

1. Description

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

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): The land that the Zande occupy extends for some 800 kilometers from west to east (13° to 30° E, i.e., from the Kotto River, a tributary of the Ubangi, to the foothills of the Bahr-al-Ghazal watershed) and about 400 kilometers from north to south (from 6° to 3° N, most of their land lying north of the Uele River).

1.4 Brief history: The Vungara and Bandia clans combined to form the Zande tribe. This happened as a result of military conquest where both tribes met and consolidated.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: The Zande found themselves under colonial rule by the French, Belgian and Egyptian at one point in time. Their main influence was in their settlement patterns which were once situated around water, after colonialization, they began to situate around roads. They (those that put the Zande under colonial rule), introduced labor recruitment for government or concessionary-company projects, particularly road building and cotton growing. In other respects the Azande were—except near the towns—shielded by colonial officials from Arab and other outside influences. Since independence, British officials in Sudan have been replaced largely by northern, Islamic Sudanese; many Zande are said to have trickled across the border into Zaire. (6)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment): Extending across the Nile-Congo drainage divide, they live partly South Sudan, partly in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and partly in the Central African Republic. The regions they inhabit, savanna in the north and rainforest in the south, are mostly suitable for agriculture and hunting.

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: The Zande numbered more than 3.8 million at the end of the 20th century. The Zande traditionally lived in widely scattered family homesteads. The Average would be for a man to inhabit his own home range with his wives and children in separate huts, normally a man would have at least two wives making for a total of three adults minimum and their children. They would position homesteads next to their relatives.

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Maize, rice, sweet potatoes are all crops that are cultivated by the Zande.

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Hunting small game, fish. The Zande are known as good hunters and place great importance on the weapons they use for hunting game.

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Bows and axes are used and are important tools within the society not just for fighting, hunting and protection but because of their cultural meaning pertaining to bride purchase.

2.4 Food storage: Unspecified

2.5 Sexual division of production: The women gather firewood, and take care of cultivation and preparation of meals and spirits. Men are responsible for hunting and building homes.

2.6 Land tenure: Homesteads are the main unit and are surrounded by fields. Homesteads are separated by bush.

2.7 Ceramics: Arts and crafts are common and can sometimes even bring in income for a family, in that case it is fashioned by the male of the household. Various crafts include woodcarving and ivory work.

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos: Pregnant women's diets are restricted from certain items that are believed to cause miscarriage like a type of potato and meat from a waterbuck. Also Mourning wives diets are impacted at the death of their husbands they commonly restrict certain foods.

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Not found

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): Male 160, Female

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): Male 5'9", Female

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): Between 13 and 17, at this time they will leave their father's house and begin to live with their husband who is often chosen at birth.
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Shortly after first marriage.
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Multiple wives make it difficult to determine a completed family size. Most men have the amount of wives they can afford so if on average men have three wives and each must bear at least one child to legitimize the marriage, an average family size would be around 7, including all members man and wives and children.
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): Not found
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): Female arranged as early as birth, often move into marriage around 17.
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Very small percentage, in the occurrence of divorce the men would return the woman to her family and they would give the man back his bride purchase. The children remain with the father. It is a sign of permanence when a husband takes a second wife, for in these circumstances the first marriage, except under great provocation, is indissoluble. Second marriages are not so stable. (1)
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygamous, percent males married polygynously: 90% or more
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: 20 spears by bridegroom to family of the bride. Sometimes two fathers, who each have a son and a daughter of marriageable age, may arrange a direct exchange, without the usual transfer of bridewealth. This is really an adaptation of the usual form; the usual ceremonies are held, but the death or desertion of one of the wives upsets the neat equation, and the kin of the lost wife must reimburse her husband, in the same way as if bridewealth had been transferred. (1)
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: When a man dies all of his household possessions are burned. Other possessions go to patrilineal male kin. Competition often arises between representatives of the senior and junior branches of a lineage. It is important to the Zande that organic witchcraft, *mangu*, may be transmitted by a man to some of his sons and by a woman to some of her daughters. (6)
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Not specified as a common practice. However some research was found stating that pederastic marriages did once occur in the zande tribe. It is sometimes suggested that such homosexual rituals function as a kind of birth control. But more plausibly, they seem to provide a sexual outlet for males in an area with an unbalanced sex ratio (too many males) and the practice by older men of having many wives—very much like the situation among the Zande in Africa, who formerly had institutionalized pederastic marriages (4)
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): exogamous with respect to marriage and sex, exceptions made among nobles allowing them to marry their own daughters and sisters
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? No other father's recognized. The ability of the father to impregnate his wife justifies and legitimizes marriages.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows") Mother plays no great role in procreation although her fertility is of importance to legitimize marriage with the birth of her child.
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? Not believed to be an incremental process.
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Briefly describes as happening with young couples who have already had some sort of relationship. Possible among men in the warrior days when they would be out trying to conquer more land.
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): With in same social ranking
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? No and can be severely punished for acts such as adultery

- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: No evidence of gift giving to extramarital partners.
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? Her sister would raise the children if she becomes a new wife of the widow's husband.
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: Higher percentage of Males than females
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: Not found
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): No
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? No, not common to marry within immediate family unless noble.
- 4.24 Joking relationships? No
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: Descent is generally traced through the male line. A chief rules over a group or tribe, and his brothers and sons hold subordinate posts as provincial administrators, appointing commoners as their deputies.
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: Yes with commoners, No with nobles. Commoners will not marry into their own clan but noble men will often marry their paternal half-sisters.
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? There is no specific one time ceremony but the payment of the bride wealth is what is considered to finalize the marriage a marriage is not complete, even if the couple is living together until the final payment has been made.
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? Name giving from father to son, mother to daughter, mother takes the husbands name when moving into homestead
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Commoners marry outside of Community; nobles can marry within community and even their own family
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Marriages are arranged at the birth of a female by her father, it is at this time that bride payment begins and continues to her father's household until the time she is about 17, at that time she may begin to live with her spouse and payment can continue until the marriage is ended by death or divorce or however long it takes the male's family to make a payment of about 20 spears. Sometimes other weapons such as tools or axes are also accepted.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: some young men couldn't have wives because older men practiced polygamy and would marry many of the eligible females

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: Very high at one point, the Zande are conquerors which led them to consolidate with other tribes, once becoming more peaceful. They are good with weapons and often used intimidation to scare their enemies, this consisted of flashing teeth and chanting.
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: Death used to be considered a punishment for adulterous behavior within group.
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Adultery, Witchcraft and bewitching were all justified reasons for punishment by death at some points in the Zande history. Out-group killing was often the result of warfare and the quest for more land.
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): The Zande grew out of two other tribes so their relations had to be very strong, most of that consolidation was probably in response to the large number of western colonists that began coming to their land. They had fairly good relations with them and even would send some of the young men in tribe to work in colonial villages. For the most part though they seem to prefer to keep to their homesteads.
- 4.18 Cannibalism? No cannibalism

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): No specific mobility pattern stated. Homesteads once situated near water have since moved towards roads and certain villages are becoming more modernized in structures and materials, steel and aluminum verses wood and clay.
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Chiefs belonging to the noble clan. In precolonial times, the vast Zande homeland consisted of a number of tribal kingdoms, separated from each other by wide fringes of unpopulated bush. Among Zande speakers, most of these kingdoms, the number and sizes of which varied over time, were ruled by members of the Vungara dynasty, except for the westernmost kingdom, Rafai. In Rafai the ruler was, like those of the similarly organized Nzakara kingdoms, a member of the Bandia dynasty, which was recognized by the Vungara as its equal. These kingdoms, born of conquest, were sustained by more or less continual warfare. Each kingdom was divided into provinces, which were administered mainly by the king's younger agnates, although in some eastern Vungara kingdoms Bandia governors were also at times appointed. In each kingdom, the central province was under the monarch's personal rule. Governors, although bound to pay tribute and assist the king in war, had considerable autonomy and ruled over deputies of their own. In each kingdom and each province, the ruler's court was centrally situated, and roads radiated out from it to the courts or homesteads of subordinates. (6)
- 5.4 Post marital residence: A village of the man, sometimes involving other wives. A daughter will go to live with her husband.
- 5.5 Territoriality? (Defined boundaries, active defense): Homesteads separated by bush.
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions? (age and sex): The girls of the community grow up with their mother being socialized to cultivate the land. Young men were once sent to work as errand boys during colonization. They do not seem to be separated exclusively only because of their different responsibilities in the families.
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: No specifically talked about.
- 5.8 Village and house organization: Their houses, situated on homesteads scattered in clearings, are conical in shape, with thatched roofs and walls of mud or wattle and daub. Homesteads include two main types of traditional thatched huts: an older, round type with conical roof and a newer, square, gable-roofed type. Also traditional are round clay granaries, usually with access through a movable roof or lid, which are often used as temporary shelters during periods of intensive cultivation. In towns, new houses are usually square; a corrugated-iron or sheet-metal roof is a sign of relative wealth. (6)
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): Homesteads with multiple huts on each property, wives live in a hut with their children men live separately. Each was home to one man, his wife or wives, his children, and other unmarried dependents. His nearest neighbors were, in precolonial times, usually his closest male relatives and their households. A chief or his deputy would settle near a stream, with kinsmen and clients nearby, connected by radial paths; a king's court was a more elaborate version of the same plan: it was connected by narrow but well-maintained roads to the homesteads of chiefs. (6)
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Ground in huts
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Organized into clans on the large scale, homesteads consisting of a man and his wives and their children most closely linked with his brothers in a lineage fashion.
- 5.12 Trade: economy based on agriculture and supplemented by hunting
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? Yes, there are nobles within the Zande community that are the main governors they can also have certain advantages such as first pick of wives and more wives than commoners.
6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)
- 6.0 Time allocation to RCR: There are no set requirements tied with RCR in the Zande tribe. They could be considered less time consuming because they do not hold many ceremonies.
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Witches not seen as supernatural, mainly the cause of misfortune and can operate close to village or reach out of village. Witch doctors used to be prominent but are now mostly in past. Diviners have since taken the place and have some affiliation with the Christian church; people go to them for consultations. Medicines that are magical are used to bless crops, fertility, good hunting and other positive occurrences. Among the Azande magic involves the use of objects, usually of plant material. A medicine is an

object in which supernatural power resides. To access this power, to change a piece of wood or plant material into medicine, requires ritual. The object, which may be consumed in the ritual or kept intact for long periods of time, then becomes the center of magical rituals.

There are large numbers of plants from which medicines are derived. Some- times the association between the nature of the plant and its use is clearly based on the Law of Similarity. This is recognized by the Azande, who point out that a particular plant is used because of its resemblance to something that is associated with the purpose of the magic. A good example is a particular fruit that is full of a milky sap. The fruit resembles the breast of a woman with a young child. A drink is made from the root of the plant and is given to a mother who is having difficulty producing enough milk for her infant. For ailments no special medicine is used.

6.2 Stimulants: No stimulants specifically mentioned

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): No ritual at birth but after birth the mother will sit with her child while leaves are burned, the smoke is believed to make them strong. Male circumcision at age of 19. No female circumcision is practiced. Women openly mourn for deceased husbands and wear no clothing or adornment, they also cut their hair and restrict their diets and do not enter the village of their deceased husband.

6.4 Other rituals: witch doctors séances, they would dance and sing.

6.5 Myths (Creation): Witchcraft is hereditary and can be passed through the female or male lines, mothers to daughters and fathers to their sons. Zande tend to attribute a soul, *mbisimo* (under certain circumstances separable from the body), to both animate and inanimate beings; in traditional belief, the souls of people became ghosts after death. Ghosts were believed to inhabit earth caverns in the bush, as did the Supreme Being, Mbori, who partook in their ghostly nature. In Nzakara-speaking areas, where the word “Mbori” did not exist, “Zagi” referred not only to the Supreme Being, but also to the outside universe in general, and ancestor spirits had concomitantly greater importance. (6)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): harp like instruments made with five strings in an arched shape, can be played horizontally and vertically. Music, both instrumental and vocal, is very important in Zande culture; traditional instruments—wooden gongs, skin drums, whistles, xylophones, and large bow harps—also accompany singing and dancing. Harps are occasionally decorated with carved human heads; otherwise, nonutilitarian carving is poorly developed. (6)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: At death men and women are buried in opposite directions, a man is buried facing east to start the day and a woman is buried facing west to collect items needed to protect the household for the night.

6.8 Missionary effect: Their supreme God, Mboli, is sometimes replaced or interchanged with the Christian God. Other spirits in the form of ghosts are now sometimes associated with evil. Catholic and Protestant congregations are numerous. The Zande people do however still hold a strong belief in witchcraft.

6.9 RCR revival: As Christian beliefs and churches are on the rise the people still hold and some would argue have increasing numbers of those in the community who practice magic.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: These clans are totemic, and it is believed that at death the body-soul, one of the two souls extant in Zande religion, becomes a totemic animal of the dead person’s clan. Zande religion also focuses on [ancestor worship](#).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? No names given to the dead.

6.12 Is there teknonymy? Not mentioned

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): Their religion centers around a supreme being called Mboli, to whom offerings are made. Divination plays an important part in daily ritual.

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: Sometimes uses in rituals.

7.2 Piercings: Not specifically mentioned.

7.3 Haircut: Some would dress their hair but others simply have it cut short.

7.4 Scarification: None mentioned intentionally.

- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Hats made of straw fastened with metal hat pins, cloth coloring in various shades, red being one of wealth or power, white and black.
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: witch doctors would wear colorful ceremonial dress during séances.
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: Women will strip their adornment and cut their hair at the time of their husband's death for up to a year.
- 7.8 Missionary effect: Mission influence has ensured that Mbori is today almost universally associated with the Christian God and that the ghosts, once regarded as potentially benevolent, propitiable ancestors, are more and more associated with evil. Catholic and Protestant congregations are well established and numerous, and have, widely if superficially, affected traditional beliefs and other cultural features. Belief in witchcraft remains important, however, and both belief in and the practice of magic seem to be on the increase. (6)
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: Patrilineal bias

8.2 Sororate, levirate: Both levirate and sororate are practised, and the wives of a dead man are inherited by his sons or brothers at the conclusion of the mourning ceremonies; in any case the inheritor will continue to make occasional payments to his affines. If a wife dies without issue, it is the duty of her family to provide another wife for the husband, if possible her sister, and the husband will continue to pay bridewealth as for his first wife. (1)

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): No.

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Witchcraft

Numbered references

1. Baxter P.T.W., Butt A. "The Azande, and related peoples of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan Belgian Congo." In Daryll Forde, editor, *Ethnographic Survey of Africa, East Central*
2. Evans-Pritchard, E. E. "Zande Bridewealth." *Africa* (Edinburgh University Press) 40.2 (1970): 115-124. Historical Abstracts. Web. 25 Apr. 2012.
3. Evans-Pritchard, E.E., "Zande Kings and Princes". *Anthropological Quarterly*. http://recaa.mmsu.univ-aix.fr/3/Archives/EVANS-PRITCHARD_1957.pdf
4. Gregersen, E. 1996. Chapter 16. Oceania. *The world of human sexuality: Behaviors, customs, and belief*. New York: Irvington Press. pp. 263-281.
5. Kubik, Gerhard, (Author), and Maurice, (Author) Djenda. "Music In The Central African Republic." *Afrika* 3.1 (1967): RILM Abstracts of Music Literature. Web. 24 Apr. 2012.
6. "Zande" *The Encyclopedia of World Cultures CD-ROM*, Macmillan, 1998
<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/anthro/faculty/fiske/135b/azande.htm>
7. "Zande." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. 24 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/655721/Zande>>.
8. "Zande." (n.d.): Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia. Web. 10 Apr. 2012.