

## 1. Description

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

- Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa
- Rwanda, Kinyarwanda, Kinyarwanda, Orunyarwanda, Ruanda, Urunyarwanda
- In the Democratic Republic of the Congo/ Rwanda language family

### 1.2 ISO code: kin

### 1.3 Location (latitude/ longitude): 4° 31' 0" S / 15° 32' 0" E

**1.4 Brief history:** "Rwandan culture emerged in the isolated mountainous terrain bordering Lake Kivu and Lake Muhazi in west-central Africa. The kingdom of Rwanda was founded in the sixteenth century in what is eastern Rwanda at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and then moved west to modern central Rwanda. Benefiting from military and administrative innovations, the Rwandan monarchy began to extend control over neighboring kingdoms and chieftaincies through conquest and incorporation. The resulting political system was complex, based more on political and economic ties than on a shared cultural identity."

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

- **Missionaries:** "The first European known to have visited Rwanda was the German, Count van Goetzen, in 1894. He was followed by missionaries, notably the "white fathers." In 1899, the Mwami submitted to a German protectorate without resistance. Belgian troops from then Zaire chased the small number of Germans out of Rwanda in 1915 and took control of the country. After World War I, the League of Nations mandated Rwanda and its southern neighbor, Burundi, to Belgium as the territory known as Ruanda-Urundi. Following [World War II](#), Ruanda-Urundi became a United Nations Trust Territory, with Belgium as the administering authority."
- **Education:** "Rwanda puts little emphasis on higher education. Less than 10 percent of Rwandans attend high school, and another small portion attends technical training schools. A very small percentage of the population continues on to university. Rwanda has one national university based in Butare, with branches in Kigali and Ruhengeri. In the past decade, several small private colleges have also been established."

**1.6 Ecology (natural environment):** "Known as the "land of a thousand hills," Rwanda is a mountainous country located on the far western edge of the Rift Valley, bordering on Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Tanzania. Rwanda rises from relatively flat plains in the east along the Tanzania border to steep mountains in the west along the continental divide between the Congo and Nile rivers. From the continental divide, the land drops sharply to the shores of Lake Kivu, which forms most of Rwanda's border with Congo. A range of high volcanoes forms Rwanda's northwest border."

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

- 7,504,900 total in all countries
- 6,490,000 in Rwanda
- 250,000 in Democratic Republic of the Congo
- "The population density was 331 per sq km (858 per sq mi), making Rwanda the most densely populated country on the African continent."

## 2. Economy

### 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- "The primary staple, pasty white *fufu* (manioc tubers, pounded into the texture of oatmeal), is eaten out of a communal bowl. This chunky carbohydrate is accompanied by varying side dishes, depending on wealth, season, and availability. Examples include sweet potatoes, perch, bananas, and plantains."
- "Rwandan food is quite simple, with beans, bananas, sweet potatoes, potatoes, and sorghum being the most common foods. Dairy products are also widely consumed, particularly a traditional drink of curdled milk."

### 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- "Fish is a primary food source for many, depending on their proximity to rivers and streams."
- "Those who can afford to do so also eat meat, primarily beef, goat, and chicken. Sorghum and banana beers are common as well."

**2.3 Weapons:** Most use guns that have to be registered when imported or exported to and from the country.

**2.4 Food storage:** You can mostly obtain food from grocery stores.

### 2.5 Sexual division of production:

- Women: In charge of child bearing. They carry their child on their backs for months until they have grown.
- Men: The physical labor. "Men bear the primary responsibility for overseeing livestock, assisted by youths who act as shepherds. Men also do heavy jobs around the house, such as construction..."

**2.6 Land tenure:** "In the past, the chief or village headman had authority over village land and ownership, but the European notion of individual land ownership led to a law in 1966 stating that the government owned all land, creating two simultaneous legal systems. "

**2.7 Ceramics:** Along with making decorative pots and jars, Rwandans also make jewelry and baskets.

**2.8 Specified sharing patterns:** "In the traditional way of eating, the women first serve the men, who usually sit on the chairs in the home. After the men are finished eating, the women and children usually sit on the floor and share the remaining items, resulting in poorer nutrition."

### 2.9 Food taboos:

- "Only the right hand is used in eating because it is an insult to conduct any transaction with the left hand, which is used only for bathroom purposes."
- "In recent years, the taboo on eating in public has diminished significantly, and restaurants have appeared in most urban areas. While the system of clans has diminished sharply in importance in Rwanda, most Rwandans will still not eat the totemic animals associated with their clans."

**2.10 Canoes/ Watercraft:** No canoes but there were roads as stated, "In 2002, an estimated 12,000 km (7,457 mi) of road, one of the most intensive systems in all of Africa, radiated through Rwanda, but only about 996 km (620 mi) were paved. Five principal roads connect Kigali to other Rwandan cities, and an asphalted road connects Butare and Cyangugu."

## 3. Anthropometry

### 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): Not Found

### 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): Not Found

## **4. Life History, Mating, Marriage**

4.1 Age of menarche (f): 11-12 years old

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Not Found

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Not specified, but it is stated that Rwanda has a high fertility rate therefore families are usually very large.

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): Not Found

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): It was stated that adulthood is reached once they are married.

4.6 Proportion of marriage ending in divorce: No actual numerical data but there is a sharp increase in divorce.

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: "Polygamy, once extensively practiced, has become uncommon except in some rural areas, such as the northwest. The decline in polygamy has been accompanied with a sharp increase in levels of divorce and remarriage.

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

- "In the past, single women in the Congo belonged to their fathers, and, upon marriage, their ownership would be transferred to the husband."
- Dowry: Cattle
- Bride Purchase: "Rwandans must marry someone outside their *umuryango*. A young man goes to see the father of a woman he wishes to marry. His father also pays a visit and brings gifts. Then the two fathers discuss the marriage. The bridegroom and his father have to pay at least one bride wealth cow to the bride's father."

4.9 Inheritance patterns: "Upon a father's death or retirement from active labor, his land and property are traditionally divided between his sons. The eldest surviving son is expected to take care of his mother and any unmarried sisters after his father's death."

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Not Found.

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Not Found

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception: Not Found

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? Not Found

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process: Not Found

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Not Found

4.17 Preferential category for spouse: "In the past, marriage in Rwanda and Burundi was based on the relations between the two families. Today most Tutsis choose the person they will marry."

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms: Not Found

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring:

4.20 If mother dies, who raises children? The sister's brother (their uncle) would assume the responsibilities.

4.21 Adult sex ratio: Not Found

4.22 Evidence for couvade: Not Found.

4.23 Different distinctions for potential father: The man usually chooses the wife.

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect: "In the traditional African model of kinship rules, there is a clear delineation of power, starting with the male head of the family. Chiefs come to rule based on their popularity within the village, their personal charisma, and their overall prestige. Whatever elders command is adhered to unconditionally, out of respect. Respect for elders, chiefs, and ancestors are an extremely important facet of daily life in the Congo."

4.25 Joking relationships: Not Found

4.26 Patterns of descent for certain rights, names or associations: Males usually obtain the family name.

4.27 Incest avoidance rules: They usually marry people in other ethnic groups.

4.28 Is there a formal marriage ceremony:

- "Marriage happens in several stages, from the engagement to the wedding. At each stage, the families of the groom and bride exchange gifts. The most important gift is the bride wealth cow that the husband gives his future wife's father."

4.29 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? Family name is passed down by the males.

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges them? "In the past, most people had arranged marriages to someone of the same social class.

Today, Tutsi may choose the person they will marry. Group activities are more common than dating in couples. However, some young Tutsis in the cities practice Western-style dating and go out to nightclubs."

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marriages who: "Unlike in the past, most couples today select their own mates, though approval of the family is expected. Marriage across ethnic lines between Hutu and Tutsi is relatively common."

## **5. Warfare/homicide**

5.1 Percent adult (male) death due to warfare: Not Found

5.2 Out-group vs. in-group cause of violent death: "Since the early 1960s, the peoples of Rwanda and Burundi have lived through some of the worst violence in African history. The killings are usually called ethnic warfare between the Hutu and Tutsi. However, victims have often been killed for their political beliefs, not just their ethnic group"

5.3 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Social hierarchy and power.

5.4 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies: According to the many sources, The Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups butt heads occasionally and have led to large rates of genocide victims. Despite that, many Hutu and Tutsi marry each other.

5.5 Cannibalism? None

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

6.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: "The UN estimated that 17% of the population lived in urban areas in 2005, and that urban areas were growing at an annual rate of 9.30%. The capital city, Kigali, had a population of 656,000 in that year."

6.2 Mobility pattern: Not Found

6.3 Political system: They have a president who is assisted by a multiparty cabinet and a prime minister.

6.4 Post-marital resident: "Each wife (if there is more than one) typically has her own house in the compound, as do elderly parents. The husband's extended family typically lives in close proximity on the same hill or on a nearby hill. The wife's family also may live nearby or may be farther away, but both the husband's and the wife's kin have important socially defined relations with the family. Nevertheless, women are considered members of the husband's family after marriage."

6.5 Territoriality? Not Found.

6.6 Social interaction divisions? Not Found.

6.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: Not Found.

6.8 Village and house organization: "The basic type of housing in the rural areas has been a structure that is most commonly beehive-shaped, made of mud bricks and poles, and covered with thatch. These residences are dispersed in the collines, farms organized on a family basis, and they accounted for 89% of Rwanda's housing units in 1978."

- About 94% of all households lived in a single-family structure. Most families live in homes made of wood and mud or sun-dried mud bricks with an earthen floor. Zinc or tiles are the most common type of roofing material. About 59% of all households get drinking water from a well or spring. Only about 6,729 households have a flush toilet. About 86% of all housing is owner occupied.

6.9 Specialized village structures: "However, in recent years the government initiated a National Habitat Program aimed at improving rural housing conditions and providing new housing for a large number of returning refugees and genocide survivors. One project of "villagization" is meant to construct rural village communities where public services and utilities might be provided more easily and, perhaps, with greater quality."

6.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Some sleep on the ground but others do not.

6.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Men are usually the head of the household.

6.12 Trade:

- Domestic Trade: "Kigali is the main commercial center in Rwanda. There are a few small supermarkets in Kigali offering imported items at rather high prices. However, smaller outdoor marketplaces selling locally produced foods and goods predominate in most areas. Nearly 90% of the work force is employed in agriculture, primarily at a subsistence level."
- Foreign Trade: Between 1996 and 1999, exports grew 424%, while imports grew by a considerably smaller 25%. However, the value of imports still equals more than four times the value of exports. Imports for 1999 consisted chiefly of food, machinery and equipment, steel, petroleum products, cement, and construction material.
- Rwanda's main commodity exports are coffee (56%) and tea (27%). Other exports include gold (17%) and animal hides and skins (0.9%).

6.13 Indication of social hierarchies? There is a class and caste system regarding the three main ethnic divisions. The Hutu, Tutsi, and the Twa.

- Hutu: engaged in more cultivation
- Tutsi: raising livestock
- Twa: hunting and other few activities

It is mentioned that the Hutu and Tutsi class change positions throughout time but the Twa group remains at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

## 7. Ritual/ Ceremony/Religion

7.1 Time Allocation to RCR: During marriages, funerals, births, and rites of passages.

7.2 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- "Both Nyabingi and Lyangombe have priests associated with their worship, but these figures have little public importance today. Instead, the main religious leaders of Rwanda are Christian clerics. The Catholic bishops and leaders of Protestant churches are prominent national figures with considerable political influence, and pastors and priests are important local figures."

7.3 Stimulants: Not Found

7.4 Passage rituals:

- The naming ceremony takes place 7 days after birth.
- The passage to adulthood is marriage.
- For mourning, the family holds a large feast and abstains from sex and physical labor.

7.5 Other rituals: "The Kubandwa sects of Nyabingi and Lyangombe are secret societies that induct new members through initiation. Families experiencing difficulties of some sort will often choose to have a child initiated into the sect. The Lyangombe ceremonies are conducted outdoors in a clearing around a type of tree whose red flowers, tradition holds, represent Lyangombe's blood. Nyabingi ceremonies are also practiced outdoors. The level of secrecy of both sects has been increased because of the hostility they have faced first from colonial authorities and subsequently from Christian officials. Many Christian churches penalize members they find to have participated in one of the Kubandwa ceremonies."

7.6 Myths (Creations): Not Found.

7.7 Cultural Material (art, music, games): "The Rwandan government provides very little support for the arts. The government supports a national dance troop based in Nyanza, but there are few other nationally funded artistic groups."

- Art: They have few graphic arts but the main ones are decorative art such as baskets and pottery.
- Literature: They have little literacy tradition.
- Performance Arts: Music and dance are the most important artistic aspects of the Rwandan culture.

7.8 Sex differences in RCR: Not Found

7.9 Missionary effect: None

7.10 RCR revival: Not Found

7.11 Death and afterlife beliefs: "Rwandans believe that the spirit continues after death, and they see their families as including not only the living, but those who have come before and those who will come in the future. Showing respect to dead family members is considered extremely important. Failing to appease the spirits of dead ancestors through appropriate rituals and offerings can lead the ancestors to neglect their families and allow evil spirits to inflict harm."

7.12 Taboo of naming dead people? None.

7.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems, etc.): “Christianity has become a central part of Rwandan culture. More than 60 percent of the population is Catholic, and another 30 percent are Protestants, with the largest Protestant churches including Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Free Methodists, and Baptists. Many Rwandans credit the Catholic Church with having supported the Hutu rise to power in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the church has thus gained great influence and public support among the Hutu. With the demise of the monarchy, most of the associated religious rituals ended, and Christian rituals have come to take their places.”

## 8. Adornment:

8.1 Body paint: None

8.2 Piercings: None

8.3 Haircut: None

8.4 Sacrificion: “Most Rwandans have a Christian funeral. However, traditional rituals are often observed as well. It is common to sacrifice a cow or bull, for example.”

8.5 Adornment: “In the past, Hutus wore skirts of cloth made from tree bark, and cloaks made of animal hides. These have long been replaced by Western-style clothing. However, handmade beaded necklaces and bracelets are still worn.”

8.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: “Groups known as *intore* perform traditional ritual dances. The dancers wear headdresses made from dried grasses.”

8.7 Sex differences in adornment: “For men, khaki pants and sport shirts suffice in the office. Most women wear dresses or suits to the office. Cocktail clothes do not need to be overly fancy. Depending on your personal interests, leisure time clothing should include a warm jacket, running shoes, hiking boots, rain gear, bathing suit. Shorts are worn at home, during athletic activities in town, and at safari camps. Generally speaking, dress for both men and women is conservative.”

8.8 Cultural revival in adornment: “In the past, Hutus wore skirts of cloth made from tree bark, and cloaks made of animal hides. These have long been replaced by Western-style clothing. However, handmade beaded necklaces and bracelets are still worn.”

## 9. Kinship Systems

9.1 Sibling classification system: Not Found

9.2 Sororate, levirate: Not Found

9.3 Other notable kinships typology: Not Found

## 10. Other interesting cultural features:

- On average, each woman gives birth to at least 5 babies in their lifetime. Fertility rates in Rwanda are very high.
- The main language is Kinyarwanda and it is spoken universally in Rwanda.

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