

Wongo

1. Description

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

- Other society names are Bakong, Gongo, Nbjembe, Tukongo, and Tukongo (8)
- The primary language of the Wongo people is Wongo with 17,000 people. They are also familiar with the Lele dialect.

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

- WON (8)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

- Latitude: -4.90 Longitude: 19.90
- Wongo tribe is located in the Kasai-Occidental Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. (2)

1.4 Brief history:

- The Wongo people migrated live in the Kasai district of Democratic Republic of Congo. The Wongo people migrated from northern African and are now living scattered about in villages. They are said to share some of the same cultural features of the Kuba, yet are not formally members of this tribe. According to legend, the ancestors of the Wongo- the Woto, had three sons- Lele, Kuba, and Wongo, which make up their neighboring tribes. These tribes traveled from Tumba Lake into the current province they live in. Wongo have a strong artistic tradition, most notably for cups for drinking palm wine. (5)

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

- Missionaries: Christian. Wongo people are noted to practice Roman Catholicism primarily. Missionaries gave the people a Bible with "portions" in their language in 1940. (4)
- Governments: Belgian governments once had control over the Democratic of Congo, which Wongo are apart of.
- Powerful neighbors: Lele tribe; Lele shares some influence on Wongo people. Both the Lele and Wongo are deeply influenced by the Kuba. The Kuba Kingdom was a multi-ethnic kingdom which once ruled over the majority of Kasai province. (1)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

- The Wongo tribe is located in the Kasai-Occidental Province, Ilebo and Kshikapa territories, and Guagu and Idiofa territories. The Lubue River cuts through the area. The terrain is savannah. The villages in the area are located on plateaus and valleys with rich soil. (2)

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

- In 1956 the people made up 125 villages out and 210 kingdoms. (7)
- As of 2000 the population was 12,700. Current village sizes and home range are unspecified. (9)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- manioc or cassava, maize, squash, beans (2)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- fish, beef, goat, and pork, ducks, sheep, chicken. (2)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

- Hand crafted knives made from animal ribs as well as both bows and arrows. (1)

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production:

- Men create and tend to small ponds on ones land for fish farming Tilapia. Women are majority responsible for cultivation of crops. (2)
- Women were responsible for farming but not for clearing the plots of land. Men are primarily responsible for activities surrounding cultivation of proteins. Such as hunting and fishing. (7)

2.6 Land tenure:

- Communal

2.7 Ceramics:

- wood-crafted cups made for drinking palm wine, raffia weaving and embroidery, and various mask carvings for ritual use. (6)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

- The drinking of palm wine is done at ceremonies however it is seen as a taboo for women to become drunk from the palm wine. (3)

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

- Both the Lube and Kwilu Rivers both flow into the Kassi River which is a tributary of the Congo River which surround the Kassi-Occidental Providence. Various ferries and dug-out canoes are used to cross these bodies of water. (2)

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):

- Varies; there is no specific “rule” for menarche age. (3)

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

- Varies; there is no specific age of first birth. (3)

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

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

- Husband’s father gives wife’s father gifts (3)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

- Matrilineal succession; inheritance is passed on through the mother’s side of the family. (3)

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?

- Clear distinction of power given to male head of family or eldest male. (3)

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?)

- Within the community or neighboring clans (3)

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

- No (3)

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

- No (3)

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):

- The Wongo are a sect of the Kuba, a group of 18 other ethnically diverse clans. (1)

4.18 Cannibalism?

- NO (1)

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- Villages formed cantons made up of 5 or 6 villages of 12 dwellings. (7)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

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

- As sited in findings from 19th century explorers the Wongo were broken into various clans ran by chiefs who were then unified under the king Bushong. (1).
- It is now safe to say that the Wongo follow the democratic political system of the rest of the Democratic Republic of Congo headed by Joseph Kabila. (10)

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:

- Villages are made up of huts divided into two rows of 12. The space in the center of the huts contained more huts or sheds reserved for ritual space. Chiefs were said to live close to but outside of the village. (7)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

- See above.

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

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

- Villages were sections up within lineages. (7)

5.12 Trade:

- Meat and other produces traded as markets with other villages as well as trading pottery and ivory. (2)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

- Society was divided in hierarchies of family, lineage, and then clan. (7)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- Members of clan specialized in various trades such as: hunter, weavers, boatbuilders, singers, weavers, dancers, blacksmiths. There were generally only one or two sculptors to each clan, this is also true for medicine men or healers. Healers and medicine men were distinguished by the hats they wore. (1,7)

6.2 Stimulants:

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

- Boy's rights of passage rituals in which young men were initiated by building a wall in front of a statute which represented the female ancestress. (1)

6.4 Other rituals:

- Royal ceremonies used various masks in plays in which the "players" would wear masks representing mythical King, Mwaash aMbooy, and Commoner, Bwoom, who fought over the female ancestress, Ngady aMwaash. (1)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

- wood-crafted cups made for drinking palm wine, raffia weaving and embroidery, and various mask carvings for ritual use. (6)
- For various ceremonies both men and women would drink palm wine from wood-crafted cups to discuss communal affairs. These cups were had a humanly figured and often represented various spirits. The cups would be carried around tied to the owner's waist indicating the status in the community of the owner. (6)
- Mask were worn at various ceremonies.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

- The existence of teknonymy is not specified however decedents are traced through one's mother. (1)

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

- The Wongo are now predominately Roman Catholic, Christian, or Muslim, but this was all before the take over of missionaries in the 1940's. Pre 1940's the Wongo started the religion of the Kuba.
- They shared a divine king or "God on Earth", Nyim. Nyim was said to communicate with the "creator", Mboom, and controlled fertility.
- The creator is recognized but not formally worshiped in ideal form.
- They call themselves the children of "Woot", who is the chief ancestor who led the people to their now land however do not have any ancestral cult worship.
- (1)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

- Scarification primarily existed on the bodies of the ceremonial palm cup figures. (6)

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

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):

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