

## 1. Description

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

Tswana or Setswana; Zone S >Sotho language region > Niger-Congo language family > Bantu language

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

S.30

### 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

(25.5, 25.9)

### 1.4 Brief history:

- Described by early Germanic anthropologist, H. Liechtenstein, in 1806

\*Not published until 1930

- Mistaken for the Xhosta dialect of Twsana

\*Maybe be considered to cover the Northern and Southern Sotho region

- Linguistic study primarily attributed to British missionary Robert Moffat in 1826

\* Published two of the first pieces of English literature translated in Twsana

~Including the Bechsuana Catechism and later the bible

-Missionary James Archibald publishes the first manual of Tswana grammar in 1933

\*Also modeled on the Xhosta dialect

-First Grammar of Tswana distinguishing Tswana as a language separate from Xhosta published by French missionary

E. Casalis in 1841

\*However Casalis later amends his claims in 1882

-Solomon Plaahte, South African born linguist and intellectual, is the becomes the first to write and publish extensively in Tswana

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

-Language studies of Tswana primarily done by French and English Missionaries

-One of the largest and most affected victims of the South African Apartheid

-Tswana is one of the few actual Bantustans

-Spoken by all eight major tribes of Botswana

\*Formerly the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland until Botswana independence in

1966

\*Land named for the indigenous Tswana speaking peoples

-Nineteenth century tensions existed between the indigenous Tswana and the neighboring Ndebele and Boer tribes

-1885 Great Britain accepts the request made by Tswana chiefs: Kahama III, Bathoen, and Sebele, and places present day Botswana under British Protection.

-South Africa was formed out of Botswana in 1910 and became a British colony

\* 1948 saw the inception of Apartheid in South Africa

-South Africa formally withdrew from the British common wealth in 1961

-Large tracks of South Africa and Botswana are still under tribal rule

### 1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

-River Delta, Desert, Grasslands, and Savannah

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

-Spoken by all eight major tribes in Botswana

\*(79%

-Overall population: 2,065,398

-Average House Size: 4.2

-Population density: 3.42

## 2. Economy

### 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

-Maize

### 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- Livestock
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:
  - Modern weapons
    - \* Illicit arms market
- 2.4 Food storage:
  - Urban: Modern food storage methods
  - Tribal: Baskets and traditional dry storage methods
- 2.5 Sexual division of production:
  - Historically patriarchal
  - Woman: homemakers and caregivers
    - \*Recently woman have begun entering the work force as midwives and teachers
- 2.6 Land tenure:
  - Four pillar system
    - \*Labor
    - \*Land
    - \*Capital
    - \*Entrepreneurship
  - Leading cause of land tenure unrest is economic instability
  - Land tenure of Botswana is directly related to the level of agricultural sustainability
- 2.7 Ceramics:
  - Two branches in the Botswana ceramic tradition
    - \*Household/ Daily use
    - \*Ceremonial/ Ritualistic
  - Key identifying characteristics
    - \*Red orange coloration
    - \*Cord markings and etching on rim sherds
    - \*Typically restricted hyperboloids
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:
  - Inter-tribal cultural and economic very common
  - Inter-tribal marriage also popular
- 2.9 Food taboos:
  - Gender/ reproductive food taboos
    - \*rarely observed
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft?
  - Long shallow hardwood canoes
    - \*Tradition of fishing culture along the rivers and deltas

### **3. Anthropometry**

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):
  - M: 143cm F: 136cm
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):
  - M: approx. 23kg F: approx. 22kg

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

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f):
  - 12 years
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):
  - F: 18 years M: 19 years
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f):
  - 4.11 members
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):
  - open
    - ~Although there is a traditional period of several month spousal separations following a birth
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):
  - M&F: 22-25 years
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

-15:100

- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:  
-unrecorded  
~still uncommon prior to 20<sup>th</sup> century
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:  
-Goats and or sheep  
~number of animals left solely to the discretion of the groom's family
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns:  
-Patriarchal
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:  
-frequent daily interactions are common, conflict is not
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:  
-Large amounts of discrimination  
~hate crimes  
~laws encouraging societal exclusion
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):  
-Historically widely accepted
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?  
-Mono-paternal  
~Uncles are, however, revered and play ceremonial parts through their nieces and nephews lives
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")  
-Mono-maternal
- 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  
-About 24% of women in the Southern Tswana language region report abuse or rape  
-levels for the rest of the Tswana language region are reflective of these.
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)  
-favors the marriage of a man to his mother's sister's daughter, and less often a father's sister's daughter.
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?  
-While women maintain a large level of autonomy outside of the home and within, there are still no sexual freedoms provided them. Even courtship and marriage are out of their hands.
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring  
-none
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?  
-female relatives
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females  
-0.93 males per female.
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades  
-information unavailable
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)  
-information unavailable
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?  
-elder worship  
-no instances of avoidance, outside of banishment
- 4.24 Joking relationships?  
-No instances could be found
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations  
-patrilineal, matrilineal, double-descent, or bilaterally organized.
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules  
-Tswana culture allows for uncle/ niece and cousin marriages.
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

-Tswana marriage ceremonies are typically elaborate and include symbolic delegations and gift exchange.

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

- no instances recorded outside of marriage and modern applications.

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

-There does not seem to be a preference towards either.

-Marriage outside of the community is not uncommon or taboo

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

-Historically most marriages were arranged

-Most modern Tswana marriages are no longer arranged.

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

-No major evidence.

### **Warfare/homicide**

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

-16.99 deaths/1000 populations (est July 2009)

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

-records not available

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

-records not available

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

-multiple reports of peaceful trading relationships with outlier tribes

4.18 Cannibalism?

-Only evidence of cannibalism in Tswana culture, is as victims of unfriendly cannibalistic tribes.

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

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

-est. 20,000

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

-The majority of Tswana groups are semi-nomadic or semi-sedentary

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

- Historically familial succession

-Modern Tswana governments are elected through indirect election.

5.4 Post marital residence:

-Patrilocal

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

-no clear definition, leading cause of disputes

-historically tribal militia defended groups

-during British occupation some tribes received Royal Army assistance

-present day a semi-modern army is used

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

-No modern divisions

-Historically men and woman were typically socially separated

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

-No records available

5.8 Village and house organization:

-Villages are organized into wards

-Each "family" has a hut/house

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

-no records available

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

-Animal skin sleeping mats

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

-Largely based on ward membership and familial groupings

5.12 Trade:

-Largely trade based economy

- Historically friendly trade relations with other tribes.
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?
  - basic ruling class hierarchy
  - ruling family = aristocrats

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

- 6.0 Time allocation to RCR:
  - Modern Tswanaian culture allocates little or no time to RCR
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):
  - priests and priestess
- 6.2 Stimulants:
  - no records found
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):
  - Bogwera
    - adolescent boys
    - includes circumcision
    - teaches tribal customs and survival skills
  - Bojale
    - adolescent girls
    - teaches adult domestic responsibilities
    - teaches acceptable sexual conduct after marriage
  - records indicate these are no longer practiced
  - Funeral ceremonies are the most common and most elaborate
- 6.4 Other rituals:
  - agro centric ceremonies
- 6.5 Myths (Creation):
  - reports of not having a creation myth
  - Other reports include the Myth of an early ancestor rising out of the earth followed by cattle and other creatures.
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):
  - traditional learning games
  - music and art are typically either religious or a keeper of historic records
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:
  - none reported
- 6.8 Missionary effect:
  - following the arrival of missionaries, Christian elements were added to the religion
- 6.9 RCR revival:
  - no traditional religion revivals reported
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:
  - most common beliefs conform to modern Christian teachings
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?
  - none recorded
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy?
  - No record available
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)
  - Tswanaian religion is a mix of Animism, ancestor worship, and Christianity
  - modern religions are predominately Christian or Islamic

## **7. Adornment**

- 7.1 Body paint:
  - used to represent spirits and animals
- 7.2 Piercings:
  - somewhat common, though no religious or cultural rationales can be found
- 7.3 Haircut:
  - short, cropped hair cut

7.4 Scarification:

-few examples present

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

-Bright Colorful geometric patterns used is typically in ceremonial dress

-feathers are highly sought after

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

-no specific documentation was found

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

-only subtle differences

7.8 Missionary effect:

-Europeans saw the Tswana as savage and naked

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

-no documentation found

**8. Kinship systems**

8.1 Sibling classification system:

-siblings are given rank through gender and then seniority.

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

-decreased to almost non-existent

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

-Cross cousins and Cross siblings

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

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