts (1)
- There is little livestock. (2p360)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

- “The hunter carries a bow and arrow...” (2pg367)

2.4 Food storage:

- “...containers (basket and calabash) has deep meaning for Ngulu.” (2pg372)

2.5 Sexual division of production:

- “He relies upon a woman’s labor in the fields...” (2pg363)
- “Through cultivation, sale of beer, and payments for sexual favors, lone women may live quite well. [...] In contrast, there are few tasks today which women are unable and/or unwilling to perform.” (2pg364)
- Women are viewed as the sole providers of a meal; it is their main role. (2pg379)

2.6 Land tenure:

- The answer is not explicitly stated but the male genitalia are seen as the support of the home. (2pg380)

2.7 Ceramics:

- “While general stylistic classification of different ceramic traditions remain fairly subjective, systematic comparison of specific stylistic features, their distributions, and the sites where they are found in association provide more principled bases for analysis. Kwale ware, the earlier of the two traditions, has a fairly limited distribution focused on the northeastern highlands, extending from Mt. Mwangea in the

north (with possible occurrences further north in Barawa and the Tana River) through southeastern Kenya (Shimba Hills, Taita Hills) and northeastern Tanzania (Kilimanjaro, Pare, Usambara, and Ngulu)...” (9pg266)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

- “The importance of communications in this connection is illustrated by the fact that the extension of the railway line to Nguru on the Bornu order was estimated to have added some 40,000 tons of ground-nuts to the annual market crop.” (4pg179)

2.9 Food taboos:

- “For instance, the children take the totem of the father. There is a taboo against eating the totem.”² (7pg105-106)

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? No evidence found.

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): Not able to find.

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): Not able to find.

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): Not able to find.

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Not able to find.

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

- “It is through her role as a moulder of her’s children’s loyalties that a Ngulu woman gains power; a woman’s influence and security depend on the number of children she bears and a sterile women is considered very unfortunate. Ngulu women desire as many children as possible...” (2pg362-363)

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): Not able to find.

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- “Today it is not unusual for Ngulu women to live alone bearing fatherless children.” (2pg364)
There is a certain amount of freedom that being married takes away from a women. (2pg364)
- “But no mature Ngulu man (other than senile, infirm, or mad persons) lives alone. Mature men consider many essentially activities unmasculine, and therefore are unwilling to live alone carrying out all of the chores necessary in a home.” (2pg364)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

- “Ngulu are typical matrilineal people in that there is considerable strain on the marriage bond; divorce is relatively frequent and easy to secure.” (2pg364)

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: No evidence found.

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

- “Most of the bridewealth received for a woman was taken by men of her matrilineage and only a small portion by her father. Similarly, most wealth provided for a boy to secure a wife was given by men of his matrilineage, not by his father. Furthermore, it is said that most men spent the earlier years of their marriage with their wives’ kin performing bride-service; only an affluent man could avoid this and take wives away from their villages. Today, the bulk of such payments is provided by a person’s father’s matrilineage, rather than by the person’s own. However, the influence of one’s own matrilineage remains important, even where right of father’s group takes precedence over those of one’s own, it is still father’s matrilineage which is involved, and not a group formed by some other descent principle.” (2pg362)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

- “When a youth is mature, he posses his own bow; when a man dies, his bow is given to his eldest son who, in turn, passes it down to his own son, or, failing this, destroys it. Similarly, a woman owns various baskets, gourds, calabashes, and pots which she passes down to her daughters.” (2pg372-373)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

- “In a Ngulu household, the women tries to teach her children loyalty to their (her) matrilineage, rather than their father’s, her husband; but it is to a woman’s advantage and to the advantage of her children that the children’s loyalties are balance between their own and their father’s matrilineage. A Ngulu husband and a

wife differ considerably in their attitudes toward their children. A Ngulu woman's position vis-à-vis her husband is most favorable when her children feel somewhat distant from their father; they may slightly fear him and depend upon her as an intercessor and intermediary. Her position toward her husband is strengthened with each child she bears because: (a) with each child her importance as a focal point for her children's loyalties increase; (b) with each child she bears, her own kin's advantages increase and her husband's decrease at the prospect of divorce, because with each child born, dead or alive, a deduction is made in the bridewealth returned." (2pg362)

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

- The Ngulu see it as a departure from the norm to engage in homosexual activities. (13p49)

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

- The Ngulu allow exogamous marriages. (2pg361)

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

- "They know that a woman who has not borne a child (whatever the reason) is likely to seek lovers to supplement her husband's attentions. If she is thwarted in this, she may seek a divorce and will sometimes make shaming public comments concerning her husband's lack of virility." (2pg363)
- "But Ngulu also recognize that women commit adultery, that some unmarried women refuse to reveal the names of their real loves, or that a lover may refuse to make a payment for rights to a child. In such cases, paternal jural and physiological connections may become somewhat confused; in the case of adultery of a married woman, a man (pater) holds certain jural rights over a child with none of the physiological and resultant spiritual sanctions which support jural rights." (2pg361)

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")

- "The male is responsible for procreation happening, thus if a woman fails to get pregnant he is blamed." (2pg363)

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

- "During conception, a man's semen combines with blood within a woman's womb to produce a foetus. This is fed through repeated sexual intercourse during the woman's pregnancy. Many Ngulu say this feeding should continue throughout the first four months of pregnancy, if not longer." (2pg373-374)

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: No evidence found.

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

- The Ngulu practice preferential cross-cousin marriage. (12pg2)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

- "Even aside from the pleasure and fun of sexual adventure, a Ngulu woman has few reasons to be more faithful than a philandering husband, although wives tend to be more careful than husbands in concealing their infidelities from their spouses. In trying to satisfy their wives sexually, Ngulu men sometimes behave in a way which leads their wives to be unfaithful. I have mentioned the Ngulu belief that women are sexually voracious and promiscuous. It is reported that men sometimes behave with considerable brutality in sexual intercourse with their wives in order to exhaust their partners so that they do not require satisfaction elsewhere. Furthermore, some Ngulu men say that if a wife should show undue pleasure and sophistication in sexual relations, they would suspect her of being a loose woman. As a result, it is often maintained that the most satisfactory sexual relations are those outside marriage, between lovers whose only concern is maximum mutual sexual gratification." (2pg363)

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: No evidence found

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? Not able to find.

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: Not able to find.

4.22 Evidence for couvades: No evidence found.

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): No evidence found.

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? No evidence found.

4.24 Joking relationships?

- “For example, the Zigua have no *utani* with the Nguu or the Sambia, the reason given being that they are relatives (*ndugu*).” (15p389)
Utani is a type of bond. (15p389)
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
- The descent is matrilineal. (2pg360)
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules:
- The Ngulu see it as a departure from the norm to engage in incest. (13p49)
 Kaguru, their neighbours, have similar beliefs and in the result of such an offense would be required to consult a diviner. Multiple offenses could possibly lead to death. (13p51)
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? No evidence found.
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?
- “The proper interpretation of the names of any one individual reveals an astonishing amount of information about him. His names will show, for instance, his father’s name and country, his mother’s sib, perhaps the name of the woman who assisted his mother in childbirth, or the fact that a medicine man was called in, his position in the family, etc.” (7pg106)
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)
- “There is some inter-marriage between all these Bantu groups, especially between Ngulu and Kaguru.” (11pg122)
 This follows their acceptance of exogamous marriages. (2pg361)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? No evidence found.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: No evidence found.

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: Not able to find.
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:
- “The Nyangusi, a few of whom are alive to-day (1939), were carrying on borders wars with Nguu...” (3pg5)
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:
- “The Kaguru have had long and close contact with the Ngulu who, at times, took advantage of their less warlike and less sophisticated Kaguru neighbours by raiding them for slaves, by practicing sharp trading on them, and by aiding Arabs in their dealings with Kaguru.” (10pg36)
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):
- “After six months at Kworgum and Kance, he withdrew eastward to Nguru, forfeiting effective control of these vassal states. At Nguru he appealed in vain for assistance to his suzerain, the Mai of Bornu, himself already the victim of Fulani attacks.” (5pg446)
 “The known history of the Sarkin Gwari’s movements and activities following his visit to Nguru indicates that he succeeded in keeping his followers united under his leadership.” (5pg447)
 - “The Kaguru are a sedentary, matrilineal Bantu people who live in small villages or in scattered homesteads. They practice hoe agriculture and have small herds of livestock. They are socially and culturally very similar to the matrilineal Ngulu who lands border Ukaguru on the east and to the matrilineal Sagara whose lands border Ukaguru on the south. [...] Most of the Ngulu inhabiting Ukaguru live in the borderlands in the northeast of the chiefdom. Their very close cultural similarity to the Kaguru has allowed them to mix freely and easily with Kaguru and to settle amongst them with little difficulty.” (10pg36)
- 4.18 Cannibalism? No evidence found.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- “Ngulu, by contrast, have settled in much larger numbers and appear to have done so due to their own population expansion and to favorable social or trading ties in Ukaguru; Ngulu tend to settle in fairly large groups and continue to maintain their ties with their kinsmen to the east.” (11p121)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): No evidence found.

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

- “Each Ngulu clan is associated with one or more areas in Ngululand. Although only one “owner” clan holds certain political and ritual rights over the land in a particular area, members of many clans live in each and every are.” (2pg361)
- “Every Ngulu should have two primary kin groups toward which loyalty is owed: his own matrilineage (*kungugo*) and his father’s matrilineage (*welekwa*, sing. & pl.) A Ngulu believes that he is physiologically, as well as socially and spiritually, related to both such groups, being related to the matrilineage by blood (*damu*), and to the father’s matrilineage by the solid parts of the body (bone, *mavuha*; hair, teeth, flesh).” (2pg361)
- “The particular *mlango*, who *mwegazi* is chief of the sib, is the “royal” *mlango*. The chief wears as insignia a *lufia*, which is, as a rule, a couple of long feathers or a piece of woven material. He carries *vitenge*, pieces of sticks, as a sign of his authority.” (7pg105)

5.4 Post marital residence:

- “...it is said that in the past residence after marriage was uxorilocal, except in the case of senior members of a lineage. This is no longer the norm and the residence tends to be virilocal.” (2pg361-362)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

- “Some settlements are still formed around matrilineage, but many are not...” (2pg361)

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

- “Humanity as a category irrespective of sex and age is not very meaningful to Ngulu. As a child, a Ngulu is a prospective husband or wife, a girl for whom bridewealth will eventually be received, or a boy for whom it must someday be found.” (2pg385)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

- “Grandmother (*wau*) refers to a category of joking relatives with whom obscene sexual and insult and joking (*thukana*) is appropriate.” (2pg383)

5.8 Village and house organization:

- “...home to provide much of the wealth and security necessary to his status as a proper adult, no longer dependent upon his parents’ household.” (2pg363)
“In return, a girl gains her own home free from the supervision of her parents, although she may have to contend with with a mother-in-law.” (2pg363)
- “In a Ngulu house, the center-pole supports most of the weight of the roof. Near its base may be found the hearth, made of three stones, where food is prepared; this is specifically regarded as the focus of women’s household duties (*cf.* Biedelman 1964b). Ngulu sometimes say that a man’s penis like a center-pole that it too supports *nyumba* (both house and household).²¹ Thus, these masculine and feminine objects combine to form a stable house; similarly, a Ngulu man and woman marry to form a home within a house.” (2pg379-380)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses): No evidence found.

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

- “A menstruating women should not sleep upon her husband’s bed but in a separate bed, or, more often, upon the ground.” (2pg375)

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

- “The Ngulu are divided into over fifty exogamous matri-clans (*kungugo*, pl. *makungugo*, or *kolo*, sing. & pl.), each composed of many matrilineages, not all of which can trace descent with one another. Many Ngulu clans have names and traditions similar to those of neighboring matrilineal peoples such as the Kaguru, Zigua, and Luguru.” (2pg361)
- “... and between Ngulu matri-clans (which form alliances and which in *toto* form the Ngulu people) and even between Ngulu and their matrilineal neighbors (which form, for most purposes, their largest possible moral universe)...” (2pg382)
- “The *mlango* is composed of individual families. The head of the *mlango* is called *mwegazi*.” (7pg104)
“The *mwegazi* is succeed by his *mpwa*, nephew, i.e. his sister’s son.” (7pg104)

5.12 Trade:

- “The Ngulu sometimes utilize this reputed relationship to secure contacts in the many areas where they trade or settle.” (2pg361)

Similar clan names can prove to be useful. (2pg361)

- “Nonetheless, Masai did sometimes take refuge with Kaguru and Ngulu during livestock epidemics and droughts when their herds suffered, and an important trade in tobacco, honey, iron and other goods was carried on between the Masai-type peoples of the north and their Bantu neighbors.” (10pg37)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

- “Among Ngulu themselves, there is an exchange of mildly insulting terms between mountain and lowland folk. In addition, eastern Ngulu are sometimes called *Wajumbi* (*jumbi*, papaw). It is said that this refers to these people’s Arabization, pawpaws being believed to have been introduced into the area by the area by the Arabs. Ngulu sometimes call those in the north *Wegeja* (*kugeja-geja*, to trade or barter for a profit to one-self), since that area is said to be notorious for producing wily traders.” (10pg42)
- “Many Kaguru and Ngulu pride themselves upon the purity of their dialect and tend to refer to the persons living at the edges of their respective countries as *Wandubu*, those who garble their words.” (10p43)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR: Not able to find.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- “Kamba are also reputed by Kaguru to be very clever in their skills with medicines, a trait which they are thought to share with the Ngulu and which is vaguely related to witchcraft.” (10p44)

6.2 Stimulants:

- “Ngulu superiority in...curing tobacco...” (10p43)

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

- “When a Ngulu girl first begins to menstruate, she is said to be ready to undergo a series of ceremonies from which she will emerge as an adult woman. [...] It is also said that some of these ceremonies are essential to control the dangerous aspects of a woman’s reproductive capacity, and it is in this sense that the private ceremony immediately after a girl’s first menstruation is called *Kuhoza*, to cool, to make normal. The girl remains secluded in the house of her mother, or an elderly woman, or in a house especially built for her. Here she goes undergoes various operations in her labia, but does not undergo clitoridectomy. This cutting is sometimes referred to as *Kutoza mkono*, taking hold of the hand, meaning to lead a girl along her proper way, to take her in hand. [...] When the girl has fully recovered from the operations on her genitals, a more formal ceremony is held; this is called *Guluwe*, wild pig. [...] Several weeks (or days) later, further ceremonies are held called *Mkumbulu*, porter’s head-pad, and *Kizelu*, ashes. [...] Usually the day after the *Mkumbulu* and *Kizelu* ceremonies (but much later if the beer and foods supplies are short), the girl goes through the ceremony of *Mlao*, emergence, where she is publicly presented to the entire community at a large dance and beer-drink.” (3pg365)
- “Ngulu boys are initiated some time between the ages of about 12 and 16; they undergo circumcision and some hazing are taught various songs and riddles providing traditional lore not only about sexual relations, the nature of the sexes and the problem of birth, but also about other values and traditions not directly associated with these.” (6pg143)

It is reported men who are sexually mature who are not circumcised are refused by women.

(6pg143)

6.4 Other rituals:

- “...Ngulu initiation ceremonies clearly define the sexual roles which Ngulu young people assume with their new roles as adults.” (2pg385)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

- “The Kaguru resemble other matrilineal peoples in this area...Ngulu. Much of what they recount of their past parallels that recounted by their neighbours. Yet the plausibility of their legends of origin may well not be due to their factuality so much as their conformity with ideal Kaguru ideals: if it did not happen that way, it should have.” (14p89)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

- “The word for “dance,” *kuvina*, is, itself, a euphemism for sexual intercourse.” (2pg369)
- “Once the basic dualistic system of Ngulu symbolic attributes is understood, many ceremonial and ritual acts, songs, prayers, and other behavior are more clear.” (2pg382)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

- “Today, ritual obligations are still primarily to one’s own matrilineage...” (2pg362)
- “In other Ngulu rituals and ceremonies, white (*-zelu*, white, bright, clean, shining as when a person is washed and oiled) with its association with masculine, clean and normative, has a similar cooling effect toward blood.” (2pg375)

6.9 RCR revival: No evidence found.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- “...they also associated blood with the disorder of sexual passion, with danger, with death.” (2pg374)
- “When Ngulu men die, they are buried lying on their right sides; women on their left. All Ngulu are buried with their feet pointing east, and they are said to be continuing the trek eastward, coming out of the west (womb).” (2pg380)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? No evidence found.

6.12 Is there teknonymy? No evidence found.

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

- “Ngulu do not seem to believe that they are making contact with supernatural beings when they undertake these ceremonies. They believe that they would be punished supernaturally if they were to fail to perform the ceremonies, but this would involve punishment by ancestral ghosts because the living had not maintained traditional, orderly, behavior.” (2pg384-385)
- “Baraguyu also maintain that Bantu, especially the Kaguru and Ngulu, are witch-ridden and knowledgeable in many forms of sorcery and witchcraft which are far more dangerous than the magic and sorcery believed by some Baraguyu to be practiced by some of their fellow tribesmen.” (13pg48)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

- “Underneath the cloth, the four women pound the red clay which has placed inside the basket, using the maize cobs which had previously been hanging on the center-pole. The clay is pounded, mixed with water, and painted on the novice.” (2pg369)

Takes place during the ceremonies that follow a woman beginning her menstrual cycle. (2pg369)

7.2 Piercings: No evidence found.

7.3 Haircut:

- “When a child becomes *mwana*, that is, has cut its two lower and two upper teeth, it is the duty of its mother to take the child to the *mwegazi* of her *mlango*. The whole head is shaved with the exception of a round tuft of hair on the crown, called a *chungi*.” (7pg104)

7.4 Scarification: No evidence found.

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): No evidence found.

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

- “For example, white beads (*king’alo*) are given to a Ngulu youth when he is fetched for circumcision, but are removed after the operation is complete. White beads are placed on an infant’s neck to celebrate its normal development...” (2pg376)
- “While young boys might be naked on occasion, circumcised youths and men must take care not to expose their genitals. In the past, they wore grass or bark kilts.” (6pg143)

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

- “A girl child would then be adorned with beads at ankles, wrists, hip, and neck.” (7pg104)

7.8 Missionary effect:

- “Today men wear European or Swahili style clothing.” (6pg143)

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: No evidence found.

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: No evidence found.

8.2 Sororate, levirate: No evidence found.

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): No evidence found.

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- “To Ngulu, the number four is an auspicious number representing the repetition gained only through orderly, stable relations.” (2pg379)

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