

1. Description

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

1.2 ISO code: 639-3 mg

1.3 Location: Southern cost of Mozambique and north eastern South Africa

1.4 Brief history: Little is known about the early history of these people but they appear to have come from many surrounding areas and formed small chiefdoms until the Zulu lead by Soshangane, took them over and established the new kingdom of Gasa. Many Tsonga resisted and fled but Soshangane was able to establish a ruling dynasty. This empire ruled until 1895 when their power was broken by the Portuguese colonials.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: The group with the most influential impact on the Tsonga where the Zulu. It was because of there takeover that the Tsonga people are also known as the 'shagaans' in reference to Soshangane.

1.6 Ecology: The area in which they live is known for being rocky, harsh and predisposed to drought. Some the the land, on the costal belt, is described as being covered with large dunes of white and reddish-brown sand. Between these dunes are basin-like hollows with pools of stagnant water at the bottom where Mosquitos and Tsetse flies flourish. There is a thin layer of soil in which vegetation and fairly dense forests can grow as well as crops.

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

-Around 750,000 sexuality's

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Sorghum and Maize

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Cattle, Sheep, poultry, pigs, fish,

2.3 Weapons: Assegais (a spear or javelin), sticks, dogs and hidden game pit traps.

2.4 Food storage: Storage huts can be found connected to the main sleeping huts. Granaries are constructed on stilts made from long logs and sticks. This helps to keep out vermin. They also light fires beneath the granary as another safety way to control pests and as a way to fumigate the crops.

2.5 Sexual division of production: Men do the bulk of the fishing and hunting while the women spend much of their time cooking and prepared food to eat or for storage

2.6 Land tenure: All the land is owned by the chief who then gives it out to members of the village. Should a new person come looking for a spot to live and grow crops he simply has to ask someone with a large amount of land who will give him a plot of land. Because they do not own the land there is no buying or selling of land and once the land is given away they have no claim to it or anything grown on it.

2.7 Ceramics:

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos: Most of the food taboos I have read about have to do with small children or nursing mothers such as a newborn must never drink strait water or a nursing mother can only drink water from her home. All the others are hand in hand with some form of ritual or ceremony.

2.10 Canoes/watercraft: They used Canoes for both hunting and trade.

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): no age was given since the age of marriage changes and so would the age of giving birth.

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): about 3-4 years

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): There was no age mentioned other then 'young' but almost everyone gets married and there are a great number of rituals to help cure a 'complaint of singleness'

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: No number is given but they do say that few can afford to have more then one bride

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: the price paid by the grooms family for his new bride if traditionally in the form of cattle, however due to the large number of Tsetse flies the number oc cattle owned by the Tsonga is low and so this price can also be paid with 40-50 iron hoes.

4.9 Inheritance patterns: Inheritance is passed down the male line but not from father to son. Instead, should a man die his next youngest brother will inherit what he has. Only when there are no more living brothers will the son of the first brother receive the inheritance.

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: none of the sources touched on it much but It does happen

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): There are no rules against marrying within your own clan, and some groups consider a boys mother's brother's daughter to be the best chose for a wife. However many marriages are forged between people of different clans and villages.

- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?:** There is only one father and no ‘other’ fathers. If the parents of the child are not married and the man refuses to get married the child is considered to belong to the mother’s family but the father is still the father.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly?:** She is the protective entity as well as a place for the child to grow.
- 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:** before they choose a spouse the younger members of the village may participate in sexual relations and a girl who turns down to many men is considered prude or deformed. as for rape, none of the sources touched on it.
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)**
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?** They do as long as they remain un-married, in fact a woman who refuses to many men is considered ‘malformed’
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring**
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?** If the mother dies while the child is still breast-feeding it is assumed that the child will also die but is given goat milk or fed by another of the husbands wives. If the child is older they will be taken care of by the father’s other wives or other woman in the clan.
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females:** No numbers were given but the ratio is about even.
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades:** none
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers:**
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?**
- 4.24 Joking relationships?**
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations:** The child’s name is chosen by the parents and can be anything from simply ‘girl’ or ‘boy’ to the name of a visitor or ancestor. If the child’s parents are married and the bride price has been paid or agree to get married the child will belong to the father’s family’s ‘village’ or family group. Should the parents be un-married and the father refuses to get married or the bride price has not been paid the child belongs to the mother’s ‘village’ or family group.
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules:** There are rules against marrying close kin however marriages between clan members is allowed
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?**
- 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?)**
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?** Marriages are determined by the family as a whole. First the boy informs his family that he wants to marry a specific girl and if the family approves they will send a liaison to the girl’s home. If the girl’s family also approves of the match they will serve the visitor a special meal and the two will be engaged.
- 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:**
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):**
- 4.18 Cannibalism?**

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:** from 6 to 12 huts
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):**
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):** There is a chief and then family’s are split up into clans
- 5.4 Post marital residence:** After marriage the wife comes to live with her husband in his families village and the new couple share their own hut.
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):**
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):**
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:**
- 5.8 Village and house organization:** all huts are built in a circle leading to a circular pen in the middle where the cattle live.
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses):**
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?** They sleep on mats on the ground of their huts
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:** Family groups are called clans and are identified by a common name though they can be spread out over many villages
- 5.12 Trade:**
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?:** the richer a family is the more respect and the more suitors they will have but they are not considered to be more important and all people participate in the day to day activities of the village.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6.0 Time allocation to RCR:** No number was given but it appears to be a large part of their life and there is a ritual for just about everything.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): All RCR seems to be performed by or with the help of a Family Doctor

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): There are passage rituals for birth, naming, the first full moon after birth, then end of breastfeeding, the cutting of teeth, the moving from children's work to grown-up work, puberty and death.

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation):

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect: Catholic missionaries have had a large effect on these people and many of their older customs are altered to add or accommodate the values of the Catholic church.

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: they believe that through death the human spirit is made into a god of sorts. They often invoke these spirits in other rituals.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?: There is no taboo against naming the dead, in fact they are often invoked by name in rituals and ceremonies

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

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

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings: Boys' ears are pierced as part of their coming of age ritual

7.3 Haircut: The first haircut of a newborn is very important and a short ritual accompanies it. Other than that they may cut their hair whenever they like though if the woman has a newborn they must leave two locks in the front long for the child's entertainment.

7.4 Scarification: a less common practice than in earlier times but more common with women than men. By burning the skin and rubbing it with salt and black ash they make triangular patterns on the girls' stomachs. This began to deter slave catchers from wanting them but is considered beautiful by these people.

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: women do not pierce their ears and men are less likely to practice any form of scarification.

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. Junod, Henri A. *The Life of a South African Tribe*. New Hyde Park: University, 1962. Print.

2. West, Martin, and Jean Morris. *Abantu: An Introduction to the Black People of South Africa*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: C. Struik, 1976. Print.

3. Kuper, Adam. *Wives for Cattle: Bridewealth and Marriage in Southern Africa*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982. Print.