

1. Description

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

The language name is Vinza, a member of the Central Bantu language family. They also speak Swahili, which is the primary language of the nation.

1.2 ISO code:

VIN

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

Tanzania, western area of Uvinza (~-5.118301, ~30.055847)

1.4 Brief history:

The Vinza-speaking people are thought to have migrated from Cameroon. Although this isn't certain, they definitely came from central Africa around 2000 BCE. They absorbed bits and piece of culture and tradition from each other society they passed, eventually settling in the northwestern area of the Great Lakes in Tanzania as a unique and diverse people (7). Eventually Uvinza was established, which became a small salt-mining village and the primary place of residence for the Vinza people. Several rich salt-water springs near Uvinza made it a profitable location for salt-mining operations. The Vinza people utilized the springs to their advantage in the salt trade, but the mining did not become a large-scale operation until the Vinza adopted a chief as ruler of their clan in 1800 (1). In the late 1800's spreading hostilities with the Germans began to negatively affect the salt trade. Many neighboring clans engaged in rebellious battles against Germany during this time, but the Vinza themselves are not specifically mentioned. In the 1900's a train station was built in Uvinza by Tanzanian Railways. Tourism has since become a part of the local economy. Plans to expand the railway with an additional line into Uvinza were announced in 2007 (8).

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

Arab immigrants traveling east across Tanzania from the coast spread the religion of Islam across most of the nation, including to the Vinza, long ago. German colonization in the late 1800's resulted in several years of warfare and rebellion, although the Vinza themselves are not specifically mentioned in any of the material I found on this subject. British occupation during World War I further developed the influence of European culture (3). Tanzania is now influenced by Christian missionaries, but the Vinza remain primarily Islamic (2).

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

Uvinza is located in northwestern Tanzania. The area is heavily forested, with many streams and rivers running through it. There are abundant brine springs nearby, which provide large supplies of salt (3).

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

Population: 19,000 Vinza speakers (2).

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

The Vinza people have a diet rich in vegetables. Crop agriculture is of great importance in the region. This was an important factor in the success of the Vinza salt trade (3). Their primary crops are corn, millet, and sorghum. Most Vinza eat a food called ugali every day, which is a thick porridge made from corn meal (7).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

Although the Vinza provided some of their own protein via fishing and hunting, most of their meat comes from trade with clans in neighboring regions, where pastoralism is more prevalent (5).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

The Vinza possess many iron tools and weapons, from knives, spears, and arrows to hoes and axes. Most of their iron was obtained through trades with neighboring societies (1).

2.4 Food storage:

Clay pots and jugs are used to store food and water (4).

2.5 Sexual division of production:

Women are traditionally responsible for crafts such as pottery or cloth weaving, while the men are responsible for mining salt and other minerals as well as forging weapons.

2.6 Land tenure:

Some farming is present, but the Vinza rely mostly on trade using the salt that they mine to procure goods.

2.7 Ceramics:

Pottery is an important aspect of the local economy. It is often used in trade with travelers and neighbors alike.

There is evidence of pottery in the region dating back as far as 800 BCE (4).

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):

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):

Marriage usually occurs during teenage years. It is considered for anyone to remain unmarried into adulthood (7).

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

Divorce is no longer considered an option after a marriage has been paid for and the couple has had children (7).

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

Polygamy is common, as it helps to make sure that everyone can be married (7).

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

Bride price is an intense negotiation which can take years (7).

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

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")

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)

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?

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)

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

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

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 typically arranged by the parents of both parties (7).

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):

There is no mention of any major and/or ongoing hostilities between the Vinza and any of their neighboring societies.

4.18 Cannibalism?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

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

The Vinza clan is run by a chief. This chiefdom was established in 1800, shortly before the explosion of the local salt industry.

5.4 Post marital residence:

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:

Little information is available about other villages, but Uvinza is now equipped with modern amenities. The village has many modern features, including its own train station.

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

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

5.12 Trade:

Salt is a primary export of the Vinza people. The salt trade was a critical aspect of the local economy until the late 1800's, when the expanding Arab slave trade and rising influx of Europeans began to conflict with the trade (3).

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 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:

6.5 Myths (Creation):

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

Music is an important part of Vinza culture. It is used regularly for a vast range of purposes, from religion to politics. Most of the music is highly vocal, consisting of lots of group chanting. It is usually accompanied by some sort of dance (7).

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

Death is a somber but regular part of life for the Vinza. Ancestral spirits are held in high esteem, and it is common for people to spill a libation in memory of the dead when drinking (7).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

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

Islam is the primary religion for these people. There has been a very strong Muslim influence in the past, which was spread by travelling Arabs coming East from the coast. There is now a moderate Christian influence in the area, and 31% of the Vinza speakers are Christian (2).

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

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

The chief's attire shows interlacustrine influence (6). This suggests an abundance of decorations made from leather and iron. Hide and leather clothes were worn for most of their history, but in modern days the Vinza mostly wear modern textile clothes.

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

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):

1. Although Swahili is the primary language of Tanzania, Mamdari notes that the various Bantu speaking groups of the nation are numerous and similar enough that they could potentially unify their languages into a single language which would replace Swahili as the most prevalent language in the entire region (5).

Numbered references

1. Ogot, Bethwell
UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. V, Abridged Edition: Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century
<http://books.google.com/books?id=Fw-1DOCXUgsC&pg=PA412&lpg=PA412&dq=vinza+uvinza&source=bl&ots=4kNYIQyUpw&sig=yUd2WJLKuVBFJv5->

[jMxNclOuK5c&hl=en&sa=X&ei=m12gT6zoNuHq2AXoijXhAg&ved=0CFoQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=vinza%20uvinza&f=false](https://www.joshuaproject.net/people-profile.php?peo3=15796&rog3=TZ)

2. <https://www.joshuaproject.net/people-profile.php?peo3=15796&rog3=TZ>
3. Ndembwike, John
Tanzania: The Land and Its People
<https://sites.google.com/site/intercontinentalbookcentre/tanzania-the-land-and-its-people/chapter-one-historical-background>
4. Gonzales, Rhonda
Societies, Religion, and History
<http://www.gutenberg-e.org/gonzales/pdf/gonzales-chapter2.pdf>
5. Mamdani, Mahmood
When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda
http://books.google.com/books?id=QUEamxb89JcC&pg=PA289&lpg=PA289&dq=%22vinza%22+history+bantu&source=bl&ots=pS-c94Nvhj&sig=ITukOtiUWXLS16kycV0TCNHQdns&hl=en&sa=X&ei=KM6gT6f_FKOC2AWio4yvCQ&ved=0CEAQ6AEwBQ#v=onepage&q=%22vinza%22%20history%20bantu&f=false
6. J.D. Fage, Roland Anthony Oliver
The Cambridge History of Africa: From c. 1600 to c. 1790
http://books.google.com/books?id=O3pPwhiWuPYC&pg=PA500&lpg=PA500&dq=bantu+vinza+history&source=bl&ots=SAhjFxiPVt&sig=twuo1Yqbfzfqpa5Ga7d06x4LVPY&hl=en&sa=X&ei=Ya-gT_KjDIfq2AW-y5XHCO&ved=0CD4Q6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=bantu%20vinza%20history&f=false
7. <http://www.uganda-visit-and-travel-guide.com/vinza-people.html>
8. Railway Gazette
November 17, 2007 *East African Rail Master Plan*
<http://www.railwaygazette.com/nc/news/single-view/view/east-african-rail-master-plan.html>