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“Chilima” and the Remaking of Chokwe Identity:  
An Exploratory Interdisciplinary Study on Globalization, Material Traditions  
and Gendered Cosmo-Polity

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An artistic collage from Kaputu's fieldwork pictures by artist Charline Xu (2016)

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my friends, Professors:

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Joshua Cohen, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston, USA

Our productive discussions led me to interdisciplinary endeavors in humanities and to this research about Chokwe Identity Constructions perceived through their material culture.



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## SUMMARY/ SAMENVATTING/RÉSUMÉ

**“Chilima” and the Remaking of Chokwe Identity:  
An Explanatory Interdisciplinary Study on Globalization, Material Traditions and  
Gendered Cosmo-Polity**

**Summary**

This doctoral dissertation is about Chokwe identities, body management, and history and socio-political understanding made possible through a careful study of their material culture. The thesis offers a comprehensive analysis – rather than a historical account – of Chokwe identity constructions, body and socio-political management, spatial occupation and social networks since their encounter with the Portuguese early in the fifteenth century.

To make sure every aspect of their material culture is rightly perceived in its contribution to the comprehension of the Chokwe identities and their local and global connections, the dissertation is presented under interdisciplinary perspectives and covers three countries where the Chokwe live: Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia.

Established scholarly resources into anthropology, philosophy, history, literature, religion, economics, art history, ethnology, and traditional medicine offer a large spectrum of expertise, and several contributions that facilitate the closest possible perceptions of Chokwe identity construction strategies and body use over many years. The research presents the Chokwe within their historical confinement beside their Lunda cousins. Lunda presence and identity has in the past publicly overshadowed Chokwe’s activities and reputation. Their closeness has often made it impossible to distinguish the Chokwe separately for many years. However, as soon as the Chokwe started marking their time with specific events and engaging in specific action such as moving away from Musumba, the Lunda Capital, fighting for their chiefs, living as independent warriors, challenging colonial administrators on land occupation, they were perceived differently by neighbouring peoples and colonial powers.

In the same vein, their cultural settings and ritual organizations differentiated them from their cousins and neighbors despite so many commonalities within the region. When the Chokwe king visited Tshikapa in the DR Congo in July 2015, the rituals linked to welcoming ceremonies offered a tremendous opportunity that brought to the scene artifacts, especially masks produced

for cultural perpetuation. Songs and dances suggested a thread (tradition-bound, open to new traditions) that was followed all throughout the dissertation for the recognition of a tradition leading to ancestors and disputing with nowadays governments, the ownership of lands, people and social facts.

From the conception and the fabrication of artifacts within a local dynamic, these objects are carved within their relations with the Chokwe King (as the visible representative of ancestors), and the leaders of different social classes. From the same artifacts, it is possible to find out the Chokwe's ideas about individual and community wellbeing taught in early initiations. These artifacts offer a religious sense separating the sacred from the profane, though often presenting them in the same space as both share spaces with the living human beings. To ensure connections with ancestors, different rituals are set around the *Gombo*, ritual material used in ethnic consultations. Human wellbeing is pursued through herbal medication inherited from ancestors and used in a vast network that combines pharmacopoeia virtues as well as magic in the evolution of the Chokwe. Practically, their wellbeing is put into the hands of *Tahi* and *Chimbanda* whose professional secrets are in initiations that give a prominent place to ancestors. Food contributes to the sense of wellbeing and is seen as a gift from ancestors praised for making good harvest, peace, and conquests possible.

Contrary to many other African societies where women's status and gender conditions raise world preoccupations, the Chokwe women seem more able to reach social equilibrium and gender understanding in drawing from oral sources and traditions. These media offer communication strategies, especially ambiguities, that they use for upgrading their social status and sharing leadership with men fairly. Through conversations' ambiguities, they slowly engage in positive actions and leadership with results that benefit their society. The Likumbi Lya Mize is one of the rituals whose spaces have promoted women as social and business entrepreneurs. Their managerial and entrepreneurial capacities have made them incontestable leaders.

A number of established authors such as Appadurai, Ferguson, Anderson, Comaroff, Stroeken, Derrida, Foucault, Descombes, Mudimbe, and Mbembe offered theoretical tools and fieldwork material that facilitated research of people in their social environment. These scholars' resources permitted finding out that even when marginalized by their respective governments, the Chokwe still unite over the hinterland at the borders of Zambia, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of

the Congo. They have constantly invented and reinvented their identities while keeping a strong cohesion and relation with their traditional background. Innovations and respect of their cultural backbone move together.



**“Chilima” en de herschepping van de Chokwe identiteit: Een interdisciplinaire studie van globalisatie, materiële traditie en gender cosmo-politiek.**

**Samenvatting**

Deze doctoraatsverhandeling behandelt Chokwe identiteiten, lichaamsbeheer, en historische en sociaal-politieke begripsvorming op basis van een studie van hun materiële cultuur. Deze thesis biedt een inzichtelijke analyse van de identiteitsconstructie, de lichaams- en socio-politieke praktijken, de ruimtelijke plaatsing en sociale netwerken bij de Chokwe sinds de eerste Portugese invloeden in de vijftiende eeuw.

Om een volledige weergave van hun materiële cultuur te bieden voor de begripsvorming rond Chokwe identiteiten, met hun lokale en globale connecties, werd in deze thesis een interdisciplinair perspectief gehanteerd en werden drie landen bestreken; Angola, de Democratische Republiek Congo en Zambia.

Hiervoor werden ondermeer de expertisen van gevestigde bronnen van de antropologie, filosofie, geschiedkunde, literatuur, godsdienstwetenschappen, economie, kunstgeschiedenis, ethnologie, traditionele geneeskunde gebruikt die een nauwgezette weergave toelaten van de Chokwe identiteitsconstructies, strategieën en lichaamsgebruiken in het verloop van de tijd. Dit onderzoek vertrekt vanuit de historische inperking van de Chokwe ten aanzien van hun Lunda verwanten. Gedurende eeuwen hebben de Lunda de Chokwe ontwikkelingen overschaduwed. Hun gelijkaardigheid bemoeilijkt gedurende vele jaren de Chokwe cultuur te onderscheiden. Pas toen de Chokwe zich aftekenden door gebeurtenissen en handelingen zoals de uittocht uit de Lunda hoofdstad Musumba, strijd leveren voor hun leiders, zich vestigen als onafhankelijke krijgers, het uitdagen van de koloniale beheerder over landgebruik, werden ze onderscheiden bevonden door naburige volkeren en koloniale machten.

Op dezelfde wijze gingen steeds meer culturele eigenheden en rituele handelingen hen onderscheiden van hun verwanten en burens, ondanks de nog vele gelijkaardigheden bestendigd in de regio. Bij de gelegenheid van het bezoek van de Chokwe koning aan Tshikapa in de DR Congo in juli 2015, bieden de rituelen rond de welkomstceremonie een uitgelezen mogelijkheid om kunstvoorwerpen, in het bijzonder maskers, voor hun culturele verworteling uit te dragen. De

zang en de dans bepaalden de draad (traditie-gebonden en vernieuwde traditie) voor de opbouw in deze thesis, en aldus voor een ruggengraat die leidt van het ancestrale tot het hedendaagse met ondermeer disputen met de overheid omtrent landbezit, gemeenschappen en sociale feiten.

Vanaf het ontwerp en de vervaardiging van kunstvoorwerpen binnen een locale context, worden deze objecten uitgewerkt in hun relaties tot de Chokwe koning als materiële aanwezigheid van de voorouders en de leiders van verscheiden sociale groepen. Deze zelfde kunstobjecten leren ons de Chokwe opvattingen omtrent het individuele en gemeenschappelijke welzijn zoals wordt overgedragen in de eerste initiaties. Deze kunstobjecten bieden ook een religieuze zin door het scheiden van het sacrale en het profane, zij het wederom samengebracht in dezelfde ruimte als die van de levende mens. Om de relatie met de voorouders te verzekeren worden verscheidene rituelen rond de *Gombo* uitgevoerd - rituele materialen voor ethnische vraagstellingen. Het volledige welzijn wordt nagestreefd door plantgeneeskunde zoals bedreven door de voorouders en verspreid over een uitgebreid netwerk dat zowel gebruik maakte van de werking van pharmacopoeia en magie doorheen de evolutie van de Chokwe. In de praktijk legt men zijn welzijn in de handen van de *Tahi* en de *Chimbanda* die hun kunde betrekken uit initiaties, en dus een belangrijke plaats toekennen aan het ancestrale. Voeding speelt een belangrijke rol in de ervaring van het welzijn en wordt opnieuw gezien als een gift van de voorouders die hen een voorspoedige oogst, vrede en verovering toelaten.

In tegenstelling to vele andere Afikaanse gemeenschappen waar de status en de gendersituatie van de vrouw een globale bekommernis inhoudt, vindt men bij de Chokwe vrouwen een wereld opgebouwd rond orale bronnen en tradities, dewelke communicatiestrategieën - in het bijzonder ambigüiteit - aanbieden die aangewend worden om hun sociale status te verbeteren en gelijke machtsdeling met mannen na te streven. Door conversationele ambigüiteit bewerkstelligen ze positieve handelingen en leiderschap ten goede van hun gemeenschap. De *Likumbi Lya Mize* is één van de rituelen die ruimten openen waarbinnen vrouwen promoveren tot sociale- en handelondernemers. Hun beheers- en ondernemerscapaciteiten tonen hen als ontegensprekelijke leiders.

Onder meer het werk van Appadurai, Ferguson, Anderson, Comarrof, Stroeken, Derrida, Foucault, Descombes, Mudimbe en Mbembe leverden het theoretische kader en de veldwerk methoden nodig voor het onderzoek van mensen in hun sociale omgeving. Dit onderzoek staat

me toe te stellen dat ondanks hun marginalisatie door hun respectievelijke overheden de Chokwe nog steeds verenigd zijn in de achterlanden op de grenzen van Zambia, Angola en de Democratische Republiek Congo. Zij hebben telkens opnieuw hun identiteit heruitgevonden terwijl ze een sterke samenhang behielden alsook een band met hun tradionele achtergrond. Vernieuwing en respect voor hun culturele wortels evolueren hand in hand.

**“ Chilima ” et refaire l’identité Chokwe : Une étude interdisciplinaire exploratoire de la globalisation, traditions matérielles et cosmo-polité de genre**

**Résumé**

Cette thèse est au sujet des identités des Chokwe, leur entretien corporel, histoire et leur compréhension socio-politique rendue possible à travers une étude minutieuse de leur culture matérielle. Cette dissertation offre une analyse compréhensive des constructions identitaires Chokwe, leur entendement du corps et de la chose socio-politique, leur occupation spatiale ainsi que leurs réseaux sociaux depuis leur rencontre avec les Portugais depuis tôt au quinzième siècle.

Pour s’assurer que chaque aspect de leur culture matérielle est bien perçu au travers sa contribution à la compréhension des identités Chokwe et leurs réseaux locaux et globaux, la thèse se présente sous les auspices interdisciplinaires et couvre trois pays respectifs où vivent les Chokwe : Angola, République démocratique du Congo, et la Zambie. Des chercheurs de renommée internationale en anthropologie, philosophie, histoire, littérature, religion, économie, histoire de l’art, ethnologie, médecine traditionnelle offrent une large expertise et plusieurs contributions qui facilitent les perceptions les plus proches des stratégies des constructions identitaires des Chokwe dans leur cohabitation exiguë historique aux côtés de leurs cousins Lunda. Les Lundas ont brouillé les activités des Chokwe pendant des siècles. Leur proximité a souvent rendu impossible la distinction séparée des Chokwe pendant de longues années. Toutefois, aussitôt que les Chokwe se mirent à remplir leur temps des événements spécifiques et à s’engager dans des actions propres à eux telles que s’écarter de Musumba, la capitale Lunda, se battre pour leurs chefs, vivre comme des guerriers indépendants, lancer des défis à l’administration coloniale au sujet de l’occupation de la terre et de hiérarchie administrative, ils furent perçus différemment.

De la même manière, de plus en plus leurs habitudes culturelles et leurs organisations rituelles les différencièrent de leurs cousins et leurs voisins en dépit de nombreux traits culturels communs dans la région. Quand le roi Chokwe visita Tshikapa, en République démocratique du Congo, au mois de juillet 2015, les rituels d’accueil offrirent une opportunité qui mit sur scène des œuvres d’art, spécialement des masques fabriqués pour la perpétuation culturelle. Les chants et les danses ont suggéré une ligne invisible suivie tout au long de la dissertation pour la reconnaissance du



réseau dorsal conduisant aux ancêtres en dispute au sujet des terres, des peuples, et des faits sociaux avec les gouvernements d'aujourd'hui.

A partir de la conception et la fabrication d'objets d'art dans une dynamique locale, ces objets sont sculptés dans leurs relations au roi (le représentant visible des ancêtres), et les leaders de différentes classes sociales. A partir de mêmes objets d'art, il est possible de comprendre la conception des Chokwe au sujet du bien-être individuel et communautaire tel qu'enseigné pendant les initiations initiales. Ces objets d'art partagent un sens religieux séparant le Sacré du Profane, bien que les présentant souvent dans les mêmes espaces partagés avec les êtres humains. Pour assurer les contacts avec les ancêtres, plusieurs rituels sont développés autour du Gombo, matériel rituel utilisé lors des consultations ethniques. Le bien-être humain est aussi recherché à travers la pharmacopée héritée des ancêtres et entrant dans un vaste réseau qui combine les vertus de la pharmacopée et la magie tout au long de l'évolution des Chokwe. En termes pratiques, le bien-être est entre les mains du Tahi et du Chimbanda (devin et soigneur) dont les sources de la profession se retrouvent dans les initiations qui accordent une place prépondérante aux ancêtres. La nourriture contribue beaucoup au sens du bien-être et est entrevue comme un cadeau des ancêtres glorifiés pour mise à disposition de la communauté une bonne récolte, et favoriser la paix, et les conquêtes.

Contrairement à beaucoup d'autres sociétés africaines où le statut des femmes et les conditions de genre soulèvent des préoccupations de par le monde, les femmes Chokwe ont atteint un niveau d'équilibre et de compréhension de genre en se basant sur des ressources des traditions orales. Ces médias leur procurent des stratégies de communication, notamment l'ambiguïté, qu'elles emploient pour mettre à jour leur statut social et partager de façon consensuelle le leadership avec les hommes. A travers les ambiguïtés des conversations, elles s'engagent tout doucement dans les actions positives et le leadership basés sur les résultats au bénéfice de leur société. Le Likumbi Lya Mize est un de ces rituels dont les espaces ont promu les femmes en tant que des entrepreneurs sociaux et femmes d'affaires. Leur capacité managériale et entrepreneuriale en ont fait incontestablement des leaders.

Appadurai, Ferguson, Comaroff, Stroeken, Derrida, Foucault, Descombes, Mudimbe, Mbembe... ont offert les outils théoriques et le matériel de terrain qui ont facilité la recherche et les contacts avec les gens dans leur environnement social ; ils ont aussi donné les outils de recherche. Ces

ressources provenant de ces hommes de science ont rendu possible la découverte du fait que même lorsque leurs gouvernements les marginalisent, les Chokwe se réunissent dans un hinterland au-delà des frontières de la Zambie, l'Angola, et de la République démocratique du Congo. Ils ont constamment inventé et réinventé leurs identités tout en maintenant une forte cohésion et la relation à leur passé traditionnel. Les innovations et respect de la longue ligne essentielle ancestrale vont de pair.

## **“ Chilima ” e Reformulação da Identidade Chokwe : Um Estudo Interdisciplinar Sobre Globalização, Tradições Materiais e Cosmopolitismo de Gênero**

### **Resumo**

Esta tese é sobre as identidades de Chokwe, a sua manutenção corporal, história e compreensão sócio-política possibilitada através de um estudo cuidadoso de sua cultura material. Este ensaio fornece uma análise abrangente de construções identitárias Chokwe, a sua compreensão da suas redes sociais desde a sua reunião com o Português desde o início do século XV corpo ea coisa sócio-política, sua ocupação espacial e.

Para garantir que todos os aspectos da sua cultura material é percebido através da sua contribuição para a compreensão do Chokwe e suas redes locais e globais identidades, a tese vem sob os auspícios interdisciplinar e abrange três respectivos países ou vivem Chokwe Angola, República Democrática do Congo e Zâmbia.

Pesquisadores de renome internacional em antropologia, filosofia, história, literatura, religião, economia, história da arte, a etnologia, a medicina tradicional oferecem várias contribuições experiência e muitos que facilitam as percepções estratégicas proximidades da cidade de construções identitárias em Chokwe coabitação apertado histórica ao lado de seus primos Lunda. Lunda mexidos atividades Chokwe durante séculos. A proximidade fez muitas vezes impossível separar a distinção Chokwe por muitos anos. No entanto, assim como o Chókwè começou a encher seus eventos específicos de tempo e de se envolver em ações próprias em-los, como se afastando de capitais Musumba Lunda, lutar por seus líderes, viver como guerreiros independentes, para desafiar a administração colonial sobre a ocupação do solo e da hierarquia administrativa, eles foram percebidos de forma diferente.

Da mesma forma, as organizações cada vez mais culturais e suas práticas rituais dos différencièrent seus primos e vizinhos, apesar de muitos traços culturais comuns na região. Quando o rei visitou Chokwe Tshikapa, República Democrática do Congo, em julho de 2015, acolhendo rituais ofereceu uma oportunidade para colocar em obras para o palco da arte, especialmente máscaras feitas para a perpetuação cultural. As músicas e danças têm sugerido uma linha invisível seguido ao longo da dissertação para o reconhecimento de backbone levando aos antepassados em disputa de terras, povos e fatos sociais com os governos de hoje.

A partir da concepção e fabrico de arte em dinâmicas locais, esses objetos são esculpidas em suas relações com o rei (o representante visível dos antepassados), e líderes de diferentes classes sociais. De mesma arte, é possível compreender o projeto de Chokwe sobre o bem-estar e da comunidade como ensinado durante as apresentações iniciais individual. Estes objetos de arte compartilhar um sentido religioso separar o profano sagrado, embora muitas vezes com os mesmos espaços compartilhados com os seres humanos. Para fazer contato com os ancestrais, muitos rituais desenvolvidas em torno do Gombo, equipamentos ritual usado em consultas étnicos. Bem-estar humano também é procurado através da farmacopeia herdados de ancestrais e entrando em uma vasta rede que combina as virtudes da farmacopeia e magia ao longo da evolução de Chokwe. Em termos práticos, o bem-estar está nas mãos de Tahi e Chimbanda (adivinho e curandeiro), as fontes da profissão são reflectidos nas iniciações que dão destaque aos antepassados. A comida contribui muito para a sensação de bem-estar e entrevista como um presente antepassados glorificados para o fornecimento de uma boa comunidade colheita, e promover a paz e conquistas.

Ao contrário de muitas outras sociedades africanas, onde a situação das mulheres e das condições de género levantam preocupações em todo o mundo, Chokwe mulheres chegaram a um nível de equilíbrio e tipo de entendimento com base em recursos tradições orais. Estes meios fornecê-los com estratégias de comunicação, incluindo a ambiguidade, que eles usam para atualizar seu status e compartilhar da liderança consensual com os homens. Através ambiguidades conversas eles se envolvem suavemente em liderança baseada em resultados ação positiva e para o benefício de sua empresa. O Likumbi Lya Mize é um desses rituais cujos espaços têm promovido as mulheres como empreendedores sociais e empresárias. A sua capacidade administrativa e empresarial foram, sem dúvida, os líderes.

Appadurai, Ferguson, Comaroff, Stroeken, Derrida, Foucault, Descombes, Mudimbe, Mbembe ... forneceram as ferramentas teóricas e equipamentos de campo que facilitou a pesquisa e contatos com pessoas em seu ambiente social; eles também deu as ferramentas de pesquisa. Esses recursos destes cientistas fizeram possível a descoberta de que mesmo quando seus governos marginalizar o encontro Chokwe em um hinterland para além das fronteiras da Zâmbia, Angola e da República Democrática do Congo. Eles constantemente inventado e reinventado suas identidades, mantendo



uma coesão forte e a relação com seu passado tradicional. Inovação e respeito pela linha ancestral longa essencial ir juntos.

**“ Chilima ” nyi Kutunga Chaha cha Usolwelo wa Tuchokwe : Malongeso a Yuma  
ya Kulisasa Helu lia Undele, Yilinga ya Ashakhulu nyi Utwamino wa  
Ulunga nyi Upwo mu Yifuchi Yindji**

Mukanda uno unatala ulumbunuiso wa tuchokwe, kulitomesa cha mujimba wo, sango lio, nyi chize tuchokwe kakwiva yuma ya mbunga helu lia malongeso akashishi a yilinga ya kukwatakwata yo. Mukanda uno unaneha mashinginyeka akashishi mu kwiva kanawa ha kulisolola cha tuchokwe, chize akutambula mujimba wo nyi yuma ya uthwamino nyi shimbi ja chifuchi, kuyula cha mavu, nyi kulinunga nyi yihata yo, kuchiza haze tuchokwe kaliwanyine nyi andele (aputu) mu kumi nyi yitano ya makulakaja a miaka.

Mumu wa kunyingika ngwo yeswe ya ashakulu nyi yilinga ya kukwatakwata, nyi chize tuchokwe kakwiva ulumbunuiso wo nyi chize kakulinunga nyi yihata akwo amu yihunda nyi aze amu yifuchi akwo, mukanda uno uli nyi yihanda, nawa unatala yifuchi yitathu muze akutwama tuchokwe : Angola, Congo nyi Zambia.

Akwa kufupa akolo aze tuanyingika helu lia Anthropologia (Yuma ya atu), Philosophia (yuma ya yishinginyeka), Histoire (Sango ja atu), Littérature (Mulimo wa kwandjika), Religion (Ufulielo), Economie (Ulamino wa mbongo), Histoire de l’art (Sango ja yisongasonga), Médecine traditionnelle (Kuliwukisa cha akhaka), kananeha yimwe thachi nyi mana jo helu lia kunyingika ulumbunuiso (kulisolola) wa tuchokwe nyi chize kakutwama hamuika nyi yihata jo ngwe alunda. Alunda hana pindjisa (pihisa) yilinga ya tuchokwe kuchiza makulakaja a miaka andji. Kulihata cho china neha kulu kupinda hakua handununa tuchokwe kuchiza miaka asuku. Chekwamba, kuchiza haze tuchokwe apwile nyi kupalikisa shimbu lio mu yuma ya ashakulu nyi kulindjisa mu yilinga yo, ngwe kuchina ha Musumba, chihunda chinene cha alunda, kulilamba mumu wa akulwana, kupwa ngwe akwa kwasa jita, kupinda nyi andele helu lia mavu nyi makulwana a mbunga, tuchokwe kapwile kumonewa ngwe atu akwo.

Chize chene, yilinga ya kila miaka ya ashakulu a tuchokwe yina ahandununa nyi yihata yo achipwe kwathwama yilifa mu yihunda yo. Shimbu Mwene Mwata wa tuchokwe kayile ku Tshikapa, mu Congo, mu kakweji wa yisambano, mwaka wa 2015(Elfu ali nyi makumi nyi

yitano), kamu tambwile nyi zango chindji, nawa kwapwile yisongasonga nyi akishi a chikala. Miaso nyi wino (kukina) ya anungile nyi ashakulu jo helu lia mavu, atu ene, nyi yuma ya yihunda, nawa nyi makulwana amu mbunga ya musono.

Hakeshi (kuchizako) kulinga yize yisongasonga ya yihunda, yino yuma yaku songewa mumu yikwase Mwata (Mulonga iye kali mukulwana uze unalinunga nyi ashakulu), nyi akulwana amu yihunda. Hamuika nyi yize yisongasonga (tuponia), tunahasa kwiva kuya kuluthwe cha tuchokwe chize kathwama nyi malongeso kuli nyikweze. Tuponya kakwa tumikisa mu malongeso nyi ufulielo wa Zambi nyi kuhandununa yuma ya Zambi nyi ya Satana achipwe kakwa zala kuli atu. Hakuliwana nyi ashakulu, yilinga yindji yakulingiwa shimbu lia kulitala muma yisemuko ha Ngombo. Kuliva kanawa cha mutu chaku fupiwa helu lia kuliwukisa cha akhaka, nyi yitumbo mu kuya kuluthwe cha tuchokwe. Che kwamba, kuliva kanawa chili mu moko ja Tahi nyi Chimbanda aze kaku uka kanawa mumu kanaka alongesa ku kalasa ya ashakulu. Yakulia yakukwasa chindji helu lia kuliva kanawa cha mutu, nawa yili ngwe chawana cha ashakulu aze kakuhana atu kuangula kanawa mbutu jo nyi kushimikiza uhwimino nyi chiyulo.

Kulisa nyi yisemuko yiko yindji ya mu Africa, kuze yuma ya ulunga nyi upwo yaku kala kuhyana, mapwo a tuchokwe hana heta kuluthwe helu lia yuma ya ulunga nyi upwo chize kaku alweza yishimu ya mukanwa. Yino malindjekela yakwa kwasa haku handjika helu lia ukulwana hamuika nyi malunga. Kuhandjika kanawa cha mapwo, chakwa kwasa kundjila kanawa mu yilinga yipema nyi ukulwana wa mu yihunda yo. Ayize Likumbi Lia Mize yili chilinga chize chaku kwasa mapwo mukupwa akulwana amu yihunda yo, nawa muku landjisa nyi kulanda yuma. Chize kakufupa, kulama nyi kutumikisa yuma yo kanawa, keshika mapwo a tuchokwe kakupwa akulwana a yihunda.

Appadurai, Ferguson, Comaroff, Stroeken, Derrida, Foucault, Descombes, Mudimbe, Mbembe... katukwasanga yuma ya kunyingika nacho atu mu yihunda yo. Awa atu kali nyi malindjekela. Yuma ya aze atu amana yatukwasanga kunyingika yeswe ngwo achipwe makulwana a mbunga kakwa pindjisa, tuchokwe kaku liwana nyi kulinunga ha ndonda yize yatwama ha kachi ka Angola, Congo nyi Zambia. Tuchokwe hana lisolola kulu kanawa nyi kulinunga cha thachi nyi unyachi wo. Kuya kuluthwe nyi shimbi jo ja ashakulu yakuya hamuika.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER, A GENERAL VIEW OF THE DISSERTATION

### I.1.1 Background and State of the Art: Chilima<sup>1</sup>, Ancient Chokwe concept, the backbone to a Search turned into a Research

This sub-title embodies a long history that has not succeeded in the construction of a structuralist, signifier-signified narrative. It represents the backbone of a search for meaning that has finally turned into a re-search. It goes on a quest of new knowledge different from a proto-history where virtuosity and epiphany have belonged to thinkers of the distant past such as Aristotle, Plato, and their peers, and would assist in the structuration of modern research presentations (Appadurai, 2013:272-273). The backbone takes the form of an endless question that has offered me, for many years, enough energy to seek more details about Chokwe identities – though, unfortunately without ever getting satisfaction. In fact, the more time elapses, the more persuaded I am that there is still more to learn about the Chokwe identities, ones hardly understandable when perceived only from a concept such as “Chilima.”

Long ago, as a late primary and early secondary student, I was called “Chilima.” Ever since then I have been led to believe that it is the only Chokwe name I deserve, even though I have never been able to give it a definite, clear, precise, and correct meaning. Literally, *chilima* means the uncircumcised (plural: *ilima*). In practice when used in talk, the word “Chilima” is not linked to precise details with specific meaning. Any effort to dig deep into a Saussurian structuralist presentation, or to get assistance from a long line of linguists does not seem to bring any satisfaction (De Saussure, 1995). Nothing has constructed a clear relation between two visible poles that could be addressed as “Signifier” and “Signified” in a diachronic tracing reminiscent of de Saussure’s semiotic work. The situation is complex. It overpasses the primacy of relation within a system of linguistic relations or formal strategies that could lead to a real understanding of the word “Chilima.”

I was born and grew up in an urban Chokwe family converted to the Catholic Church, but whose parents still kept strong contacts with villages and especially with their respective siblings. They regularly came to the city for many reasons and stayed for the time needed to end their business,

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<sup>1</sup> The author of the present dissertation assumes the concept “Chilima” status as a personal possibility to get deeper into the Chokwe culture. The dissertation explores how far he can go in the knowledge of Chokwe identity construction strategies. At the same time, the concept “Chilima” changes into a research strategy for getting to the roots of a quest.

or sometimes they stayed for long months or for many years when they had decided to engage in studies, and to dream about urban projects closely related to western education. They had found a place for their daily food and for sleeping.

With my immediate siblings, we looked at these long-time visitors as village people and often managed to keep them at noticeable distances far from our closest friends, and our dreams and daily life. Nevertheless, despite a total exclusion from our circles, the village people never seemed discouraged. They always had a superior air of their own and appeared to lead a wholly independent life from everything and everybody except their exceptionally strong relations with their “Mathu” or uncle, our dad. They adored him and seemed to have elevated him to a level of a deity. In the traditional matrilineal beliefs, the uncle had the duty to take care of his nephews. The definition of the concept “nephew” was never clear and extended to a large number of people within the clan. We ended up having village people around us all the time. They never complained about any mistreatment or lack of any kind, but all of them were particularly engaged in celebrating their uncle’s divine dimension.

Towards the house children and the other people that they met in the city, these temporary visitors or settlers for education programs have always had a superiority complex as if they knew the world better and had nothing to learn from urban settlers. With their total indifference about anything that seemed attractive to the youth, they gave the impression of coming from a society that “appeared immune to the arrival of Western modernity” perceiving their future through cultural facts (Appadurai, 2013:285). The village guys were always quite cool and approached all situations without showing they were upset or at risk; that they lacked anything; or that they faced any significant issues. Hungry, deprived of affection or exposed to any suffering, they positively looked at all situations and maximized all opportunities without openly celebrating any victory or personal success. They became more and more a living proof of what the urban youth could not be. They had no attraction to multimedia, television, or other game gadgets linked to modern evolution. They spent hours drawing in the sand and laughing at the drawings that were not successful. For the urban youth, such people were simply out of place and belonged to another planet. They could never be understood and could eventually never understand new things in their real dimensions. Despite their outside-like situation, they often surprised us: any subject of our personal satisfaction or dissatisfaction was merely a topic of their laughter toward the “Chilima.”

The first time we heard the word “Chilima,” I had come from school and had excellent results that I wanted to share with my dad. I was the first of my class (fortunately counted among the best students of the school). I was happy to bring home highly graded course transcripts from the Salesian boarding school, and went straight to my dad who was talking with the village visitors in the sitting room. I was expecting to get his attention and admiration. However, just when he was on the point of opening his mouth, the village people exclaimed altogether as if they had rehearsed: “Chilima!” Everything stopped at that moment; their laughter followed a complete silence and could easily have been a kind of compliment, but I did not know much of their customs.

In the next days, as a good and disciplined school boy, I showed up with plenty of energy and thought about spending time with mom to help her with different kitchen jobs like washing dishes, cleaning the house, boiling tea for everybody, and making sure all rooms were clean. However, every time I expected a pleased response, the only compliment I got was “Chilima!” Everything I did made it worse. I ended up believing that a “Chilima” was anybody who could not meet these Chokwe village people’s satisfaction—and hence deserved the name “Chilima.”

The word was pronounced with much contempt every time, and I learned this much from my dad, staying by him when he had visitors and talking with him about social issues and daily oppositions. The village guys, on the contrary, always discreetly disappeared, but never went very far. They had their eyes on their uncle to stay close enough to protect him in the case any danger arrived. They openly addressed me as a “Chilima.” They mocked me and mocked the education I had from the most brilliant school of the place. They always asked what the school was teaching, and why I had to study for so many years if I was not able to lead a life expected from a Chokwe.

When I thought the word “Chilima” had to do with circumcision, I quickly went to all Chokwe people present in the house. I proudly showed them my circumcised penis. An uncle who had worked for many years as a nurse at the public health center, had combined modern knowledge in using scissors, medical alcohol, antibiotics, and ritual songs for the operation. He had ordered restrictions to approach fire, eat salted food, and listen to his stories whenever the uncle, nurse, and traditional herald would come. The more the village people heard about this circumcision story, the more they laughed at me and believed the term “Chilima” was the most appropriate to call me. I insisted and wanted to know about this concept, but they were always either short of

explanations, or living under restrictions and interdictions that forbade them to say more. They thus changed the concept “Chilima” into a nightmare for me.

Why did the physical proof of circumcision not alter their opinion and my social status? Here we see culture at work in its dynamic capacity. Culture lives through daily practices, largely unconsciously determining our decisions, but it is in part also a construct, the result of strategic inclusions and exclusions. There, culture becomes identity. There, it is what people – the members of a community – make of it. My budding success as a member of the community in the world of the évolués, of Catholic school, future civil service and global travel was undoubtedly a threat to some members of the community, for potentially changing the hierarchy of values and corresponding social status. The proof of circumcision did not change a thing, because the term was levelled at me for protecting the Chokwe set of traditional values and identity. The actual meaning of these values, of being circumcised or not, mattered less than the power some members feared to lose in a rapidly changing, globalizing society. Indeed, Chokwe society is as an amalgam of trading communities necessarily very open to social exchange and cultural mediation of goods, practices and ideas for non-Chokwe. It is cosmopolitan towards its neighbours, and thus seemingly vulnerable to outside influences, yet has always been able to appropriate these without losing its cultural identity. That in a nutshell is the dynamic which this thesis delves into. Admittedly, the evidence we offer is more phenomenological and evocative than positivist. The data, which include many qualitative sources, are to illustrate the thesis rather than to prove it.

The village people were happy guys, proud of their village life they were not ready to forget or deny under any condition. They fully assumed their past and courageously took full responsibility for whatever situation they had to face in the city. In the house, on the road, in school, or wherever they were, they could easily be thought of as Spartans from Old Greece transferred to another continent from other times. They were like trained soldiers ready for any quick intervention especially if anything happened to their uncle. At the same time, they all seemed to have a specific mission to remain faithful to their traditions despite the education they were facing. They spoke with pride about their art, especially about masks, masquerades, other arts, and dances. They also spoke with much pride about the time they spent in the forest for their successive initiations.

I suddenly understood that to grasp the deep meaning of the concept “Chilima” and to avoid being called so, in the future, I had to go through special learning activities that would include the entire Chokwe material culture, socio-political life, and identity connections to better know the Chokwe, for I did not know them at all. Everything I had collected so far was insignificant when taken as isolated, and it only attracted the mockery of my village cousins. It is through my first reading of *Writing and Difference* (J. Derrida, 1978) that I found a hopeful direction to follow to understand the concept “Chilima” fully. My quest had indeed to be not a question of displacement, but a grammatology understood as a process; it would lead me to insert the concept “Chilima” into a meaningful structure within other social phenomena and life details (J. Derrida, 1978:xi). “Chilima,” as a concept despite any repressive possibilities that may come with it, cannot get rid of its presence among other cultural manifestations. It is a sign or rather a symptom of its very presence in the Chokwe world, because it differs from itself in order to achieve a new appropriation of its specificities (J. Derrida, 1978:xi-xii).

In fact, Derrida’s contribution goes far from the early mentioned “Signifier” and “Signified.” It is through presence, *ousia* (being) and *parousia* (presence) from Greek meaning, that Derrida suggests a meaningful presence, *existence*, connected to a totality that these concepts’ interconnections reveal. “Chilima,” then, would, with the adoption of Derrida’s strategy, be located through the structural links that can make Chokwe’s life possible within their socio-political boundaries, and well beyond. For “within structure there is not only form, relation, and configuration. There is also interdependency and a totality which is always concrete... the totality more clearly perceived, the panorama and panoragram are possible” (J. Derrida, 1978:5). The “Chilima” will certainly show up its different meanings once placed in different contexts and regarded without passion. I had doubtlessly left out an objective sense of observation and felt concerned to the point of lacking a panoramic vision of the Chokwe culture.

In other words, my understanding of the concept “Chilima” is an utter escape from preconception and any predetermined design; it does not require much invention from outside but rather the individual capacity. It bears a keystone that can be translated into research as human rights gain more systematic knowledge in the pursuit of the not-yet known (Appadurai, 2013:271). However, since the knowledge pursued is not of any particular kind and has to be integrated into anthropological identities and cultural facts with consideration for the Chokwe as “human as future-makers and of futures as cultural facts” (Appadurai, 2013:285), “Chilima” as a concept



needs to be grounded in empirical observations of the Chokwe world for its “verifiability, replicability... and transparency of research protocols.” All along the process, the research will eliminate any epiphany or virtuosity that could be attributed to early researchers — in the hopes of reaching Max Weber’s understanding of the importance of value-free research within an academically reliable framework for the production of an appropriate shelf-life of knowledge (Appadurai, 2013:273-275).

### **I.1.2 Chilima’s Backbone Knowledge Reinforced through Education**

Being a student at the University of Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I came to know that professor Joseph Cornet, mostly known as Frère Joseph Cornet<sup>2</sup>, taught a course in African art with an exceptional devotion and genius, paying specific attention to Chokwe art. His skills included details that suggested how material culture was closely related to an entire area’s history, personality construction, and social development over years. From pieces of art, Cornet could figure out population movements, aesthetic dynamics, and above all cultural expansions over centuries. A first encounter with this specialist added new flavor to interacting with material culture involved in my seeking of more knowledge about the concept “Chilima.”

Joseph Cornet made it obvious that the understanding of material objects in Africa (in the Chokwe area in particular in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Angola and Zambia), as well as cultural representations and material objects, should be grasped in light of a couple of academic disciplines. Their input culminates in the presentation of stories and the artifacts quite often shared with the public under specific conditions. In this vein, Van Damme (1996:2-12) particularly insists on the necessity of quitting western canons to see ethnic logic better and for eventually grasping other aesthetic dynamics, in particular where the artists’ inspiration and

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<sup>2</sup>Frere Joseph Cornet died in 2004 aged 85 and was a missionary who spent most of his career in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With his research team he travelled all around the country and collected close to 5,000 objects of art. As an historian of art, he had the opportunity to study different Congolese traditions that he mastered and understood more than many Congolese, especially the ones born in towns. I attended his class in the academic year 1980. My memories are still full of stories he had collected especially in the Kuba countryside. His broad skills and knowledge had permitted him to learn the most important parts of local history and their varied stories. He knew much about the Lunda/Chokwe kingdom, royal successions, and different paraphernalia that included most of the masks mentioned in this study. He spoke to us about secret societies and the extensive work required to make masks. He perfectly understood different religious systems that contributed to mythological systems and metaphysical representations at the center of Bantu philosophy.

production respond at first to a community's needs visible through daily labor division, rituals, connections with close neighbors/distant travelers—rather than necessarily through the artist's absolute self-expression. The artist, anonymous in many cases except when the artifact is for personal use of the ruler or another potentate, had a prominent place in the community, although most of the time, just like his work, he mingled with everybody in every activity and did not have a specific status. In fact, Strother (1998) confirms the anonymous nature of many artifacts, for they were collectively produced in a long chain where different artists participated for various aesthetic aspects.

Finally, Professor Cornet took a keen interest in masks and costumes, and extensively commented on Chokwe masquerades in traditions that covered long centuries. He pointed out that neighbors such as Lunda, Lwena, Kuba, Asalampasu, Songye, Pende, Suku, Yaka, and Songo shared much in common with the Chokwe regarding rituals, world visions, and societal organization.

From that time on, my interest in Chokwe art has increased and reached its highest level during the years I taught classes revolving around African art, religion and philosophy at Massachusetts College of Art and Design in the Boston area. One of these classes entitled "African Art, Philosophy and Religion" seemed to be a duplication of Cornet's endeavor, which advised the inclusion of several sciences for a deeper comprehension of African art. It was so interesting indeed to find out that American students looked at African art through material plasticity, and questioned essentially why the users needed these artifacts, and what impact they had on individuals and their communities. In other words, these issues may be translated on the one hand, in terms of physical bodies' connections with produced artifacts. They identify with certain artifacts in their totality, or simply with their significant parts (Burtler, 1993). This last sentence stresses to what extent material culture may be a source of different studies leading to a better understanding of communities in their "natural" biotope. The conception of art and its use often differs from one group to another. It gets enmeshed in wider cultural visions that may not respond to all the scientific criteria from any one modern school.

### **I.1.3 Art, Human Body, and Society**

How is material culture – including things made with artistic creativity, i.e., artifacts that do not follow standard classification criteria or contemporary art – connected to power, local institutions, politics, and aesthetics? The short answer is the body. Things are never just tools. In things, we find the management of the body’s creativity and desires, including lust and discipline (Crossley, 2004). Colonial and postcolonial obstructions to local forms of body management have been identified as potential sources of crisis and violence on the African continent (Adejunmobi, 1999, Dec.; Nyamnjoh & Devisch, 201; Stroeken, 2010). This study offers a fresh look at sensory realities, for which traditions have been developed worldwide, ranging from initiation, to music and myth, to traditions of oral literature and to what some call primitive art (O’Reil, 2002; Myers, 2005; Errington, 1994). Far beyond aesthetic, moral and any political or provocative aspects, Chokwe artifacts have a powerful agency related to the body in the sense that they are an expression of what the body is believed to be able to achieve (De Boeck, 1993). The artifact permits the community to transcend the individual body, to include and exclude realities, to open up a world or close it, and to allow innovation (Crossley, 2004).

Since modernity, many scholars have tried to define and understand the human body in its different dimensions and related functions. What began as a mechanistic organism since the days of Vesalius is today seen mainly as a socio-politico-cultural agency that determines identities. Mythico-religious narratives from oral literature on macro- and microcosms have addressed issues that were debated as much by sociologists as by medical scientists. In “The Offending Part: Sacrifice and Ethnocide in the Era of Globalization,” Appadurai (2013:85-99) extensively documents how the human body stands for the agency at the roots of nation-state: as a concept that is built both on the personal body sacrifice, and the “sacrifice” of those who could prevent the construction or the defense of the land that justifies the sacredness of a space. All throughout his argumentation, Appadurai (2013:85-89) curiously points out spaces whose gradual occupation by different population waves and the development of various communications indicate the beginning of national geography, peoplehood, and citizenship amid a process that includes sacrifice of and violence on the human body either for rituals or vengeance. Or both. The long occupation process includes various social aspects that, finally, culminate in social constructions. For, quoting Girard (1977:13), Appadurai (2013:87) insists a “sacrifice is primarily an act of

violence” addressed to the individual or the community members, or again to outside the community. The body still remains at the center of possible (and probable) actions that might include not only death (killing) of the whole body, but also parts through expulsion and purification (or again excision and extrusion) in a way that reminds us, on the one hand, of shamanistic practices, and on the other of nation-state construction practices as Appadurai (2013:88); Herzfeld (1997); Anderson (1991), and Balibar (1991) document.

The concept “Chilima” seems to stand for the cultural knot or spot that opens a space within a significant designed area of knowledge and skills. It breaks the succession of colors, but still bears the possibility (the potential) to catch up with colors in harmony with the entire layout. If that “color filling” process has not taken place, or is not completely filled, the “Chilima” remains a subject of laughter, an outsider, similar to the Chokwe Katoyo mask originally made to mock the foreigner, the stranger who does not master local habits and customs.

*Figure 1 Katoyo Masks*



Katoyo Masks. The complexion of the nose, changed and whitened aged hair are chosen to remind white people. The teeth are a reminder of advanced age that goes with the presentation of the skin exposed to the African sun and life hardship. The hat intends to be a protection against the sun. Later, the text will present a variant of the Katoyo under the Chindele Mask. Contrary to Katoyo, Chindele shows a white of a given age. The mask is of wood. However, unlike many other times, the Chindele could also be made of colored clay. It is also somehow heavier. However, the explanation remains the same turning around mockery of the occupant. and the colonial powers. The Katoyo as will be explained later is addressing lack of civilization and cultural knowledge.

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Left: Chokwe Mask composite materials (1930's) / Don Bequaert

Right: Wooden mask registered in the RMCA collections in 2001

*Figure 2 Katoyo Masks*



Both the above are also Katoyo masks and continue the themes mentioned in the above images though with much more realism. The white men are completely tanned or let us say burned by the sun. With their lost teeth, burnt skin, need of shelter far from the sun, the question could be raised: who is finally more powerful the colonialist or the local? Obviously, the suffering that the expatriate is exposed to is far more dangerous than verbal orders and a wish to change the local order. The colonial powers are mocked for their incapacity to penetrate local realities and therefore to subjugate Africans. The Chokwe are champions in the presentation of such themes that made the backbone of their resistance to colonialism, and later the source of their misunderstanding with their colonialists, once their frenemies especially in land conquests and slave trade.

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Right: Chokwe Mask (DRC) collected close to Kahemba (years 1930) / Don Bequaert

Left: Chokwe Mask (DRC) collected in the 1950's by A. Maesen

*Figure 3 Katoyo Mask*



This Katoyo Mask is more elaborate and seems to be of a later production. The nose is much more pronounced. The skin problems are combined with a kind of smallpox quite present in Africa in these years. Combined with malaria, smallpox made the hell of many Europeans.

The carving makes another innovation with a special stress given to the cross.

However, the continuation of the rotten teeth theme should doubtlessly be perceived within a more symbolic dimension: a lack of class and civilization. In many cases, the whites are unable to master the right language that the wise men use in different circumstances for palavers and rituals. They face a world full of its strongly rooted traditions that they cannot penetrate. Later, the text will exploit the theme of ambiguity, and boomerang that perfectly fit the Katoyo mask image.

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The stranger is still admissible to “Chokwehood or Uchokwe” once he masters the social life vision and becomes a community member who inserts social structures and philosophical thoughts. Thus, the “Chilima”, perceived as a perpetual apprentice, lives with the Chokwe but lacks their knowledge and skills, as well as a clear understanding of society and the right initiatives. The Chilima becomes a construct of identity and an opening on larger cultural systems. Unfortunately, the learning process which is not compulsory may take an entire life and may never happen or be completed. An incomplete (or not even started) learning process to change from the “Chilima” premature status leaves the human body filled with unexpressed desires. It also leaves the mind limited and condemned to a metaphorically dwarfed capacity as entrances into the Chokwe social communication spaces remain closed.

More and more, new technologies, multimedia, and especially films mixing emotions, doubts, pragmatism, and experimentations attest to the importance of the sensory body as a resource for production and management of knowledge production, identity construction, definition, determination in society, and the cultural management of lust often considered as instinct-based and socio-psychologically oriented. The communicating body stands for the agency of social projections and organizations within a global network differently anchored at local levels. In this vein, for Marx (1971), the human body is mainly coined with labor and resource production. It is associated with production and utility. Ricoeur (1992; 2003; 1967), M. Foucault (1972b), (M-Ponty, 1962), J. Derrida, Ronell, A. (1980, Autumn); J. Derrida (1968; 1983; 1998; 2004) have directed the discussion away from material structures, *per se*, toward human body conceptualization, at the interface of nature and socialization, and away from symbols to meaning processes, for the human body sometimes navigates between material and immaterial conceptualizations (Crossley, 2004). Thus, these scholars leave wide room for anthropology as the agency finds its reflections in art, history, philosophy, religion, gender, literature, psychology, physics, chemistry and so on (Collier, 1986; Nadel, 1951). At the same time this new discussion connects with lifestyles, lust presentation, cultural manifestations, and the valuation of commodities perceived as human bodies or objects bearing either financial or other symbolic values (Appadurai (2013:9-60). Also, understanding the “Chilima” status and finally leaving it to fit in the wide colorful Chokwe cultural design become fundamental for self-existence as an individual and as a community member. Thus, the concept “Chilima” becomes the potential negotiator or doomed personal, social, and community fate negotiator.

#### **I.1.4 More than “Chilima,” Study Purposes**

In Africa, many studies have concentrated on ethnology and paying attention to the place of the person within her socio-ethnic organization. But they often overlooked the agency of the human body (De Boeck, 1993). V. Turner (1967; 1975; 1977) and Salakoski (2006, March) are among the rare who have undertaken research in the Chokweland (though without paying much attention to the Chokwe themselves) and focused attention on the human body in its many roles of construction, expression, sacrifice, death, life, expiation, surrogate agency. This research intends to fill that lacuna with the specific example of the Chokwe who have a long and rich history, but whose several resources have not been used for a better understanding of body agency in the social fabric – as it unfolds in times of war and peace. The same body can be used for many different purposes, and it stands for a multifunctional center.

The Lunda-Chokwe group is indeed an interesting case, especially if approached from its artifacts, ritual articulations, anthropological connections, and social foundations. In fact, although the Chokwe group is distinct, it is quite often associated with the Lunda from which it originated and departed in a kind of revolt. When the Lunda Kingdom had accepted a foreigner as ruler, Muhunga (1962) and Kayembe (2015a) largely documented and provided proofs strongly supported by their long family oral histories, but the Chokwe quit the union and went their way for the construction of their separate community identities. According to Bascom (1973: 147), the Chokwe people (and their art, culture, and civilization) are often studied along with Lunda, Luchazi, Lwena, Mbunda, Mbundu, and Songo for they not only share the same geographical area but have constructed their history together over the centuries. They nevertheless claim their respective socio-politico-economic community independences that have long unique traditions. Herein, Lunda-Chokwe art opens possibilities of multi/interdisciplinary research projects on the Chokwe human body and its use throughout migrations and encounters with neighbors and from visitors or occupants, negotiations, and identifications within social structures.

Firstly, this art is located within a geographical area that had some African kingdoms playing a great role in socio-political organizations and facing existential challenges defining the human body as a vehicle of culture, civilization, and reinforcing identities. Secondly, under different contacts with neighbors and colonial powers, artists shared and developed skills that influenced their production and consumption within palaces, the public, and neighbor relations while



aggregating identity features. In its dynamic evolution, this art could, on more than one level, put to question what Christensen (1955:7-9) looks at as primitive art or Negro African Sculpture using what nature provides. This art surprises in its contacts with new populations and the use not only of local natural products, but in its careful collaboration with newly learned skills, and incorporation of what comes from other populations. In this vein, J. Vansina (1999:44, 77, 163) digs deeper and deeper into local traditions and reveals how African art was highly connected with the human body, rituals, and socio-religious events. The interviews conducted for the sake of this dissertation in different places in Angola, Zambia, and DR Congo seem to openly support Vansina's statements.

Thirdly, as Lunda-Chokwe people were suddenly dispersed over three different colonial powers (Belgian, English, and Portuguese), their art traveled with them and adapted to new environments, body definitions, medium role expectations, and especially lust capacities represented in bodily suggestive art productions. Jordan (1998; 1993; 2006) highlights body-sculpture connections of a threefold creative power that often put anonymous artists on a podium, along with the material used and the human bodies rendered alive (Burtler, 1993). Lunda-Chokwe art, thus, is an excellent pretext to research on 1) the Chokwe identities, 2) the human body (and lust) as a multi-sectorial agency, and 3) the growing influence over an African region and far beyond. It condenses linguistic communication abilities, historical designs, and anthropological specificities to reveal several scholarly details through an interdisciplinary study. "Civilization" (culture: socio-political organizations, and social dynamics), history, art and artistry (based on woodwork, masks, Sona, oral narratives and dances) are all present. They may be studied through multi/interdisciplinary approaches concerning body presentations. Finally, the research will not attempt to question the existence and the recognition of Lunda-Chokwe art, nor its detailed artistic presentations, for "African art has won its own place among the great art traditions of the world... recognized as one of the great contributions ..." (Bascom, 1973:3). Instead, this dissertation stands for an opportunity to understand the Chokwe identities through interactions, creativity, and body management at different times in history dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a multipurpose agency in the area under study. Overall, it is also an open window on the Chokwe through history, their customary habits, and their different socio-political responsibilities.

The Chibinda statue (mythic hero) and Mwana Pwo masks (ideal female image) are exemplary Chokwe social archetypes; it is possible to track the Chokwe throughout their history and evolution as a community, an ethnic group, and a distinct people whose culture revolves around certain commodities.



Both these pictures taken from the house of the Tshikapa House of Artists show the Chokwe ancestors Chibinda Ilunga and Princess Ruwej (whose name is also often written Lweji). The left-hand picture insists on the fact that Ruwej had the power from her family whereas Chibinda Ilunga, from a foreign royal family, got power through his wedding with Princess Ruwej. The picture on the right hand is a representation of Chibinda Ilunga as the Cultural Chokwe Ancestor from whom hunting and magic powers are inherited. Chibinda Ilunga is the Chokwe cultural hero.

*Figure 4 Ilunga Chibinda, Ruwej (Top) Mwana Pwo Masks (Below)*

**Source: F.Kaputu Pictures (Tshikapa 2015)**



Above is a Mwana Pwo mask viewed from two different perspectives. The first picture shows a front view of the mask with full breasts. A costume covered with a local Zambian wrapper material. Her costume is knitted in following the traditional style from natural material. Nowadays, the artists buy second hand material from the market. They take off the fibers they use to knit mask costumes.

**Source: F.Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)**

From an anthropological perspective, Simmel (1978), Kopytoff (1986), along with Appadurai (2013:9-60) move a step further as they consider commodities in their capacity to participate in exchanges for what they stand for as objects of value. All the same, the value in question depends on what the human community figures out as real or imagined given they can empower people to act, and the words that enable them to communicate, identify individuals/things around them, and if possible put them in a given hierarchical order.

The same commodity exchange and communication capacity may be perceived on different levels locally and at the world level. Globalization processes have affected and renewed specific artistic techniques, language codes, entertainment conventions, religious body choreographies, ritual organizations, body management, and political fabrics. Globalization has gone hand in hand with the development of individual and community identities in these different exchange possibilities (Meyer, 1999). Along their history, the Chokwe have been exposed to globalization and the question of their roots within that world view, thus raising a study case that fits in Birgit Meyer's and Peter Geschiere's *Globalization and Dialectics: Flow and Closure*.

Apart from the general flow that opens and leads to globalization, more and more described as full of "vagueness and inconsistencies" and ambiguities, the historical evolution of Chokwe has brought about social community dissensions as far as gender challenges are concerned. According to Chokwe experts, Ndua Solol (2015), Kayembe (2015a), Muhunga (1962), and De Saint Moulin (2015), general Chokwe politics have gone through migrations, connections with neighbors, and with visitors of diverse kinds as they engage in conversations and give values to commodities. Female images have changed over a spectrum that identifies them as queens, mothers, slaves, prostitutes, and partners often blurred through lenses that consider them through their productive capacity rather than as equal beings (J. Vansina, 2004:232-243). Unfortunately, during their peregrinations, Chokwe women had to face social realities that exposed them to commodities and their exchange, in addition to values attributed from real and imagined estimations; they could sometimes be looked at as personal possessions. With women in general, and particularly with African women, Kevane (2004) rightly points out that they were typically worse off when compared with men. With time, commodity exchanges, social considerations, and economic dynamics also forced as many changes as possible. Quite often, new economies

have brought new change conventions that have not always been the best for women in most cases, nor for all parts of Africa. However, recently conducted interviews in the Luvale/Chokwe area in Zambia, as will be later demonstrated, provide a serious case where women have progressively reversed the trend in their favor by using cultural strategies as social commodities. As Chokwe society became more cosmopolitan the place of women as traders became more central and the role of certain traditions such as male circumcision as a basis for authority, which excludes women, diminished to become a local value. Blacden (2006) describes how Sub-Saharan African global economies have decreased women's pride and dignity by shaking and blurring identities. This study of Chokwe identities through material culture counters his position and will contain more surprises. The research will lead to a better knowledge of the Chokwe through their cultural specificities, which keep them separate from their neighbors and the world, and at the same time as a *part* of the world. It will also show the benefits that the Chokwe commodities gain today through global exchanges. More than material goods, Appadurai (2013; 1996), Piot (1999), Gerdes (1998), M. Hilgers (2011), Herskovits (1962), and Bonnewitz (2002) rather insist on the power of cultural facts as they frame relations, and deliver new identities through incessant dynamics.

## **I.2 Chokwe (African) Modernisms: continuity, discontinuity in the Chokweland**

The first annotated situation in this dissertation around the concept "Chilima" (far from being completely personal, trivial, or anecdotal) is an indicator of a general situation with the Chokwe people. They have resisted another world vision that comes with Western education under its different ways, as it brings new learning conditions and leads people to behaviors that do follow the way of Chokwe traditions. The same situation happens in the world of Chokwe art and its resistance to time and to external invasions. From early colonial incursions that attempted to condemn all artistic productions linked to "pagan" rituals, to the departure of artifacts to other continents, the Chokwe ritual artists resisted by finding ways to insert into their productions artistic features depicting foreign presences in the Chokweland.

The "Chilima" as both outsider and insider to the community marginalizes himself because he cannot do like everybody else and cannot understand why things are the way they are. Facing adversity from colonial invaders, the Chokwe chose to stick to their most essential values. At the

same time, despite a systematic closure to the outside, the Chokwe have always found ways to expand their presence through modernism. Sollors (2008:10) highlights details concerning modernity and modernism that could assist us in better understanding how the Chokwe have organized their identities from their contacts with the colonial powers. Despite their free choice to contradict colonial powers, other influences have been inserted straight into Chokwe traditions. As far as technologies are concerned, the Chokwe are recognized among the first to have had access to firearms and to have used them since the sixteenth century. They were also among the first to have changed their food by accepting food seeds from America (Allen, 2002). J. C. Miller (1982; 1987; 1999), Hoover (1978b) confirm these borrowings that have changed the Chokwe world with new food, the fabrication of guns and the use of other metallic tools.

The Chokwe were also among the first to have chosen different ways to cooperate with the new urbanization. From Tshikapa, they could go to live near new cities that offered them services and the ability to sell harvests from their fields. They were thus a part of these migrations that Sollors (2008:10) considers as aspects of “modernisms.” Despite their open claims and opposition to the presence and the power of the colonial powers, the Chokwe had at the same time developed conscious or unconscious strategies to get what they needed, even to the point of including in their artistic production crosses from the Roman Catholic Church because they represented power. Also, the Chokwe’s new way of making chairs represents a combination of a Chokwe stool added with a back frame from the European chairs. However, this chair was carved with Chokwe designs of different manhood, leadership, and kingdom rituals. The Chokwe thus got into “modernization at the same time they stressed transnationalism, and attempted to be meaningful to the world (S.L. Kasfir, 2007:xi; 1992).



*Figure 5 Chokwe Chairs*



The Chokwe chair design here above combines a stool to which is added a back inspired from the European design. The Chokwe chair retakes the main ritual event that includes the seclusion of boys for their transition to manhood through the Mukanda Initiation. The ritual is famous for masks. The chair shows the coned Chikunza, the mask of fertility and the Chokwe women on the bottom. On the right hand, a lateral part of the chair gives a scene of circumcision an essential part of the Mukanda Initiation. A Katotola mask with batons is represented in the discipline role that it fills on masquerade days, and at all events turning initiations. Finally, a drummer shows how music learning and making music instruments take an important part of the initiation.

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A Gift from Kasai Company (1913)

The meeting with the Western world and the confrontation of two different cultures were in themselves strong enough to break any barrier of what officially prevailed (Geertz, 1966; 1977). From the Western side, the “primitives” had to get rid of troublesome rituals and meaningless artifacts. That was the official position. Yet, at the same time all along the colonial time, “primitive” artifacts were exported to the West as object of curiosity. From the Chokwe side, they had to resist the occupation and the loss of their cultural and mainly religious heritage. Also, changes came slowly in the Chokwe “Hamba” or spirits because some were now representing the colonial occupants and their powers, and also their escorts (even though also African). Wastiau (2006:18-23) documents how the “Hamba” took different forms representing for instance, “Nyayindele” or the mother of the white man, and the “Vimbali” that represented the escorts of the first whites, i.e., the Ovimbundu from the Atlantic coast. They related to misfortune, illnesses. The “Hamba Imbali” were not perceived as bringing hope to the country. In fact, the “Hamba ya

peho” or the spirits of the air, would be called kamikaze by the Japanese, a literal translation. They behaved in unpredictable ways and would usually bring death. During consultations to the diviners, they were offered cigarettes, papers, magazines. Also, “In the course of treatment, the patient in the throes of a possession trance had to eat a meal in the European manner; drink beer or imported wine served in bottle and eat food served on a table covered with tablecloth and prepared with European condiments...” (Wastiau, 2006:18-19).

Fetishes were made representing the “Vimbali,” Portuguese, Ovimbundu and other whites, for they were believed to be equivocators, and ambiguous. They represented a destructive force to the homeland and its power distribution. At the same time, they were a source of curiosity and of possible power to be used locally. Also, the “Vimbali” were present in the basket of the diviner for a double purpose: first, to stop any evil force that could destroy individuals or entire communities; second, for a boomerang effect that might lead to using the European power against the same colonialists on the battlefield, and in any other area that needed protection, discussion, or simply a show of physical strength.

This dissertation will, among many other things, demonstrate how, contrary to many discussions, that the Chokwe society was and still is highly “capitalistic” – in the broad sense of an orientation on the accumulation of economic capital that could be socially exchanged and correlated with influence and status. The meeting with Europeans is a significant example that shows that as long as they could find common interests with their time, skills, negotiations, they were together. As soon as the Europeans decided to take over all decisions, to get rid of their former partners, and to force out the Chokwe to the same level like other colonized subjects, resistance started and the Chokwe considered Europeans as their enemies. Diviners called them “Vimbali” whose power as here above pointed out, meant evil, but at the same time a source of possible local power. It is through that one thing and its contrary that continuity and discontinuity can be found in Chokwe modernisms. At the same time, the Chokweland, though still hesitant, marks its entrance in a modernity designed to fit its desires (Sollors, 2008:10).

This quick introductory note on Chokwe (African) Modernism would not be complete without additional information that points out the Chokwe and the European perception of their encounter and what came out of it. S.L. Kasfir (2007) highlights and comments on the most important concept that characterizes the encounters in the title of this book, *African Art and the Colonial*



*Encounter: Inventing Global Commodity*. However, far from attributing the responsibility of that process only to the Europeans, the Chokwe had their own part in the game. They were also in commoditization. Apart from fabricating the “Vimbali” and using it for depicting the evil side of the occupation, they capitalized on the encounter by making new fetishes from the foreign presence. The Chokwe, like many other people around Sub-Saharan Africa, thus became involved in the long process of updating witchcraft, its evolving ideas, and the diviners’ contribution to their society (Geschiere, 1997). Appadurai (2013; 1986; 1996) extensively documents the concept of “commodity” and clearly moves from a simple consideration of artifacts and material culture, as such, to cultural facts. Through different ways and strategies, cultural facts reach out to the end of the world, and thus confirm the essentially capitalist rules of supply and demand laws without any significant difference separating the developed and the developing worlds, as long as needs are met and satisfaction brought to individuals, and to their communities (Appadurai, 1996).

The Chokwe called the Ovimbundu: Vimbali, also known as Imbali or Imbari. The word means those who lead a double life. In fact, the Ovimbundu were working for the Portuguese and accepted the Portuguese Philosophy and, at the same time, pretended to be closely related with the Chokwe. For, the Chokwe such brotherhood was impossible. The Ovimbundu were in other words simply traitors who were ready to sell their brothers and sisters to the foreigners. Viewed from that angle, the Ovimbundu were also seen as bringing bad luck and an opening to the possibility for bad spirits to invade the Chokweland. They thus were seen as an evil force causing illnesses.

However, as traitors and double agents, the Ovimbundu quickly got their place in the diviner’s basket, for Imbali meant “both” good and evil, and had to be scrutinized by the diviners. The Ovimbundu had indeed to be thoroughly inspected wherever they were present for their intentions could not be as clean as they would pretend, and the Chokwe could not trust them. The Ovimbundu were believed to be able to keep a hidden side representing their interest. They were thought to share the same policy with the public enemy: the Portuguese. The diviner had as mission to find their intention and to block whatever evil they could thus bring to the people. Thus, the Ovimbali got a place in the diviner’s basket. The diviners had the difficult duty to find out their intention and to foresee any evil that could be used for bringing illnesses to the Chokwe

communities. In fact, because of that evil side attributed to “Imbali,” the same name was also extended to the Whites who pretended to have come for a good mission, and essentially for peace construction with the Chokwe. Once again, ambiguity was the most important concept that permitted a possible navigation in these different situations. Also, when they would look like concentrated only on the Ovimbundu’s case, the Chokwe included also Portuguese. Everybody could laugh about that through entertainments, but everybody had to be serious when the case was in diviners’ hands, or when the case was treated in secret society looking for secret powers, such as witchcraft (Geschiere, 1997).

In fact, the diviner had another mission in dealing with the “Imbali.” The diviner, especially when dealing the Portuguese, looked for the boomerang effect. It was important to mobilize the forces that the public enemy was bringing and turn them against the same enemy. Thus, everything was done to make a transfer of forces from the enemy to the locals in order to attack the public enemy using his forces and technology for an imposing surprise. Apart from the magic aspects, such an evolution included the learning of new skills in order to reach a full capacity of reaction. It is in this vein that the fire gun makes its presence in the initiation camp for it changes in a camp where world modern fighting skills are also learned. The fire gun became a part of the world of witchcraft, as witches also started using the same concept for magically killing (Lima, 1971).

Finally, a look in the direction of both Jean and John Comaroff will reveal another important detail to consider, at least on the side of the Chokwe, as far as their meeting with Europeans is concerned. The paragraphs were already mentioned above about how the meeting turned into a lucrative business for both parties. Apart from the artifacts that the Europeans were happy to bring back home and put in museums, the Chokwe had quite often become a suspicious case to closely control for some of their Chiefs, like Samazemba, who were particularly disobedient, stubborn, and resistant to the new political order (Ndua Solol, 2015). They resisted the royal representatives often approaching and designating other people to represent the people (Wastiau, 2006:18-19). The Chokwe, on their side, apart from the “Vimbali” phenomenon, related to the colonials both as a source of evil and power, found the same ambiguity of love and hatred perceived in the cultural roots that Wastiau describes above. While in trance, a patient would have access to a table with European food and bottled wine. This image can certainly be

interpreted in different ways. Psychologically or psychoanalytically, if we consider being in trance as a second mind state, or an inside way to a medium state, the image seems to have much to do with some kind of shamanistic ritual, or what would also be called primitive religion (Kaputu, 2010). Whatever the case, we are in a detailed situation that depicts how the white food serves as a healing process (Katz, 1997). The patient is healed by going through that ritual consisting of European attributes. In other words, it is possible to teach leadership and to integrate some “European” social activities without necessarily needing the Europeans around. Thus, when in addition to the “Vimbali” the Katoyo mask comes on scene, the public is lured in believing it is an object of mockery for it represents ignorance, a Chilima like situation. Such a description is right and may suffice for the public. However, the specialists will also perceive in the Katoyo a source of some kind of new knowledge that could serve in the leadership, or at least in the increase of the capital understood, either economically as strategy to get pay for any trivial work/offer, or as a possible strategy for capital accumulating toward personal and generation class distinction (P. Bourdieu, 1984). In all the ways here above mentioned the Chokwe (African) modernity and modernisms are integrated within the Chokweland and will recur throughout this dissertation. J. Comaroff (2012; 2009) would see in such developmental mechanisms what might happen in the post-apartheid era in South Africa, once apartheid Zionist religious institutions have become a source of inspiration for a new leadership construction. The mocked Katoyo mask would only be a source of mockery to many, but would be an inspiration to a group who wants additional powers to lead differently.

### **I.3 Quick Review of this dissertation title: On identities**

As simple as the concept of identity may seem in its daily use and understanding, for several discourse reasons it does not follow the same straight line that may apply to the present study. The word identity inherits the outcome of several generations and trends including philosophical, anthropological, historical, grammatical, civilizational, colonial and postcolonial discourses that offer different perspectives sometimes diametrically opposed as the following paragraphs will certainly reveal.

Boaduo (2010) presents the concept of identity from a specific perspective that includes power from the identifier. The lack of power balance leads both authors to describe Africa in a funeral-

like situation that deserves wails, for despite atrocities infringed on the continent for many generations, the colonialists have the cheek to identify Africans through derogatory concepts such as “black, tribe, colored and native” or “Hamitic, Semitic, Cuchitic, Negroid, Neolithic,” essentially encrusted in a long history of imperialism, colonization, and economic domination subordinating powerless people to any social status, with meanings decided upon only in Western dictionaries or encyclopedias. Tedla (1995) looks with sadness at such an identification. It recalls how the world is often led to believe Africa does not contribute at all, or not enough. Such consideration comes despite African added values in terms of slaves’ work, artistry (as attested by museums located on all continents), and diverse minerals whose products have constructed both Western prestige and grandeur.

Also, what falls short of being called Western could be automatically disqualified and outcast as primitive, savage, retrograde, and unworthy to share space with the West. This top-down forced and unjustified identification completely ignores centuries of African artistic and philosophical contributions only accessible through the mastery of complex skills, esoteric training, and exceptional achievements. Fortunately, paying close attention to Lowie (1929), Berthelot (1986), Boas (1944), Christensen (1955), and Myers (2005) leads us to find out that the concept “primitivism” has been widely discussed in academia for years to the point of getting recognition for its originality. Meanwhile, artistic features that have inspired the famous Western artists for new creativity within artistic dimensions are otherwise unknown or neglected. Simultaneously, the academic endeavors about African artistry have permitted new considerations of African identities.

The above preoccupation regarding African identities and classification as rather unidirectional and abasing are largely repeated in Kanu (2011; 2013) who raises pertinent questions on identity principles, qualifications, responsibility, and choices. In a few rhetorical sentences referencing black color, racism, ideologies, colonization and slave trade, Kanu (2013:35- 37) underlines how African identities are often randomly considered. From the introduction, Kanu trashes fallacious judgments that led scholars such as Linnaeus (1707-1778), Gobineau (1816-1882), Levy-Bruhl (1857-1939), to mention but a few, to disqualify Africa and Africans on pretensions of wrongly developed, nonsense rhetoric that justified slavery, attributing wrong identities that none of the victims deserved.

It is with pride that A. Kanu Ikechukwu (2013, June) refers to the African undefiled personality, Senghor, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Ki-zerbo among those whose works bring back pride to the black continent. Finally, A. Kanu Ikechukwu (2013, June:34) leaves out whatever may seem personal choice to distinguish qualitative and numerical identity reflected in synchronic and diachronic identities. The identity kind answers the “who am I?” question, whereas the second points out what makes a being throughout time. Through this focus on two identities, Kanu smoothly joins other scholars who question identity from a general perspective. Despite his movement towards other world scholars, and his insistent call on African scholars to join a fundamentally intellectual research for African identities, A. Kanu Ikechukwu (2013, June:39) points a finger at globalization as a significant danger to African identity. This dissertation will, later on, discuss this point and will significantly balance it, for I do not look at globalization as necessarily a risk to African identity, and in many ways not at all for the Chokwe studied here. The reader will have a couple of opportunities to find out different approaches that scholars use to variously present the concept of identity.

Identities distributed from a power-based bias, as here shown, have resulted most of the time in self-questioning and in attempts to reject whatever is felt imposed from the outside that displays misrepresentation. Kvasny (2008:7) illustrates the above with details about how Africans, all around the world in the Internet era, continue a tradition that W.E.B. Du Bois started early at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and named “underground approach” developed from 1902. The approach insinuated that African Americans could “develop positive self-concepts despite the stigma of being devalued by the largest society” (Kvasny, 2008:9). After noticing the above, Du Bois coined the concept “double consciousness.” Parallel to the mainline, a minority concerned by mistreatment could still develop its own identity based on its vision. Taking initiation from Du Bois’s *Nigrescence*, many scholars have not only found strategies to study people’s identity, but also to use the most accurate tools for dialogue to find out what individuals think about themselves. Cross (1971) described W.E.B. Du Bois’s dynamic intellectual movement that saw the concept Negro slowly replaced by “Black.” The latter led to civil rights’ movements that reached their full development in the Sixties in the United States.

In pursuing the dynamic search of an identity, i.e., its understanding and possibly its construction through dialogue, Kvasny (2008) inquires if the same wish to know and construct identities

persists in the African communities in the African Diaspora, especially in the United States of America and on the African continent. To get measurable results, the study is based on Internet conversations about self-identity consciousness and construction over time, given that the Internet offers a space that can be freely occupied. The observation of Africa in this area cannot be complete since there is not access to speedy Internet everywhere, but collected data show how the concepts Negro and Black concur in the formation of ethnic identity. Through the dynamic developed over the Web emerges a continuum of terminologies that are accepted as right identities, while rejecting all other concepts reflecting domination or imposed inferiority from power-based orientations. Hence, contrary to what some scholars like Turkle (1996) believe (ones who consider Internet impact negative on identity construction), Kvasny (2008) clearly sides with another big group of researchers. Selwyn 2003, Broek 2005, Kvasny 2007, Boatswain & Lalonde 2000, Kvasny & Warren 2008, Mitra & Watts 2002, Kraut et al. 1998 consider the Internet space as an opportunity to discuss and build African identities both in developing and developed countries through productive discussions.

Internet dynamic in the construction and updating of African identities is far different from early twentieth century East Africa. Igoe (2006) endeavors to find out through ethnographic research conducted between 1991 and 1997 the past of the Massai in Kenyan history, and if they have always been plagued by their countrymen. The author found out that the Massai were an important social group that had opportunities to cooperate more than once with English colonialists. This single fact struck my researcher's attention. It is the same pattern that is pointed out about the Chokwe who collaborated in different ways with the Portuguese, especially for various kinds of trade and slave shipments from many routes in the vast region covering Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia, all the way to the western coast, the Atlantic Ocean. Massai were once strong people and possessed not only cattle but lands and power. As their status changed over the years, they slowly lost their lands. Today, they are more and more forced to leave their herding life and to settle down on lands that are no longer theirs, amid occupations they have never been prepared for with dramatic consequences on women and children<sup>3</sup>. The Massai viewed their status as increasingly more necessary with the presence of

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<sup>3</sup>Recently two interesting PhDs, respectively by Lucy Willy Massoi and Pascal Haidari, both from Tanzania, as well as PhD candidates at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences at Ghent University, academic years 2013-2014 and

colonialists. They could trade their cattle with weapons, and they were suddenly respected, acquiring a status that imposed itself through their military capacity.

However, with the progression of the years, their power vanished and with it the weapon and power-based identity they had built for themselves. Today, international and local NGOs are joining forces to help the Massai find their way in a new life, mostly based on other kinds of trade, such as selling milk to households, that still require moving much. They use bikes and motorbikes, and some women have also joined this new trade. Many women are left to sell medicinal plants and yogurt in Tanzania. They can hardly have the same kind of life they had; they cannot raise their cattle in the same conditions moving from one space to another. Modern farms owned by Tanzanians who were once seen as foreigners in the Massai lands have taken over large areas. The Massai have even changed their diet as they can no longer live on the same food. Their identities and power have changed so much within just a century. It is an illustration that will help us to understand how the Chokwe's identity question has experienced authority shifts during the same century, and how Chokwe women, contrary to Massai women, offer a different perspective regarding gender identity construction in postcolonial times. In the same vein, Makokha (2011, June) offers a dissertation that focuses on ethnic identities and gender in contemporary East African Literature and underlines women's specific suffering in male-dominated societies when the center of command shifts from a colonial immigrant group to a local one that does not recognize traditional land authority. It is once again a question of power-based identification that leaves men fighting, whereas unrecognized women take the entire household burden on their heads.

Much more African religious literature today has a self-justifying tone. African Christianity is now on its way to conquer what was once the pride of the West in the conquest of Africa: bringing Christianity to the entire Africa. More and more Christianity finds leaders in Africa and opens up spaces of African identity, authority and leadership (Kaputu, 2002). At the same time, the number of African Christians is attracting attention from around the world. Koschorke (September 15-17, 2004) gives figures related to leaders coming from Africa and looks at the

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2014-2015, presented dissertations on Tanzania Massai, once a strong people now reduced to changing their lifestyle due to moving from places that were once their social life environments. They have gone as far as to changing their diet because of lacking farm lands now. At the same time, their gender understanding has undergone different kinds of violence that have left women without many rights in their society ....

black continent as the remaining Christian bastion called on to save Christianity from a possible death (if only considered from the indicators collected in the West). At the same time, most of the churches developing in Africa, especially Pentecostal congregations, have successfully found a bridge between the Bible and the African traditional world, contrary to the condemnations that came from the colonialist Christians who were looking at every African spiritual value and representation as evil (J. Comaroff, 1991, Jan.; 1992; 2009; 2012). It is rather a dynamic of deconstruction, construction, and re-construction that loops for miles through Western thoughts implemented for many years in Africa. It is finally an identity process once again power-based but one that has gone through a shift from colonialists to local people. Slowly, African Christians are identifying themselves as the protagonists in charge of keeping their religion alive and bringing it to the far end of the world.

#### **I.4 Is Human Identity Based Always on Power Position or Distribution?**

Identities (as earlier specified in the above paragraphs of Africa and Africans) may mislead us to believe they are necessarily power-based, just a question of power-showing and decision-making from a leadership position. V. Descombes (2013:125-126), a contemporary French philosopher, links the question to a distant past through two concepts (*quaestio finita* and *questio infinita*) that he attributes to Cicero and explains them through two easy examples: “*Caton doit-il se marier?*” and “*l’homme doit-il se marier?*” “Has Caton to get married?” and “Has man to get married?” The first question is precise whereas the second is not. Both concepts lay down the very complexity of the concept “identity,” for the first example is clear, whereas the second stands for an indefinite question and is too general. Descombes takes the above as a starting point for leading him into a long labyrinth that illustrates how difficult it is to find the right identity, and how prejudice misleads and brings about illogical, and incoherent conclusions. That is the case of “the Indian professor living at Master’s Lodge in his quality of Master of Trinity College. The immigration officer cannot believe that an Indian professor would be in that position” (V. Descombes, 2013:152).

Apart from vagueness and lack of precision, V. Descombes (2013:234-235) pinpoints identity politics, also known in France as community politics; they go as far as identifying people



through their migrated communities, often with a hint of their religion, for instance, Islamic identity. Whereas a finite question is based on principles, an infinite question is rather vague, general and transcendental. In this vein, far from revealing a unique and straightforward equality operation, Dumoncel (2014:153) elaborates Descombes' "identity." He understands it as one out of four different meanings of the verb "to be" like in the following example: "David est le père de Salomon." Three examples from the same construction types mean different things, testifying existence in "Je suis," attribution in "Socrates est homme" and finally inclusion in "Les hommes sont mortels."

By calling people's attention on the above differences, Descombes underlines that even the transcendental (if not the intellectual abstraction) levels may have varieties, and different comprehensions. Thus, V. Descombes (2013:90) points out what he calls the *summa divisio* that would include *qualitative* (or specific) identity as addressed through speech and *numerical* identity that lead the philosopher to speak about the "théories scolastiques des espèces d'identité" based on general features and trends regarding a significant group.

It is worth mentioning that Descombes' identity analysis (2013:90) finds resources in metaphysics as he brings up another concept, "genidentity," that discusses how individuals could keep the same identity through time. This concept leads some philosophers to claim the impossibility of swimming twice in the same river as water flows and permanently changes—and the present happens to be only a possibility. It offers, all the same, a significant possibility to this dissertation for paying attention to another French scholar, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural legacy and capital transmission from one generation to another (Bonnewitz, 2002; Bourdieu, P. 1984; 1992; 1997). Otherwise, a process of individuation allocates specificity to different cases and individuals. In mixing *Wittgensteinian criterion* that combines a word's usage and the individuation principle, Descombes (2010:84-85) gets what he calls the *Geach Rule* that underscores the fact that the word "same" necessarily calls for "the same what" whenever the concept identity comes to mind. Furthermore, V. Descombes (2013:215) stresses the possibility of water from a stream getting lost in a river, but the impossibility of fusing two horses even though they can team for a yoke. In a way, Descombes calls on the reader's attention to take into account criteria that determine an identity and making a division between the profane "here" and the sacred "there" or the contrary (M. Eliade, 1963b; 1993; 1996; 1998; 2005). With the above

division, V. Descombes (2013:225-226) suggests thoughtful possibilities that can lead to *politea* or the political identity that would oversee a people in its institutions, political or religious, through democratic principles renewed from one generation to another through continuing education. Dumoncel (2014:169) looks at renewal principles through different perspectives: as an offspring principle that points at hope and responsibility principles largely comprehensible through biblical genealogies. It is, indeed, also this generational responsibility and inheritance that P. A. W. Bourdieu, L.J.D. (1992) along Bonnewitz (2002) describe as substantial human capital.

Finally with a retrospective look at both traditional and modern societies through a structural observation, V. Descombes (2013:132-133) notes the same law or the same cultural invariable that revolves around generational responsibility. It puts together elders and youngsters' visions through the same ideals though often reached through specific temporary training. Either *homo hierarchicus* in tribal societies, or *homo aequalis* in modern societies: both go respectively through initiation rites for the first, or through different school levels, another kind of initiation. The final aim remains the same, i.e., making sure that the next generation keeps new generations continuing what elders started and were once sure about for their social survival. Otherwise, the square relations that construct parents to parents, also function similarly concerning young generations (Bonnewitz, 2002).

Going through the above possibilities to approach identity, which have been used all during the twentieth century, it is worth questioning which one could adapt to the present research on Chokwe. If Vincent Descombes seems to come somehow closer to our convictions and approaches, several other scholars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries offer alternatives worth consideration before making any decision that will condition the entire dissertation. First of all, Zahavi (1998) offers an additional opportunity in the possible ways to determine identity, and mainly to reach it after a coherent evaluation process either from Hegelian phenomenology that Gadamer stands for, or Derridan identity and differance concepts. Gadamer and Derrida seem to have different views regarding textual hermeneutics. According to Zahavi (1998:42), Gadamer underlines meaning as not a chance or a pure "conscience coincidence apprehension." Even though meaning as such is exposed to a given roaming, the identity meaning is permanently requested without paying much attention to alterity. Derrida's deconstruction is instead much

more concerned about the structuralist language reminder of Saussurean meaning producing process. In refusing the presence of a text in the past, in the present, and in the future, Derrida offers an opportunity to move ahead and takes alterity a new vision.

According to Chardel (SD:47), Derrida engages in bargaining identity meaning with a consideration for writing activity understanding, as here pointed out, “Certes, l’écriture pour Derrida nomme le fonctionnement de la langue en général, et décrit le mouvement même du langage en constituant avant tout le renvoi de signifiant à signifiant.” Chardel sees in Derrida’s approach two meanings, “a common and hyperbolic” that require a permanent shifting, but not an impossible communication, for writing is ultimately linked to obligation in communication standards. Both Gadamer and Derrida offer the reader the opportunity to understand alterity and the identity-making process through two possibilities. The first, Gadamer, conceives identity in the engagement to accept experience as science based on weakness recognition and participative learning. The second, Derrida, underlines the quest that permanently leaves out another meaning even though coincidence is not excluded.

The above mentioned contribution that Chardel (SD) presents clearly excludes personal passions (as much as possible) in the effort to produce meaning. It is indeed important to avoid such a trap based on passions that do not permit the right efforts to identify what is studied, and what it is researched with regard to identity. Both Gadamer and Derrida denote movements in the process of getting a meaning. When referring earlier in this section to the colonial times and the classification attributed to Africa and Africans, I noted that critics of the colonial times did not notice the same effort to get closer to the subject of study, or at least the colonial subjects. These are rather rash and *ex nihilo* conclusions that have led to monstrous aberrations often presented as the relevant epoch literature and philosophy, excluding Africans from any world contribution and presenting them as useless and irrelevant in many ways.

Such an attitude deserves a strong blame, but at the same time, it is a lesson for better approaches regarding studied phenomena, and especially human-related conclusions. In this vein, Bhabha (1983) reconsiders the “stereotypes and Colonial Discourse” and accuses the colonial discourse of its “fixity” that influenced racial difference as a big issue. On this note, “fixity is responsible for an ambivalence and for psychological strategies within stereotypical discourses in a subjectification process ignoring resistance—and a self-identification process from the colonized.

This all brings about definitions and presentations that completely exclude the subject itself. There was a deliberate effort to refuse a possible articulation around the stereotypes and preconceived ideas in the presence of the colonial resistance and self-determination; it was done by leaving everything to a power-based, difference-based significance. In that context, even the politics of aesthetics are left to the same unjustified judgment for the benefit of governmentality. Lemke (2000, September 21-24:3) with reference to Foucault considers it as “technologies of the self and technologies of domination, the constitution of the subject and the formation of the state.” Lemke (2013:38-40) insists on power relations regarding “soft” and “empowering” mechanisms that lead to self-determination differently. As a result, a “subject nation” is more inclined to perpetual obedience, and self-exclusion from power capacity. Bhabha (1983:24) points out “the subject of Foucault’s power/knowledge capacity through an unconscious pole of colonial discourse and the unproblematized subject, restricting the effectivity of both power and knowledge.” Indeed, the continued use of words such as primitive, savage, savagery, cannibalism ... aim at demonstrating how no substantial contribution could be expected from Africa. Through a tabula rasa process, there was a call to notice the vacuum and to transfer whatever possible from the North, whereas the locals could only be used in the same ways that horses, donkeys, and cows are used: as unconscious labor for plowing or other physically demanding work.

Contrary to the above approach that tends to point at “nothingness” concerning Africa and Africans, Kananoja (2012) goes in a different direction linking African identity with remembrance and thus bringing about the historical dimension playing a huge role in identity construction. Throughout his thesis entitled “Central African Identities and Religiosity in Colonial Minas Gerais,” he reveals identities strongly linked to Congo, Angola (Luanda), and Benguela, locations from where slaves were shipped to Minas Gerais in Brazil. Despite spending many years with different masters, learning other languages wherever possible, and going through the apprenticeship of new ways, in most of their late life testaments they insisted on their identity details referring to their distant pasts and their pride in their original homelands. In their life reviews, they identified themselves with reference to their distant past. They also had a big image of their departing ports as places that released them and their big personalities to Brazil and the world.

In order to find the right identity understanding concerning the topic of the present dissertation, I focus on scholars who constructed their argumentation from seemingly coherent elements. These argumentations match philosophical, anthropological, cultural, and political perspective opportunities of their time. They show the high risk of letting ideological invasion disturb boundaries otherwise already slipping as seen through different controversies pointed out earlier. To avoid blindly siding with any of these scholars, the conceptual identities (or better said, “Chokwe’s Shattered Identities”) will slowly decipher a combination of sources whose culmination will be the moving and shifting nature of the identity in question. To make the research coherent, we will not reinvent the wheel. Apart from the resources here above mentioned, a few more will be necessary to manage an original orientation. It is important to keep in mind V. Descombes (2013) who regards the identification process as an equation balancing around the equality sign. The concept of identity logically comprises the understanding of equality with something ( $X=Y$ ). It is, therefore, imperative to find regular items (or ideas) on each of the two sides of the = sign. This dissertation hopes to find strategies that will make it possible. However, the main strategy will be to develop strategies that let material culture speak through observable events and people.

In this vein, Strother (1998) represents an important source for understanding material culture. The book will certainly be extremely useful. It specifically refers to the Pende’s mask invention. Pende are among Chokwe’s most influential neighbors whose artifact beauty has many similarities with Chokwe’s, being formerly produced within similar ritual production contexts. This interest involves Strother’s focus on social life and Pende’s psychological motivations. Strother also raises questions regarding masquerades and the associated dancers, masks, costumes and their detailed contribution within their complementarity in the vision of the sacred<sup>4</sup> and the profane. While carving masks, the Pende also interweave their identities. Artifacts bear their creators’ intentions, language and understanding of the world, and open a communication space with the world. The possibilities this book offers bring a full contradiction to the earlier statements that looked down on the Africans on whom Todd (1916, Apr.:180) states “the savage makes no distinction between dream and walking life; both coalesce and both are equally valid.”

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<sup>4</sup> It is high time to clarify the fact that the concept as used all along this dissertation does not an absence of violence. The “sacred’ associated with rituals and religion may sometimes result in violence (Girard, 1977).

The superabundant sense of the primitive personality accused of spilling indistinctly on nature (Todd, 1916, Apr.:171-173) has, on the contrary, a coherent artistic development that stands for a community collaborative outcome (Strother, 1998). It is through the same collaborative that otherness and identity are viewed, for as Mácha and Pellón (2014:1) state: “Otherness structures social relations.... the perspective which foregrounds the Other at the expense of the Self... We are interested in how we can overcome cleavages which group identities produce in the body of humanity.” If the above refers to the Latin Americans, also once called primitive, it all the same sheds light on Otherness and Identities on a long spectrum that opposes the Self to other instances over many considerations (Kaputu, 2012).

As far as culture material and identity construction are concerned, S. L. Kasfir (1992, Apr:42) suggests a point of departure to question and discuss criteria that may be taken into account for art classification and for its evolution in time—far from fictive accounts built from the outside. It is also from such a perspective that it is possible to collect more details to find out how artifacts play a part in the social construction of Chokwe identities throughout time. In order to prove historical roots, evolution through colonial/postcolonial times, this work will provide the reader with signposts of significant referential points to understand how Chokwe art and cultural evolution may be tracked along the nineteenth and twentieth centuries while also developing community identities.

To make sure these shattered (and remade) Chokwe identities are completely covered and Chilima’s chances are maximized in the learning process, the historical perspectives through artifacts will need additional support about human bodies and community welfare through two important points: 1) an anthropological survey of Chokwe’s life with a particular stress on wellbeing, health, food, and 2) social organizations that reveal other material culture connections with identity constructions. The Chilima’s journey is extremely long and not only goes through initiation camps and rites of passage, it also includes daily social life, spontaneity, skills, and know-how reactions that reflect more than a community, an entire population.

Finally, the above given details demonstrate how difficult it is to attribute an identity to other human beings, falling into the traps pointed out earlier that are often consequences of ideological invasions and the lack of disciplinary barriers characteristic of the colonial times. However, passionate scholars and anthropologists who have an obvious envy to highlight their

contributions to world evolution will, as Benthall (2013:4) says, still be “good at locating objects of study which are not, from the standpoint, of common sense, obvious or important - turning them into gold.” This is in fact what this research hopes to achieve from a Chokwe material culture that has been generally neglected, changing it into a golden opportunity to learn about a rich culture. This research will reveal various strategies that made possible the construction of Chokwe different identities over time.

### **I.5 Disciplinarity, Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinarity, and Transdisciplinarity**

Even though the choice for this dissertation is interdisciplinarity, it is worth looking at it through an inclusive encompassment that maximizes interdisciplinary studies in a wider context to explain its place within three other closely related concepts, i.e., disciplinarity, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinarity. In fact, it may prove not worthy at all to understand interdisciplinarity when completely isolated from the others since the boundaries that separate them from each other are not absolutely clear. For many scholars they are seen as spaces for bridges and other communication channels described all along a very rich literature (Apgar, 2009; King, G. 2009; Max-Neef, M. 2005; Klein, J.T. 2004; Cassinari, D. et al. 2011; Basarab, N. 2010; UNESCO 1998).

Basarad (2010:19) looks at all four similar concepts through Reality that “induces a multidimensional and multi-referential structure of reality, signifying the coexistence between complex, plurality and open unity.” As a scholar worldwide known for his first-hour implications in interdisciplinary studies, Basarad (2010) points out the differences and similarities that are likely to be found in the study of these concepts and mainly in their application in educational fields. In the same vein, he informs his readers about the approximate age of transdisciplinarity through the work of a Swiss philosopher and psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980), who developed the concept of transdisciplinarity in the 1970’s about seven centuries after the concept disciplinarity was in circulation. Wherein Klein (2004b:504) also locates the origin of transdisciplinarity in Switzerland and over the same time, she particularly points out the outcome of the initial works that present the first set of generic terms, concepts and axioms, which permit attention allocation to disciplines for a better understanding of a problem. It is this unified perspective for problem solving, full of much hope for the future, that leads Basarad (2010:20) to

conclude, “Finally, we hope to see succeeding to the stage of interdisciplinary relations a superior stage... ‘transdisciplinary,’ i.e., ... not be limited to recognize the interaction and/or reciprocities between the specialized researches...” The disciplines’ interaction leads Klein (2004b:504) to use phrases such as “a common system of axioms,” or “postnormal science” that she combines in a strong statement leaving no doubt about the ambitions that all four concepts intend to cover, for “Both transdisciplinarity and postnormal science break free of reductionist and mechanistic assumptions about the way things are related and systems operative...” (Klein, 2004b:515). Treated differently with insights from different disciplines, problems are likely to get better and lasting solutions. Also, Klein (2004b:515) insists on knowledge production benefits when various stakeholders take charge of a complex situation and understand that “an older hierarchical and homogeneous mode is being replaced by a new form characterized by complexity, hybridity, non-linearity, reflexivity, heterogeneity, and transdisciplinarity through co-management, co-decentralization.”

Basarad (2010:20) concurs with the above and underlines the benefit of fluid disciplines’ boundaries that make it possible to fix different parameters within the same system. It is otherwise a “superior” status beyond disciplines or rather an explanation that he borrows from Jantsch (1972:108) “the coordination of all disciplines and interdisciplines of the teaching system and the system of instruction and the innovation on the basis of a general axiomatic approach.” Basarad’s consideration of transdisciplinarity documented above has much to do with breaking from the past disciplinarity problem-solving-based approach that carries serious limitations for placing much expectation and demand on one discipline. His project even goes far beyond the simple etymology that could have limitations if the concept transdisciplinarity had such a limited translation as “across” or “beyond” disciplines. In fact, like Morin (1977), Basarad (2010:20) comprehends transdisciplinarity first of all as a “kind of messenger of the freedom of thinking, a go-between disciplines,” for “it raises the question of not only problem solution but problem choice” (Klein, 2004b:518)—as it brings about a different consideration of sustainability, time duration, and satisfaction of parties concerned in finding a solution through contextualization and co-management.

Moving a step ahead, Klein (2004b:519) identifies two main interdisciplinarity characteristics when applied to research. He sees it as horizontal with the same level of cooperation toward other



disciplines during multi – and interdisciplinary research. It is vertical when inclusive transdisciplinarity ensures that disciplines' cooperation comes in at different levels for best practices in a region. Beside, epistemic analyses conducted through comprehensive language and commonly agreed rhetorical and hermeneutical skills enhance communication dynamics not only in workers' teams, but also in project programs (Klein, 2004b:520). These communication dynamics are essentially context-specific negotiations “that Klein, and Voskamp, link with the concept of communication action [otherwise also known as] Habermas' notion of ‘communicative rationality’” (Klein, 2004b:521).

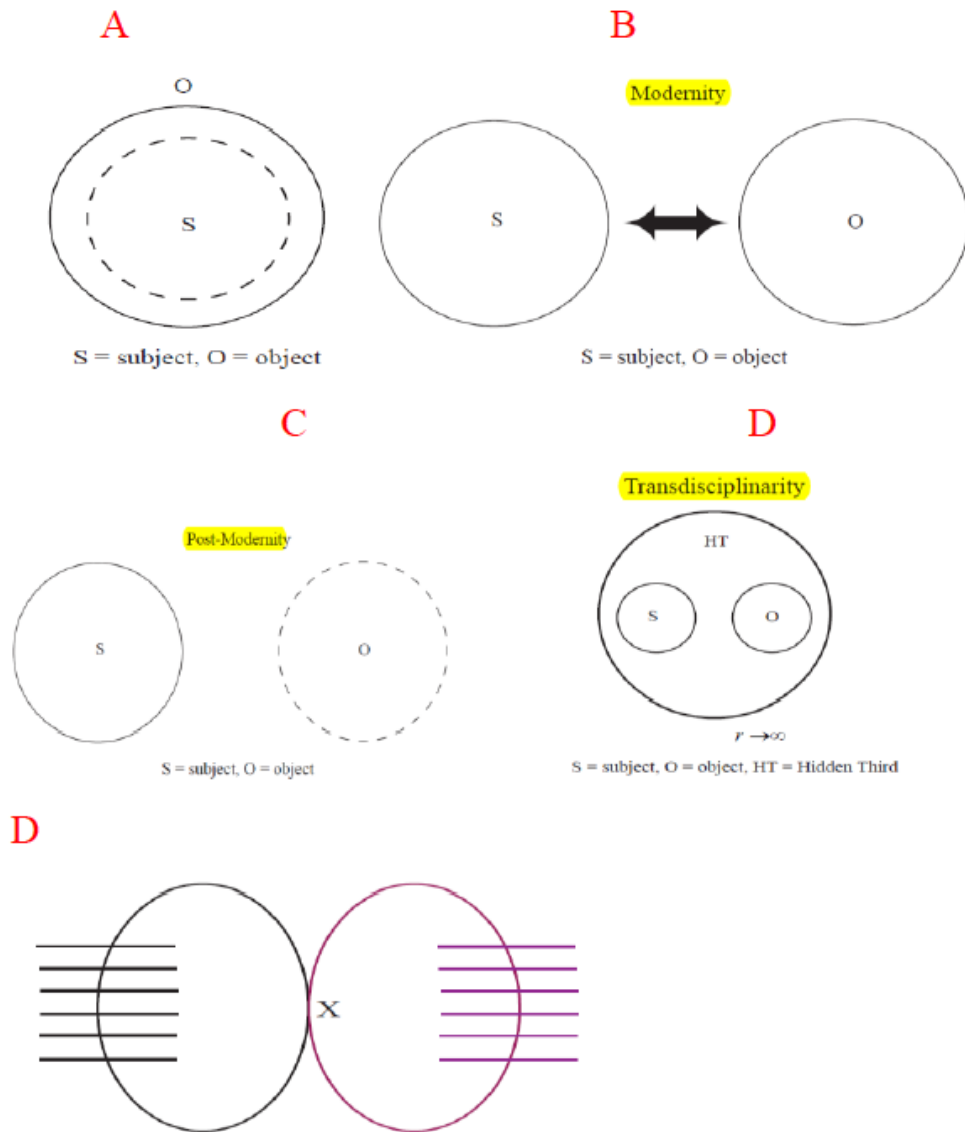
The dynamics that develop throughout disciplines (for getting solutions to different problems) duplicate somehow what modern and postmodern scholars deal with in subject treatment when the latter keeps moving and requires more and more attention and new perspectives (Docherty,1990). Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer concur with the way Descombes looks at the subject from a grammatical (or logical) perspective that locates the subject beyond disciplines. In the same vein, for Basarad (2010:22) “there is no opposition between disciplinarity (including multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity) and transdisciplinarity, but there is instead a fertile complementarity. In fact, there is no transdisciplinarity without disciplinarity.” It is under consideration for a given discipline and the possibilities it offers that other disciplines find resources to support in one way or another their specific capacities.

Basarad's additional contribution to the comprehension of transdisciplinarity can be found through other indicators of logical axiomatic relations displaying different levels of reality, and strongly making use of intuition. Such a consideration of reality views it as a continuous fluctuation of the experience that the consciousness captures. In that sense, it can never be identified with a “closed system” (Basarad, 2010:28-29). In this vein, his main consideration concerns the understanding of an included middle field found through the comprehension of different axioms, “(1) the axiom of identity: A is A; (2) the axiom of non-contradiction: A is not Non-A; (3) the axiom of the excluded middle: there exists no third T [“T” from “third”] which is at the same time A and Non-A (Basarad, 2010:29). Finally, Basarad (2010:30-31) sends the reader to the principles his argumentation embodies. This logic displays the coherence on which transdisciplinarity intends to work in borrowing its central discourse from quantum mechanics. It shows the main concept based on “yes” and “no” quantum states, even though the included

middle “does not abolish the logic of the excluded middle: it only constraints its sphere of validity. The rationale of the excluded middle is certainly valid for relatively simple situations provided “There is certainly coherence among different levels of Reality.”” Scholars may discuss the compression of concepts here related to Reality, such as levels or zones that Basarad (1996:1998; 2000) elaborates on with details regarding horizontal and vertical complexities. Basarad (2010:31) looks at complexity as a modern scholarly concept that comes along an ancient “principle of universal independence” open to interaction. With V. Descombes (2013), Basarad (1996; 2010) and (Bonnewitz, 2002) concur with the idea of a dynamic subject building a new spirituality based on communion with the cosmos through “a new spirituality, conciliating technoscience and wisdom found in the unity and diversity that transdisciplinarity stands for and advocates through transcultural and transreligious attitudes (Basarad, 2010:32). Also, like Bonnewitz (2002), Basarad (2010:32) once again makes use of the same concepts that are likely to fill the same virtual definitions of “Homo economicus” and “Homo religious” The first one finds its place in the long history of the world whereas the second is “sui transcendentalism and establishes a new pattern of relations linking the Object to the Subject and vice versa especially transdisciplinarity” (Basarad, 2010:33).

Finally, Basarad (2010) draws his reader’s attention to the relationships of Subject and Object and vice versa in Post-Modernity. These relationships display changes from the distant past of Pre-Modernity and Modernity concerning Reality. To help the reader understand Basarad’s logic, he offers the following drawings that we will explain.

*Figure 6 Modernity, Post-Modernity, Transciplinarity*



**Figure 1. Transdisciplinary Reality.**

Source: Basard, 2010: 33

From the above images, we can understand how Subject and Object (identity distribution) are being treated throughout times. In Pre-Modernity (drawing A), the Subject was immersed in the Object. Basarad illustrates the case of all skills and knowledge attributed to the divine will or

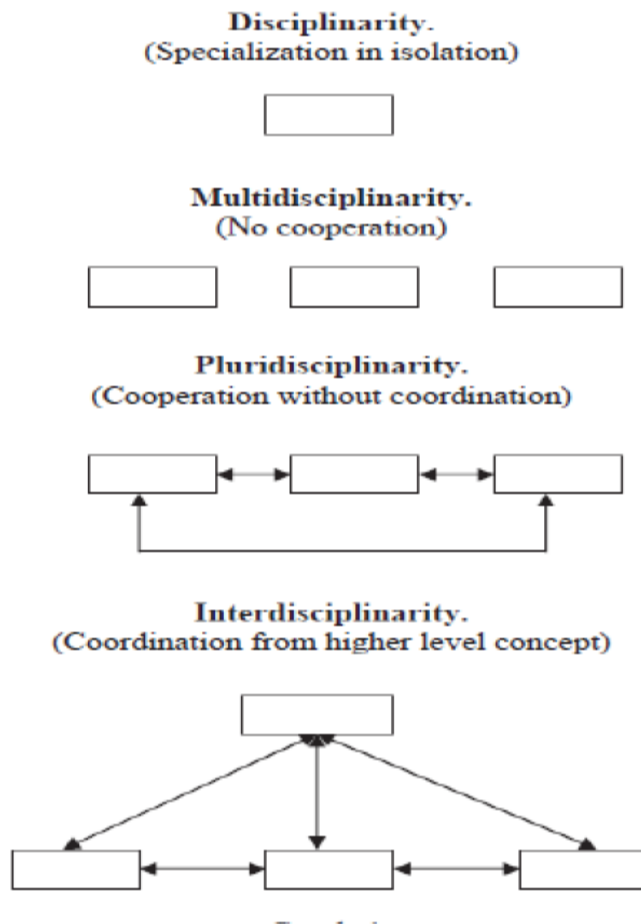
otherwise to a magical world whenever too difficult to find reasons and acceptable explanations about different events, thus attributed to some kind of magic. In Modern times (drawing B), Basarad shows how there is a strong separation between Subject and Object. Epistemology separates Subject from Object in such a way to develop modern science, and “the Object was just there, in order to be known, deciphered, dominated, and transformed” (Basarad, 2010:33). In Post-Modernity (C), Basarad sees another change around the concept “social construction.” The latter takes the presentation (B) about Modernity that locates the Object outside of the Subject, and therefore looks more like its emanation. In fact, it is not there but is rather constructed there. Like in Modernity, “the Subject and the Object” are separated but “are unified by their immersion in the Hidden Third, whose ray of action is infinite” (Basarad, 2010:34). Finally, the last chart shows how Transdisciplinarity Reality permits different levels for both the Object and the Subject through the Hidden Third, thus getting to what is defined as Transdisciplinary Reality or Trans-Reality (Basarad, 2010:34).

McGregor (2004, May) insists on the bridges that are likely to link different disciplines and solve generational problems as multidisciplinary, while interdisciplinary approaches offer many possibilities to address various issues. In fact, McGregor (2004, May) places disciplines within a growing spectrum line including monodisciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, all sharing identities and revealing specificities. The monodisciplinary approach uses one discipline to solve a problem through paradigms, patterns, and methodologies specifically believed adapted to the study. However, many scholars have noticed that monodisciplinary cannot easily deal with a complex situation requiring much attention for specific features that are characteristic of the raised questions. The latter kind of problems are preferably treated through multidisciplinary or interdisciplinarity with a strong connection to the root discipline, which sees disciplines mingling to solve a problem while each maintains its distinctiveness (Colins, 2002). For McGregor (2004, May), transdisciplinarity not only moves across or between, but it also goes outside disciplines to understand the world in all of its complexities.

McGregor (2004, May), Max-Neet (2005), Basarad (2010) concur in the recognition of integration efforts: different approaches permit them to get to knowledge through an intellectual outer space displaying concepts, metaphors, and patterns for a better understanding of problems.

The mentioned authors have found out with McGregor (2004, May) a “Nourishing Fertile Middle Ground Between Disciplines” that they also call middle ground or joint space, a virtual space that permits a couple of principles uniting knowledge, complexity, emergence, and multiple realities for a better understanding of the world. From opposing the sacred and the profane, Man-God like other things, McGregor suggests “we would move from viewing things in dualities to viewing things in open unity, more complexly.”

Max-Neef (2005) all the same seems to bring into the debate many more details that attempt to clarify matters:



*Figure 7 Disciplinarity, Multidisciplinarity, Pluridisciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity*

Source: Max-Neef, 2005

The above attempts have introduced our readers to the exercise that will be ours throughout the present research. In order to get to the core of Chokwe identities, we will not use a single tool but many that will help us get closer to the realities Chokwe have undergone for centuries and have used to construct their identities. Even though much will have to do with the human body, it goes without saying that beyond the body, as such, there is a world vision, and different capacities to cooperate with the world. It is also in this scope that Chokwe anthropological and cultural fact will be seen within a global dimension dynamic that highlights exchanges through societies without necessarily any fictional and ideological hierarchy (Appadurai, 2013; 1996; Piot, C. 1999; Ferguson, J. 2006; Geschier, P. 1997). This exchange dynamic leads us to perceive and understand how Chokwe identities distinguish themselves and share a couple of patterns with other parts of the world, either through cultural facts of the distant past, or through new ones born in personal or community meetings—cultural facts having their own dynamic permitting them to move in all directions without any preconceived idea.

### **I.6 Material Culture and Gendered Cosmo-Polity**

When using a title like the one above with reference to the Chokwe, the first idea that comes to the mind refers to what some prestigious scholars depict about this people. J. Vansina (1999; 1990), for instance, leads the reader or the researcher to the belief that material culture includes only what is daily observed around people. Vansina finds art in everything, farming tools, fighting weapons, kitchen utensils, housing utilities, architectures, ritual fabrics... everything is seen with an artistic dimension with a specific dream about female images whose figurines are omnipresent. In this vein, everything mentioned here could be a source of different studies of material culture. However, despite Vansina's deep studies of the region and particularly his knowledge of the Lunda and the Chokwe, we do not intend to follow his exclusive attention reserved to understanding material culture. It is our intention to add some considerations from other scholars who have gone a couple of steps ahead by linking matter to culture.

Arnoldi (1966; 1988; 1995) resembles Vansina in some ways. However, he puts stress on technology and its innovative dimensions as it participates in the making of culture. The more technology is innovated, the more culture is likely to represent material in more and more sophisticated ways. Material culture is thus moving ahead with a kind of magic that changes

things, shows progress and leaves archeological traces. From ceramics to walking sticks, hoes to clothes, masks to puppets, Arnoldi believes that material culture can assist much in the reconstruction of people's identities throughout time, while pointing to their aspirations, motivations, disappointments, and joys, as they manage their society in groups of influence and power.

It is in this vein that Oyeniya (2015) looks at material culture and its impact on human beings with the eloquent example of the Nigerian Yoruba. Through the body dressing of the Yoruba, it is possible to reconstruct the regional history that has engulfed several historical trends. Local clothing traditions have left spaces for Islamic, Christian, modern, and postmodern influences (Docherty, 1990). Most people move from one style to another as they feel free to adjust their clothes. At the same time, through their dressing they are recognized as important to the social hierarchy. Thus, material culture becomes part of society, organizes it in different classes and reflects the powers of given groups. The most powerful are likely to put on most sophisticated clothes, or multilayered dresses as is the case in the Yorubaland today.

Going further, Woodward (2007) includes three important concepts from sociology and anthropology in his discourse (Nadel, 1951). Well-observed, material culture offers spaces to distinction, narratives, and interdisciplinarity. Like P. Bourdieu (1984), Woodward sees distinction at the center of social construction, since individuals and groups of people do their best to be different from others, attract attention, and construct specific identities. Material culture plays a significant role in that work, with individuals accessing different materials to figure out social classes, and construct dynamics that may move from one generation to another. These social groups in construction may also (if not mainly) concern those who have decided to take leading roles as local, community, space, nation leaders. The most important dynamic is how the material that builds up material culture becomes the center of huge business that includes local and global connections. It is not surprising therefore that, from Zambezi in Zambia, artifacts establish their communication spaces with the world, thus going global (Khondker, 2004).

A final look at material culture touches upon more perspectives in addition to the ones mentioned here above. Hicks (2010) presents a book in an encyclopedic form that attempts to pay attention to different aspects of material culture and their impact on human communication,

growth, and social construction. Material culture focuses its attention on material agency, i.e., it undertakes the dimension of communication and becomes the thing that communicates what is thought, heard, believed, felt, and intended. Thus, magical things, fetishes and computers can share spaces with ecology, cultures, architecture, and archeology, culinary art... all could still be connected through music and songs, also as material culture (Geertz, 1966; 1977). With this consideration, music and songs be a part of material culture and its historical evolution.

In our approach to material culture, this dissertation will consider available material to help understand how the Chokwe have constructed their identities across time. This understanding of material culture can also lead to seeing how the Chokwe use art agency, or rather how artifacts stand for a metaphor and for extensions that play the agency role of bodies (Burtler, 1993). Finally, material culture can be an excellent pretext to penetrate a world that would otherwise stay unknown despite the Chokwe's long time traditions and initiation secrets.

The question of gender is often raised all around the world. Men and women share the same spaces and, in one way or another, decide about their respective participation in social events, and especially households' survival. Historically, social pressure has often pushed in men in directions as leaders, breadwinners, and builders whose images are promoted through oral traditions, religious rituals and customs. They all contribute to the construction of social patterns that characterize various societies, and contribute to differentiate them around the world.

Several studies involve questions around feminism, especially for claiming more rights for women. Africa has also joined other continents in such preoccupations that are well founded. Mikell (1997), for instance, goes into details about how women's survival undergoes social Sub-Saharan politics that often marginalize them despite their significant contribution to household progress and community wellbeing. Quite often, they do not have access to the rights that would permit them to choose a specific kind of sexuality, or use their female body in one way or another, as patriarchy determines socially acceptable ways in many places. Heterosexuality, pronatality, bread, butter, and power often seem to be the only factors in gendered balance.

On the same topic, Verna (2001) focuses on Eastern Africa, precisely in Kenya. Women's lives are inserted into a complexity and diversity that do not depend much on them. Social life has permanent requests that women are the only ones to fill despite an absolute absence of



recognition and gratitude from their partners and the entire society as such. Social constraints are aggravated by a stressful economic environment. When they think to have opportunities to offer their contribution, nature itself seems to contradict them. Soil degradation, climate change, and land conflicts condemn them to poverty, and to sticking to the same socio-economic conditions.

Fortunately, opportunities come in other different ways and more and more African women are quick to take them, thus changing their conditions and the general community discourses regarding women. In this vein, Sylvanus (2016) presents different narratives that force admiration for Togolese women. From their expertise in trading clothes, especially locally produced clothes, they slowly engage in global transactions. Also, they engage in cross-cultural aesthetics, ready to exploit not only their traditions, but also to add new features gleaned from other people they meet. They are, thus, able to take their destiny into their hands, and engage in postcoloniality as new economic socio-cultural entrepreneurs. This pattern inspired us to carefully look at Chokwe women, with particular attention to activities developed in Zambezi, the Northwestern Zambian province. It is through dynamic local and global connections that new aspects of cosmo-polity develop. These women are able, without necessarily getting into open hostilities, to successfully and slowly bring changes to their local social environment. They contribute by leading their society to accept social novelties, and construct new communication spaces.

### **I.7 Dissertation Objectives**

The objectives of this dissertation may be subdivided into two significant strands concerning a general objective and specific purpose. The overall goal aims at finding local broad definitions and comprehensions of Chokwe identities through their material culture, human body management, and cultural dissemination, as the body stands for the contextualized and multipurpose agency. The specific objectives will determine the Chokwe body (male and female) in its multiple physical, social and virtual facets as related to social, philosophical, anthropological, mythical, and identity construction--reported through different indicators from cultural to socialization processes.

These specific objectives coherently progress from referencing the human body as the main identity agency through socio-linguistic identifications and empowerment, and move through historical background designs and social fabrics to anthropological comprehensible sets—and finally through rituals, art, music, health care, social connectivity, and individualized cultural descriptions. Identities and their different constructions have shown up as a culmination of several activities, including psychological growth, taboo, as well as sanctioned behaviors, polity construction, processes of individuation, capacity expressions, all collected from within and without the first community.

With the support of the interdisciplinary perspective, Chokwe identities are likely to be observed from different approaches and through various social contributions. Both general and specific objectives are likely to reveal details on Chokwe identities but to definitely offer a contribution in cultural studies, cultural facts shaping the world through multidimensional dynamic spaces (Appadurai, 2013). In the same vein, this dissertation will reveal how the once known as “primitive” cultural manifestations compete for spaces today with once known advanced and privileged cultural facts. Under globalization, cultures exchange and communicate at an exponential speed and in all directions with advantages (Geertz, 1966; 1977). Quick communication, transportation, displacements, and different media have become susceptible of curiosity and study. Twenty-first-century scholars try to get a possible alternative from any other culture that may offer another option besides the boring situation that suggested a top down representation of culture.

### **I.8 Hypotheses and research questions**

In a dissertation, the concept hypothesis often sends us back to the main research question presented at the outset of the paper. Dépelteau (2013:162) considers the hypothesis as a preliminary answer to the research question. It is submitted at the beginning of the dissertation. It is often also an outcome of a hypotheticodeductive process from a chosen theory. However, it is simply defined in easy terms, for hypotheses may have to do with the field of research and the kind of approach selected for the study. Thus, the same Dépelteau (2013:162) mentions other sources like Fortin (1996), Deshaies (1992), and Gauthier (1990) whose contribution to the understanding of hypothesis merges various dimensions including a formal statement predicting expected relations among the different variables (Fortin, 1996:123). It is also about a logical

style that moves from a proposal needing to be confirmed or rejected (Deshaies, 1992:124). Dépelteau (2013) agrees with Gauthier (1990:125) with the proposal of a link between the particular concept likely to be proved true or wrong. That is why Dépelteau (2013:163) gets assistance from two more scholars, Mace (1988:126) and Grawitz (1990:127). With the first one, he presents the concept hypothesis as an anticipated response that a researcher gives to his research question: a possible outcome of the discussion the entire research. The second explains in a very simple way that the concept hypothesis is a proposed response to the raised questions clarifying different steps of the long research process.

From the above, it is evident that hypotheses should be considered as tentative explanations including experiments and experimental tests when the research is dealing with quantifiable matters. It is also in this scope that the hypothesis would stand for a conjectural statement about two or more variables. However, this dissertation has from the very beginning shown its interest in focusing seriously on cultural facts about the Chokwe. It is evident that the best process to follow should be based on observations that can be essentially combined into two different ways. From a deductive process, observation is expected to find out patterns that permit clear formulation of hypotheses, and end with a clear presentation of a theory of the main roles cultural facts play in the area under study. In the same vein, an inductive process is possible that consists of consideration of several cultural facts in their production and social insertion deeply observed, submitted to criticism, discussed with locals and with experts, ultimately leading to the presentation of a theory. The theory comes at a later stage in the research process and reflects in one way or another features presented in the hypothesis. The latter will permit observation that will, in turn, lead to the confirmation or not of the chosen theory. It is understood that the above cannot necessarily exclude each other. With the advantage of interdisciplinarity, the hypothesis will take into account the fact that both concepts, cultural and acultural facts, share the same spaces. They are both participating in the cases that this dissertation intends to study. Consequently, cultural facts construct identities of a dynamic process where finding and understanding open up the meeting space for getting closer to other people's culture, indeed to "find culture for understanding others" (Gershon, 2008, Dec.:417). Furthermore, culture is not only used to categorize people but rather to understand them and better know how the opposition (cultural versus acultural) works within the Chokwe society as Gershon (2008, Dec.:417) proposes,

When people in the modern institutions use culture as a category to classify some spaces, people, and practices they simultaneously construct the spaces, people, and practices of the institution itself as acultural. The cultural and the acultural are, thus, mutually constituted and mutually constitutive, and both are implicated together in the workings of institutional power. This is what we mean when we write of “Culture in spaces of no culture.”

The above means that both the hypothesis and the research question of this dissertation will slowly bring our reader to comprehend how cultural facts and the ones classifiable as acultural have different ways in which they contribute to the construction of Chokwe identities within a dynamic society.

From reading Piot (1999), Ferguson (2006), Appadurai (1996; 2013), J. Comaroff, Camaroff, J.L. (2004;1991; 1992; 1999; 2012), it is evident that anthropological research projects are engaged in new dynamics that are clearly separate from traditional ethnological studies, which in many cases try to justify superiority, on the one side, and explain inferiority on the other. Nowadays, anthropologists are more concerned with cultural dynamics that raise scholars’ curiosity as the entire world is completely in motion; every part of the world seems to interest the entire globe; and data move quickly in all directions. The Chokwe people and their traditions are thus not excluded from the world; they participate in their own way in global exchanges through global spaces from home, or glocal spaces (Mendis, 2007). The readings here above pointed out should also raise our readers’ curiosity insofar as they do not insist on material, but rather on cultural exchanges. Thus, cultural facts become more and more important as they determine meaningful exchanges that lead the twenty-first century in its quick connections all around the world.

With that detail in mind, it becomes necessary to look at the way the hypotheses of this research related to identity/identities should be tackled. As pointed out in the above presentations, there should be many choices for treating cultural facts and material culture. One of the choices could be to just describe them as they are in their natural environment. However, such a description would not be of much help for the goals assigned to this study. The best way out is to move from examples that have dug deeper into new directions via culture at the center of human connections/experiences and as the real innovator of cultural dynamics around the world. Also, a detour through South Africa may be necessary to introduce the questions that are at the center

of this study. The detour is likely to indicate that from apparently anodyne daily cultural facts, identities are being weaved at local levels, and can extend in different ways to other parts of the world.

Bangstad (2012), in a text with a particularly strong title “‘Anthropologists are Talking’: Anthropology and Post-Apartheid South Africa,” interviews John L. and Jean Comaroff. Both anthropologists give a panoramic view of South Africa in its motion from the apartheid to the post-apartheid eras with details that are likely to inspire the most important questions of this study. In a conversation focusing on South African apartheid, the anthropologists particularly note how identities are constructed, deconstructed, reconstructed, and invented in light of stakeholders’ capitalist interests of the moment. Also, an identity that was given to ethnic groups located on given lands (or islands) in the world, and recognized through cultural habits, may be present in new patterns. New indicators show how simple daily activities from small groups working together can be like the conservative Jews displaying a difference between men and women in Cape Town. Such activities influence local, quickly growing religious congregations born from a combination of religious features. Men once suffered internally but never openly condemned apartheid as such and wanted to avoid the government’s violent and always disproportionate reactions against those attempting to criticize the government. These violent government reactions kept men far away from their families whenever they were arrested. Accused as communists, they were jailed in severe conditions. Some men were assassinated; others disappeared without leaving any visible sign at all.

On the contrary, white women who spent most of their time with Black African women, and thus knew about apartheid suffering, often pushed for change. They also wanted their husbands to adopt given behaviors. Small population categories were thus built around interests with the same common denominators on the one side, and the weak ones on the other, without any common interest as such. What Anderson (1991) refers to as imagined communities slowly took shape. Significant gaps could also be visible as far as wealth is concerned. With the end of apartheid, ethnic affiliation (ethno-genesis) was thus reconstructed in different ways as the postcolonial powers weighed in to modify identity construction and ethnic affiliation. Moving from one group to another for reasons of economic capital (or for education, religious/faith,

witchcraft) also counted as capital in general fetishist beliefs, for its believed empowering capacity.

In the same vein, J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. eds (1997) and John L. and Jean Comaroff (2009) already pointed out how ethnicity is at the same time one thing and many others as cultural identity evolves through consumption and self-construction. More and more newspapers mention new entrepreneurs, previously unknown, such as the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA) that was involved in business as a specific “ethnic group.” Similarly, here and there, local leaders show up in the postcolonial era and take things into their hands in an attempt to bring experiences to their countrymen, although sometimes it all changes so quickly through new paradigms linked either to fortune or to their wish to stick to what they believe to be appropriate to their time.

The above paragraphs summarize research results conducted in South Africa (and in other countries). These results have raised my curiosity not only about what is still happening in South Africa, or the long experience pointed out about Togo, but also about the Chokwe people in the Southeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Northeastern Angola, and Northwestern Zambia. Described as a strong group of warriors, Vellut (2006) details how they were finally forced to migrate to new territories to decrease their power and make sure the colonial powers were safe. The colonial powers no longer had to face them as one big powerful group.

The hypothesis of this dissertation can be summarized in a simple way under the form of a question regarding how the Chokwe cultural material offers the possibility to study Chokwe identities over many years. However, after a closer look at the fields that the question addresses, we can say it is a summary of a number of preoccupations permitted to cover several details. As a matter of fact, the above question can translate into a series of issues that tackle specific interests regarding different aspects of Chokwe identities developed over the years, ones still facing challenges related to shared local and global spaces. Otherwise, the main research question can be viewed in these following twenty sub-questions:

1. Is there a coherent trajectory to describe Chokwe identity evolution from the colonial times?
2. Is traditional Chokwe leadership (royal leadership) still relevant?

3. What reference frames can make the study of Chokwe identities through time more salient?
4. Are there ethnicities that have been constructed along these years?
5. Are Chokwe satisfied with their participation in their respective country's national politics?
6. Are Chokwe marginalized from national politics?
7. How is globalization affecting Chokwe lands and influencing Chokwe identities and ethnicities?
8. How have traditional Chokwe characteristics still survived?
9. Is there a way of predicting Chokwe's identities, ethnicities, and globalization relationships in the long term?
10. What explains the attention paid to Chokwe artifacts and longtime rituals?
11. Have oral traditions also adapted to modernity, postmodernity, and globalization?
12. What explains the persistence of traditional medical practices in both urban and rural Chokwe milieus?
13. How has gender evolved in the time studied?
14. Are women still playing important roles in social construction?
15. How has governance changed in time?
16. How do religious groups participate in postcolonial changes among Chokwe?
17. How has traditional power (chieftaincy) moved from the colonial times to today?
18. How has witchcraft moved from the past to today?
19. How does the Chokwe human body (male and female) participate in social constructions?
20. Are traditional rituals still important in the vision of a new society?

Admittedly, although together they concern the state of Chokwe culture today, each of these questions deserves a thesis. What we target is the interrelatedness of these questions, through which each will be illustrated, so that we can reconstruct what we will call the cultural “backbone” of identity processes in this very loosely interconnected society. It is our hope that throughout this dissertation, the different research strategies deployed will find a linking thread to bring clear answers to the research questions and the hypothesis developed under the above

questions. They will also build a backbone that organizes the dissertation into a specific writing process covering the needed number of chapters to be documented while taking into account different research aspects.

It is important to emphasize that the above questions will not be addressed separately one by one. They are rather expected to lead to a comprehensive approach that aims at the production of a general discourse about the Chokwe identities. They will permit a coherent development of ideas within the dissertation.

However, among the sources to be addressed for this research, there is a one that needs to be systematically addressed to collect data, compare the results and find out the general orientation the Chokwe identities have developed over the years. Samples of the Chokwe in the countries that the research addresses (Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia) will answer questions that will help us see if the general orientation that this work takes actually reflects what the people know and have been going through for many years.

Addressing samples of the Chokwe through these three countries responds to a particularity that reinforces the anthropological aspirations of the methods of much subjective work. In order to stress the personal work capacity and describe things in their right order and in order to cover as many different aspects that the research question and hypothesis address, the selected population provides a contribution that will essentially form the last two chapters of the dissertation. The selected population's contribution comes from the set of questions found in the annexes.

### **I.9 Research Strategies: Bricolage and Interdisciplinarity, and limits of the Study**

To conduct this research and reach results reflecting its ambitions, the third chapter entitled "Methodology" explains the general lines that are followed from the very beginning. We invite our readers to quench their thirst there. However, at this level, let us present how the methodological chapter is strategic, and give a few words on the strategies that will be developed.

The starting point of everything should be seen through Grounded Theory. It stands as the angular stone from which everything else grows in an unpredicted way. That is why the concept



bricolage seems the most appropriate. The currently popular “assemblage” belongs to the same conceptual family. Sanusi (2012:125-126) considers bricolage as a technique that shares space with structuralism, itself an old technique with sources in Ferdinand de Saussure’s quest for the meaning, specifically taking advantage of the capacity of language to be split in pieces that offer meaningful presentations. Genette (1982:4-5) adds much consideration of the idea of splitting and connecting. She pursues it in insisting on the critic’s “*bricoleur and bricolage*” capacity. With this empowerment, the reader, critic, researcher can give a specific configuration to a text (a narrative) as s/he is moving forward in the quest toward meaning building, the main object of the research and the dissertation. Bricolage, understood as a research tool here above pointed out, will enable us to play the “bricoleur” role in gathering together details – like in mask costume knotting – that, when put together, reveal sense and meaning that other scholars might not have given to this field of research. In using the word “bricolage,” we intend to use subjectivity as the most important freedom for leading us into qualitative research and paying attention to every single detail that many scholars may have neglected. It will be an opportunity to design and present an original research.

However, to stick to a line of progress around the main quest object, i.e., a quick repertory and understanding of the Chokwe identity constructions perceived from material culture all along time, there is a need to undertake an additional step. Apart from the concepts here above pointed out – bricolage, bricoleur, structuralism, qualitative versus quantitative – another useful one, the holistic approach, can permanently remain in the background to accompany every activity planned in the design construction. In this vein, Esfeld (2004) and Verchick (2003) agree in their consideration of holism as a possibility to consider the analyzed material from a survey-like perspective, which, in turn, permits us to pinpoint everything in the construction of the final discursive narrative. This discourse will be clear, will, above all, reflect the assigned quest of purposes as described in the research objectives. Holism as a general bricolage coverage, here applied, will permit us to collect useful and understandable material from around material culture traditions, and it will bring much more light to the understanding of the main research question, keeping its main focused field clearly expressed without possible confusion from other fields. It is therefore first and above all an assessment that means carefully collecting material for the culmination of the defense of the hypothesis, if confirmed.

Also, from the beginning of this dissertation, “bricolage” is presented and meant to be understood from its French origin as a child-like work during in which different pieces are put together to create something useful and personal, which may be or may not be repeated. In fact, many original objects are produced in this way, a unique example. Quite often, a work of bricolage is not repeated, for the creativity is based on sudden inspiration and may disappear in the same way it came. Even though the various steps followed are explained, another application might lead to another final product in the world of art. As for identity, V. Descombes (2013), in the same conditions, would rather look at the impossibility for the same water to run under the same bridge. It goes its own artistic way, bricolage.

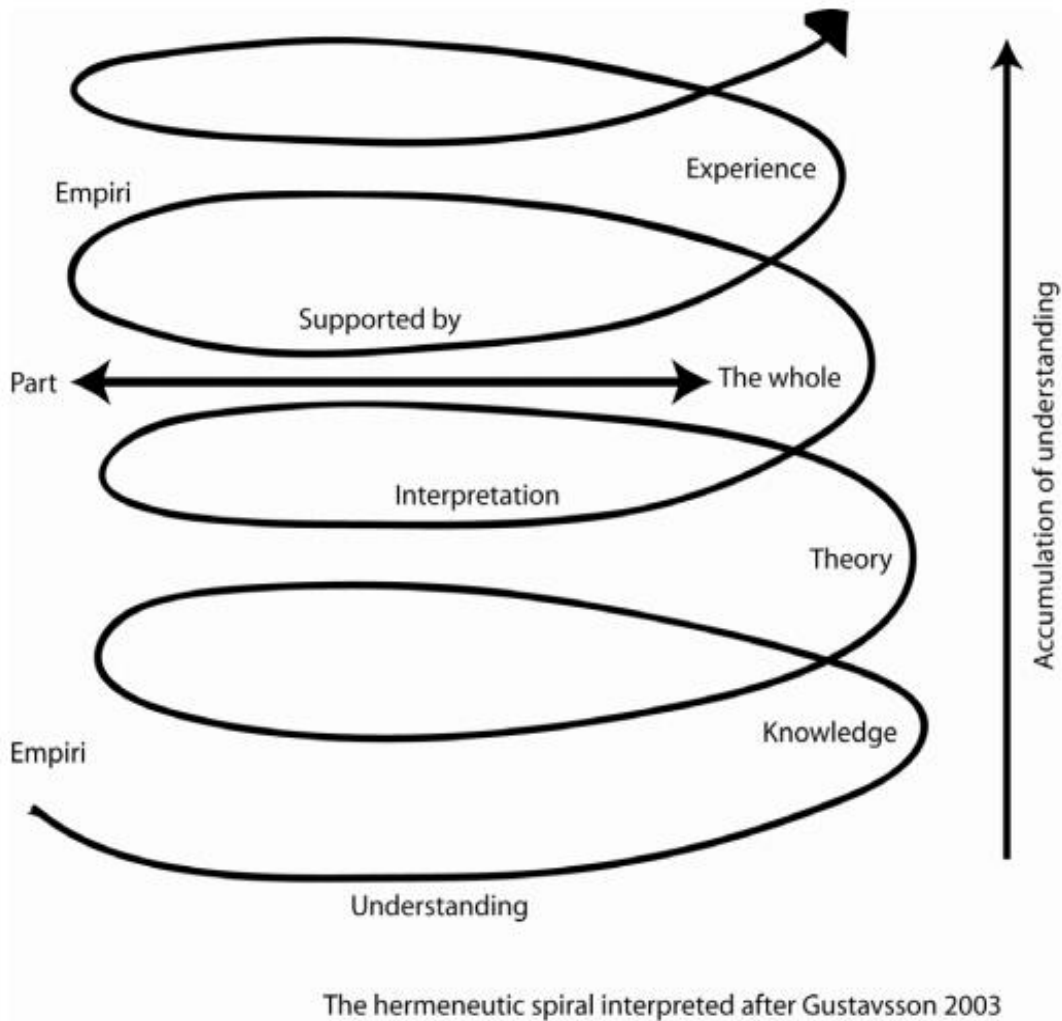
It is however important that our readers understand that despite its simple presentation, bricolage is largely used and may be attributed different meanings depending on the contexts chosen, and the work direction planned. As for us, faithful to material culture literature and its different trends, we went to look for the possibility of using it as a coverage strategy. The sources here above mentioned have confirmed our wish and reinforced our capacity to use “bricolage” not only as a concept that permits us to understand African artists’ work, but also as a technique that makes possible the understanding of all sources, and selecting from them the most needed detail. Fieldwork discussion groups, one-on-one meetings, written works: all bring about the necessary sources for the construction of a narrative, uniting pieces genuinely collected and constructed for the best possible design. The biggest interest in this technique leads us to select a coherent and meaningful narrative. The construction of the narrative also aims at bringing readers clarification about historical and material facts’ construction, along with participation in identity preservation, change, continuity and discontinuity in time.

In fact, the concept of bricolage, even though presented in a simple way, still needs much attention from our reader for a few reasons. Herein, we go to Levi-Strauss’ early research and particularly to Levi-Strauss (1966) to note how this French scholar of anthropology used the concept bricolage with reference to pre-scientific research. However, the word pre-scientific should not distract readers because most of the studies were based on an inductive process. It would lead the research from the knowledge of parts to the understanding of the whole. The researcher facing chaos had to find a way out in order to get meaning from his entire work or risk a permanent chaos. In this work, Levi-Strauss had to find a line that marked a continuity

from a point of departure, and had to fill in any discontinuity in order to get a continuum in the structure. Wiseman (2007:102) depicts the work the mind must go through in order to get a coherent meaning, “The whole visible universe is but a store-house of images and signs to which the imagination will give a relative place and value; it is a sort of pasture which the imagination must digest and transform.” The artist is a creator. Thanks to his imagination, he is called to a specific creativity that finds meaning in things that would otherwise stay unnoticed or be labeled as meaningless (Millis, 1959). His mind allows for this insight and continuity and avoids chaos that would lead to confusion.

Wangelin (2007, June) continues the ideas presented in the above paragraph with a specific attention paid to hermeneutics. To get a meaning it has to be found and constructed in such a way that the audience can understand and value the work of art. The artist, therefore, has the duty to fill in chaos in a meaningful way in pieces or parts of the entire work. The author uses a chart to illustrate how the operation goes. Wangelin (2007, June:4) depicts the operation that the mind performs as it goes from parts to the whole, and the necessary experience to understand other similar phenomena. The following chart is about that meaning creation complex process:

*Figure 8 Meaning creation complex process*



Source: Wangelin, 2007:4

The mind is actively moving from the field of the visible that may have an empirical experience toward the knowledge stored in the invisible unknown that the chaos affects at a high level.

The combination of the presentations of bricolage that the scholars mentioned here make, finally culminates in Jaaware (2001:259). He combines both bricolage and bricoleur as the actor performs different actions. Also, he opens the readers' attention to the operations involved in bricolage and points out that they make it look simple, but these simplified ways of approaching

operations may be very complex. In reducing them to a slow evolution from one point to the next, a kind of magic is produced. The design takes on a sense of its own and the operator gives the operation a shared meaning. The bricoleur's actions should be perceived as the process of construction that leads to meaning, and to existence as such. This kind of operation applies similarly to attaining meaning, but to also finding the object of meaning itself (Mudimbe, 1993). The research that results is indeed a kind of archival and archeological work that brings to the surface material from the bricolage operation for the construction of meaning, and general direction given to the work. Also, Jaaware (2001:468, 222, 466) provides us with three quotations that explain how bricolage works,

Page 468 - The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before.

Page 222 - The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are Known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar," to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged.

Page 66 - And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

The writer, like the artist, has a creativity duty. The writer has to make sure that the character fits in a realistic world where space shared with other characters makes the world possible. Through bricolage, the writer manages to find harmony in that world. Finally, the world in which characters intermingle leads readers to understand a social environment and its many questions. The artist chooses a line that makes things unfamiliar with forms often unknown that are under a veil of mystery. It is with aesthetic techniques that the critic discovers different parts of a piece of art, understands it and eventually learns rules that may be communicated to learners to understand artifacts following the same philosophy. They could also learn how to become artists. In this vein, the last quotation gives an almost divine role to the artist. S/he is the one who, through bricolage, makes reality into what the public sees and appreciates from the very names that every item is given. The artist, and to many extents the researcher or the critic, becomes that

co-creator whose works, through bricolage, give sense understood as meaning and direction to the object researched. Thus, as we consider Chokwe/African bricolage, the concept of bricolage becomes quite important, as it remains at the center of the activities undertaken for this research.

Before ending this section, it is important we, once again, repeat this study looks into the cultural identity construction of the Chokwe from their own perspectives. As both insider and outsider to the topic of this research (and to the studied culture), the dissertation will explain how different interactions and research strategies serve to avoid ambiguous situations but clarify various details. The main field of this research is in humanities with a postcolonial perspective anchored on Derrida, Foucault, Descombes whose approaches permit a necessary separation of the subject and the object in an exploratory study that goes through interdisciplinary methodology. Their common ground combines as much as possible humanity and scientific sources. Starting with a personal experience, the present research will check how the first institutions vaguely heard about in early age still find their veracity, presence, use, and expansion among the Chokwe from different visited places. Also, every chapter will serve as an application for a better knowledge of materiality, religion, initiation, kinship, gender, and globalization intuitively observed at first and later met on the field in different interactions with respondents. In order to reinforce our quest with as much knowledge as possible and in a bid to clarify the gendered diversity and perspectives towards various questions regarding religion, power, education, political institutions, we will not hesitate to use both qualitative and quantitative data as far as they better clarify early learned anthropological details and show their presence among the Chokwe from different places.

Despite sharing much in common, it is important to avoid stereotyping “the Chokwe”. However, as identity is a collective cultural construction, the definite article found in “the Chokwe” refers to a collective construction without insisting on individuals and their personal perspectives. The capacity to import significant foreign cultural facts, adapt them to their community necessity as every borrowing stands for an opportunity to increase local power and the capacity to manage their community wellbeing. The initiates “Chilima” become an opportunity to renew the local potential, find out new skills among the youth, and develop new capacities that help in the survival of different communities. The initiates learn new skills, but also offer opportunities for experimental purposes during their initiation time as knowledge layers accumulate throughout

time. Through the use of masks in a continuous combination of ancient traditional and newly made ones, the Chokwe manage their communications with ancestors through religion and social institutions that reveal identity features and determine community wellbeing.

It is this last perspective that leads us to understand and look at “Chilima” as a concept that could be the main characteristic of world scholars today. Different quests scholars undertake aim at leading them to finding out truth and details that miss in a chain of knowledge. Such scholars may be in humanities or in scientific fields but are all united through the quests they undertake though in different areas. In undertaking this study within interdisciplinary resources and boundaries, it is our hope that the “Chilima” introduced at the beginning of the study will get through a complete initiation and that others scholars will learn from the entire process how to develop certain attitudes that can lead in a long learning process that includes various cultural aspects.

### **I.10 Dissertation subdivision**

This dissertation entitled: “Chilima and the Remaking of Chokwe identity: An Interdisciplinary Study on Globalization, Material Traditions and Gendered Cosmo-Polity” is articulated in ten different chapters. Each of them develops a large theme discussed into subtopics that intend to culminate in the coverage of a question concerning identity construction (and deconstruction) in the light of material culture. Also, each of the chapters brings a perception of interdisciplinary contributions for the understanding of how the Chokwe organize their society and construct their differences and cultural bridges with communities settled around them.

#### **I.10.1 Introductory Chapter**

The first one is simply called “Introductory Chapter.” It provides a context around which the dissertation is written. From longtime questions about the Chokwe and their social life, the search of knowledge moved to material culture as the biggest possibility for understanding the history and the present of the Chokwe that give shape to different aspects the Chokwe identities. From the outset, the dissertation offers a broad spectrum of the concept material culture that is likely to include not only artifacts but also many other cultural aspects.

Concerning the concept of identity, the introductory chapter has constructed an understandable survey from a philosopher, Descombes. He has given several perspectives from which identity may be understood and possibly inserted within the Chokwe population growth and development. From philosophical perspectives, the chapter moves to socio-anthropological identity perspectives that include Bourdieu's capital legacy distribution and perpetuation, and Appadurai's cultural facts and spaces.

The same first chapter goes into other details regarding a short introduction about interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, disciplinary studies and the different possibilities and gains this research could get from these perspectives. The introduction leaves open the possibilities that the dissertation will use to get to the core of the Chokwe culture by maximizing the contribution from different disciplines.

The chapter elaborates the research question that builds up the backbone of the dissertation. It has also given the hypothesis, though in an atypical way, through a series of questions that support the main question and predict the support that could come from the sampled populations in the conditions that anthropological fieldworks and interviews are normally filled. Finally, the introductory chapter discloses a few words on the strategies that will be deployed in the study in order to reach the objectives fixed.

### **I.10.2 Chapter Two: Literature Review**

As indicated by its title, this chapter is essentially a literature review, i.e., it finds its substance in documentary sources. It tries to understand the identities the Chokwe people have constructed and received through a history of some five hundred years or six centuries, starting with the arrival of the Portuguese on the Atlantic Angolan coast. From their arrival, the Portuguese were in close contact with the Ovimbundu, who helped them to have access to the Angolan Plateau as carriers and fighters whenever necessary. However, it is with Chokwe populations that the Portuguese managed to get far inside African lands. The Chokwe, therefore, became their men for the organization of trades with inside African lands, and for the conquests of what should be regarded as an important area of the Portuguese influence.

Nevertheless, as Chokwe populations were strictly known as coming from the Lunda Empire, a place famous for its market and culture, they were simply recognized as such, i.e., citizens of the Lunda Empire. They were presented as Lunda-Chokwe, a *forced identity* that they have carried



for many generations and one that, more and more, seems to be at the basis of exploited prejudice.

Historians and art historians have since then produced writings and other material culture proofs facilitating a clear decision about the Chokwe as a quite separate people from the Lunda. The compound word, Lunda-Chokwe, seems to have condemned them to be one and the same people. However, recent reactions from intellectuals, from both sides, have sent them back into a long history to dig out every single small detail to help in the view of the Chokwe as a unique people. Independent and different from the Lunda with whom only a common mythical history would have put them together at a time of the foundation of the Lunda Empire, the Chokwe have had to build their separate identity for centuries.

Much confusion was present in the shared history of the Chokwe and the Lunda. It was later in time when they were clearly shown as a separate big group, and the colonial powers were afraid of the Chokwe fire force. The Portuguese were suddenly afraid of their longtime friends. They did not make it easy for them to continue the conquest of new territories especially towards the long-time capital of the Lunda-Chokwe Empire, Musumba (in the now Democratic of the Congo). The Portuguese shared this fear with the British and the Belgians. The colonial powers put forth their forces and moved those who could contest their power and land occupation authority from the local socio-political influences. More than lands, the three colonial powers had similar ambitions that can still be perceived on the African map. The Portuguese needed to reach the Eastern Indian Ocean where they were already present in what is now Mozambique. The Belgians also wanted to move as far as the Indian Ocean via what is now Tanzania. Those ambitions seemed “legitimate” as long as the British were not in the calculations. Unfortunately, they also needed to link the south of the continent to the north where they were present in Egypt. Finally, Chokwe populations were pushed in the three different land territories under the power of the three colonial powers (Vellut, 2006; 1995; 2005).

Such scholars’ investigation and demonstration of the force that was used specifically towards the Chokwe has given a significant incentive to both Chokwe and Lunda intellectuals to integrate oral sources that their families can still offer them. The Lunda intellectuals insist on the fact that Chokwe have always been at the service of the Lunda for centuries. As for Chokwe intellectuals, Muhunga (1962), Kayembe (2015a; 2015b), Lambert Kandala have found in old memories proof

that the Chokwe have always been an independent people. The colonial institutions have shown, in various opportunities, their powers to local people.

Lima (1971) came to the rescue of the readers with significant details for the determination of the Chokwe identities, independence, and distinctions. Artifacts of different dimensions and social functions were closely associated with various rituals that indicated the Chokwe's particularities within a large group of people sharing similar cultural heritage. Concerning rituals of hunting ceremonies, healing, social insertion from initiation, marriage, and death, all prove that the Chokwe have had their own ways and social lives carried through many generations. Lima (1971) also showed how the Chokwe were able to develop their socio-political system through the years, and have been able to differentiate themselves from their closest neighbors with whom they have much in common from a cultural perspective.

### **I.10.3 Chapter Three: Methodology**

The third chapter focuses on methods that can help move the researcher's attention to focus on the core of the Chokwe's identity through their material culture. Several concepts are discussed. The most important notions are quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The chapter surveys how both concepts are useful in research. The first, quantitative approach is presented for its focus on statistical and demographic details highly considered in the analysis of results based on a pre-established theory.

In this case, data are collected for their capacity to prove the starting theory. The sampling choice is selected with the idea of reaching a set that permits the confirmation of a preset theory, or on the contrary contradicts it. In this vein, the research sometimes uses a closed questionnaire that is distributed to a preselected population. The particularity of this kind of questionnaire is built with questions that need straight answers. The questionnaire may be distributed online via the Internet or on hard copies that are distributed and filled. The results are easily collected and compared.

However, the qualitative approach, on the contrary, is based on open questions. In this way, the respondent has the time to say as much as possible and even to go beyond the expected limits. Also, the questions are rather viewed as an opportunity to get deeper into the respondents'

thoughts, and even to push ahead whenever there is an opportunity. In that way, the researcher has the chance to meet respondents and exchange points that may otherwise be impossible with closed questions. In fact, the talks and entertainments the researcher shares, and the opportunities s/he has to meet with the respondents, permit the researcher to reinforce his knowledge of a question. In Anthropology, it is seen as an opportunity to sympathize with the respondent and share with him/her the ongoing issue and, thus, be able to understand better what is going on (Collier, 1986; Nadel, 1951).

It goes without saying that a few scholars such as Bernard (2006), for instance, take sides and think that qualitative approach is not hard science and academic since it employs many “useless” talks and subjective considerations instead of going straight to the facts as detailed and counted. Others, on the contrary, such as Creswell (2003), Kelley (2002), Glasow (2005, April), Walliman (2005), and Marvasti (2004) do not share the same view. They recognize that the two approaches are different in the way they pursue their object of research, but a subjective approach that puts personal efforts at the center of the quest is worth the results that are received and can cover a broad range of questions. In fact, as will be seen in the course of the dissertation, Walliman (2005) insists on “Memoing” and “Iterative” activities that the researcher goes through. It is not only about talks or recording. It is about reviewing everything to find a line that moves from one point to the next for understanding the reasons of that evolution. It is about stopping every time to raise questions and find potential respondents who give an additional element or a missing detail without which the entire narrative loses its taste and direction.

Despite the explanation that seems to locate quantitative and qualitative approaches on two opposite sides of a spectrum, they do not automatically exclude themselves from all studies. Researchers do not have to make the kind of choice that necessarily excludes one when the other is present. It happens quite often that the researcher may need *both* approaches to deal properly with data and attain results that are explained in a quite satisfactory way.

Apart from the debate opposing quantitative and qualitative approaches in research, this chapter also speaks about other sources. Documentary sources are mentioned concerning what has been so far written on the Chokwe and can help to find links to their identity construction. The first sources refer to the arrival of Portuguese on the Angolan Atlantic coast and the assistance Chokwe populations gave them to reach far inside lands—especially through commercial routes

at first, and then through the routes that permitted colonials to occupy lands. These sources also show how the Chokwe's power went on increasing. They were among the first to get guns, on the one hand. And on the other they were also among the first to acquire new seeds for food, permitting them to resist successive drought seasons and use their foodstuffs for conquest strategies. They are shown moving from hunting activities and embracing agricultural orientations for selling their harvest to the newly born town.

In their search for complete independence, documentary sources describe them leaving their once closest cousins, the Lunda, and embarking on their own for building their vast world. They often had recourse to war. Even when the three colonial powers occupying their space decided to push them in three different directions, documentary sources show them still united around their cultural powers and the socio-political structures resisting both colonial and postcolonial. Through their socio-cultural annually scheduled events, and other activities related to death, twin births, health care and healing customs, Chokwe populations have always moved in different directions in search of the best witch doctor wherever he might be without taking into consideration forced/artificial borders inherited from the Berlin Conference. Lima (1971) has gone through Chokwe traditions and given details concerning different artifacts, masks and rituals. They are contextualized in their production situations and explain how Chokwe populations have been able to build their social environment and growth.

Finally, on questions concerning ethics, this chapter raises many issues about ways in which contacts with Chokwe populations can be interpreted with respect to local values. Apart from laws that revolve around respect due to elders, the chapter goes into ways that could help researchers organize meetings with respondents. From meeting around local beer to an artifact fabrication location, the chapter depicts how many Chokwe engage in conversations, welcome visitors and share local cultural wealth with them. For example, after making a video recording of an event or conversation in a village, it is often a good idea to watch them on a screen with the community. This strategy leads to more discussion and can correct statements that may not have reflected the feeling of everybody. It is also a way of making the entire village co-producers of whatever direction their contribution will take thereafter.

**I.10.4 Chapter Four: From Remote Local Primitive Commodities to Remotely Global Visibility: Tshikapa Chokwe traditional cultural facts at the center of national and international anthropological dimensions and politics**

Chapter four gets fully into Chokwe daily life from the top. Based on the presence of the Chokwe King, Mwene Mwatshisenge, the chapter details a combination of primitive commodities or artifacts, cultural facts, and their use in the presence of the king. First, the artifacts are more than simple works of art that would otherwise serve artistic purposes. They fill other social functions that are fully addressed in this chapter. They stand for social attributions and functions that people use to fill the Chokwe society. From the king's royal head cover, costume, bracelets, walking sticks (duplicated in the local chiefs' attires) to different masks, all bear a language standing for the social roles the bearers fill and the expectations the populations, according to their local customs, have placed in their leaders.

Apart from artifacts and their different attributes, another part of material culture is celebrated through welcoming rituals, songs and dances that fill up all the days during which the Chokwe king is in Tshikapa. Thus, when a symposium takes place in Tshikapa instead of being academic, it is rather folkloric and represents things that happened in past Chokwe times. Oral traditions were presented in a combination of genres. Songs, dances, and mask shows contributed to the gaiety of the day, and to the lesson that was transmitted from one generation to the next. The symposium was about what the Chokwe were as people and their many victories over weak neighbors. It was also about how their firepower was able to keep the Lunda Empire alive, a way of pointing out how much the Lunda owed to the Chokwe. In addition, the symposium was about the migrations, and the cultural wealth accumulated along these journeys. This wealth reached its highest point when academic talks were interrupted. Songs and drum beating came so suddenly that it surprised everybody. The entire assembly began dancing except for the king and the local chiefs. They did not dance because their social function does not permit them to dance, but, even so, their attire and especially their multi-colored knotted crest head covers seemed to participate in the dances. Moreover, visitors are quickly taught how to step in. Consequently, what was meant to be an academic presentation succeeded in changing in a space of Chokwe culture where long time ethnic memories are suddenly alive again and can fill up a long history with a successful story giving life to archived souvenirs.

The arrival of the king in Tshikapa is finally an opportunity to make an important transfer from the distant past to the present; rituals once absolutely secret are presented in a stadium. The initiates who attended the Mukanda Male initiation received a full welcome in this stadium (their celebration used to take place in isolated villages) thus making everything big. Thus, contrary what is often pointed out concerning African traditions, it is now taking a different turn. Traditions often believed dead are becoming more alive and are exposed to the global space. Local rituals and places have accessed a global space with pride, open to sharing at all levels of the world.

#### **I.10.5 Chapter Five: Chokwe Wellbeing: Religion, Mahamba, Medication Preparation, Entertainment, Witchcraft, and Identities**

Chokwe art, religion, medication and healing, witchcraft, and entertainment are presented in one package that includes living examples from practitioners. In a continuation of what was earlier presented in the previous chapter about the king, the local chiefs and the population, artifacts have now taken another dimension. They are associated with the individual and community wellbeing. Some artifacts stand for ancestors, and people address them with their daily issues regarding health, death, succession, family survival, famine, drought, and flood. Most Chokwe spend time with ancestors through their artifacts in communion with ancestors.

Health is presented not only as a simple fact regarding medication. It is a combination of several practices. First, the ancestors are the ones who bless the world, and permit plants to have their pharmacological capacities. Also, instead of their obviously visible pharmacological principles, ancestors are the only ones to suggest the right ways to follow. Finally, there seems to be a distance between the healing effects from plants and their real applications. They depend much on the achievement that ancestors help to reach.

It is in this context that witch doctors, healers and diviners come in and become important. They accept an intermediary role between the Chokwe living community and the ancestors. Some of these witch doctors also fill the healing functions. However, many of them send their patients to healers who look for plants in the forest and administer them.

Thus, the concept wellbeing is largely connected to health and to the healing process in hands of specialists. Religion becomes the space through which several dynamics meet and address

ancestors. However, because of so many implications around religion, the separation between Sacred and the Profane becomes difficult. They interpenetrate each other and everything that happens in social life seems to be at one level or another connected with the sacred.

### **I.10.6 Chapter Six: Wellbeing Coordination and Wellbeing Search in the Chokwe Identity**

This chapter deals with a full presentation of the Chokwe identity construction and presentation to the public in the scope of wellbeing. From his childhood, the boy is prepared to attend the male school, i.e., the initiation camp where he will spend many months learning necessary skills and knowledge for him to be identified as a man, to give back these expected skills to his society. Even though the departure day for the initiation camp comes at random, and even though it is principally the source of mothers' crying, it is believed to be the best thing that can happen to them. Cries are part of the long separation that follows, with the lack of information about what may happen to the young boys amid their exclusion. They are considered as dead and do not have to communicate with their community members. They have their own "Tshilombola" or guardians who take care of them, but who are also submitted to absolute secret vis-à-vis the remaining community, for the "Mukanda" initiation camp is a secret society.

During their exclusion, the initiates are trained to look differently at things they could have taken for granted. Thus, first, their body is reduced to its possible minimum: to nothingness. Additionally, the initiates must learn that so many things linked to body pleasure are but ephemeral, a source of egotism and gradual separation from the community body, the source of life, connection to ancestors, and personal pride. The trainees are also taught to lead an ascetic life regarding their body conditions while learning valuable lessons regarding their cohorts' transformation in bodies sharing the same suffering, and eventually the same pleasure. That is the reason why the initiates from the same group are taught to keep absolutely secret about their training details—to maintain the body understanding and their difference with uninitiated people. It goes without saying this kind of austere and Spartan training makes them not only bearers of Chokwe traditions but also soldiers needed for territory conquests and community protection. Above all they possess reliable qualities and trustworthy personalities needed to keep contact with the past, the present, and the future.

All the above denotes what Chokwe identities stand for and how they progress throughout time. One of these details involves songs and their impact on social events. In fact, songs are part of the biggest events and they channel community emotion, imagination, and expectation. An example can be found on the day the young boys are recruited to join the male initiation “Mukanda.” Songs use sun and moon metaphors and underline how important the event is. They are about a big change in the lives of the youth. Compared to the place the sun and the moon have in daily life, they are at the center of society and life does not simply exist without them.

These songs also point out how the young boys are left on their own without any support. Chokwe populations cannot imagine life without their community. However, what happens when the young boys are taken from their families is seen within their training about social insertion. During their isolation in the training camp, the initiates learn how to build a Chokwe community and how to live in it. They learn how to help each other, and how to connect their world with ancestors.

Finally, songs are also integral to the work that witchdoctors offer to their community. Songs are seen as facilitators. They help connect the living human with their ancestors. They are used in consultations for health reasons, or for things related to death, to the future, to joy, or just within community meetings. Songs have the capacity to link to ancestors, and to cool down spirits in many cases, or to heat them up to engage them in physical actions. The same songs are also used to disconnect with daily realities and fears as the young initiates learn to connect with invisible powers hidden in their beings. They suddenly become able to perform acrobatic actions they had never thought possible. They are of great assistance in the construction of Chokwe identities.

#### **I.10.7 Chapter Seven: From Likumbi Lya Mize Masquerade Festival to Feminism and Gender among Luvale, Chokwe, Minungu in Angola, Zambia, and D.R. Congo through Fretz’s Storytelling Ambiguities, Hermeneutics, and Appadurai’s Global Cultural Dimensions**

In Africa like elsewhere in the world, the gender question is particularly sensitive. People are likely to believe that Chokwe women are mistreated, and would not be considered with much respect at all. That is not the way things happen in Chokwe communities. Chokwe populations avoid all situations that place men, on one side, and women, on the other. They lead a social life



that has much consideration for women. During the initiation time, the males are trained to have deep respect for women, and to look at them as the ones who make their society even possible.

A proof of man's masculinity, commitment to community survival, and continuation of the ancestor's presence among the living, is found in men's engagement for the welfare of their family by providing it with food, security, and awareness of the ancestors' presence. During their training, male initiates learn particularly how to listen to women and pay attention to their needs. They also do their best to avoid upsetting each other since their complaints are known for attracting ancestors' anger and particularly punishing men.

In fact, women are also trained to play several roles in their society. First, they are trained to avoid frustrating men by challenging their masculine ego. They do not oppose them openly when important social questions are raised. Even when they are right, women would rather keep silent and use other strategies to have their messages clearly transmitted and inserted in public decisions. Fretz (1987) depicts the ways in which Chokwe women strategize to channel their social wishes in their communities. Their power lies essentially in the use of words in such a way that men will think twice before making any decision.

This chapter invites the readers to have a different understanding of Chokwe women concerning gender. They are a special case contradicting most of what is often said of African women. They definitely cannot be classified with women whose voices are heard because men have decided so. They cannot be counted among the women whose social life depends on parochial institutions that have silenced them in a slave-like situation where even kitchen work would be a big gift. On the contrary, they participate in all social issues, and have found strategies not only to accommodate in their society, but also to avoid any kind of shame to their men. Fretz (1987) found out about these strategies regarding language ambiguities. As a technique, the ambiguities aim at re-questioning any position taken, statement given, direction chosen for the people, or contact made in the name of the community. Closely observed, this technique has a significant psychological or human dimension that calls for thinking twice before acting. Chokwe women, ipso facto, have a psychological dimension that gets the mind to move ahead in a circumambulatory process, i.e., in a style that includes two steps ahead and one back. Going forward, but never forgetting the past. It is all about leaving enough space to women in an environment where they contribute to the construction of their society while sharing social status

with men. Finally, Chokwe women represent a special case in Africa, showing how much they can contribute to moving their society in a direction of harmony that pleases their ancestors.

#### **I.10.8 Chapter Eight: Chokwe Identity Ruptures and Disjunctions Tentatively Scaled through Bourdieu's Field Theory, Appadurai's Cultural Dimensions and Stroeken's Intersubjective Anthropological Dynamics**

The Chokwe we encountered in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in Zambia all agree about one thing: they do not trust as much as that their respective governments. They complain about how their respective governments seem to have forsaken them for many years. The governments have not paid much attention to them and their areas since their respective countries' independences. It is obvious they say that their governments have not managed policies that pay attention to local Chokwe traditions in the sense of finding a common ground of understanding and sharing. Most of them believe their past is not sufficiently addressed and valorized. For them, the western education brought to some parts within the Chokweland does not present specific curricula that include local aspirations and quickly growing needs.

The new education given in classes leads to a complete death of traditions without any genuine expectation that would see better days for the Chokwe or any other people. Also, many Chokwe reject modern education completely and consider it as the worst thing that has come to them. Several Chokwe also suspect the modern healing system that has come with modernity. Even though modernity seems to offer medicinal systems that are simple and seem to respond to the needs of the people, they all the same forget completely about an inclusive cultural dimension. They lead people to believe that swallowing medicine is enough for healing diseases and mental suffering. On the contrary, Chokwe medicinal traditions consider the healing context and the needs that people must face. The healers were not only distributing medicinal plants. They were connecting people to a wide network back to their ancestors, making everybody responsible for community wellbeing, health, and the healing process. Unfortunately, the modern medicine focuses on the individual while quite often forgetting the community dimension. It is especially during the HIV-AIDS era that many people found out how modern medicinal treatment did not include the community dimension. Many are left to face death alone without the support of their

community members. Consequently, more and more people decided to go back to village treatments or to let the village healers come to them on the outskirts of towns and cities.

### **I.10.9 Chapter Nine: Amplification: Research Interview questionnaire: Interpretation of results**

It is at this level of the dissertation that the data collected through interviews are now presented. It is evident that they have already influenced what was written before. However, here, the chapter digs deeper into them to point out the general tendency of responses, and what should be considered as parameters for the understanding of the Chokwe and their identity construction strategies over many years. It will also be an opportunity to question if the Chokwe have always behaved in the same way and if today they look in the same ways at challenges they have been facing for many years. It is important for us to point out that the finality of this chapter should not be found in statistics and numbers. However, all this is an opportunity. The readers are given to figure out how the Chokwe as people have been making their way over the two last centuries, selecting what they can construct as African modernities, and refusing what they believe will not contribute to the development of the Chokwe locally and globally.

The data thus analyzed put much stress on men and women in the three countries studied, and focus on their reactions to the raised questions. Also, through the analysis, it will be possible to discern patterns that correspond to countries. Since we have been treating the space that the Chokwe occupy as one nation, we are likely to find out patterns that repeat in the same way. Frontiers are there only by name. On a practical level, most Chokwe move from one area to the next. They do not necessarily go through the imposed government demarcation lines, for they have their virtual borders that include a significant space they occupy which unites the three countries. We are likely to figure out what the main rules are, if any, that lead them to have the kind of life they lead. They have formulated expectations that are theirs and, quite often, oppose them with the governments. By the way, Chokwe have chosen to live within virtual borders that they have managed and within which they keep hope for future organizations and better wellbeing.

Even if they are accepted as leading a life of their own, many Chokwe hardly fit in the local judiciary and political systems. They can prevail to be this or that; they can pretend to be autonomous. However, the sad truth remains the same; they are respectively counted as citizens

of given countries even if some of these countries deserve the calling “Failed States.” They still have the absolute judiciary right to consider everybody living on their respective lands as their citizens or country subjects. As such Chokwe people are supposed to undergo the same treatment as everybody else in the same country. However, modernities permit them to be the same and different at the same time and to communicate with various parts of the world with which they identify through the spaces they construct (Appadurai, 1996).

Through the exploration of the spaces they figuratively, and in reality, create the Chokwe become the entrepreneurs of a cultural life that may share much with the country, or at least with the sub-region where they are. However, at the same time, they organize and exchange elements about what their culture is day after day, while borrowing whenever necessary from neighbors, close and distant, via the magic of communication and links with technologies at large. Establishing a dynamic culture while dealing with a government that does not encourage fundamentals of identities and culture has pushed Chokwe populations to chosen, accepted, and assumed isolation on the margins of big societies. The Chokweland lacks a recognized authority to start its judiciary autonomy even if the signs are observed, and demographic movements reveal their detachment

In that dynamic, beliefs are built on different patterns and paradigms, which open them to traditional creeds with a bridge that connects them to ancestors. At the same time, they celebrate African modernities through local and global spaces and integrate details into the course of their destiny that would otherwise be obsolete and meaningless. Local isolation from the benefits of development and education does not mean regarding connections with the local and the outside world. Whatever the direction taken, even when isolated from the main development lines of their countries, several Chokwe will always be able to figure out their way in importing what is necessary and in connecting with people, institutions, and creativities of their choice.

Appadurai (1996; 1986; 1996), Anderson (1991), Ferguson (2006), A. Gupta, Ferguson, J. (1997(a)), A. Gupta and Ferguson (1997b) reinforce the ideas presented in the paragraph above with concepts such as “Imaginations, distance, nationalism, and globalization” concerning community that survives through different strategies. They connect locally and globally as they look for different ways for their survival. At the same time, they construct and re-construct various identities that empower them to the point of using their imagination in various constructive ways (Millis, 1959) They are forced to be a part of the countries to which they

belong since the Berlin Conference attributions, but they have chosen to construct a nationalism that has permitted them to survive so far, and will probably be their main pillar for the future.

This chapter concerns the interview questions earlier presented. The chapter also acts as a kind of bridge on the way to the Conclusion, i.e., chapter ten. The chapter subdivides the research questions into three main parts. The first part regards education under comparative perspectives with traditional education in the Chokwe world, in addition to education through curricula developed in modern schools. This part tries to find out from interview replies why modern education has never been successful in the Chokwe environment. With reference to the preceding chapters, the main points of the Chokwe education are revealed with a specific stress on its practical side. The Chokwe youth are trained to take their community life into their hands in a very practical way. On the contrary, the education transmitted through curricula developed in school leads to a dead end, as students try to find opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge in the Chokwe world. A crucial lack within that education concerns sexual education. Modern education does not offer the necessary tools that young people need in their society. A very simple example can be found in the total absence of sexual education dealing with many diseases, lack of birth control, and an extreme gender divide in favor of men.

In the same way, a general lack of basic education concerning the local people leads to a lack of knowledge of religions and rituals. In the Chokwe traditions, the people were trained to know most of the local rituals, which included the presence of the population. Some were restricted to leaders and were secret. The population knew many details about the current religion centered on ancestors and the spirits they brought with them to assist the living. The opposition between the Sacred and the Profane was not obvious at all. Every daily action had its end in the Sacred and needed blessing from ancestors. Also, common life was encouraged to follow lines that favored communication with the Sacred. To express the presence of the Sacred and the Divine, rituals take place in such a way that masks like the ones presented at the Likumbi Lya Mize participate in the mimetic experience (Lakoff, 1980). Masks have various functions that lead to the Sacred and achieve a vital force.

Traditional education also expanded their knowledge of medicinal plants used for healing different diseases. The high scores on tests regarding the ongoing use of medicinal plants prove that these healing mechanisms are still in great use. However, modern trends have not done much

to find ways in which these healing traditions can cooperate with modern institutions in order to offer the best medicines to the populations. Through examples selected in the dissertation, the Chokwe healing systems are among the leading features that characterize Chokwe identities via several possible constructions.

The interviews have also raised a point regarding socio-political institutions. Most Chokwe population still believes in their traditional institutions of leaders and kings. The interview replies show that many Chokwe believe their traditional leaders will be able to readjust social institutions to open their local spaces to globalization. Many Chokwe seem, in this way, to support what a couple of anthropologists we have referred to throughout this dissertation actually believe (Appadurai, 1986; 1996; 2013). Chokwe leaders are part of an evolution that permits them to put their cultural facts on a global market. At this level, cultural fact will change into commodities whose value will depend on their capacity to travel and connect with the world (Appadurai, 1996).

#### **I.10.10 Chapter Ten: Dissertation Overall Concluding Observations and Different Perspectives**

The last chapter of the dissertation has several orientation points. First of all, attention is paid to everything studied within the dissertation. This survey summarizes the entire work and the main articulations of the paper. The survey also considers how the main themes studied have answered research questions. These themes include an attempt to look at artifacts through lenses and to consider them as powerful commodities, ones that can communicate dynamically through different local and global spaces. This theme is herein analyzed through the eyes of Tshikapa inhabitants and shows how Chokwe artifacts share a number of features in common with what their neighbors produce—especially ones with whom they share cultural understanding focused on ancestors and community leaders.

Another theme developed in the dissertation circles around the Likumbi Lya Mize festival. This major theme permits us to notice several different perspectives. First, as a cultural mold, this festival held in Zambezi, Zambia, reveals what happens in the Mukanda Initiation camp. It illustrates how young people are prepared to move ahead and face different challenges present in their society. Another insight is offered on the various skills learned during this time. One of the most important skills must do with rituals and knowledge of medicinal plants and their different

uses. It is also during the time of seclusion that the initiates learn about the main behaviors expected from them, especially in terms of sexual comprehension within the Chokwe society.

Furthermore, the Likumbi Lya Mize also helps us understand how several Chokwe see their society at present and how they prepare its future (Lakoff, 1980). For a better comprehension of different and successive strategies employed, this theme is developed in the light of Bourdieu's theories (field and capital). It also uses a couple of other theories essentially from Appadurai (Cultural Facts and Globalization) and Stroecken (intersubjective dynamic).

Another theme studied concerns gender issues and divide among the Chokwe. Fretz (1987) offers the tools that offer the best way to look at gender issues among the Chokwe. It is, in fact, once again the Likumbi Lya Mize that gives us the opportunity to check Fretz's theory. She suggests ambiguity as the main strategy that women use to change situations and to get things done in the way they have chosen. In digging deeper into that theory and receiving testimonies of the people who attend the Likumbi Lya Mize Festival, it is indeed obvious that, in the same way, Chokwe women – like other women around the world – are credited with birth giving, i.e., giving life to the world. They are also credited with providing their society with “meaning.” As a matter of fact, the Likumbi Lya Mize shows how the meanings they choose are finally incorporated in the ethnic cultural corpus, determining values for which both men and women would be ready to give their life as they defend their ancestral metaphysical and social choices.

Beyond these major themes revealed through details and the testimonies of the local population, much work goes in to understanding material culture through Chokwe identities and their constructions. In this vein, the human body also stands within the same comprehension of material culture up to a certain extent; its expressions and (re)-adjustments use musical sounds and songs inherited from the long Chokwe traditions. The Chokwe body participates in the construction of identities and cultural management in an ongoing way.

It is within the same scope of material culture that the entire dissertation pays attention to Chokwe cultural masks. During the time they spend in the initiation camp, young people learn to make masks. They also learn how to empower these masks with spirits and ancestral powers otherwise invisible to ordinary human beings' eyes. They spend time learning how to make knots that make the mask costumes. The knotting work gives initiates deeper understanding of religious

and mythical contours within the entire Chokwe socio-political vision. Masks are made in such a way that they represent human society. Thus, wherever masquerades occur in public for whatever occasion, the outfits and the characters they represent are lessons given to the entire society. As a matter of fact, when we consider the Likumbi Lya Mize, for instance, even though the festival presents to the public many masks, they all bear different significations regarding their social functions that Lakoff (1980) would look at as metaphors by which people live. These masks include a king around whom other society members respect a specific hierarchy of set mimetic roles—reconstructing the entire Chokwe history with a particular stress on the time many Chokwe left Nkalayi, the Lunda/Chokwe mythical departure location. It is through this vision of the masks as a part of material culture that the entire dissertation evaluates their contribution within the construction of Chokwe identities and body management.

Apart from offering an overall view of the entire dissertation, this chapter underlines the main philosophical and scholarly contributions from other fields, consulted through interdisciplinary considerations in order to better grasp the questions dealt with in the paper. As a matter of fact, different scholars are mentioned from the beginning and contribute to the comprehension of the interactions occurring in the Chokwe society. It is in the context of such contributions that the ten chapters are organized and set up in such a way to show a coherent evolution from the first words to the last.

### **I.11 General Concluding Remarks**

This first chapter of the dissertation has endeavored to provide readers with a survey that covers the writer's motivations. From personal experience with the simple concept (simple in appearance, perhaps) of "Chilima", the writer has given a testimony that has constructed the roots of extensive research considered over time as its pieces came slowly together. Also, the concept "Chilima" has led to various connections that find their right expressions in material culture. It is indeed material culture that is presented in its various capacities to deal with Chokwe identity constructions and different body expressions.

The chapter expands on the strategies that the entire dissertation will be using in order to meet its ambitions at all levels. After giving an explanation of most of concepts that build the the title, the paper mentions a couple of scholars' names whose understanding of words such as identity,



disciplinary, disciplinarity, interdisciplinary, interdisciplinarity will slowly inspire the entire body of the work about the Chokwe from three different countries, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia. The dissertation announces the research question and discusses it in a way that produces several sub questions that will need to be addressed in the paper. Also, the hypothesis comes out as a prediction of the conclusions that the dissertation could eventually reach.

The dissertation reserves an entire chapter to methodology, i.e., chapter three. And thus, it only offers a few words in this chapter and announces that chapter three will explain the concept “bricolage” largely explained in the third chapter. This first part ends with chapter summaries offered in such a way that the reader has not only the possibility to get a general view of the dissertation; but the capacity to select from the beginning what part may directly interest him/her. If the author of the thesis chooses “bricolage” as one of the most significant strategies used for a better coverage of the research question, the reader is also free to somehow use it in the selection the topics and sub topics that are the most useful to read for a given purpose related to the entire dissertation. Finally, the summaries offer an overview of every chapter in a coherent presentation insisting on the main points that make the complete frame of the work.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW OR THE CHOKWE SEEN FROM THEIR ORIGINS

### II.1 Introduction

This chapter intends to share documented sources with the reader that present Chokwe people in their artistic world with a historical perspective as far back as the sixteenth century. It is about discovering Chokwe people within documented actions to understand them better and sketch a drawing of their identities known so far<sup>5</sup>. The sources will be listed as coherently as possible. As there are many controversies with the Chokwe often confused with the Lunda, it is our hope to clarify possible confusions by putting stress on the Chokwe's achievements and their identity constructions. After this chapter, it is our hope that our readers will be able to locate the Chokwe population in the areas where they live. Readers will also be able to understand their relations with neighbors, and find out the modus operandi that the Chokwe follow for using cultural facts in the construction of their successive identities, according to accessible sources that documentary archives reveal. Later, the dissertation will take into account what oral sources can still communicate.

The aim of this chapter is to clarify certain features in the subsequent pages of the thesis. While this dissertation is based mostly on fieldwork, and interviews with the concerned Chokwe, it is likely to bring up significant details that other scholars may have neglected so far. Also, as pointed out early in this dissertation, anthropological research foci have changed much over time now pay attention more to cultural facts. And paying attention to cultural facts raises awareness of people's daily actions, their hobbies, and their historical values transmitted through generations. This dissertation gains input from interdisciplinary organization of sources providing contributions of Chokwe people under various umbrellas and contributing overall to their identity

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<sup>5</sup> Readers interested in Chapters two and four will keep in mind that the work methodology applied here reflects very much what is done elsewhere in the dissertation. The comprehension of most themes studied goes from the fieldwork, i.e., from meetings and talks with a sample of people who define themselves as Chokwe today to sources of the past. Other studies could, for this same kind of work, put much stress on the sources collected in the past, especially through an exercise of Art History. The methodology thus applied based on an interdisciplinary approach moves with a special stress on sources that Mudimbe calls "Memorae Loci" with references signaling social activities that the Chokwe achieved and that explain their sociopolitical situation today. It is in this scope that the selection of sources keeps its particularity and tries to maximize as much as possible fieldwork encounters and conversations. Other sources, very helpful certainly are consulted in this perspective, in a kind of dialogue with material culture.

constructions throughout many centuries. Also, in paying attention to Chokwe cultural facts, this dissertation has the ambition (like its most important theoretical sources) to look at cultural facts that raise possibilities for the construction of new community and personal identities. The chapter will clarify many details related to the past, but will also focus on possible projections that continue the construction of other identities.

## **II.2 Confusions around the Chokwe**

Acquiring research on Chokwe identity/identities may reveal a difficult task, though; from the first consideration, the endeavor may seem easy given the abundant documentary sources that cover the people, especially from their encounters with the Portuguese late in the fifteenth century (Shillington 2013:128). The first encounter between the Portuguese and Chokwe populations, according to Kevin Shillington, seems to have happened later after the Portuguese reached the Angolan coast in 1489. The Portuguese were, at first, dealing with people living along the Atlantic coast, mainly the Ovimbundu. It was when their trade within the continent developed that the Portuguese started dealing with the Chokwe, who became highly reliable partners, especially in the slave trade when caravans had to go through long, dangerous routes that required protection and valuable local resources for the shipments to safely reach the coast. These human and other commercial shipments had to cross lands that both the Chokwe and Ovimbundu inhabited. Needless to insist, in the light of Verbeken, A., Walraet, M. (1953) whose main themes found in Barré (1898), Cameron (1878), Capello et Ivens (1886), Cooley (1852), Cuvelier (1951), the Chokwe, with many of them then living together with the Lunda and under the same leadership of Mwant Yav, even though many other Chokwe had moved in different directions, were the most important group of people known as “Pombeiros”. They went through the Katanga in 1806. In their capacity as collaborators with the colonial powers, they facilitated the connection of eastern and the western coasts. For more details, our readers may consult the books given here. It is quite interesting to find out how colonial powers could not get easy access to given territories and had to pay for their passage. The Pombeiros could move easily from one place to another combining commercial activities and sometimes land conquests. They were the first messengers bringing life (or in some cases death) to people. They were those without whom the Portuguese activities would not have succeeded and would be meaningless. As they were moving around, they were also disseminating cultural facts, constructing a significant network

important to the Portuguese, but also to their own social structure. One more area of interest in this study has to do with spaces, communications, and openings to the world through shuffling people, yielding cultural facts, praising local values, and at the same time happily aspiring to global spaces (Appadurai, 1998).

Apart from contradictions that prevailed in the partnerships, the Chokwe people and the Portuguese at first, and later the Belgians, were, in fact, enemies whose relations depended on the interests of the moment. When Chokwe people could help in the conquest of new lands, the transportation of goods or people on the long routes, they were appreciated as good friends. However, whenever several Chokwe ventured to claim their power, land ownership, or leadership over conquered people, or simply as the indigenous owners or first occupants of the lands, they changed into dangerous enemies. The Chokwe suddenly changed into criminals for whom the colonial powers had to find drastic punishments (Vellut, 2006; Nduwa Solol, E., 2015).

In addition to the above, an absurd complexity results from contradictions concerning the very people's origins, locations, and separate identifications from their neighbors. The Chokwe are included in a vague classification with names such as Lunda-Chokwe or Luvale, which leave shadows on their specificity. The Lunda Empire has often claimed its supremacy and its leadership more than its contingent, historical origins that led to secession and deployment of different ethnic groups with the Chokwe at their head (White, 1959). However, at the same time, the compound name, Lunda-Chokwe, means that even if separate from the Lunda, both Lunda and Chokwe may still have much in common concerning their origins and evolution over time. This kind of confusion was particularly recorded as such until quite recently in the artistic field, at least. Despite their vast and distinguished art history characterized by exceptional pieces now spread all over the world in different museums, Chokwe people were not very well-known. Until recently, their artifacts were attributed to their neighbors such as the Lunda, the Luvale or the Ovimbundu, who were much more known through the coastal trades and their commercial caravans. Quite often the artistic works of the Ovimbundu brought to the coast were, in fact, Chokwe's (Bastin, 1998; Wastiau, 2006; Ndaywel E Nziem, 1998). These same scholars mainly

Bastin (1984, Aug.-a; 1984; 1998) and, Wastiau (2006)<sup>6</sup> have assisted the most in the understanding of the Chokwe as a specific people with artistic productions that have imposed both their techniques and presence in rituals and social activities.

Volper (2014), though basically discussing the Salampasu, important neighbors in the area, offers significant information regarding the topic here. Regarding the possible confusion often overshadowing the coexistence of the Lunda and the Chokwe often taken for one and the same people, Volper (2014, 7), for instance, highlights the Chokwe's interest in war conquests, royalties, and trading. In this vein, it looks as if Chokwe populations are more like a considerable military force whose actions on warfields last in time and move from one location to another. Most of their benefit should be calculated in terms of respect, trophies and payments without necessarily changing the local socio-political order. The local chiefs submitted to Chokwe warriors and agreed to pay royalties. The same text pointed above shows how the Lunda occupied the Salampasu's land after the Chokwe had considerably decreased the opponents' military power. The image of the occupation process could lead to many interpretations that went on for centuries. Chokwe people, despite their departure from the Musumba, the Lunda capital, continued in many ways to look as if they were working for the Lunda, or to put it otherwise as if they were completely under the rules of the Lunda. Also, it is also obvious that both groups had a different approach to power with the Lunda interested in land occupation for profound changes, and the Chokwe moving from one place to another as they pushed on with conquests.

Apart from the material retributions the Chokwe populations would take from the conquered, they also shared different beliefs with the occupied populations. One such belief relates to fighting and the use of extraordinary powers. Human beings would change into fierce animals in order to gain victory over the opponents (Volper 2010:23). Going through this book reveals both people's attraction for weapons, especially the use of metallic war gadgets rare in those days.

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to underline at this point a few things concerning this author and particularly this book. We have made the choice to use the book several times because the people we met in the fieldwork know it well and remember their contributions. It is a straight link to our fieldwork encounters and experiences. The people met also invited me to share with them the stories they shared with the author, and pushed a step further. It goes without saying that this deliberate choice does not mean we will not use other books about Chokwe art and social life. Our readers will understand that our purpose in such a choice focuses on sharing with the locals what they really remember about their traditions and different local dynamics that may make a comprehensive vision of their identity construction and cosmopolitanism. Other sources will be useful especially when we will need to know a bit more about Chokwe art, and to balance the collected information.

They shared beliefs regarding body treatment, and scarifications that could empower fighters in their different operations. Cultural exchanges are visible through language details and through social traditions regarding initiations and rites of passage, including initiation camps, masks and masquerades that fill similar social functions. With the Salampasu, the Chokwe populations have much in common and their masks fill social functions that often reflect social hierarchy and power sharing (Volper, 2014).

In whatever region they are, Chokwe people recognized as a people are often mentioned amid other people. Wastiau (2006:7) gives more details in these lines:

The Chokwe live in a huge, often multi-ethnic territory, which covers the greater part of north-east Angola and large areas in Kasai occidental, south Bandundu and south-west Katanga, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C.). Nowadays, they are also more widely dispersed in various parts of west and north-west Zambia.

Figure 9 Chokweland Map



Manuel Jordan, Chokwe (1998: page 13) underlines the cultural area overlapping three different countries (Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia) that is later on presented in this dissertation as the Chokweland, and the Chokwe nation. The Chokweland is at the intersection of the three countries: Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia. Source: Jordan, 1998:13

Wherever they are, they live in mixed groups, with other ethnic groups, a fact that may lead to confusion and hide originality in their contribution to art and other essential anthropological resources of the region. To avoid such a mystification and disorder, Lima (1971:41) intended to shed further light on spots that otherwise cause misunderstanding about Chokwe primary resources (especially in their entire artistic world), and its anthropological connections. He further clarifies the confusion that often comes from the treatment of Chokwe identities hidden behind the Lunda. For Lima, Chokwe history is not directly faced and treated but is always perceived through biased lenses, through Lunda or Western perceptions, instead of focusing on the actual Chokwe participation in the cultural area. If that confusion has been noticed within this long history, its impact on real knowledge of the Chokwe has not been sufficiently measured, or documented. Cultural proximity often reduces to zero the distance between cultural events that are fundamentally Chokwe and those of their neighbors difficult to differentiate for many generations. Finally, though, without paying much attention to the topic, White (1959) and Vellut (2006) document another source of confusion aggravated through both colonial and postcolonial displacement dynamics that have sent Chokwe populations in different directions into meeting other ethnic groups. White (1959:1-7) clearly identifies how the Chokwe people have, in many instances, come to merge with other groups such as the Mawiko, Luvale, Lwena, Luchazi, and Ovimbundu. With them, they share the same cultural area, and for different reasons they have often come to live together, or from time to time fight each other.

Human contacts, cultural and artistic exchanges, skill learning and teaching do not facilitate a clear approach to fathom the intimacy of the Chokwe (or the intimacy of the other people here above mentioned). The previously referred to complications have affected the knowledge of the Chokwe populations over many centuries. It goes without saying that searching for Chokwe identity/identities becomes a sensitive topic for many reasons. In fact, much zeal to correct history may lead us to neglect historical sources, to accuse them of partiality, and to construct identities otherwise based on hearsay and simple beliefs with the risk of an entirely biased output. Much rigor with historical and contemporary sources may also, on the contrary, lead to the exclusion of sources that bear critical values. Even though this dissertation counts much on oral sources and specifically on a fieldwork including local stories, it is wise to treat all sources with impartiality—and to apply historical criticism



wherever needed to find the best option. It will not be easy to make decisions. We have instead chosen anthropological perspectives to share beliefs with the concerned people so that to access their present identity construction and hold their archival memories from the distant past. Today, more Chokwe scholars are participating in discussions that often question famous historians of the distant past. Presently, the debate seems to move from the Chokwe region (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Zambia) as discussions continue to question alliances founded on a long history. Lunda and Chokwe tease each other as the following section will demonstrate.

In a situation like this one, scholars are likely to support, from time to time, different sides with proofs collected from the fields. The Lunda may indeed be presented in the first position; they are the ones whose empire gave an expansion of different population groups in the region. However, when raising questions related to military strategies and making war, collecting royalties and quickly moving in different directions, or making art with imposing socio-religious artifacts, none of the people can compete with the Chokwe. Discussions opposing the Chokwe and the Lunda may take very different directions.

In this vein, Professor Donat Tshimboj Kaleng from the Université de Lubumbashi is specifically known for his provocative argumentations around the Lunda ethnicity question termed as: “What came before: the chick or the egg?” His sources come from the A-Ruund (Lunda) area where he was born, grew up and where he often goes back for many reasons. Some suspect his presentation to be partial, reflecting other motivations than academic. However, at the same time, his argumentation is highly coherent and seems to be based on richly documented oral sources from the Mwant Yav’s court. All modern sources in our possession (Muhunga, 1962; Kayembe, S.M.T., 2015; Ndua Solol, 2015; De Saint Moulin, 2015, Ndaywel E. Nziem, 2015) concur about the Chokwe origin epic related to their secession from the Lunda empire. All the same, De Saint Moulin (2015) rather stresses the Chokwe’s long migration from the Nigerian Delta, making difficult any firm conclusion on the attribution of specific identities to a given demographic expansion in the geographical area. To make it even more complex, the entire neighborhood, for instance, absolutely celebrated the same original ancestors. The region as a whole can still, through oral traditions, locate itself on a long ascent tree of their forefathers. All their leaders are, in one

way or another, linked to the Lunda Empire. They are related to the “mythical ancestor and cultural hero, Chibinda Ilunga... believed to have introduced... hunting techniques, new forms of magic, rituals and court manners which contributed to the greatness and influence of Chokwe art” (Wastiau, 2006:7). Chibinda Ilunga, the cultural hero, came from the Luba Kingdom (Muhunga, 1962). All around this region, the same simple survival techniques of significant daily life have moved from one generation to the next, such as, farming land, gathering dead wood from the forest, edible bush and forest fruits and other species, hunting savanna game, net fishing, using medicinal plants for healing different diseases, house building, and village construction. Everything has ramifications that remind them of the first royal Lunda power effective at first under Chibinda Ilunga’s Royal, and later under Mwanta Yawvo (Vansina 2004:1-2).

From the above, it is more evident that any academic endeavor in that distant past, if not well calibrated, may run the risk of becoming a mere curiosity, and a source of much more confusion. Worse, even though from the historical point of view such a venture would be attractive for the collection of as many backgrounds as possible, the fear will remain that in the long research process many more questions will be raised, slowing down the quest and bringing about a high risk of permanent digression. Moreover, Carvalho (1890) and Pogge (1880), Carvalho (1890) cited by J. Vansina (2004:10), and whose ideas were later retaken by Ajayi (1969), are the first to give a thorough account regarding the Lunda Empire. However, even then, their account reveals its incapacity to penetrate the full reign of the ancient Lunda Empire (Vansina 204:10). The most interesting information, both writers above provide, shed light on those days foragers who indistinctly “lived in small communities whose members communicated and intermarried with individuals from the outside but they did not develop any social aggregate larger than the community itself” (J. Vansina, 2004:24).

### **II.3 African Scholars’ Controversies on the Chokwe**

Nowadays, Chokwe scholars such as Professor Simon Kayembe Malhinda Tshikuta, (Kayembe, 2015a; (b); (c)), and Lambert Kandala, <http://www.mutambi.org/> (accessed on September 30, 2016), devote their full scholarship to the Chokwe. They repeatedly claim the independence of

the Chokwe populations as an ethnic group vis-a-vis their neighbors. They pretend to have a unique history of Chokwe populations that has nothing to do with any other group from the area, in particular with the Lunda with whom they are often connected and confused. They insist that the Lunda and most Chokwe live in the same area, share a part of their long history, but are two distinct groups.

A step further, Kayembe (2015a) goes as far as to point out how the Lunda owes much to the Chokwe. As proof, he mentions that Chokwe chiefs still put on the throne new Mwant Yav, for the Lunda are Chokwe's nephews. We think Tshikuta's denial of any Lunda superiority has to do with one of the many versions that explain Chokwe's departure from the Lunda Empire. The version is given in this dissertation section later and points out Lweji's marriage with a foreigner, Chibinda Ilunga. Many Chokwe consider themselves as the uncles of the Mwant Yav born from the union of Lweji with Chibinda Ilunga. According to many myths about the Lunda-Chokwe, another bitter reason, it seems, for Chokwe's decision to move away could be related to the fact that Mwanta Yav was not at all the son of their sister, Queen Luweji, but rather a son that Chibinda Ilunga had with a servant. This event was the main reason for the Chokwe's secession from the Lunda Empire. Moreover, ipso facto, it reduced to zero any superior pretension that the Lunda could have over the Chokwe, for the Lunda as known today are a breed from a foreign royal Chibinda and a son born from a servant (Kayembe, 2015a). It is important that our readers understand how the earlier mentioned scholar Tshimboj belongs to the Lunda (Aruund) ethnic group, and as early pointed out, Simon Kayembe is a Chokwe. It is as if quarrels that went on for many generations have now reached the university level. Scholars argue for different interests. However, what seems, all the same, suspicious is the fact that none of the scholars mentioned here takes a position that is purely academic in trying to find out the truth as such. They all try to find spaces for justifying their ethnic group. Dealing with such sources makes the work more difficult as the truth cannot be easily reached or presented with absolute guarantees. Fortunately, other sources may come in and permit us to balance positions as will be demonstrated in the text.

#### **II.4 Outside of the African Academic World**

Outside of the academic world, there are oral sources widely used since the Portuguese time. Lima (1971), Carvalho (1890), J. Vansina (2004; 1966; 1985; 1999), Ndaywel E. Nziem (1998), Ndua Solol (2015) have largely used these oral sources to delve into the Chokwe historical

labyrinth whose twists, meanderings, morasses, mazes, and chaos are an elaborate confusion that has never had enough power to shed light on every part. They have all dealt with different aspects related to Chokwe traditions, art, socio-political organizations, wars and resistance, and network building with neighbors. However, there are still many other topics that deserve attention and that have not been adequately addressed. This dissertation is precisely about such untouched topics as history and social life. Furthermore, other studies related to Chokwe have not paid enough (or any) attention to Chokwe identities over years, on the one hand, and the human body as the main agency participating in the elaboration and construction of their successive identities. This dissertation has taken on an additional curiosity: material culture as another possible source for the understanding Chokwe identities.

Before Simon Kayembe Malhinda Tshikuta, there was another Chokwe, Ambroise Muhunga, who based his contribution on rich oral traditions of his family, and testimonies he collected from the three countries where Chokwe are most present (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Zambia). Muhunga (1962) believed in the Chokwe Nation and thus decided to write about their different dynasties that permitted its construction around the three mentioned countries. He elaborately pointed out the Chokwe's bigness through their significant action, culture and quick expansion over vast geographical areas. He discussed family histories and mentioned how chiefs ascended to power, and the nature of power they had. With many details, Muhunga (1962:11-63) elaborated on successive genealogies that led the Chokwe populations in the kingdoms they were able to build. He eventually demonstrated how powerful the Chokwe people have always been, and how none of their local neighbors was able to have any military victory over them. Muhunga (1962) also confirmed that apart from the three colonial nations (Belgium, Britain, and Portugal), none was strong enough to face the Chokwe military force. The three-fold colonial force could push the Chokwe in three different directions, which, in turn, led them to the three countries in question where they are most present today. Unfortunately, once again similar to the controversies mentioned above, in writing this book, Muhunga was, in fact, rebuking the largely circulated stories that wanted Chokwe to be widely connected with the Lunda, and dependent on their aura. However, Ambroise Herman Muhunga denied the existence of any Lunda supremacy. He did not accredit the Lunda with any superiority. For this writer, Chokwe people were the strongest warriors of all times. They were the ones who always fought for the Lunda and permitted them to survive. Consequently, Muhunga suggested the Lunda owed

everything to Chokwe populations. They were largely indebted to them for human sacrifices they had accumulated over many years, ones that had given many Lunda the opportunity to survive. It goes without saying that presented in Muhunga's terms, the question here above raised can be reviewed, and brought to the table one more time. For, when forces fight for a country or a sovereign, they are known as special forces working for the power at hand, and as a result they cannot be in any way superior to their bosses they protect.

Finally, Muhunga (1962) endeavored to prove that Chokwe chiefs resisted the colonial power. They strictly stuck to what was acceptable, and necessary for their people. They refused any compromise about anything that was likely to dehumanize their people, or to put them in difficult conditions with their neighbors. Muhunga also points out the strong solidarity that characterized the Chokwe people transnationally as they united to help each other especially when there was a catastrophe such as war, or forced migration (Ndua Solol, 2015). Through such statements, Ndua Solol (2015) and Muhunga (1962) identify Chokwe first as strong warriors for their community interests, and also as a significant group that could build up strong relations with neighbors and partners<sup>7</sup>. In the same vein, they describe the Chokwe as a quite religious people whose relations with their leaders concern ancestral considerations that construct a hierarchical precedence and priority that pays attention to "Kalunga," the Creator, at first; ancestors follow immediately after; and kings and community leaders logically come after them. They stand for the living beings who would take every gifts and sacrifices due to gods, and whose anger, curse, and condemnation are understood to have a negative impact on the undisciplined community members, and may eventually have consequences on the entire the community (Tempels, 1947)<sup>8</sup>. It is through this

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<sup>7</sup> On August 31, 2016 on our way back from the Likumbi Lya Mize in Zambezi, Zambia, we met an exceptional well-identified Chokwe, Dr. Sakaimbo from Kabwe. His family lived a story that could be compared to many other people's around the world in the diaspora. His grandparents came from Angola at the beginning of the twentieth century and easily found a place where to live in the Northwestern province. That is where the doctor was born: "I know my ancestors came from Angola. I am a Zambian, but I feel the need to connect with other Chokwe populations within the cultural rainbow that sends us back to King Mwa Tshisenge". His convictions have changed him into a researcher who would like to collect as much information as possible about the Chokwe. He follows what the Chokwe do in their countries and especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and is happy that joint activities can be organized to gather the Chokwe from different countries.

<sup>8</sup>This dissertation mentions a couple of times Placide Tempels as the first who had the opportunity to use the concept African Philosophy. I would like to invite readers to slowly take on the intellectual quest for the definition of African Philosophy. Father Tempels was condemned mainly for talking about things he did not know enough and he could not be a part of. Also, his colonial position could not permit him to get in the right position for an objective observation and narrative description concerning the local people social ways, and material facts. African scholars

combination of open and transparent practices and relations to invisible deities that the Chokwe populations structure their community life, look forward to connections with neighbors, and view possible development aspects from whatever can keep them in contact with their ancestors, and help them stay active in their meetings with neighbors and other visitors.

Apart from the website mentioned earlier, <http://www.mutambi.org>, Lambert Kandala, in his quality of Mwa Tshisenge Court Prince, is the main writer whose main papers and relevant excerpts have been republished on the Chokwe website <http://www.mutambi.org/>. The author, certainly motivated by his family position, also digs into oral traditions still available at the royal court to depict the long Chokwe history. He particularly insists on long time links the Lunda-Chokwe kingdom has had with Angola. It is indeed Angola that has always worked as a backbone power provider to both the Lunda, at first, and the Chokwe for several centuries. It is thanks to Angolan Chokwe that the Paramount Chief Mwant Yav was provided with strong military forces many times in history. When later, the Angola Chokwe assisted the Congolese Chokwe in their opposition to the Lunda in 1887, the Lunda lost, and the Congolese Chokwe stopped paying any loyalty to the Lunda emperor.

The above detail is quite significant as it once again brings about the often-raised question about any possible understanding of Lunda's superiority at a given point. It goes without saying: the least that should be recognized is that throughout their history, the Chokwe populations have had ambiguous attitudes and positions towards their cousins Lunda. By defending their enemies and by, from time to time, paying loyalties to the Mwant Yav, on the one hand, and by installing them in power (as Kayembe early mentioned so proudly points out), the least we can say is that during their shared history several Chokwe have had ambiguous attitudes. The Chokwe's free choices could be misinterpreted, for their history reveals much more support (or submission) to the Lunda. It is with these colonial powers that built a friendship with the Lunda that the Chokwe were suddenly presented as disobedient, undisciplined, and opposed to the colonial authority (Ndua Solol, 2015). They were slowly moved away from the public scene, treated as public enemies, and forced to silence. And moved to separate lands.

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such as Mudimbe, Hountondji, Mbembe, Appiah, Abiola, Asante... made the missionary their criticism target for having misrepresented and homogenized African thoughts.

It is within the Chokwe spirit of community evolution and safeguarding socio-political principles that Prince Lambert Kandala insists on the independence of many Chokwe chiefs in their links with the colonial representatives and the Lunda. It is also through their fighting power, presence and landownership through centuries that the Chokwe constructed their visibility and recognition to all their neighbors. They finally came to build their own powerful kingdom for which the Mwant Yav has always had much respect as neighbors. However, through the same oral sources, this author also agrees with Kayembe (2015a) that the Lunda should look at Chokwe as their uncles who left the Lunda empire to mark their refusal of a foreign War Chief, Chibinda Ilunga (who took the Lunda power through his marriage to Princess Luweji). Kandala's version of the Chokwe history credits many oral traditions still alive at Mwene Mwa Tshisenge's royal court in Sandoa. Independent storytellers still digging deep in the long Lunda-Chokwe history often perform the same different versions.

The Chokwe site mentioned above particularly focuses on foreign scholars such Léon Duysters and D. Bieduck. A visit of Mutambi.org site reveals that the first, i.e., Duysters criticizes the second, Bieduck, for the treatment of the Chokwe without revealing the real side of their power. The Chokwe depiction was not enough and not just. In fact, the invitation was in the direction of joining the researchers who rightly recognized the Chokwe as a powerful people. Such scholars clearly recognized Chokwe's power and superiority in relation to their neighbors. These scholars also mentioned how the internationally supported joint operation by the Portuguese, Belgian and British to decrease the Chokwe's power through imposed war in the early twentieth century was unjust and was a specific way to place the Chokwe under the authority of the Lunda kingdom, since the Lunda were obedient to Belgium. This violence finally forced the Chokwe to move in three different directions while seriously decreasing the influence of what could be considered as a powerful nation of that time.

## **II.5 Chokwe War Power, Land Occupation, and Social Strategies**

Ndaywel E. Nziem (1998) continues this same debate over the Lunda-Chokwe's dichotomist disorientation as he gets deeper into the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The sources he used have recognized Chokwe populations as an unyielding military force that has resisted the occupation of colonialists. Ndaywel E. Nziem (1998) displays different sources. They

mention the Chokwe as a strong people famous all over the region. They were particularly known along long trade routes that linked the inside of a vast region including Southern Congo, Northeastern Angola with the Atlantic, and the Indian coasts through commercial routes completely freed from all possible dangers. All ethnic groups over the main region were part of a “chokwization” process because they had no choice but submission for their survival. The policy left them the choice to convert into Chokwe, working for the Chokwe and having their children and wives completely transformed into Chokwe. Women were also expected to give birth to newborns who would increase the number of the Chokwe. With these strategies, the Chokwe had become a very powerful machine that everybody was afraid of, including even the colonial powers.

The discussion here seems to achieve a new and more comprehensible orientation when Vellut (1995; 2005; 2006) gets into the debate and sheds light on zones that may otherwise have been neglected, even if his first attention does not go straight on the Chokwe. He reminds his readers that there already was much violence before colonial times since there were many structures used to have access to leadership over a period. Thus, certain agreements put different groups together that found interest in mutual protection. The slave trade as such was also the cause of much violence, and many chiefs had to find protection for their people or had to agree to deliver their people for free to the slave merchants to achieve some peace. The arrival of the colonial times was a consolation in some ways, but it also had its violence. Through such a presentation of the colonial period, our readers will understand the Chokwe’s power, and its successive setbacks, disappointments, and tribulations, as they worked with different powers of the time. They illustrated through their actions in the Lunda Empire their allegiance to the Lunda. Their secession from the empire was essentially motivated by the will to reach their full capacity and independence. They developed their fire capacity, created socio-cultural useful spaces for their communities, and made their areas and lands the safest for whoever would choose to live under the protection of Chokwe warriors. Chokwe warriors, indeed, worked at first with slave traders who needed to get their shipments on the Atlantic coast. Then, the colonial powers needed them to enforce order in different places. Thus, in one way or another, the Chokwe populations remained a local, unavoidable, geostrategic power consulted and used in many difficult situations. With the evolution of events the slave trade stopped. Geographical territories were somehow completely submitted to the colonial rule. Chokwe warriors had become “useless” and



a danger that needed to be evacuated, especially after the Berlin conference divided the Chokwe land and attributed it to the main occupying powers.

It is about that time Vellut (2006) emerged as a historian and specialist of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, writing a fascinating text dated from 2006 entitled “*Angola-Congo: l’invention de la frontière Lunda.*” His text presents the main ideas of the time concerning borders and the local populations. He first mentions a specific dynamic in the sub-region that includes several people moving in different directions around areas whose borders are not clear at all and do not fall under the western idea of spaces called countries limited within specific boundaries. It is worth mentioning with Vansina (1966a) that this sub-region was not a tabula rasa; on the contrary, it was governed and had well known African kingdoms. In fact, there is a large area that seems to be under the Lunda influence, and thus under the authority of the Mwant Yav. Ethnic groups easily intermingled as spaces interpenetrated natural fluid frontiers. In the vast area where many people move around, Vellut (2006) mentions names such as “Njinga, Bondos, Mbalanga, Ambaca, Malanje, Quimbundu, Bie” that stand for large organized population groups, distinct from each other, sharing regional customs regarding succession in power and large cousin relationships permitting them to attend each other’s main customary rituals. Most of them seemed to move around and connected differently with the influential Lunda, on the one side, and the Chokwe, experienced traders, and fighters, on the other. Finally, in this local influence competition, two areas particularly attracted much attention as the Katanga and the Lunda territories attracted the colonial powers, i.e., the Independent State of the Congo, Portugal and Britain (Vellut, 2006). Under the pretext of getting rid of the exponentially and dangerously growing Chokwe commercial capacities and territory invasion power that exposed many local chieftaincies to quite ephemeral reigns. Most Chokwe were finally pushed away without any considerable opposition by the tripartite coalition (Belgium, Portugal, and Britain) in the directions of the three colonial power territories, in order to have much control over them and limit their nuisance capacity. In fact, this thesis is among many things demonstrating that the forced migration towards well-chosen territories under each of the three powers did not succeed to put an end to the Chokwe identity as such. On the contrary, it opened spaces for much solidarity, and opportunities for the Chokwe to think about different survival techniques, alongside cooperation with their neighbors and their ethnic cousins. Henceforth, several Chokwe

managed their survival capacity well through different strategies developed along years. Their culture became the main mold for their community and personal identities

At the same time, according to different oral and written sources, the above mentioned scholars (Kayembe, 2015a; Muhunga, A.H., 1962; Ndua Solol, 2015; Vellut, J.L.. 2006, 2005), the colonial powers in their presence had special plans that opposed the Lunda and the Chokwe. For the international powers, local opponents should free the zone that seemed prepared for international trade. However, the international partners did not share the same interests. Their alliances could not last long. For, the British and Belgians would unite against Portuguese sometimes, and on other occasions, Belgians and Portuguese would unite against British while trying to stop their respective expansions. Alternatively, these powers avoided that none of them get a territory that would cover a space going from one coast to the other (Roberts, 1976). The Portuguese were attacked for thinking about a territory that would move borders from the actual Angola to Mozambique. The British were attacked for their wish to expand from Tanzania to North or South Rhodesia. Finally, the Independent State of the Congo wanted to move towards the Indian coast to have a territory that would be open on the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Once again, the temporary alliances would explode as Belgians from the Independent State of the Congo and Portuguese found a compromise over the vast territory known as the Lunda kingdom, and decided to get Portuguese support to stop the British expansion (Vellut, 2006).

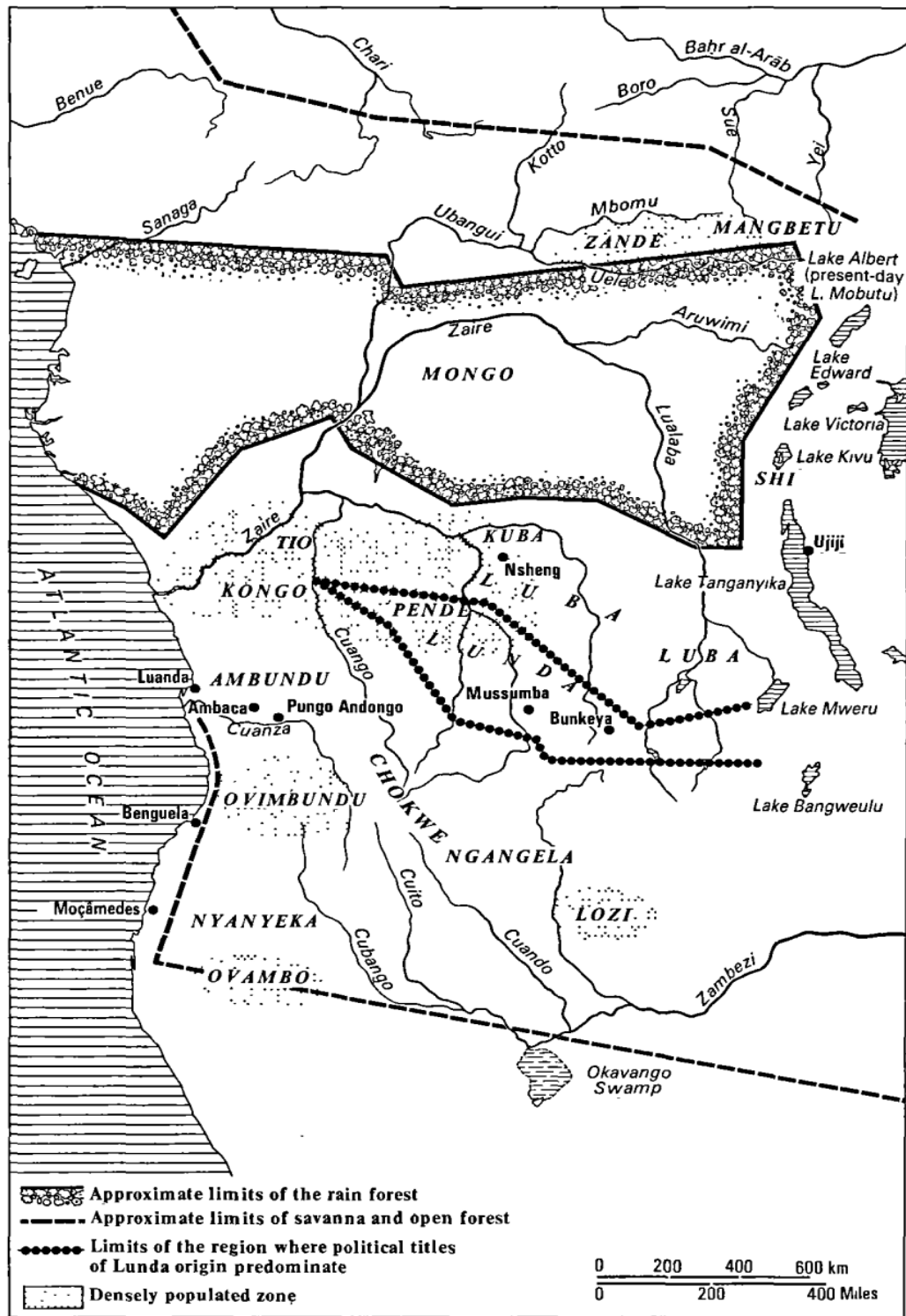


FIG. 12.1 West Central Africa in the nineteenth century (after J. L. Vellut)

Figure 10 Chokwe Expansion into Three Different Directions and Countries (by Vellut)

To denote an explicit consideration of the divisions of that time and how power was organized in the evolution of the Lunda-Chokwe empire, Ade Ajayi (1995) can certainly provide our readers with useful information and details of the time. However, more than anything else present in that book, there is just a part of it that should be read for the understanding about how much confusion there is, even though, at the same time, things are clear. Contrary to many other sources considered here, Vellut (1995:394) locates the most intense contacts between the Lunda and the Chokwe around 1800-80, the time during which the Lunda were levying taxes from many local people. It is the time of breaks with the past with densely populated areas here and there (even though the death rate remained quite high). It is the time when trade has become the main activity of the Lunda-Chokwe as pointed out on the map hereafter. It is finally during this period that the world economy influenced this part of the world, bringing changes in political organizations, production models, and leadership considerations.

Vellut (1995:302) has noted during these times the first movements of the Chokwe especially around the Tshikapa region. Many young Chokwe chose to migrate towards densely populated areas where their wives could deal with agriculture, whereas they would get involved in hunting elephants, setting hives for collecting honey and wax, all products they could sell in local markets and to caravans going through Musumba, the Lunda kingdom capital. From 1870 onwards, Vellut (1995:316) combines some details to explain the Chokwe movements in the region. First, the Lunda area of Musumba, essentially around Kalagne (known mostly in oral traditions, and in our fieldworks as Kalany) was overpopulated. Secondly, the young Chokwe highly desired to escape from the Chiefs' rapacity to make use of all captives' manpower. Mwant Yav Nawej (C.1820-52) was cruel. He combined traditional weapons, such as arrows, and the first fire guns which he got from the Chokwe warriors he had invited from Angola around 1840 to dominate many people, even far from Musumba (Vellut, 1995:316). The Lunda kingdom knew years of prosperity under Mwant Yav Muteba (C. 1857-73) who worked much with business people from Angola. However, at his death Shanam took the power thanks to the Chokwe warriors he had invited from Angola. He became Mwant Yav Mbumba (C.1857-1873). Upon this death, the Chokwe warriors managed to get the royal bracelet for Mbumba's son Mushidi. Henceforth, the Chokwe populations became very powerful and went their way to build up strong areas of their own (Vellut, 1995:318-319; Nduwa Solol E, 2015; Ndaywel E Nziem, 1008, Muhunga, A. , 1962; Vansina, 2004, 2010, 1966). Once again, unfortunately, even though coherent, Vellut's account,

despite much support from other scholars, brings about another confusion as it is only one among many other versions so far presented. This account can be credited for the confirmation of the Chokwe's quick conversion to new technologies and movements in the region. Secondly, the narrative makes clear that the Chokwe were rarely in the same place, but easily moved from one location to another especially when they had to flee from dominating powers. Finally, as a military force, the Chokwe people, all the same, seemed so versatile that they managed a capitalist vision of their services. They chose for bosses whoever could guarantee the best payment for rendered services and recognize their services with humility in the lands where they went.

In all these land division operations, the Chokwe people were not spared; they became a justifiable excuse to insist on the importance of local population movements in different directions to clearly delimit new territories. It goes without saying that the Chokwe people were affected by all this dependency on colonial powers that did not take into account the welfare of the local population. Should we go as far as there to find one of the reasons why the entire Chokweland was suspected, why much distance was constantly put between the fighting people and the other docile people? This dissertation will have the opportunity to document the point in depth. Finally, the Chokwe populations were forcibly pushed towards the three different countries that these super powers owned. Once again, all the violence also concerned many other Chokwe neighbors. In fact, little attention was paid to the Chokwe; as such, they were easily confused with the big groups. It is worth mentioning however that either a coincidence or a planned policy in the areas where the Chokwe populations moved has been exposed to long years of violence. Independence wars at first, then the secession war in the Congo, the UNITA in Angola, all forced Chokwe populations to move from one place to another in a new kind of war that had nothing to do with their long history.

Of the three countries here above mentioned, two, i.e., the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola, went through years of wars particularly characterized by inhuman atrocities. For instance, the civil war in Angola had already started before the independence continued until 2002 when the UNITA leader Savimbi was ambushed and killed with fifteen bullets. His forces were either completely decimated or on the run with few surviving. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Katanga secession war in the 60s, as well as the late 70s Katanga invasions

from Angola, had their main operations in the Chokwe areas. The Chokwe populations had to move mostly to Zambia for their safety, and for the survival of their family members. Those who survived locally suffered under the dictatorship of President Mobutu. They were called rebels and excluded from national considerations as dangerous and unreliable people. In Angola, they had (either by choice or by force) to join Savimbi's rebel forces. Ipso facto, their Angolan territory also was submitted to government incriminations, and therefore suspected for many years without any objectives. They were pushed to the margins of their society. They were also excluded from national sympathies. All this violence led to another confusion as everybody living in the area where there was war was abusively called a Chokwe, or a rebel in both countries: in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Zambia.

## **II.6 A New Vision of the Chokwe**

For many years, especially under the reign of President Mobutu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a total silence covered the Chokwe because the President had identified them as public enemies, and isolated them. When there was a kind of national inclusive tendency, most of the time the Chokwe populations were still represented by Lunda intellectuals. In Angola, after 2002, the country had taken care of landmines that the warriors had left in many localities. However, still, the Chokwe people were looked at like murderers that attempted to destroy the entire country with fire. In Zambia where they had gone after fleeing from war tragedies, many Chokwe arrived at first in refugee camps. However, slowly many of them started moving away from the refugee camps because they could go to their "cousins" who were happy to welcome them. The only reason many of them accepted the UN camps in the first place is because they were given advantages they could share with their local cousins. However, wherever the Chokwe populations were, they were in places that did not get much attention from the government. Moreover, they had to face many challenges regarding modernity and modernisms, as the Northwestern province is quite poor compared to other Zambian provinces.

Recently, at the Tshikapa Chokwe Symposium (July 10-12, 2015), two eminent historians gave two important conferences on the Chokwe populations. First, De Saint Moulin (2015) looked at the Chokwe people from the perspective of African population history and migration around Africa. De Saint Moulin believes the Chokwe populations like many other Bantu language

speakers came from the north from around Lagos in Nigeria. They went on their migration towards the south. Finally, they reached the Angolan area from which they were able through different population waves to reach different places and mainly what J. Vansina (1985; 1966, 1999) calls the “Lunda Commonwealth.” He also describes the Chokwe people as quite industrious since they developed important commercial routes, connections with neighbors, and were quite known for their capacity to adapt to their temporal needs. He essentially locates them in the three countries here above-mentioned, i.e., the Democratic Republic of the Congo (primarily in the Katanga province, in western Kasai and Bandundu, Angola and Zambia). In the same vein, he offers a few words on the Chokwe culture that he believes are at the roots of an adamant identity developed in an unyielding war operational machine whose tactical and emblematic strategies permitted their expansion over significant territories.

It is this cultural identity and those highly military strategies that Ndua Solol (2015), a historian of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a particular focus on the Lunda Empire, reveals in its many dimensions. We had the chance to interview him on the same topic regarding Chokwe expansion and power. For him, the Chokwe power is revealed through different myths that preceded their names and connected them with war victories they had over many other local people. Oral traditions often associated these victories with Chokwe’s long time hunting experience, weapon fabrication traditions as well as other traditions related to their use of witchcraft and magic.

In the interview, Ndua Solol underlined the fact that their neighbors described the Chokwe in many ways. Many rumors circulated about these warriors, and stories were constructed as their neighbors continued being afraid of them. These rumors connected them to their fighting power and capacity to defeat all their enemies. So many people were afraid of them and described them with rumors that circulated in places where they were perceived as a powerful conquering machine. In Ndua’s terms : *“Les rumeurs les décrivait comme les plus puissants de tout le territoire. Jamais leurs voisins n’avaient vu plus forts que les Chokwe. Leur puissance de feu et magique surpassait tout entendement”* (Ndua, Tshikapa Interview, July 11, 2015).

Chokwe people were particularly believed to be omnipresent. Shadowy stories included victories, superiority, and magic over their neighbors. Many of the rumors still circulate about their questionable alliances that they had with local actors in the slave trade, and through which the

Chokwe populations had made their wealth in those days. In these days, the Chokwe populations were connected with different foreign powers present in the region. They had finally become unavoidable in a vast area where their influence was visibly present and growing with time as all their neighbors looked with terror at them (Stryf, 1935; Turner, 1962).

Apart from tracking them through military violence and finally pushing them to different countries, which did not seem enough, it seemed more productive to oppose them to their neighbors and to the powerful Lunda under various pretexts carefully worked on by the colonial powers. However, amid this difficult period (the nineteenth century and early twentieth century), the Chokwe populations illustrated themselves through their military superiority. Moreover, their main power challenger, the Lunda, also happened to be the only partners they assisted, and could eventually consider as the “incontestable” partners. The Chokwe regularly offered them military personnel needed in all war operations. Despite everything, the Chokwe managed to have an unyielding kingdom of their own. This kingdom regularly got the assistance of other Chokwe coming from today’s Angola. In the succession of royal chiefs who built the Chokwe kingdom, the name Samazemba illustrates the Chokwe resistance in an increasingly growing regional power, and their illustration of a unique people focusing on cultural traditions, and aiming at the construction of a power covering the entire sub-region.

According to Ndua Solol, Chokwe King Samazemba was also famous through his controversial with the colonial power represented by the Belgian administration. He was ready to cooperate as long as what he was asked to do was human. He also resisted whenever what the colonial administration requested could not be considered as human and led instead to the dehumanization of his people. Because of what King Samazemba was, a resistant Chokwe leader, the Belgian administrative agents found every pretext to mistreat him and represent him as the worst possible local chief who did not want any cooperation with the Belgian administration. It goes without saying that this comparison was made with the main aim to show that the Lunda chiefs were better than the Chokwe chiefs. The Chokwe populations were presented as unpredictable and largely incompetent politicians, a failure as leaders. From their historical activities, this presentation was only a propagandist communication arrangement for hurting the Chokwe image and getting rid of them from the political arena.



All in all, Professor Edouard Nduwa Solol Kanampung's conference paper (Ndua Solol, 2015) illustrated the case of people whose cultural traditions and political choices - though quite changed for colonial propagandist purposes - permitted the construction of firm identities that kept growing in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Despite tough local and international oppositions of incompatible kinds, nothing could stop their identities from moving, adapting to novelties, and carrying on a strong link with their outstretched history. The Chokwe had specific military strategies to gain victories over time, and to impose customary traditions over neighbors. They also had the capacity to manage their relationships with neighbors in such a way that their culture would maintain the leadership while encouraging all the others to follow them. Many people chose to be on the side of the Chokwe warriors for their protection during a time when there was much insecurity with the slave trade still going on here and there.

Here is an example of a magical story still circulating about the Chokwe King Samazemba, and accepted in almost all Chokwe villages: he was believed to be more powerful than a lion. Also, many people were sure King Samazemba could change into a lion; the simple sound of his voice could also change into a roaring lion. King Samazemba's powers could shake trees, rivers, and change wind directions. Whenever Belgians trapped him, he always surprised them by the ways in which he would respond or announce his presence. All oral sources from Mwene Mwa Tshisenge's court concur with Ndua Solol's presentation. There was a strong connection between King Samazemba and natural forces. Violent whirlwinds announced his arrival. Wild animals roared as the king arrived from nowhere and could also disappear within a minute giving a headache to whoever thought about following him or knowing his whereabouts<sup>9</sup>.

## **II.7 More Focused Knowledge of the Chokwe from a Broader Cultural Perspective**

With time, there are now more and more focused studies of the Chokwe. We have to underline that most of these studies come after the aforementioned Wastiau (2006) that shows how much

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<sup>9</sup> Testimonies about King Samazemba's life have helped us much in what would later on culminate in an attempt to define African Philosophy and give it a different perspective from the ones based on discussions, condemnations, academic schools and fighting with prestigious African scholars. This king was a living proof of African Philosophy or better Chokwe philosophy itself. He was not discussing it or trying to show it but was leading a normal life of king, a Chokwe king whose life is a mystery connecting the Sacred and the Profane, the Visible and the Invisible, and a world of living ancestors with ancestors who passed away long ago, their spirits, and the assistance of few experienced community elders. The Chokwe believe that the dead are not dead and still participate in the social life of the communities. Though invisible, the ancestors continue living as active members of their communities.

confusion led to the inclusion of Chokwe art in other cultures. In the same vein, it is essential to keep present in mind that cultural facts finally reveal the best way to approach the long-time discussion on the Chokwe's situation and possible comparison with other neighboring people. For whereas the debates mentioned to this point tend to find out who is called superior in the function of the socio-political occupation/leadership in the last centuries, the conclusions we are slowly producing show that it is difficult to draw a straight line with the superiority of either the Chokwe or the Lunda. Their common history is full of confusion, overlapping with interchangeable actors, the same actors sometimes standing for Chokwe, and other times for Lunda. There is with the group of new critiques another thread putting more stress on artistry, artifacts, and creativity to determine a precise cultural group.

Instead of sticking to the Chokwe with only a strong focus on political activities/social responsibilities as once perceived in their relationships with their neighbors and colonial powers, Wastiau (2006) is in a group of scholars who look at Chokwe in a broader way that includes a larger presentation. The Chokwe populations are seen through many lenses that include, but not exclusively, their successive geographical locations, specific cultural features mainly of art production and its impact on social evolution, artistic specificities, rituals with social growth, and political endeavors that have built a strong socio-politico-historical network.

In order to achieve that endeavor, first, Wastiau (2006:7-16) like Jordan (1998) stresses an important detail that keep recurring in other levels of this dissertation with regard to understanding Chokwe identities. The Chokwe populations are described as living in a huge geographical area where they share space with other people. The big area includes portions of the three countries here above-mentioned including Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Angola. It is obviously noticeable that the other people (besides the Chokwe) discussed in this dissertation, even though sharing the same language and obviously very closely the same culture, are present over several areas in three different neighboring countries. They can obviously be easily confused and commented on in different ways.

Concerning the point discussed in the above paragraphs and with regards to migrations, Wastiau (2006:7) contrary to De Saint Moulin (2015) rather locates the Chokwe migration departure point in the seventeenth century when they were identified as a dissident group from the Lunda Empire. All around their migration routes, the Chokwe populations brought with them hunting

techniques they had learned from their disputed cultural hero, Chibinda Ilunga. Historians among whom are the earlier Ndua Solol (2015) and Ndaywel E. Nziem (1998)) pinpoint the contradictory fact that persists from their departure from the Lunda Empire. They refuse the Lunda superiority and reject the cultural hero, Chibinda Ilunga. At the same time, they are ambassadors of the Chokwe-Lunda culture based on the main techniques that the cultural hero brought. The Chokwe populations became the ambassadors of a culture they cannot deny and that has become theirs. Ethnologist, historians and anthropologists of the Congo together with Wastiau (2006) also describe how Chokwe share the same geographical area with many other people including Luchazi, Luena, Luvale, Mbunda, Lunda and Ndembu (generally called Lunda in Zambia). In the same vein, these people's geographical areas superpose each other through commonly inhabited lands, in the same way their cultural productions superpose each other. Music and artistic studies from the large area give eloquent proof of how these close people living within similar vicinities share the same values, and especially the same philosophical and religious concepts that demonstrate the shared particularities through their cultural production, principally through music production. They have also shared through many centuries the same specific sand drawings always produced in a continuous line (Wastiau, 2006).

Wastiau (2006:8-10) richly documents how the same socio-politico-cultural institutions that these different people shared in common led them to share the same rituals, even if in some cases the artistic objects may have had different names. As our readers can see, such a perspective represents a source that could be exploited in order to find out how local dynamics have developed either in the same or in different directions for given purposes. It is especially from the early eighteenth century that such art objects may be noticed; most of them were exported to the West and can still be visited in rich museums around the world.

These art objects have shown an unyielding dynamic that connects Chokwe to their neighbors, giving art historians a challenge to document standard features and continuous influences from neighbors. That challenge has finally disclosed a potential for hybridity (or hybridism) as a strong concept related to the sub-regional art production and growth, especially impressive through many miniatures needed for different purposes. They can essentially be seen as body fetish pendant artifacts, divinatory or altar, sacred/profane objects needed and used in many places. Many people were and are still crazy about such small objects that can be carried on the body for

personal protection, or that were often regarded for their symbolic values possessing powers needed to solve different social issues that happened daily. Later, we will also see how important they were for divination; the “Tupele” or small objects contained in the divinatory baskets were useful to determine personal destiny within an environment where various forces interacted and could harm people’s health. The Chokwe populations were leaders in health and divinatory fields.

These miniatures were also quite visible in the artistry related to treating health issues and were in many cases inspired by the cultural hero Chibinda—always shown carrying his charm bag. As a matter of fact, apart from hunting secrets and magic attributed to the cultural hero, the “Hamba” ritual develops a long spectrum of diseases that affect people’s lives and may force them to change as they face different illnesses. Lima (1971) largely documents the Hamba in their different functions. We will use his resources as the dissertation deals with different health questions disturbing the Chokwe people, and mention Hamba relating to fields like possession, cults, fertility, and hunting.

Altogether, these objects, combining functional attributes that are artistic, divinatory, fetishist, medicinal and shamanistic, are also determinant in tracking several routes that the Chokwe populations followed all around the sub-region. Through these cultural routes thus dug by these scholars, it is possible to reveal that the Chokwe had an especially strong influence during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as their expansion spread. They had different strategies that ensured their presence everywhere. Wastiau (2006:11) informs readers that Chokwe leaders, explorers and hunters “led their people to new hunting and fishing grounds and farmlands” all along breakaways that ultimately produced different big communities or kingdoms. At other times, the Chokwe populations would move in small groups for building hunting camps from which they slowly pushed local people to contest their local chiefs’ authorities. Or again, they purposefully asphyxiated a local culture by surrounding a vast area using their cultural influence through their artists, ritual masters, hunting experts, customary managers, and different healers. Slowly, many people within the area would start speaking Chokwe and identified as such. However, the most successful tactic of all involved intermarriage with local foreign women. In the matrilineal system, women took particularly care of the children and men could easily continue new land conquests. Thanks to these women, the children they had and the ones they

had with the Chokwe warriors were quickly introduced and educated into Chokwe traditions. In this way, the number of Chokwe grew quite quickly (Wastiau, 2006:10).

Apart from Wastiau (2006) and Jordan (1998) many times referred to in this section of the dissertation, other sources testify about the presence of the Chokwe populations within a broad cultural area where they share some many anthropological commonalities. Also, Wastiau (1998), Silva (2014), like years before them D’Azevedo (1973) and Wingert (1973), or again like Bastin (1982), have all demonstrated that the culture that prevails and is often labeled Chokwe culture results from a long heritage that shuffles people and their local customs. Most of them still claim the same origins from the Lunda empire, or have long been physically fighting while, at the same time, copying cultural assets from each other. Questions regarding health, reproduction, community wellbeing, fear of the witch, and need of protection from ancestors have led them to share sources and security practices that still unite them very much and often lead them to have the same social agents, as well as healers that move in communities claiming ethnic differences.

Also, in their works only distant of a few years, De Boeck and Devisch (1994), Jordan (1996), Bouttiaux (2006), and closeby Collier (2012), and another text by Silva (2013), they all put the Chokwe populations in a large cultural network that spans from human meetings to tossing baskets determining how to maintain individual and community wellbeing. During these healing and blessing search operations, often the same ancestors are called and asked for their assistance. Above all, the patterns followed seem to have been inherited from the same sources and transmitted in the same *modus operandi* from generation to generation. Later, chapters seven and eight will look at these cultural events as commonalities that build up the social capital that permits a society to move in time.

Finally, such changes and evolution in time and within the same social groups make it difficult to make a distinction between one group and another. The Chokwe have thus moved from one generation to the next while collecting cultural experiences, and growing as a social group largely relying on ancestors, and mastering different aspects dealing with medicinal plants. Because of their capacity to accumulate skills and necessary expertise in their communities, the Chokwe populations slowly became a force attracting everybody and open to many groups sharing together a distant past. Also, it can be difficult to decide from a set of cultural characteristics which ones depict only the Chokwe people. As a proof, most of the groups celebrate their social

events together and move from one geographical space to another in the same way their music, medicinal potential, and philosophical visions move into dynamic waves that could be called: “chokwescape.” This concept would thus be a reproduction of Appadurai’s word, ethnoscape, that points out how social groups rise up for following and respecting the same interests.

## **II.8 Identities in the Oral Traditions, Myths, Epics, and Legends**

Jordan (1998) and Wastiau (2006) expand on the starting point of these migrations that led Chokwe to be a separate people from the Lunda. Several variables of a story concern a myth or an epic a myth around the circulation of the Chokwe populations and their neighbors in the sub-region. The narrative starts with the coming to power of the Mwant Yav (also known as “the gabon Viper, or *Bitis gabonica*, a name referring to his powers and to the spirits, in his quality of the guardian of the fertility bracelet) supposedly born from the chieftainess Lweji and the Luba hunter Chibinda Ilunga. Kayembe (2015a), Muhunga (1962), and Ndua’s interview have another version of the myth. For them, and they are not the only ones, Mwant Yav was an illegitimate son, born from a servant that princess Lweji had passed over to her husband to make sure that the couple could finally get a child. In fact, in the oral tradition, that servant is named “Kamong” which in the Lunda language means “Vagina.” The servant was thus a vagina lent to Chibinda Ilunga to make sure he could get an heir (symbolically, it could be perceived as a form of appropriation of the wild outside for continuation of the clan). Unfortunately, the Chokwe, then also Lunda like everybody, did not accept that their power go to an illegitimate heir born from a foreign warrior, Chibinda Ilunga.

Royal close families did not agree that the son of a foreigner, even though the foreigner was a great hunter, and recognized for his contribution to the Lunda culture, be their king. Thus, “the most important secession of Mwantiyavwa’s Lunda group occurred in the seventeenth century” (Wastiau, 2006:10). In fact, this secession continued a schism that had already begun. Other people such as the Mbwela and Khoisan had already gone on their own ways before the large group of Luchazi, Ndembu and Luvale also took different geographical directions and developed in various ways despite the cultural homogeneity that was preserved (Wastiau, 2006:10-11).

Wastiau credits another variable story of Chokwe’s origins with the art historian Marie-Louise Bastin. The story in question probably comes from the Portuguese traders Capello and Evens

(1881, I, 1873-1874). This story was certainly told by a Chokwe chief Ndumba Tembo, and the story is still at Mwa Tshisenge court. Tembo or Lucoquessa, a noble woman, had three children by the name of Ndumba Tembo, Mazumbo Tembo and Kasanji Tembo (Wastiau 200:22). They were excellent hunters and decided one day to push towards western lands. From the court, many people followed them in search of available and fertile lands where they could settle and for starting a new state. The first group went in a successful mission and conquered “Tshiboko” that later became the land of the Chokwe.

In other versions, the nucleus that emerged in the identification of Chokwe and their history essentially was about a couple and the union of a Lunda noble woman, Lweji, and the Luba noble hunter, Chibinda Ilunga. This hunter had gone to the Lunda land where he met the chieftainess Luweji. Feared for his fetishes, highly respected for his hunting skills, and above all a handsome man, he attracted the princess who fell for him immediately. They were married and had children. Later on, the children born from this couple usurped the power (Wastiau, 2006:28). Chibinda the ancestor is often depicted with either a “stick or a flintlock latter introduced...at his belt he has a knife, a hatchet, a tin of powder and a protective fetish for the hunt. He is circumcised, a custom which was imposed on all the Chokwe boys” (Wastiau, 2006:28).

This story also provides a particular contribution to Chokwe identities insofar as it describes the time and the scene preceding the first couple’s marriage with a specific activity involving the Lunda princess Lweji. She is believed to have transported a great stone (on which her father, Yala Mwako, used to sit down) for using it like a cushion. She deposited it by a big tree. She presented it as a seat to the visitor before his interview with the king. And Chibinda is believed to have planted trees around that place, thus creating the first “Tshipanga” or ancestral altar where prayers and sacrifices were offered to ancestors. That place was thought to be a source of fertility, also highlighting Chokwe’s first female ancestor, Lweji and her husband, Chibinda (Wastiau, 2006:30). The Chokwe origin myth here has permitted the production of many such narratives that J. Vansina (1966a; 1999; 2004) has gone through trying to find out about the Lunda diaspora and their expansion in the nineteenth century (Wastiau, 2006:22-23). The growth pointed out previously in this paper opens possibilities to understand how Chokwe’s expansion in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Angola was effective and quick from the eighteenth century.

All versions do not report a successful development from the evolution of the marriage story of the first couple. Unfortunately, some oral tradition versions report that when already married Lweji had to face her menstruations, it was at a time during which she was not supposed to govern, or to put on the royal bracelet, "Lukano." The bracelet could not suffer any kind of spoliation. She decided to lend it to her husband Chibinda, ipso facto, making the foreigner the new king. However, for many in the royal family, the bracelet exchange was but a usurpation of power. Many among them considered this bracelet exchange as a betrayal of the royal order. For, Chibinda, a foreigner, had succeeded to get in the royal line without any blood link. For many in the royal family and the kingdom, that accession to power was unacceptable and unforgivable for the true heirs (Wastiau, 2006:31).

Other variables of the Chokwe early history and identities can still be found here and there, and duplicate most oral traditions still in circulation among different neighboring groups. Jordan (1998:26-29) gives an account that we came across in many places in our fieldwork, and even more recently in Tshikapa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (July 10-12, 2015). The Chokwe (then in the same group with Lunda) are said to have come from the north in the sixteenth century and occupied the region all around the southern Congo. The name Konde is mentioned as the senior chief who had two sons Chinguli and Chinyama, and a daughter Lweji. Some traditions accuse both brothers of abuses towards their sister and above all towards their father. They did not spare the old man and went as far as beating him almost to death. Beating their father was an unforgivable offense in the Lunda traditions where power had to pass from father to son. Konde thus decided to nominate as successor his daughter Lweji.

Muhunga (1962:37-38) gives another account of the origins of the Chokwe, but there is still much confusion around the entire construction of Chokwe identities. Muhunga he completely denies the story according to which once drunk, Chinguli would have beaten his father. In the same vein, he denies a version that reports their quarrel about clean water used for mat weaving, and that Chinguli would have poured the water. For Muhunga, none of the versions would be true because such a kind of quarrel is just impossible in the royal family. For the author, Yala Mwaka had two wives and had apart from Chinguli and Lweji born from Thumba VI, two other children born from another wife, Diur Ntupa and Nakapamba. Chinguli committed incest by going to bed



with his half-sister Nakapamba. For this reason, the king Yala Mwako had cursed his son; the latter was ashamed about his behavior and had decided to leave his father's kingdom.

To that same point, Muhunga (1962) denies one of the Chokwe reasons of secession from the kingdom. That reason was the royal bracelet "Lukano" that Lweji would have given to the royal hunter. As Lweji was having her menstruations, Chibinda Ilunga happily took the royal bracelet. Despite his foreign status, he got in the royal family. Muhunga denies this version for, according to him, customs are clear about such a thing happening. If she had menstruated while her brother was still around, by royal tradition obligation, she would have given the bracelet to her brother.

Lweji fell in love with a "royal Luba blood," the exceptionally gifted hunter, Chibinda Ilunga, whom she married, then Ilunga eventually maneuvered to become the new Lunda king. Despite the hunting new skills, he brought as well as his acquaintances with fetishes and other magic powers, Chinguli and his brother Chinyama could not agree with their father's decision to appoint their sister as his successor and could not at all tolerate the arrival of Chibinda as their king. Even as a brother-in-law, he was above all a foreigner, and could not whatever circumstances pretend to the throne.

For the royal family life within the same area became impossible. The royal brothers found another future. They decided to migrate and went in the southwest direction. They had many followers, and eventually managed to get along with local populations and start new kingdoms. Many ethnic groups including "Chokwe, Lwena, Luchazi, Mbundu, and other ethnic groups trace their origins to the Lunda migrations led by Chinguli and Chinyama in the early 1600s" (Jordan, 1998:27). In this vein, some oral traditions, though not all, believe that Chokwe were all the same under the authority of the Lunda king to whom they had to pay tribute and taxes. Jordan (1998:29) confirms these traditions by putting a strong stress on the 1887 Chokwe invasion of Lunda capital in the Congo. He particularly underlines that this invasion aimed at stopping the Lunda political influence, and thus "The Chokwe have since had their own paramount (supreme) chief called the Mwachisenge" (Jordan, 1998). Jordan is known worldwide for his scholarship of the Chokwe. He spent many years in the three countries under study, and speaks most of the local languages. He could not give a conclusion like the one here at random. His conclusion clarifies everything; it is only from 1887 that the Chokwe populations got rid of the Lunda supremacy. We believe a good way to understand Chokwe evolution through the last centuries is to look at a

comparison with the Nyanga people in the eastern Congo. Biebuyck (1969) explains how the Nyanga attain power and the kind of relationships they have. It is obvious that their neighbors participate in the organization of royal succession rituals. However, despite their contributions to the royal succession ceremonies, they do not compete with the eligible successors, but keep with them cousin relations. The Lunda and the Chokwe can be viewed within the same kind of relations.

From the sixteenth century, Chokwe are particularly known for their trade activities when they exchanged goods with Portuguese and local populations, eventually collaborating with their commercial partners, i.e., Portuguese, also in the slave trade. The Chokwe populations were particularly involved in exchanging Portuguese goods, such as weapons, powder, clothes, jewelries, alcohol ... for which they supplied other inside continent traders, local chiefs ready to sell their own people, and their own war captives if necessary. They also provided other kinds of payment in the form of elephant tusks.

Lima (1971:41-42)), who has worked with important oral sources from around Angola and accounts and testimonies from many Portuguese reports about their first day accounts in Angola, believes that the name Chokwe derives from the river “Tshiboko.” The river area was known for having welcomed exasperated migrants who had decided to move from the Lunda territory<sup>10</sup>. Interestingly enough, Lima (1971:42-43) plunges into oral traditions and mentions a captivating oral mythic tradition that envisions Lunda-Chokwe as people related to their origins. The myth of creation that Lima writes is an account credited to Chief Mwailunga from the Mona Quimbundo region in Angola. At the beginning were only Tshyanza Ngombe and mama Nyamweji, the big serpent that created everything including fire “Kahya” water “Meya<sup>11</sup>.” The same narrative also mentions Shakasangi as the one who made everything. He could see, but could not be seen. After Tshyanza Ngombe’s marriage to the thunder, Nzaji, he sojourned in the skies with his son,

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<sup>10</sup> Mesquitela Lima (1971) when referring to “Tshiboko” mentions scholars such as Bastin, Van den Byvang, McCulloch, Redinha, and Carvalho whose versions can be contested insofar as there is no river with the name “Chokwe.” However, we believe the account makes much sense because in African languages people are often named with reference to the place where they live.

<sup>11</sup> Vansina (2004:138) referring to the distant past mentions how communities kept their sacred fire alive and burning. That cultural observation has without doubt influenced nowadays historical considerations, local practices. Many Chokwe households, especially in villages, keep their fire alive on the fireplace even when the fire is not visible.

Tangwa, the sun, and his daughter Kakweji, both known for their traveling capacity around the world. The sun moves daily from East and West, and the moon, Kakweji, moves along stars “Tongomoshi” in a dance like atmosphere with lights in a succession of darkness and shadows within a festive atmosphere.

In this time, Nzaji’s urine was filling rivers and fertilizing the earth while making possible the growth of different plants, the presence of animals in the bush, and an exponentially growing number of different aquatic species among which fishes. Tshyanza Ngombe also known as Nyaweji lived surrounded by that wealth, and from her were born the first living beings called Namutu and Samutu. As in other myths around the world with regard to procreation, the couple Namutu and Samutu got married and got two children, Kondi ya Matete and Yala. From this couple were born Mwako and Kondi. The latter gave birth to Yala Mwako. This one finally got three children Tshinguli Mbangala, Tshinaya Mukwa Lwena and Lweji ya Kondi (Lima, 1971:43). Lima closely links this story with Yala Mwako’s sadness as his male children slowly turned into sour dictators killing or imposing impossible and unimaginable punishments on their countrymen. They pushed their cruelty as far as to mistreat their father, eventually beating him almost dead. For a long time, Yala Mwako was sick and had only the support of his daughter, Lweji. Contrary to their long traditions reserving power to male heirs, Yala Mwako received the support of the majority of his population to forget about his male heirs, get rid of them, and rather give the succession to his unique compassionate daughter Lweji.

Lweji succeeded her father in power. As she was already married to a Luba prince, and this one automatically became the king. As if this was not enough, the couple chose their own son Mwant Yav to become the new king. Lima’s version of the story tries to put together two other versions that reveal Mwant Yav’s name as related to the fact that the queen, on the point of giving birth, had to run from a big serpent and hide in a house. The incident was interpreted as a sign from ancestors. As soon the queen gave birth to a child, baby was given the name. Yet another version shows her as a barren woman who cannot give any son to her husband. She then chooses, “Kamong” from her servants “Amilombe,” one girl she gives to her husband in order to get a son and an heir. The dissident Chokwe may have added this detail to their long list of complaints and discontents that finally pushed them to leave the Lunda kingdom immediately. Some versions report that their sister was happy to see them gone because she was afraid for her family. She

thought her household was not safe as long her brothers would be around. The famous brothers had started with their patricide (they were accused of killing their father). Quickly, through different encounters and cooperative strategies with different ethnic groups met on their way, the Chokwe populations slowly changed their social organizations into matrilineal<sup>12</sup> considerations and agreements (Lima, 1971:54-61).

Of all narrative versions that try to explain Chokwe's origins throughout history and mythological productions, de Heusch (1982) has introduced a literary tradition that finds its source in Strauss' anthropology and structuralism. Also, the origin story of the Lunda that wants the ancestor to have been drunk and beaten by his children offers a master piece. It offers an opportunity to construct a full story turning around motifs. It also gives reasons that explain what happens when taboos are not respected. Thus, the origins of the Chokwe get into patterns that need more than simple testimonies, but rather a sum of narratives that need to be addressed with method in order to understand local aspirations that may be translated in philosophical presentations (Collier, 1986).

With the example of Biebuyck (1973) that permits us to get deeper into the Lega culture in the eastern Congo, de Heusch (1982) opens a door for knowledge of culture and its people as the Chokwe move along other social groups and together build their origin myths. When McCulloch (1951) depicted the Lunda in the southern Congo, many links came about. However, the most interesting were linked to their culture and spiritualities shared in similar rituals and highly demanding ceremonies<sup>13</sup>. Bastin (1968, 1988) went a step further as she revealed the close relationships between regional art production and spiritualities developed for different domestic and community wellbeing rituals. Readers should imagine themselves in front of a map that includes oral traditions, beliefs linked to long traditions, constructed and reinforced in different

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<sup>12</sup> On this point, Vansina (2004:90) joining other historians of that part of Africa raises a very important question: "From time to time, historians have wondered how the great matrilineal belt came into being. Was it common legacy of great antiquity, a legacy that had died out elsewhere?" The Chokwe experience shows a movement from an area involved in patriarchal succession to a matriarchal environment where much attention and consideration is given to matrilineal succession.

<sup>13</sup> De Heusch (1972; 1982; 1985; 1986; 1988; 2000; 2006) display an interesting scholarship on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and most particularly on the Lunda-Chokwe origins. In a wide combination of trance, religion, power, sacrificed, myths, and rites all presented in structuralist light, cultural traditions are approached and presented in their capacity to construct societies and ensure cultural transmissions from one generation to the next. In following Levi-Strauss' structuralist research methodology, he was able to accumulate considerations that led him to a strong construction of the origin of the Lunda Empire through the crisis opposing a king to his sons.

ways especially using a wide combination of artistry and spirituality. The Chokwe populations are at the center of that combination and have been playing a leading role in communicating oral traditions, domestic and community rituals and spiritualities. The Chokwe, thus, are found at the center of dynamics that propose, and keep for years, symbols, articulated language, and spatial organizations which have permitted the survival of a multidimensional culture and its gathering role in a big geographical region (Bastin, 1998; Lehuard, 1988; Strother, 1995).

The above paragraph leads us to a couple of observations. The first has to do with the permeability of the Lunda/Chokwe spatiality regarding geography, but mainly cultural dynamics whose features are shared, and often taken for granted as group cultural facts. The cultural porosity increases with demographic waves moving in different directions and eventually stopping in neighbors' region and getting married, thus constantly shuffling and reshuffling cultural facts. Such permeability confirms what we earlier labeled "Chokwescape". To understand it, several significant facts need to be taken into account with a useful literature about the Chokwe. Miller (1970) highlights the fact that "Chokwescape" should be seen through the lenses the Chokwe population quick displacement and expansion capacity linked to trade. They move around with cultural assets and beliefs that attract even their enemies. They are ready to share their cultural wealth and engage in learning the specific cultural language transmitted especially through artifacts. Consequently, cultural facts such as initiation schools have spread in the region whereas, at the same time, ceremony masters have acquired new jobs and the capacity to easily move from one place to another where their services are needed. In many cases, the closeness of spoken languages has even avoided the use of interpreters. Thus, creativity, ceremonial behaviors, training environment, leadership styles, and searches for wellbeing have increasingly taken the same directions (Bouttiaux, 2004; Holdredge and Kimball (1927); Frazer and Madison (1972), Silva, 2015, 2016). As a matter of fact, the same cultural dynamic spatialized as "Chokwescape" reaches out to many neighbors and makes it even more difficult to perceive how the Lunda and the Chokwe pull in different directions. Also, Sesemba (1974, 1981) like Redinha (1965) and Fagg (1969) become so useful to the readers as they practically dig into these commonalities regarding lifestyles, training, community building, and daily religion expressed through specific art production and rituals. Masks especially become one of the best ways for community expressions to be heard locally, but also for reaching out to the world with local contributions.

All in all, Chokwe and Lunda were very much the same people long ago in the “illo tempore.” However, following different migration waves especially towards the south and the west precisely in Angola, the reader is informed that a new people was progressively forming a new identity as Chokwe within a vast area sharing the same cultural features. The Chokwe people discovered specificities by claiming a long cultural heritage that linked them to the skilled ancestors Chibinda Ilunga, a handsome man, a master of many secret skills needed to survive and dominate the world in those days. The Chokwe are boastful about what they are supposed to be: people having unmatched skills in the entire region. They view their identities mostly through their material culture.

Yet that same backbone related to the mythic hero Chibinda Ilunga puts shadows on their identities with regard to the Lunda kingdom, and later their migration within other kingdoms. For, they seem to claim one thing and its contrary at the same time. They pretend to share everything with their mythic hero. At the same time, they see their dissident secession from the Lunda kingdom as an act of rejection, and refusal to recognize an impostor who is but the same Chibinda Ilunga. Apart from their capacity to have acquired a completely different language from the Lunda, Chokwe identities will still raise discussions, because for the coming years they will still be associated with the Lunda, with whom they share that same cultural ancestor, Chibinda Ilunga.

The best way to end this section is to quote J. Vansina (2004:210). He points out how it is not yet possible to get a satisfactory account of the Lunda-Chokwe kingdom since many shadows persist and we cannot be a hundred percent sure about so many historical details. As proof, Ambrose Herman Muhunga and Prince Kandada who belong to the Chokwe royal family do not have the same versions about everything. What remains sure is that the confusion of the Chokwe identity keeps growing as long as research keeps digging into their past. Otherwise, Lunda-Chokwe, Chokwe-Lunda, Chokwe and Lunda will continue their verbal fights over who is superior, or who is stronger than the other. They will be fighting cousins whose jokes and serious accusations may never escalate in open violence.

## **II.9 Chokwe: village life, art and entertainment as identity features**

Other scholars following the example of Jordan (1998) have had long fieldwork time among the Chokwe and offer the material that motivated us to dig deeper, specifically into the Chokwe material culture to display more details on Chokwe identities expressed through daily activities and artistic expressions. Jordan (1998) has details that match much of what we have found in our fieldwork these last years, a continuation of the same identity expressions. Oral traditions circulate in the same way, and artistry is particularly celebrated around different festivals aligned at different months and dates during the year. Jordan informs his readers that Chokwe people have undergone a long history of violence and trouble. At first, they had to face Portuguese as the most important colonial power of the area. Then, they were exposed to different civil wars especially the ones that went on at the expense of Angolan independence and to which should be added two terrible wars that ravaged the southeastern Congo in the late 70s. Despite so much violence, almost all the Chokwe have been able to safeguard their cultural heritage. In addition, they have been able to develop rich cultural traditions throughout different parts of their region, i.e., in northeastern Angola, central and southern Angola, southeastern and Bandundu region in the Congo, and in western and northwestern Zambia (Jordan, 1998:9-11). Apart from the neighbors that Wastiau mentioned earlier, Jordan adds “Pende, Mbangani, Kate, Minungu, Lwena, Luchazi, Mbunda, Holo, Mbundu, Songo, Ovimbundu, and Kwanyama” among neighbors who share cultural influences with the Chokwe (Jordan, 1998:12; Crine-Mavar, 1968).

Chokwe live in an area in which the visitor will come across “woodlands and rain forests,” such as the ones found in the Kasai and Kwilu region in the northern Angola. However, many other places are savanna plains full of grasslands, with high plateaus expanding in Angola, Zambia and the Congo. An exception to this extension can be found in southeastern Angola and western Zambia where sandy soil runs along floodplains (Jordan, 1998:12-15). The area inhabited by the Chokwe and including the three countries (Angola, Congo and Zambia) has two seasons, a rainy season going from early October to the end of April. Whereas the remaining part of the year is a dry season that is cool in the morning with cool temperatures at night, but quickly warming during the day.

Village life revolves around several activities scheduled throughout the year and essentially coinciding with different seasons. With houses built within a large circle or along a central path,

the chief generally having the biggest one of the place, Chokwe houses indicate an architecture that has progressed over time. Despite the architecturally visible progress, Chokwe houses kept a unique specific main feature, the thatched roof with thick layered grass. It has remained the same over centuries; it has kept its own specific beauty that many people are unable to imitate. The other material includes walls and floors which have adapted to new construction modes and have in many places - though not in all of them - moved from grass covering poles, to adobe bricks, and even to burned bricks in some places. Still despite the changes mainly with sun-dried bricks, the quality of the houses will remind the visitor that he or she is in a village. Besides, in many places, there is a general lack of electricity with the consequence that kerosene lamps are used, or firewood is burnt. Another particularity that has survived over many years is the personal touch of women in house decoration. Women are still the ones using special colored clays for different drawings they put on the walls. They also take special care of the floor by keeping it clean and reserving it as a space that requires intimacy, though today the arrival of modern sofas has started moving people from the outside community talking space to the inside household, once a private and isolated place for the couple.

Despite some changes here above noted, Chokwe still use the dry season as a time of rest after long months of rains and farm work for cleaning the village, mending roofs and refreshing walls. Most such work is done with the assistance of neighbors who are offered food and drink that they happily share around. During this time, they spend together after refreshing their houses, they also delve deep into their past, telling different versions of their history. Women find specific strategies to slowly construct their place as the storytelling environment. Most of the time, when asked to respond to another oral tradition genre, women will use ambiguities to mark their presence without openly taking positions in male gendered stories (Fretz, 1987).

In that way, the space that was once erected at the center of a few houses, the "Tshota," is still significant. It helps close family members to have food together, sit for talks around a fireplace at night, and plan different events. They also take opportunities to discuss matters that call for justice in order to evaluate them before sending them to other chiefs within the large village. It is only when no agreement can be found that they use a local representative of the government. The state law and the ancient traditional law have coexisted for many years even though from time to time the village law consultation becomes an opportunity to question state laws whenever they



are openly against people's interest. That decentralized decision-making may be the reason why Chokwe, wherever they are, have been treated as rebellious people, often excluded from national interest issues.

During this same relaxing time, the dry season, people look at other details regarding their life, mainly the tools they use during the rainy season work (Jordan, 1998:19). They also take that time to share stories and carve different artifacts and needed home material. They work on other artistic objects to be sold. It is a good time for men to organize hunting expeditions while women also organize themselves for fishing using big bamboo basket. More and more, this time is used for bringing large quantities of different harvests to the city for selling. Chokwe people take that opportunity to buy tools, and other needed foodstuffs not produced in their villages, like oil, sugar, salt, matches, kerosene, weapons, and medicine. When the money, finally, permits them to buy more, they can also afford different kinds of fish imported to the country, and even buy radios, televisions, batteries of different sizes, and soft drinks for different celebrations. During the year, city people who have developed different trade routes use bicycles mostly to bring different goods to villages. These tradesmen are paid with cash only in a few cases. In most cases, they are paid by exchanging their goods with quantities from their farm harvests. In a few parts of these countries where there are still a few good roads or rail trains, the exchanges between cities and villages have constantly grown over the years.

In fact, most of Chokwe are also known as good farmers. J. Vansina (2004:74) referring to farming activities of the area writes, "The acquisition of cereal agriculture, more than any other factor, allowed people of West Central Africa to become fully sedentary, within the limits of shifting cultivation which required shifts within close distances every few years..." Even though they were much involved in hunting, an activity that kept them moving from one place to another, farming, on the contrary, obliged them to accept sedentary life for their families. Despite continued temporary long incursions tracking down games, J. Vansina (2004:79) points out how growing farming activities also meant growth in the metallurgical industry that had to provide farmers with hoes and other material needed for their farming activities. Such growth contributed to the commercial movements as well as to demographic growth and movements within the areas. The Chokwe populations were known for their capacity to produce metal that they used for making their hunting, farming, fighting and other daily useful instruments (Muhunga, 1962). In

the same vein, J. Vansina (2004:80) mentions how hoes became a “staple of trade, a favorite medium of exchange, and sometimes a currency of account. Metal became a measure of wealth...” The Chokwe populations were thus among the most powerful people of that time since they could afford metallic objects which needed for different reasons. They grew cassava as their first food choice, corn, millet, and sorghum. Today, they also grow different types of sweet potatoes, pumpkins, tomatoes, rice, beans, peanuts, and imported vegetables that include cabbages, especially Chinese cabbages. They have learned to eat these vegetables, but still they sell most of the products to cities (Jordan, 1998). Despite their identification today as Chokwe food, Allen (2002), Beadle (1980.), and Sharma (2003) indicate that corn and cassava originated from the Americas whereas rice came from Asia. These details clarify once again the power that the Chokwe people had in the past: they had new food varieties, and therefore could achieve better health, resist different diseases, and extend their land conquests. The foodstuffs also reveal another detail about the Chokwe’s capacities to adopt novelties, adapt to them, and to include them in their cultural heritage. Once that step was reached, the newly acquired foodstuffs could also be a part of certain rituals.

Vellut (1995:298) gives details on the growth of new agricultural seeds and plants whose harvests completely changed the local life style and permitted quick population growth. Some areas became more densely populated, adopted new crops:

Lastly, all the high-density centres in the region known in the nineteenth century had enriched their agriculture by the introduction of American varieties. This innovation led to an increase in yields, as arable land was used more intensively (in several high-density areas there were two or three harvests a year), and high-yield plants were introduced (e.g. cassava). The chronology of these changes obviously cannot be traced in detail: depending on the region, they might have extended over more than two centuries (1600-1850). This is a rough estimate that can be pinpointed by some landmarks. Around 1800 all the American varieties (maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, beans, etc.) had no doubt not been adopted everywhere in the same way, but no area seems to have ignored them altogether. Moreover, in some cases American plants had become so integrated that they were no longer regarded as foreign imports.

The Chokwe warriors and transporters were among the first to completely adopt these new food plants (another historical illustration of the Chokwe appropriation and cosmopolitan attitude to culture). Using them as resources, the Chokwe's strength increased in the big geographical area that was under their control. With time, these American foodstuffs have become Chokwe and only a few people can remember that they were imported to Africa. With leadership, food, weapons (firearms that they were also among the first to use), strong warriors, and strong rituals inherited from ancestors, the Chokwe had everything to be considered as one of the "superpowers" of the sub-region.

During the dry season, there is another important activity regarding beehives, honey and beeswax. Most of the people like honey. They also use it for making a specific honey beer. For annual celebrations, for weddings, and for the commemoration of their ancestors, or for the payment of given fees related to health treatment through the diviners and other plant medicines, the Chokwe populations can count on their cattle, goats, pigs and chickens that they raise and take care of throughout the year either in the village, or far inside lands on their farms after the harvesting season. Since they also need fish as a supplement of their diet, they have developed fishing techniques that include using nets, canoes, or traditional baskets used in the most productive places. Whenever the fishing activity seems to produce enough income, men seriously get involved and produce large quantities of fish they or their wives sell to big cities. Chokwe are known for selling well-conserved smoked fish from different rivers. Wherever they are they provide urban centers with fish of high quality.

Although hunting is officially forbidden in these countries, Chokwe cannot afford to forget their ancestral skills. They manage to poach and get what they need for their food, and in some cases, they sell some of it to urban settlers fond of smoked meat that makes a difference in their daily diet. Either urban or rural, the Chokwe in most cases like eating meat.

Contrary to the distant past when the Chokwe had only oral traditions including songs, dances, and story narratives, today they have much more for entertainment at night. They have radios and televisions and are connected to the world, even though they cannot yet afford spending as much time as they would want on the multimedia entertainment tools. They are thus aware of the most important discussion topics around the world, and in their own way participate in things like the celebration of a new African President in the United States of America, or Mandela's death,

President Mwanawasa's death, or the death of President Sata. Or simply the soccer matches played in the Congo, the wars going on in the eastern Congo, or the arrival of the pope to Angola. Or the expensive Angolan prices in Luanda. In the same way, they took rebels' names such as Savimbi, Mufu, Mushala or others and actually gave them to their village roosters; they also find comparisons that help them understand the world in their own way whenever necessary. When names are quite popular around the world, they insert them in their habits.

Still in many ways, formal entertainments are going on daily, especially the ones aimed at changing the youth's perception of many things, and of the world around them. As the culture continues its orality in many aspects, most oral traditions are still alive and celebrated through many opportunities linked to daily life events: birth, death, burial, wedding, evening entertainment, and especially rituals that we will talk about in the third part of this dissertation, ones that still confirm Chokwe identities. New aspects related to orality have managed their way into the Chokwe society: radio, TV, films, soccer events, and international events. These increase talks and discussions in many places.

Children, like others from all over the world, are curious about many things and places. They do not only wait for the ritual time for them to be introduced to different artifacts or to make what they need for filling their free time. They use recuperated material for making different innovations. They use old rags for making different toys like rag dolls and rag balls. They use any wire that may come their way for making car toys, bicycles, and other miniatures that often surprise visitors. They do not forget the Hamba and masks in their inventions, at least the ones that are not dangerous. In the same vein, they continue the tradition of tales, myths, legends, songs, drumming, and riddles that give them opportunities to laugh at their respective ignorance, and to appreciate the geniuses among them. They even may mix in, from time to time, their traditional ancestors and film stars. Chokwe culture is much closer to nature as here above pointed out with regard to different farming products especially for cassava that is presented in oral traditions, mostly in tales. Farming tools are often carved with female figurines. They still use the same kind of hoes their blacksmiths could produce even though they now buy them from cities. They were conceived in such a way that women could easily use them, for men were often gone for other activities such as hunting. However with strict regulations regarding hunting, and

the fact that games have disappeared in many other places, most men have gone back to farming activities especially with the cultivation of cereals adapted to the soil.

It is within family structures they produce goods that can generate cash. They still exchange goods within the village for their respective goods. Moreover, the Chokwe people of the Diaspora have gone to cities for work participate in their village evolution. As there are places that need fertilizer to increase their production, or from time to time insecticide to get rid of different kinds of insects, the urban Chokwe have become central to the development of many rural areas. Slowly, they raise a kind of competition between villages. However, most of urban Chokwe are quite careful when they go back to their villages. They are all afraid of witchcraft believed to still be present in villages. Often, they will not deal straight with their families in the village. They would rather deal with a selected family representative, either at the village or the family levels.

Out of what he was able to collect from both oral and written sources, Lima (1971:62-65) suggests in few pages how Chokwe history could be subdivided through different epochs. The oral sources we checked do not seem to be able to confirm or deny this classification. However, at least three different periods that coincide with the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial times are identified. With regard to our fieldwork overall, it is so interesting to find out that these oral sources concur with what still circulates among old people. According to Lima, during the first epoch, i.e., by the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century, only the name Lunda prevailed and was transmitted through oral traditions from those days. The Lunda people were mainly farmers living on sorghum and millet.

As Chokwe differentiated from Lunda, they slowly moved towards an economy whose production was mostly based on families, understood here as small village communities with a small number of household families. These units planned their needs together as far as farming is concerned. They also helped each other in the work and in the selling process to the outside. They exchanged their daily needs by supplying each with what could also be compensated later. Finally, they exchanged things in the name of "Usoko," i.e., brotherhood. Such gifts did not need any return as such (The distinction between commercial exchange and brotherhood exchange is indicative of a society used to deal with large non-Chokwe social networks).

In fact, a village usually included members of the same family in the sense that they could retrace their roots to the same ancestors. They are therefore linked by blood and have to observe certain rules regarding their relations. One of these rules regards marriages as interdictions permitting only preferential exogamic marriages between cross-cousins. They permit a given exogamic move from the lineage even if the marriage is preferably “endogamous,” that is, if it is operated within the same village (Lima, 1971; Vansina, 2004).

## **II.10 Chokwe Art and Identity Development over Time**

Oral sources inform us that as a sign of gratitude for welcoming him, Chibinda Ilunga planted trees around the “Tshipango” that became associated with the first sacred place for anything related to the “Hamba” as a channel for the treatment of body ailments<sup>14</sup>. The “Tshipango” also became the primordial or the archetypal examples of the family altars that the Chokwe populations have since then carried in their peregrinations around the places where they have been. Finally, the Chokwe populations have shared the altar tradition with people associated with them as an opportunity to offer sacrifices to God, to ancestors and to different spirits that continuously roam around the world. Bad spirits could be hazardous to unprotected human beings by either getting them sick, bringing death, or submitting them to endless unfortunate days. This shrine had thus become the first and most prominent community identity (Lima, 1971).

The long tradition of “Hamba,” healing spirit and medicinal treatment, can also be linked to the first Tshipango,” and has since been used for human wellbeing associated with treatments through different objects connected to the Chokwe and the human body. Body possession, or trance, is a personal and community communication, and an art reserved to exceptional persons who can communicate about themselves and about their community with spirits. Lima (1971) gives a few examples that can still be proved in the field; the state of trance helps mediums to deal with different body and spirit questions. Kaputu (2010) in a comparative study of shamanism

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<sup>14</sup> The “Tshipango” may be seen as a sacred place. In the Lunda-Chokwe tradition, it has its first reference to the place where Lweji had permitted Chibinda Ilunda, the Luba royal hunter and prince, to sit on the big stone that Lweji had used as cushion, and on which her dad, Mwako, used to sit on. My readers must understand the mythic story presented here as a transformation of a profanely used material in a sacred seat reserved to the royals. In fact, Chibinda’s gratitude through planting trees all around the place justifies the sacredness of the place. These trees are essentially seen as medicinal plants, i.e., full of curative and healing powers while at the same time used for their magic effects.

brought attention on the Mikishi in the Katanga province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Itako in Osoresan in Japan. In both sites, through individuals in trance, these mediums are believed to get in contact with divinities. It is that same tradition that Tempels (1947) underlines in the description of name acquisition. Names are always seen in their connection capacity with either deities or ancestors. There is not any age preference for medium function. However, there are a few features or preferences related to local presentations reflecting on medium identities.

The “Mahamba” plural of the word “Hamba” within Chokwe communities is regularly used to refer to divinatory small objects (objects of art). They also refer to the raw savage material that is quickly transformed with a few symbolic objects or touches in order to attribute different powers, or make them the representatives of given powers and forces. Such materials include trunks of trees, dead trees collected from the bush, as well as small anthills that are not necessarily part of an artistic process but are just touched a bit and placed where they are supposed to play different roles. But the artistic hand is visible through clay figurines or dolls that are also attributed specific powers. They may go as far as to represent the people with their different capacities. Powers are also distributed through other well-done miniatures of musical instruments, farming tools, animal skins, sacred rocks, and other Christian objects (Lima, 1971). Later, in the chapter dealing with the Chokwe populations and wellbeing, we shall point out how the “Mahamba” situation becomes difficult to grasp because the same “artistic objects” may play a neat role when they are in the hands of a witch. In the same way, the Chokwe identity description in the last pages showed some confusion, the Mahamba also may lead to some confusion as they play different roles, positive and negative, no to obvious on the first consideration.

### **II.11 Western Expertise of Chokwe Material Culture and Identity/ties**

The reading of most available scholarship on Chokwe material culture just pointed out here can provide much useful information regarding how the work is done, and how most Chokwe in given areas participate in the production process of their material culture. It is however difficult to find out how individuals confess and give a credo of personal identity reflected in the work they do. They do their best to reflect their productions in long traditions often inherited for many centuries. Van Beek (1991), M. Griaule (1975), M. Griaule, G. (1985) have lengthily studied the

Dogon in Mali and have come to conclusions that closely relate art productions, cultural and oral traditions, and ritual organizations<sup>15</sup>.

Like for the above mentioned scholars' studies focused on the Dogon, Linville (2003) et al. describe in detail how Chokwe art strikes the senses. They also point out that a careful observation of that art will certainly connect it with the invisible deities, or the sense of creation and a creator. Quickly, she draws the reader's attention that if by any chance s/he wants to look at Chokwe art through Western traditions, the best part of the artifacts would be missed. Chokwe's art values need to be found in the the artist's motivation and the insertion of art objects in social life (Remondino, 2003).

These authors, as can be seen from the above lines, have tried their best to explain the environment in which Chokwe art objects are produced, and how they contribute to social life fabrication. Thus, artifacts contribute to polity making in view of the kind of society that is dreamt about. Linville (2003) and Jordan (1998) have noticed that Chokwe, like all African art, is all the same in motion. They justify that evolution through artistic features that they have noticed in comparison with Chokwe's neighbors. Jordan has paid particular attention to migration waves that have come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola towards Zambia, and has noticed that in spite of keeping the same names, Chokwe masks are more often made from modern fabrics. Wastiau (2006) and Jordan (1998) concur about several details regarding Chokwe art. The new artifacts have adapted to their new environment and have brought novelties essentially based on colorful clothes borrowed from different fabrics. In fact, in Zambia the artist no longer uses material drawn from nature's forests since the government is particularly punishing nature destroyers. However, artists have recourse to synthetic and recuperation material focusing on colors and figurative expressions adapted from the distant past yet still

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<sup>15</sup> Griaule's work is often compared with Tempels', both condemned for their strong will to find and explain African philosophy without necessarily having the necessary operation tools that include the local language and social life which are a part of the local people's ancestral experience, continuously updated. Like in the case of Tempels often put in question by African scholars, the knowledge of African philosophy and specific skills are largely connected to local socio-political life. The same African scholars also question how far Griaule could be honest and objectively analyze situations from people generally addressed as inferior and having nothing to contribute to the world. The forced position in which the Africans were put could not give a place for an open dialogue. Also, like for Tempels, there is a serious question about the early colonial scholars concerning their capacity to accept a student position that would permit them to learn from the locals. They could pretend to know things they could not understand, and for which they never received the right lessons from the right teachers, initiation masters.



getting much contemporary attention. For coating, artists can use tar, and for paint they are happy to use synthetic color as well<sup>16</sup>.

If the above scholars seem to have done much work, there is still a question worth raising today and regarding the people who claim to be Chokwe. We wish to find out how they still associate with Chokwe artistry. We have noticed that most art work is associated with social events and with social construction in the sense that it comes with the permission of political leaders. They are in most cases also the ones who supervise it. In many cases the human body is at the center of the artistic creativity as it is the main agency whose dynamic and expressions contribute to social politics implemented and shared locally and with neighbors. We have also noticed that the human body—either through dances or through the collaboration and exchanges with masks—is used as an agency for social reconstruction. However, we have not noticed how the participants in this social re/construction appreciate everything around them, and how they judge their participation in this social construction. It is indeed hard to find out a clear thread that combines Chokwe artistry, socialization, and identity re/construction in a straight way.

## **II.12. What Ordinary Chokwe Say They Are**

After going through a chapter like this one, our readers are likely to have many questions and think that the Chokwe may have much opposition issues with their neighbors and especially with the Lunda from Mwatha Yamvwo. If such an identity fighting may be found in some sources consulted, our readers shall keep in mind that some of the classic scholars of the region, Vansinna, Wastiau, Jordan, Bastin, Miller, Hoover, Ndua, de Saint Moulin, Ndaywel ... seem to put much more stress on the geographical and cultural spaces that have more in common than any scholar could find for strong separation. Also, despite several features that mark community units and their long history, many bridges seem to put single community identities at less important levels.

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<sup>16</sup> On this point, Anceau Lucie (2004) is a quite important and impressive source and reference. She is so important because she did most her work from museums under the guidance of experts and compared many artifacts coming from the area of this research. With particularly strong references from Bastin (1969; 1982), Crine-Mavar (1968), Neyt (1981), and De Heusch (1972), she reached the same conclusion we had worked on for many years in the fieldwork. Despite several attempts to justify the Lunda work in the field of art, their contribution is meaningless. They have for centuries been taking the artifacts of the Chokwe under the presentation Lunda-Chokwe.

To prove the veracity of the above statement, in many occasions we met the Chokwe before getting into serious matters. We usually asked them to tell us what they were and what made their particularity when compared to their neighbors and local ethnic groups. We are happy to share with our readers four good definitions of the Chokwe that summarize what we heard repeatedly. We are calling these respondents with one of their names. These names are well represented in different communities without any chance of going back in any way to the respondents interviewed.

Njamba, a 75-year man from Lusaka, married and father of six children, laughed much when asked to define himself and show how different he was from other people around him, belonging to other ethnic groups:

*Is your question a joke? How can I be different from these other people? They are all my cousins. Our ancestors came from the same kingdom in the now Democratic Republic of the Congo. More than many other people around the world we obeyed the creator's command to fill the world. We have been in the long process of getting married among cousins and getting many children. Many of us speak at least six languages we share with the neighbors and participates in all rituals they organize without any hesitation. We are all the same. You know cousins are meant to be the same and share the same geographical and cultural spaces. I guess what happened should be seen turning personal egos like today in politics. Individuals who thought to be strong enough as to lead by themselves a big group took their way but soon realized they could not face the wildness alone. They just added here and there a few new words and intonations linked to their wandering adventure but still were exactly like their cousins they had left a couple of years earlier. They were especially forced to come together as the colonial presence threatened them and their fragility if they had to stay alone. They soon reinforced their security system with the weapons their neighbors could have and got into sharing whatever could reinforce their social life and attachment to ancestral values.*

*Consequently, when you visit today the Likumbi Lya Mize, it is a celebration that none of them can claim to be absolutely belonging to a group. Under the name Luvale, you find a large component of several ethnic groups that actively participate to make the cultural event possible. A good artist could find a few differences and contributions coming from different ethnic groups.*

*However, their contributions culminate in a high presentation of sequences that make the Likumbi Lya Mize as a cultural event sending far back in the history of ancestors.*

*Now, some leaders chose to make sure their followers would only swear by their name... That is what happened! Here are on the same roads living under the same circumstances and discussing about our daily needs. We are cousins, we have the same blood and have only taken different adventures along time. The colonials also wanted to divide us for their purpose. However, they failed. Take for instance twenty families and get in their history, you will be surprised to find out how many got married to the other ethnic groups at a point, then came back to a village in which the Chokwe population outnumber others. That is the reality. When we are in a place that is far important because of the number of Chokwe or Luvale living there, or gain another ethnic group, people are likely to define themselves as members of the major ethnic group.*

Njamba's attempt to define and differentiate the Chokwe population from other people has given us what many people think about the Chokwe. Thus, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo everybody speaks about the G5 or the group of five ethnic groups. They are considered as the same even though they speak different languages. It is also understood that whatever favor given to one group has an impact on all of them. More and more today, scholars like the ones mentioned in this chapter try to explain that the ethnic spaces are different and do not necessarily cover everybody with the same benefit. The Luvale are believed to have left the Lunda empire, its capital Musumba, under the guidance of a Chokwe, Chinyama who took the direction of Angola to the kingdom of queen Nyakatolo. An important group migrated to Zambia.

The second testimony taken about the Chokwe comes from Mujinga a fifty-four woman from Zambezi. Her testimony is quite short, but very clear.

*That is a question I have never been asked before and have never asked myself! We are exactly the same. I freely move from one village to the next and am well treated wherever I go as soon as they discover what family I am from. Here, it is so important that somebody knows the family s/he is coming from in order to find people who would assume straight away that they are the same blood and the same people. Fortunately, when we get in the search of ancestors the same names are mentioned for all groups and the interests, if any to be defended, seem to be exactly the same. We spend our early years learning the same traditions and singing for the same ancestors.*

*You know, we have only constructed a few forced differences all along years. For instance, even though our traditional events and feasts are quite the same, we often place them at different time during the year. The same people will attend everywhere, and will stress a couple of different names to these events when they refer to the first organizers.*

For these women, the Chokwe populations are exactly like other people with whom they share the same geographical area and with whom they mention the same ancestors. She also points out the fact that they celebrate the same ancestors. If their calendar regarding celebrations are different, it is only because some local organizers would like their names to be associated with the celebration even though they may not mean much difference as such.

The third testimony is from Kapalu, a 46 businessman from Tshikapa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Kapalu is exceptionally married to two Chokwe women and seems to understand the Chokwe within the lenses of man married to more than one woman and looking at all children as his.

*What is that question again? It is a question that should never be raised. Have you have seen a man who has several children from different marriages discuss who is his son or who is his daughter. They are his children. They may be different with different faces and behaviors, but they are all the children of the same parent. That is wht the Chokwe are with their brothers and sisters from different ethnic groups, all originating from the same ancestors. We are the same family and the Chokwe have a specific charisma. They are warriors, hunters, and the ones who always take the first position to defend their families and friends. For that reason, they are often looked at as group leaders without necessarily being different from the people they lead: their brothers and sisters.*

Once again, Kapalu insists on the fact that the Chokwe populations and the other people around them belong to the same group of people and celebrate the same ancestors. However, they seem to have a specific characteristic regarding their leadership position.

The last testimony comes from a university scholar from Copperbelt University. He is a man of 55 years. He has rather pointed out the link that unites these people.

*“Hanga Twayoya!” This short sentence seems to summarize what links a group of people around the Chokwe and the Luvale. They all believe in everlasting life and resurrection that does that none of them is can be condemned to death. The Likumbi Lya Mize is exactly about that part of the ceremony that shows the masks as the embodiment of the people’s spirits. Those who pass away always come back as spirits and embody the living.*

*It is the belief in everlasting life that makes of the Chokwe the people who have their pace among the other with whom they share the same faith and the same world view.*

The scholar from Copperbelt University finds that the main feature that links the Chokwe populations to other people is what the Luvale celebrate through the Likumbi Lya Mize: the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting. Because of their belief, they are able to celebrate the same ancestors and customs that prepare them to live their beliefs I the same vast geographical area.

Also, if the scholars carry the readers through discussions on details about identities and differences between the Chokwe populations and their neighbors, the common people seem rather attracted by the general commonalities that celebrate their common history. In pointing out the contents of this section, we cannot pretend to have solved the problem. On the contrary, we have led our readers to a level where everything seems possible. One would also understand why when reading authors such as Victor Turner or Jan Vansina, they cover cultural regions rather than singled out ethnic groups.

Before reaching the conclusion section of this chapter, it is worth coming back on the concept “chokwescape” mentioned earlier and point out some of its characteristics. Grabum (1969) offers the first paths that we should seriously consider. They are all about acculturation and indeed chokwescape is all about acculturation as a continuing process that manages to get different ways to connect with people as individuals or communities, physical or institutional bodies that engage in taking new orientations for their society and its aspirations. Also, when Bastin (1969), Cornet (1982, 1999), Burtler (1993), and Silva (2012) look at art in the region where the Chokwe are, creativity comes at the center of several traditions that have brought together o people from the region over many years. They have slowly and patiently learned from each other and have consciously or unconsciously placed the Chokwe populations at the center of their learning

process as the carrier of traditions, and the fighters whose proofs have gone far beyond their territories. Acculturation has brought them together as it has offered comprehensive communication structures. All along the acculturation process, art played major roles in the connections with ancestors, and as pedagogical tools for teaching and unifying beliefs and aspirations, for art has the capacity to break silence through its communication that can be compared to the revelation role that art has played in South Africa in the era of HIV-AIDS (Roberts, 2001). The revelation that art offers justifies why given scholars would mention a concept such as tribal art that include a spatial comprehension, a growing population, and a common to stick to the same values or representations (Boquaert, 1998a, 1998b). There is more about “tribal art” insofar as it leads to several implications.

Lema Gwete (1986) pursues tribal art idea in raising a specific understanding of power considered as the capacity that individuals are given to lead over land, people, traditions, and beliefs. Also, when Delanghe (1971) looks at what could be labeled as primitive society, it is seen with its strategies for moving in times. Primitive art includes the necessary values it needs in order to organize social sectors within understandable aspirations. Such strategies grow and change over time, as art bears powers and includes secrets of power acquisition and conservation. Crowley (1972), Mudimbe (1994), Ndoji Musoko (1985) look at locally produced art as political artifacts that are attributed social functions mainly political and religious leadership. Still the artistic field has its own specificities and silent global realities that would often see the artists offering skills, and expertise without necessarily taking part in the power. Would this last sentence lead to another observation and another detail regarding chokwescape? The Chokwe populations indeed were quite active in art production and in the fieldwork mainly in fighting the enemy and in moving from one spot to another while escorted by their magicians and other healer, but they would not necessarily take advantage of their strong position to take local powers.

One last word could still consider art communication capacity both among individuals and communities, or again between living humans and divinities. D’Almeida (1995) points out a significant aspect of art. It may indeed be looked at in its capacity to connect different parts of the world. Despite being produced locally in a Chokwe location, it is still able to find its ways to connect with the world. Appadurai (1998) explains such communication capacity through the

concepts early mentioned including ethnoscaples, ideoscapes, financescape and technoscape. It is in this concept that I have suggested the use of another concept adapted to the present study or “chokwescape.” Mudimbe (1986,1993,1994) reinforces that communication capacity looking at it through obvious contacts in time, the present and the past, and even possible projections of a given future. If the past has its weight through archeological perspectives or what Mudimbe calls “*memoriae loci*”, it is formulated through communications, narratives, and oral traditions. These are presented as myths, epics, songs, tales, proverbs, and other social events that carry populations through ages. Apart from human dimensions, art also aspires to divine levels. Also, Adams & Apostolos-Cappadona (1987), Lima (1971), Kubik (1981, 1993) insist on a divine dimension as art gives the opportunity to develop other social functions, as art participates in all social aspects that finally also contribute to its building. It is that dynamic culture that Redinha (1975), Bastin (1982, 1997) describe with many details and with a special place reserved to the Chokwe people at the center of such cultural design. Speaking about such a cultural design within a network makes the Chokwe populations look important. However, at the same time, the task becomes absolutely difficult as to look for a needle in a haystack. For, for many considerations cultural facts and their distribution in a vast region, the Chokwe and their neighbors could all claim to be the same and one despite slight differences in respective “chokwescapes.” The collective consciousness in the Democratic of the Congo reflects that uniqueness and slight differences through the way the Chokwe, Lunda, A-ruund, Lwena, Luchazi are addressed. They are called “Groupe de Cinq or Team of Five”. The idea of a team reflects peers within the same group and sharing the same conditions to the point that it could be difficult to know them individually or separate them from each other. This image also includes the possibility that all members have to easily move from one group to another, and why not belong to one or more groups at the same time. Finally, what so far looks like cultural wealth share in a region, also contributes in increasing the confusion that the scholar meets in attempts to absolutely isolate Chokwe from the other ethnic groups. The Chokwe are indeed a singular group, one of the five here above mentioned, but they are also the group that is often referred to for cultural specificities that are so important in the recognition of each group’s identities through chokwescapes.

### **II.13 Conclusive Remarks**

This chapter entitled “Literature Review on the Chokwe seen from their origins” had as its main objective to find out what is known on this topic and what can still be found from a consultation of oral and written sources. From the very beginning, the task revealed itself to be quite hard because despite the number of scholars’ works on the topic, and especially the works still being done, it is not an easy task to understand the Chokwe’s identities.

From the distant past, the Chokwe and the Lunda have always been presented in a compound word separated with a dash with the word Lunda coming in first position, Lunda-Chokwe. Both words are linked and cannot make any sense when separated just like compound words would be. That is exactly what the Lunda have been for many years with Chokwe. Political institutions have contributed to much confusion because it was believed that Lunda and Chokwe were but one, and that Lunda had the right to represent them, in part due to this hyphenated name.

The situation has become difficult as more and more Chokwe claim their independent identity, and pretend to have nothing to do with Lunda. Both oral and written sources do not give clear testimonies about their being one, or on the contrary their complete separation. It goes without saying that they share the same mythological sources with the names of the same ancestors. It is also certain they have shared the same lands and the same people for many generations. It is also obvious that the presence of the colonial forces did not facilitate their coexistence. The presence of newcomers on the African lands mainly through the Angolan coasts brought many changes that pushed them in different directions. The concept of modern states, lands, territories, states, and nations somehow forced them to look differently at their past and reinforced the quest and construction of different identities. However, their cultural commonalities will continue to keep blurring borders that will finally force them to accept, although silently, their identical sources, and the passage of people from one group to the other.



## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **III.1 Introduction**

This research started from a few talks at Ghent University, then at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, precisely at Center Leo Apostel expertise highly valued for its interdisciplinary research. It is out of these dynamics that a clear idea of different data collection, its analysis, validity, and delimitation could be thought about.

From an interdisciplinary approach, this research aims at assessing Chokwe identities through material culture, making use of the most employed ritual body artifacts under the light of anthropological directives. Anthropological theories are likely to tackle and point out agencies, and pinpoint groups (nationalism), personal and community identity constructions, and hybridity sustainability throughout years (K. E. I. Smith, Leavy, P., 2008). Agencies reveal several quests related to personal and collective representations. In this vein, A. Smith (1991), Anderson (1991), P. Bourdieu (1985), A. Gupta, Ferguson, J. (1997(a)), and A. Gupta and Ferguson (1997(b)) largely document community constructions as people discover their (be)longing to the same space(s). These spaces also maintain dynamics that permit local and global applications that enhance local originalities and global appreciation (Mendis, 2007; Habibul Haque Khonder, 2004). The dynamics increase the sense of personal identification, on the one hand, thus responding to the wish to be located somewhere with different ideological and artistic attributes, and at the same time, the strong will to be connected to global space.

### **III.2 Research Design, Epistemology**

Everything started with a discussion around a conceptual framework, which seemed to summarize the successive lines building up an overall presentation of the research. It also appeared to predict some of the results that would be reached after a long research work. The framework suggested that the entire work would start from (1) a selection of the most known and appreciated Chokwe artifacts, mainly the statue Chibinda and the mask Mwana Pwo, worldwide known as examples of body management and communication capacity to local and global publics. This step would lead to (2) where art would be considered as a source of inspiration both at the local and global levels while including different aspects related to the Profane and Sacred,

health and healing, and gender construction. The Chokwe culture often has the Sacred and the Profane so closely related and participating in health and healing processes, glamour and notoriety of people. These various aspects would be viewed through (3) their intervention in the engineering of the Chokwe identities. In the following level (4), artifacts throughout their evolution would lead to the understanding of developed community habits through daily needs regarding food, and body management. Finally, the long process would result in (5) a clear view of the Chokwe shattered identities, their knowledge of body management, and their insertion in global perspectives.

In a quite simplified way, the conceptual framework seems to give the general succession in which different points will follow one another. If everything would be based only on a chart with specific attributes, this dissertation would indeed be completed within a few days. They have the merit to suggest a general line of ideas and a succession of some of the main material whose contribution could be quite important all along the body of the work. That conceptual framework worked as a launcher of a discussion. In this vein, it stands as a brainstorming organizer, for it permitted a couple of meetings and debates around a premature body of ideas. As such they needed to go through a process of maturation that started coming about with the assistance of professors. Professor Koen Stroeken happens to have a long experience of another similar region in Africa, precisely in Tanzania. He did not focus particularly on artifacts; his experience has many tentacles linked to rituals, their organizations, and their insertion in social life. This discovery would play a significant role in the dissertation. It was also an opportunity to question what kind of fieldwork would be manageable and would get the data needed in time. Here are the conceptual framework and its different cases.

Figure 11 Conceptual frame of the dissertation

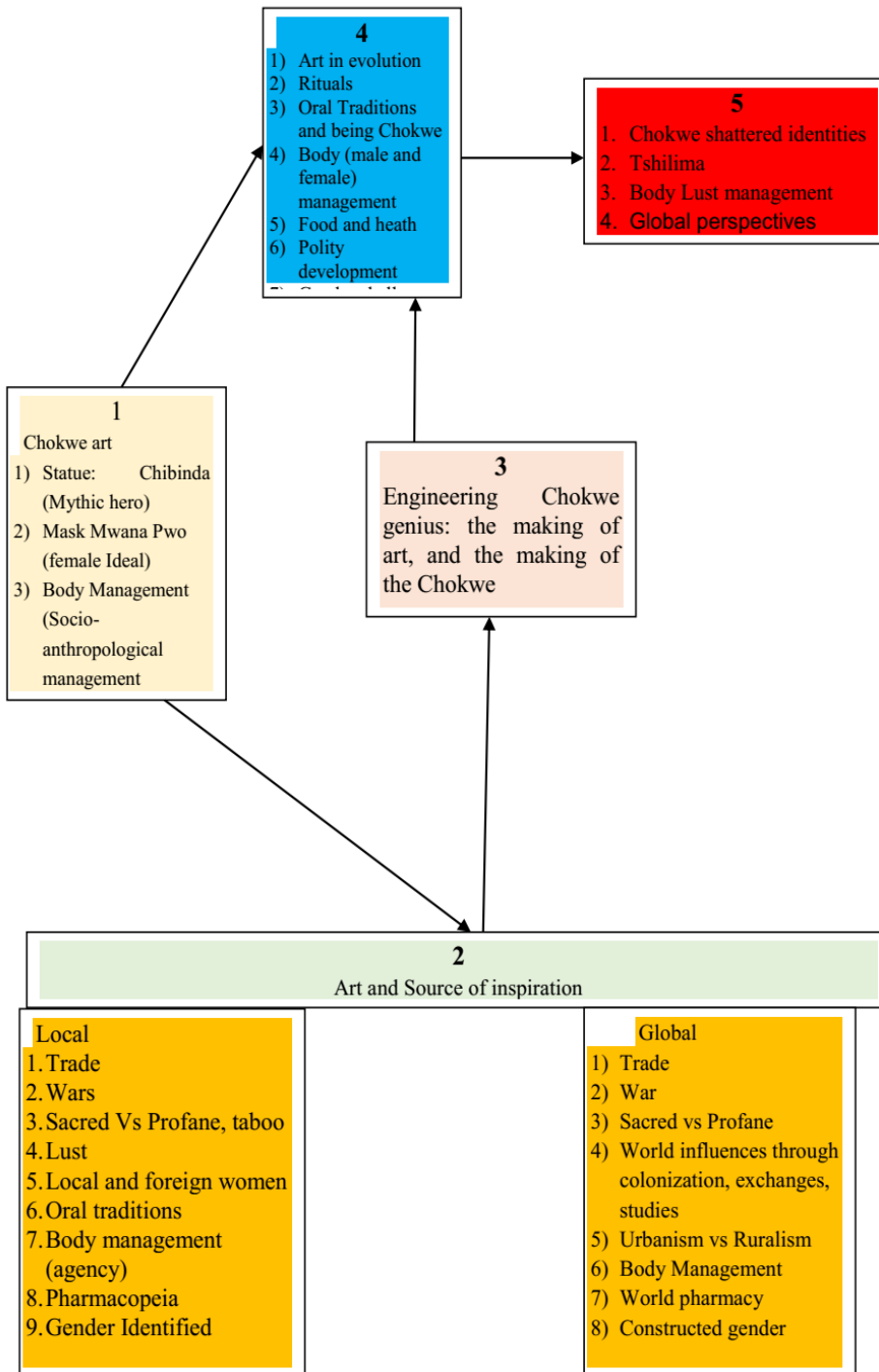


Chart explaining how the dissertation could be viewed  
 Source: Felix U. Kaputu

Every concept here comes into the study, but its structure has completely changed. The representation above was one of the simplest and did not consider the most important parameters when such academic work is handled, and conducted to its best resolutions. One of the most recurring questions that researchers face from the beginning has to do with the collection of data and their presentation to the readers into quantitative, qualitative, and mixed designs. Associating data with a specific approach makes much difference. That choice can refer to the stronghold field in “hard” science or human and social sciences, though it is not excluded that some studies borrow resources from them all.

### **III.3 Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches**

Quite often scholars spend time discussing the best way to undertake research through either qualitative or quantitative approaches. In this vein, Rhodes (2014) sees a qualitative approach as focused on closer understanding of phenomenon based primarily on individuals surveyed in order to confirm or refute the research question that led to the construction of hypotheses. Continuing on the same line, Mishra (2002, Spring) in a study of music and basic memorization also pinpoints how the qualitative approach is the most appropriate. At the same time, like Rhodes, Mishra recognizes how often the researcher using quantitative approach ends up having access to only a few means, whereas the work is too demanding with very structured questions, and covers only a part of the field, eventually leading to findings that cannot be generalized. However, such findings could serve to launch larger studies. Mishra (2002, Spring) has a slightly different consideration of qualitative approach that uses open-ended questions and interviews to find out how individuals are doing as far as major research questions are concerned. Within a general view, this approach helps to understand identity mechanisms. At the same time, the qualitative approach offers opportunities to deeply and repeatedly discuss social issues, for information given orally that could not be heard about if given through silent figures, or through prefigured surveys. Mishra (2002, Spring) notes all the same that the advantages as listed here above do not overcome all limitations. Despite every effort to generalize absolutely the general population’s visibility, the results that are reached are not necessarily the only proof to clear and detailed work. It may still be even harder to formulate a clear assessment that would question characteristics or statistics. It is indeed one thing to get data one way or another, but it is another thing to find a strong interpretation strategy of the results.

Concerning the quantitative approach, Mishra (2002, Spring) points to the gathering of information essentially based on a large number of participants in such a way that the researcher has the possibility finally to present a summary of the entire phenomenon. The approach will thus survey a large number of participants and will apply statistical methods under the general trends, and find out patterns that are followed, especially if the same survey is used with different groups. Survey methods applied to large groups somehow permit generalizations and offer strong evidence in the answers to the studied phenomenon or the questions raised by a group of people. Gathering information from a relatively large number of participants, addressing the same questions to different big groups and covering broader populations, make it easy to justify numerical attributes and to get clear guidelines for understanding the role that different variables play in the social phenomenon. Despite this positive contribution, the quantitative approach will still have problems with the recognition of a new phenomenon, and will often need a control group in order to get credit for the findings.

Despite their differences that may strike the attention of their users, both qualitative and quantitative approaches have similarities. Overall, a quantitative approach is likely to guide the researcher through holistic techniques to grasp a significant phenomenon through its different identifiable social components within given contexts. However, the quantitative approach will isolate and measure some of the elements in the context with the hope to extend the understanding to the entire social phenomenon. In this case, reality could be defined as the set of variables that can be separately identified for their possible measurement and detailed study.

However, a qualitative approach will rather try to understand reality through its complexity and amalgam sets that can be best approached through holistic and contextual techniques. The final purpose of the holistic techniques should be found in a keen interest in the discovery of meanings constructed from the data collected and their interpretation. A qualitative approach is granted with an in-depth examination of phenomena through personal, subjective information that is not limited to definable variables and will rather consider values that would be otherwise impossible to bring about with quantitative methods. It can thus lead to the exploration of new areas, with the eventual construction of new theories. This kind of qualitative approach is based on commensurable and exhaustive work that can easily lead to biases and situations that could not be understood by serious researchers, even though triangulation could be provided while

corroboration would also bring about confirmations. It is a well-structured research wherein the qualitative approach could prove satisfactory when it comes in clearly identified settings, well-collected data that permit the analysis of emerging themes and the formulation of questions and hypotheses. Through analytic inductions, specific issues for well-identified informants will enable the development of the initial assumption. Unstructured and structured interviews, focus groups, ethnographic observation, and discussions will slowly lead the researcher to the discovery of the unknown that could not be predicted by variables as would be the case for a quantitative approach.

Marvasti (2004:7-8), before underlining any similarity at all, looks at quantitative research as using methodological techniques that represent the social experience in statistical categories with a significant use of statistics, whereas qualitative research illustrates itself in detailed descriptions and analysis of the quality or substance of the human experience. Despite these differential engagements, Marvasti (2004) emphasizes the fact that there is much overlapping between both qualitative and quantitative approaches on at least two different levels regarding theory and practice, for they are not disciplinary absolutes. Marvasti (2004:1) reduces the qualitative approach to the firm will of getting a clear explanation and understanding the process that makes up the entire process. The approach may be compared to something else; in the same way, when a phone call is not answered, one wonders what is going on over there and may begin a process that finally leads to understanding the complex situation that resulted in the absence of any answer to the phone call. The entire process will count on strategies and different theoretical assistance to figure out what happened, and eventually to give a clear dull report on the situation. Walliman (2005:270) sees a strong distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches, for their data have different characteristics. They also require different techniques and strategies for their analysis. Whereas natural science concentrates on hard quantitative positivist analysis, qualitative and anti-positivist analytical approaches take more account of the “soft,” personal data. Still a mixture of both approaches is possible.

Mack (2005:3) has the observation that the major differences opposing qualitative and quantitative approaches should be found in the concept flexibility. For, quantitative methods are relatively inflexible. All along surveys and questionnaires, the same questions in the same order are asked to all participants without leaving any space for personal interactions, thus leading to

“close-ended” and fixed categories. This type has doubtlessly the advantage of providing the researcher with a tool that permits an extensive comprehension of the study site, even though it would also require an extensive mastery of questions to be asked and the limitations of the answers that would be provided. In this vein, Mack (2005:4) instead looks at the qualitative approach as more flexible as it is open to more spontaneity and adaptation to interactions with participants, in particular to “open-end” questions. Much more freedom is left to the respondent who can choose words and communicate personal feelings and judgments without the imposition of limits through figures. It is still important to point out that both methods leave out a given range of flexibility much linked to the quality of questions and possibilities they leave to the respondent. It is in fact through that range of flexibility that it is possible to find out the main concerns of the research (Dépelteau, 2013). While listening carefully to the respondent, the researcher can probe some of the answers recorded earlier and even somehow extend them with more details.

In the same vein, Dépelteau (2013:223) offers the reader what Soulet (1992:9-22) displays about qualitative methods. From their origins in opposition to positive science, Soulet considers that they have put an end to absolute “certainly” in human sciences, for all academic studies do not necessarily have to be quantitative. For Soulet, quantitative studies are not mathematical but display an intensive analysis insofar as they do not deal with quantities as such, but rather lead to an intensive and profound analysis of the selected sources and data--while trying to find out the purpose of human actions and the explanation people give to their actions. It is not about causality, but rather about values, intentions, beliefs, ideologies that are not often quantifiable. Thus, videos, photos, personal journals, and one-on-one conversations offer a potential through induction perceived as an outlook on social processes, the meaning of human actions, and the construction of social realities. It goes without saying that statistics and other quantitative data are not necessarily rejected provided they help in the quest mentioned above: social dynamics for a better understanding of social reality construction. Also, Dépelteau (2013:224) advises an objective process that shall lead to the comprehension of social needs revealing social actors' actions, different from anything that would come from a researcher trying to understand social phenomena from the outside. The researcher is engaged in the social life s/he is studying as a tremendous hermeneutical source of his information. And knowledge.

Despite the differences found here and there between quantitative and qualitative approaches, Marvasti (2004:8) still insists on their parallels. For him, both methods are built on empirical and observable reality; their research is based on the real world such as interviews, interactions, documents, and observations, all related to the world that is out there. Also, in both cases, it is agreed that the scientific, academic experience is based on logic and coherence with much scientific rigor and acceptance of rules and procedures. It goes without saying that both methods could also be criticized when quite often they are chosen as a result of a political or ideological commitment to use one method instead of the other, forgetting that the choice should be determined by the method that is suitable for the work to be done.

A further difference can be found in research designs. Each will necessarily mention the steps that the researcher will have to follow in order to complete a study. Marvasti (2004:9) mentions among many points: (1) asking a research question that would be based on a theoretical orientation, (2) selection of research corresponds and data collection, (3) data analysis, and (4) reporting the results. In this manner, a quantitative research will randomly select participants or respondents through a process known as sampling that aims at getting a sample. However, the sample has to be large in order to avoid any biased analysis. Marvasti (2004:9), on the contrary, concerning a qualitative approach, points out that it is not so much about the number, but rather about theoretical considerations. For, “Sampling procedures in qualitative research are sometimes referred to as purposive, meaning that the theoretical purpose of the project... determines the selection process.” Also, these two research models also differ through their data recording modes. Whereas the quantitative approach will privilege numerical references through a survey, and statistics, the qualitative approach stresses the importance of narratives, and detailed accounts that reflect personal understanding and reflections over questions. In the same way, these two methods will analyze differently collected data with the statistical space paying much attention to variables. Lastly, Marvasti (2004:11) underlines a big difference found in the attention given to social theory. The quantitative research seems to detach theory from the method, even though some discussion could still show up exceptions. Thus, quantitative research would introduce theory mainly in the initial step of the research to point out the rationale and could return to it by the end of the work, primarily for showing how an implementation process could be addressed. However, qualitative researches are more focused on the reflective component or “the give-and-take relationship, between social theory and methods” (Marvasti, 2004:11).



Contrary to those who support either of the research approaches, Bernard (2006:viii) announces his “neutral colors” for the preface of his book in unequivocal terms:

Students of cultural anthropology and archaeology may be asked early in their training to take a stand for quantitative or qualitative research. Readers of this textbook will find no support for this pernicious distinction. I lay out my support for positivism in chapter I, but I also make clear that positivism is not a synonym for quantitative...and so I do not like the bogus distinction between method and theory, any more than I like the one between qualitative and quantitative.

For this scholar, “the canons of science that govern data analysis, and the development of explanations apply to qualitative and quantitative data” (Bernard, 2006:x). He adds the following details, “This book is about research methods in anthropology – methods for designing research, methods for sampling, methods for collecting data, and methods for analyzing data. Moreover, in anthropology, this all has to be done twice, once for qualitative data and once for quantitative data (Bernard, 2006:1). These quotations underline a given relativity in the use of approaches commanded by the nature of the study and kind of data to be treated without any preference for a given approach. He gives preference to the fittest interpretation. At the same time, in the course of his explanations, he reserves a qualitative approach to the earlier investigation, a quantitative approach being exclusive for “mature science”:

At the early stages of its development, any science relies primarily on qualitative data. Long before the application of mathematics to describe the dynamics of avian flight, qualitative, fieldworking ornithologists did systematic observation and recorded (in words) data about such things as wings developments, perching stance, hovering patterns...Qualitative description is a kind of measurement, an integral part of the complex whole that comprises scientific research... As sciences mature, they come inevitably to depend more and more on quantitative data and on quantitative test of qualitatively described relations. But this never, ever lessens the need for or the importance of qualitative research in any science.

Despite the presence of a couple of words negotiating the importance of both approaches by the end of the above long quotation, and despite our respect for H. Russell Bernard, we do not agree with him at all on this obviously unfair presentation that entails his strongly defended “Neutrality” in the preface of the book. Unless English, though our second Language, is still

totally incomprehensible, there is no way we could share with him such attributes as “early stages of its development.” It is something that could easily put on the table the once condemned language use of “primitive” and other words of the kind. That said, we do not agree with him on this point. We timidly accept his allusion to the fact that both approaches could still be applied in the same research, only with the alteration that for us there would not be any preference or reservation to a particular stage.

For obvious reasons, it goes without saying that, for the sake of this study, preference was given to a qualitative approach as the entire work involves listening to and analyzing the Chokwe’s attitudes and formulations of their identities, and communications among themselves and different levels of leadership. It is all about reporting the results of how material culture comes into the construction of human identities, and how finally the human body may fill the agency role. Thus, a qualitative approach would not put much difference between the data collected and the way in which they are collected, as “the attention to the fluid and the interactive nature of the phenomenon would be a recurring theme in every step of the research” (Marvasti, 2004:11).

Marvasti (2004:12) summarizes in a table the main similarities and differences that characterize both approaches.

*Figure 12 Quantitative and Qualitative Methods*TABLE 1.2 *Comparison of qualitative and quantitative methods*

<b>Research activity</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>
Selection of research participants	Random sampling	Theoretical or purposive sampling
Data collection	Pre-coded surveys or other formulaic techniques	Direct, fluid, observational techniques
Data analysis	Statistical analysis aimed at highlighting universal cause and effect relationships	Analysis focused on context-specific meanings and social practices
The role of conceptual framework	Separates theory from methods	Views theory and methods as inseparable

*Source:* adapted from Bamberger 1999: 11–13

Likewise, Mack (2005:3) provides our readers with a synthetic chart that permits a quick overview of both qualitative and quantitative approaches

	<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>
<b>General framework</b>	<p>Seek to confirm hypotheses about phenomena</p> <p>Instruments use more rigid style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions</p> <p>Use highly structured methods such as questionnaires, surveys, and structured observation</p>	<p>Seek to explore phenomena</p> <p>Instruments use more flexible, iterative style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions</p> <p>Use semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation</p>
<b>Analytical objectives</b>	<p>To quantify variation</p> <p>To predict causal relationships</p> <p>To describe characteristics of a population</p>	<p>To describe variation</p> <p>To describe and explain relationships</p> <p>To describe individual experiences</p> <p>To describe group norms</p>
<b>Question format</b>	Closed-ended	Open-ended
<b>Data format</b>	Numerical (obtained by assigning numerical values to responses)	Textual (obtained from audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes)
<b>Flexibility in study design</b>	<p>Study design is stable from beginning to end</p> <p>Participant responses do not influence or determine how and which questions researchers ask next</p> <p>Study design is subject to statistical assumptions and conditions</p>	<p>Some aspects of the study are flexible (for example, the addition, exclusion, or wording of particular interview questions)</p> <p>Participant responses affect how and which questions researchers ask next</p> <p>Study design is iterative, that is, data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned</p>

*Figure 13 Quantitative and Qualitative Research Approaches*

Source: Marvasti, 2004:12

Both above-detailed descriptions of quantitative and qualitative studies aim at showing the choices this research has made in order to reflect how the participants' activities be justly appreciated as contributions to the research visibility.

With the above, if we have clarified how we will operate both for data collection and for their interpretation without a specific preference for either qualitative or quantitative approaches, whatever our choice is the best to lead to the comprehension of the social phenomenon studied. However, the above is not enough to help our readers understand how concretely knowledge

organization (KO) prevails all over this dissertation. In order to have a clear idea about that, it is important to present how epistemology and ontology are the backbone of this study and contribute to knowledge organization.

In this scope, Tennis (2008) suggests a preliminary classification of knowledge organization research divided among epistemology, theory, and methodology, all presented through Information Organization Framework. Epistemology is an important part of knowledge organization, and it is all about how we know things or how we have access to knowledge. According to Tennis (2008 104), it is also epistemology that validates the claim over what knowledge is valid in research or is susceptible of offering an organizational process. In that way, it also helps to put a clear line between what is knowledge and what cannot be a part of knowledge and should be discarded. To get knowledge formalized, epistemology can be closely viewed along a theory or theories. Tennis (2008 105) looks at a theory as a set of propositions and narratives used to explain social phenomena. It is a body of propositions that unify narratives that count phenomena. Theories are also perceived through their capacity to adapt to other scenes and explain other phenomena, for they must be abstract, predictive, explicit, universal, distinctive, and complete. The level of efficiency will quite often depend on the general methodology followed. Darlaston-Jones (2007, May) goes a step further and brings much more clarification regarding epistemology, ontology, and methodology. For him, a personal view of reality or ontology is submitted to epistemology as the obliged way to attain meaning, and social construction.

The above part has tried to put together concepts such as epistemology, ontology, theory, and methodology. However, we still need to get a clearer presentation of the framework this dissertation uses through details that should clarify the process. First of all, Blaikie (2009:96-98) informs us that any social construction of this kind comes in the scope of long traditions combining theories and ideas. At the same time, the author reminds us that traditions have not stayed the same over time. On the contrary, they have mutated and developed over time for, finally, presenting lines that could be followed as research paradigms. These paradigms are the source of theoretical, ontological, and epistemological assumptions; they are also the tools that construct the best frames for research strategies and take into account research questions. The choice of a paradigm for a research strategy does not exclude recourse to other research

strategies. That is why A. Giddens (1990; 1993; 1999) is many times mentioned in the research about modernity understanding and its different structures, and ideas that other scholars often quote and reshape again and again (A. Gupta & Ferguson, 1997(b); Gupta, 1997, Ferguson, 2006; Appadurai, A. 2013, 1998, 1986; Anderson, B. 1991; Smith, K.E.I., Leavy, P., 2008; Smith, A., 1991).

### **III.4 Grounded theory**

Bernard (2006:492) considers Grounded theories as one of the two methods that are widely used in social sciences for text analysis (the other being classical content analysis). It has its particularity with a specific emphasis on the discovery, labeling, and construction of models based on the formal description of concepts and their testing along hypotheses. It is, therefore, a set of techniques for the (1) identification of categories, concepts that emerge from texts, (2) linking concepts to theories.

Glaser (1967) developed Grounded Theory mainly for the analysis of ethnographic interview data in the following process: (1) the reading of a sampled text of an interview; (2) the identification of an analytic category or a theme; (3) as the data emerge, they are pulled from the class, and they are compared; (4) the researcher can think about how the categories are linked and how his/her research link them; (5) he will eventually use these relations to build up theoretical models; and finally (6) the research will present the results of the analysis with exemplars from the analysis and quotes from the interviews that illuminate the theory. Fortunately, Bernard (2006:510) finds the key to following the above six process points in what he calls “Memoing,” i.e., essentially running notes about a possible hypothesis and discussing the new direction the theory is about to take. That is why he looks at Grounded Theory as an Iterative Process that slowly leads the researcher to get more deeply grounded in the data.

Marvasti (2004:84) sees Grounded Theory through its closeness to reality and substantive space sharing data through an inductive or ground-up approach to data analysis. Marvasti (2004:84) happily notes with (Charmaz, 2002:677) the facilities that Grounded Theory, when well applied, makes accessible. Thanks to it, it is possible to lead a sixfold operation that leads to a quick comprehension, sharing, and theoretical construction in the following steps,

“(a) simultaneous data collection and analysis, (b) pursuit of emergent themes through early data analysis, (c) discovery of basic social processes within the data, (d) inductive construction of abstract categories that explain and synthesize these processes, (e) sampling to refine the categories through comparative processes, and (f) integration of categories into a theoretical framework that specifies causes, conditions, and consequences of the studies processes.

Despite this tremendous elaboration, the most attractive benefit remains in the capacity to theorize close to data as all reflections move within the boundaries that data provide the researcher with, making it possible that abstraction and empiricism share the same space. Also, the second most obvious advantage will certainly be found in the capacity to get a quick development of theories (substantive and formal) around relationships that emerge among concepts and sets of concepts (Marvasti, 2004:85). In this vein, Marvasti (2004:85-86) and Charmaz (2002) guide researchers towards the use of constructionist Grounded Theory that pays much more attention from the start to the social construction of reality through data collection and analysis, and through interactions contrary to objective Grounded Theory that wants the meaning to be discovered in data. Viewed from these perspectives, the researcher has, in fact, objectivist and constructionist Grounded Theory as this chart suggests,

***Figure 14 Objectivist and Constructionist Grounded Theory***

TABLE 5.1 *Comparison of objectivist and constructionist grounded theory perspectives on qualitative research*

	<b>Objectivist</b>	<b>Constructionist</b>
Data analysis	The data and its analysis reveal real meaning about real facts: ‘Let the facts speak for themselves.’	The data and its analysis are social constructions: ‘Whose facts, for what purpose and in what setting?’
Research method/technique	Strict adherence to preestablished methods such as coding techniques	Sensitive to how contextual factors (e.g., time, place and culture) influence the research process
Researcher role	Researcher must remain objective so that the facts emerge untainted	Allows for subjective interpretations by the researcher and the respondents to be part of the analysis

An explanation of grounded theory, source: Marvasti, 2004:85

Most of our work has been conducted under the lantern of constructionist Grounded Theory that permitted us to keep moving ahead while raising questions, constructing a narrative, and enjoying the re-construction of theories.

Also for this research, Grounded Theory has been adapted on two main levels. First of all, the narrative or the text to read is taken from living situations where the Chokwe gather around artifacts, or for a given ritual--in any situation that gives the opportunity to tackle a theme recurrent also in the interview questions. Thus, from the presence of the Chokwe king in a remote area far from his palace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Tshikapa, the main theme is raised: who do the Chokwe say they are, and how do artifacts assist in finding out who they are? Also, what are their relations with their leadership, and with the country leadership? What is their understanding of social construction? This situation construction is the main thread that is repeated in the other narratives. The main strategy has led to the construction of chapters around such themes or narratives. Their coherent presentation permits to move from chapter one to chapter ten, or within the entire dissertation regarding Chokwe shattered identities revealed through the study of their material culture and body lust both in daily life and in artistic representations. Thus, themes such as leadership, identification, identity construction, wellbeing, health care and healing, food and identification, gender and social construction, appear in the dissertation that itself becomes a narrative whose discourse analysis culminates in the interview analysis. Interview answers reflect in their own way every point that the narrative was built upon.

However, particular attention will be paid to gender consideration. This evaluation will be based on constructionist Grounded Theory in order to bring the research close to informants' experiences, and the identification of indicators, categories, schemes, patterns, inter- and intracultural sets that determine Chokwe identity and body variables within the study area. To facilitate the Grounded Theory work, the research strives to present prototypical examples reducing sampled artifacts to their main mathematical characteristics and cultural peculiarities. These specificities permit a *content analysis* of the human body as a socio-politico-cultural vehicle that determines motivations and articulations. The research counts much on the Grounded Theory; at the same time, *participatory approach and other strategies* (interviews, focus group discussions) are used to make sure that the concerned informants take part in the assessment and the evaluation of quantitative and qualitative body identity data management.



### III.5 Participatory Assessment detailed

Dietz (2013) and his *Participatory Assessment of Development* permits local informants to measure body implications, acquisitions, and views regarding identity amid the social politics and culture covering the Chokwe's body understanding and possible identity constructions. With the income from different disciplines, interdisciplinary approaches, this study draws resources from various disciplines to build up a clear understanding of Chokwe identities as they move more into globalization. Dietz (2013:218-219) uses participatory assessment mainly for development projects. It implies much input from the local population that sees thus from which point they are coming and the level they intend to reach, and the appropriate direction they need to take. After reading Appadurai (2013:1996; 1985), it became more than obvious that cultural facts have a life that can be extended, increased, and decreased. They also quite often involve a combination of fiduciary and cultural values whose life depends on the local interest, attachment to the past, and above all memories of the distant past. These archival and archeological remembrances make up history and construct values that are transmitted from one generation to the next, and give a life to material culture (Mudimbe, 1993; Appadurai, 1986). Our field contacts proved in fact that we were learning from the locals, and their assistance was quite necessary for the repetitive memoing exercise, i.e., they were quite required for the work that we had to undertake to get fully into the data. It is thus with them that we were able to move along one step at a time while discovering new things.

Taking into account that Grounded Theory leads to a presentation of a theory or theories that are built with the assistance of the local people themselves, we could thus figure out several ways to get theoretical representatives of the material we had at hand and their possible interpretations. Apart from the discussion we had and which needed the support of all community members to go from one step to another, we were able to formulate together theories based on the experience of some scholars and adapted to our needs. Thus, our readers will be happy to find that we were able to adjust Bourdieu's theories, for instance, to one revolving around the capital and habitus and their process of legacy with new generations. In addition, we were able to access the presentation and analysis of cultural facts of some scholars to prompt an understanding of the Chokwe cultural zone with significant implication on identity, nationalism, and body agency constructions (Appadurai, 2013; 1986;1996; Gupta, A.; Ferguson, J., 1987; Gupta, A., 1987; Anderson, B.,

1991; Smith, A., 1991; Smith, K.E.I., Leavy, P., 2008). Our theories can be viewed concerning identity constructions revealed through art fabric and body management, leadership and social hierarchy understanding, traditional royal chieftaincy versus modern African governmental contours and the grassroots, gender constructions and adaptations to times, wellbeing, health care, healing and rituals from long traditions, and glocal personal and community fabrics (Katz, 1997). The efforts put into each of them would completely lose their capacity if they had to be understood only through the researcher's capacity to penetrate them. An adapted participatory assessment, not only in the memoing and the iterative process, became more than necessary (Bernard, 2006:492).

This research counts much on the studied people's participation. It is, in fact, an ethnography that is mostly based on the accounts coming from the studied population. That is why participatory assessment becomes an essential tool for the population to get involved in the exercise and activate their memories of the distant past, eventually classifying these discoveries in a given order. It is at this level that the researcher's work assists them through a given maieutic process (Hines, 2000).

The researcher is collecting data, but through the best possible ways in his interactions with the local population. Oral memory covers many generations and goes to the roots of situations. The most significant history of Chokwe runs from the seventeenth century. Scholars such as J. Vansina (1966a; 1985; 1999; 2004), Vellut (2006), Strother (1998), Hoover (1978b), J. C. Miller (1982) ... have particularly focused on the Lunda/Chokwe space covering large moments of its population waves, rituals, masquerades, wars, food and famine, meetings with other populations... The stories that these scholars heard through ethnographic research came from living with the people for years in order to come to know them better and learn about different sources of information through oral traditions.

The scholars here above mentioned did a great job regarding historical contexts, the birth of community movements and survival through many years. They offer an interesting reading that permits the reader to locate places and people in time, and to find out their customs and habits developed in different meetings with other people. However, they do not offer much about the identities they claim and the reasons why they claim such identities, nor how these identities have survived to be expressed today through material culture. Through participatory assessment, this

gap is likely to be filled as the concerned will talk about their attachment to the material art, or some other kind of material culture that has become part of their daily life. The same process will certainly help to understand how the Chokwe people are still connected with rituals whose roots go back to a distant past through archeological strata of memories.

In this scope, we are confident participatory assessment may prove to be very useful as it engages in a dialogue with the concerned local people in a process that is likely to reveal how every step of their life is organized around material culture. The most visible aspects to discuss involve masks which, for different festivals and rituals, are still in existence around them. Material culture covers foodstuff not only because the food is served with utensils that have a long, changing history and connection with people, but also because people are likely to identify with what they eat. Some even use it as a kind of reference to what they are, and what their roots experienced in a long history. Kaputu (2010) shows how material culture includes well-being through rituals and ceremonies that through “Mimesis” follow a similar presentation frame for generations Grimes (2014; 2006; 1962). Such presentations finally become associated with people. Thanks to participatory assessments, this dissertation will be able to find such rites and rituals in the Chokwe world.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the main operations related to different tools that made possible a solid engagement in the constructionist Grounded Theory and a continuing application of participatory assessment with local populations.

### **III.6 Territory identification and limitation**

This operation was quite easy and does not need to be repeated here as it was already done in the introductory chapter. In fact, it is about the identification of the territories where the Chokwe populations live today. It is a total population of over one million in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Zambia. They live closely with people with whom they share the same culture, and who attend the rituals, and quite often decide to be called either Chokwe or Baluvale. It is these people spread in these three countries that we decided to study under the main title of this dissertation entitled: “Chilima and the remaking of Chokwe identity: **An Interdisciplinary Study on Globalization, Material Traditions and Gendered Cosmo-Polity.**”

A close look at this title shows that the interest of the survey will be on different levels. The land they occupy is scattered in the various regions and places. It is so curious to know and find out how they still have the same body management policies, or the same kinds of links with their material culture and the global spaces. Through a collection of updated data from locals and other sources such as documentaries, along with the ultimate assistance that comes from well-structured interviews and other group discussions, good results will certainly be reached and explained. In July 2015, the Chokwe King's visit to Tshikapa, which coincided with the first Chokwe symposium held in this mining city, was a good opportunity for us to spend a couple of days there. Apart from artists who participated in the symposium, we could meet the Chokwe populations whose collective memories went as far back as long enough in the past when young couples had decided to move from Musumba the Lunda capital for the first urban centers that could benefit from their experience. We had also several occasions to admire the continuation of Chokwe cuisine in a place where neighbors' influences have also been respected. Finally, interviewing local artists was an exception event as they are the ones whose works mesh with long traditions. They succeed in featuring several various traditions either in the same works or in the different works submitted to teams working in chain. My assistants covered other places where the Chokwe populations live in the Congo, Angola, Zambia. With them we spent much time at the intersection of the borders of the three countries. An assistant under my supervision, live in Cazumbo in Angola and we visited him a couple of times.

### **III.7 Sampling projection**

Like for any other research covering such a big area as here above noted, this research had the duty to assign a population to be interviewed in order to get the needed data. Needless to say, the same operation could be applied to material culture parameters, as this study has particularly much to do with the Chokwe artifacts. However, this kind of selection was done later in the study through meetings with the concerned people and, fortunately thus, avoided any bias from the outside. Concerning material culture, Glassier (1999), Woodward (2007), D. Miller (1987), Hicks (2010), (Gottdiener, 1995), Arnoldi (1966), P. Bourdieu (1984), all together help us understand that material culture deals with many different fields, such as folk studies, history, geography, cultural terms, architecture, landscapes, and so on. This big opening leaves us many possibilities but at the same time a problem of sticking to a few choices to maintain a clear

survey. Artifacts, rituals, songs, beliefs, food habits, ceremonial costumes, ceremonial discourses will hopefully be enough to encapsulate the Chokwe material culture, and keep a coherent line without necessarily much amplification.

Otherwise, sampling techniques contribute to getting a population that the study will concentrate on. In a case like the present, that sample is usually a part of the population that stands for an entire population sharing the same basic characteristics that have motivated the research (Dépelteau, 2013:213). In other words, the sample is supposed to be a subgroup of the population studied, whereas sampling techniques consist of the entire operations that permit the selection of the sample. Bernard (2006:146), Walliman (2005:275-276), and Marvasti (2004:9) concur on their comprehension of a sample. For all of them, it has to be representative of the population studied in order to lead to acceptable results. They all together underline the rationale that considers how a smaller size would increase the probability of getting biased results. In this vein, they also agree with Dépelteau (2013) that one of the first steps in conducting research be the selection of participants or respondents.

If respondents are randomly selected for the sake of statistics in quantitative studies, and for a process simply addressed as sample viewing people a bit like objects that come in the study, the process is quite different in qualitative research. Marvasti (2004:9) looks at sampling procedures in qualitative research through what he calls “purposive...meaning that the theoretical purpose of the project, rather than a strict methodological mandate, determines the selection process.” The quotation leads the reader to understand that with the qualitative approach he would be doing what was referred to earlier as both “memoing” and “iterative” (Bernard, 2006:510). The above scholars also concur on most of the different sampling kinds. We will limit ourselves to mentioning the most recurrent by their names, and will only focus on the one(s) used for this research.

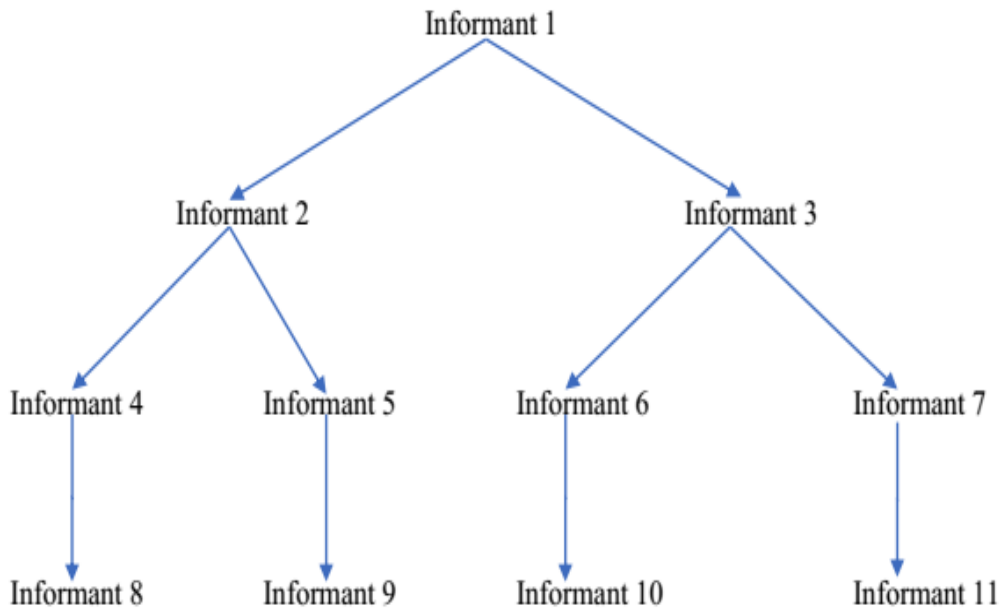
Otherwise apart from the *random sampling* already mentioned, we need to add that it is called simple random sampling when the population is uniform or has similar characteristics and the same chances. Seven other methods are well known and often used. *Simple stratified sampling* is of excellent use when cases in the population may be classified in the same categories, and could still apply randomized within the same category. *Proportional stratified sampling* is used when the population strata fall in different categories. An equally randomized sample is taken from

each stratum and finally from the complete sample. *Cluster sampling*: when cases in the population come into clusters and share one or some characteristics but are all the same heterogeneous. It is also called area sampling and addresses a large population and spread over a large area. It is divided into segments, and segments are chosen at random. When the population is enormous and without any precise characteristics, units are selected in a series with one taken at the *n*th case. There is also *non-random sampling* that provides, however, only a weak basis for sampling. Thus, *accidental sampling* uses what is immediately available, though there may be no way of checking on the representation capacity. As for journalists, they often use *quota sampling*. The same number of responses are selected from the replies that are given from different political parties. Still to get information from a population that is believed to know as much as possible about a topic, *theoretical sampling* is also advised. This approach is of great use in qualitative research and does not put much stress statistics. We can still mention three more. *Systematic matching sampling* compares two groups of very different sizes with a number selected from the larger group to match characteristics of the smaller group. Another simple sampling strategy is called *purposive sample* already mentioned above. It leads the researcher to the selection of what he believes is typical (Walliman, 2005:275-280 ; Dépelteau, F. 2013, 2013-27; Marvasti, A.B., 2004: 146-180). Marvasti (2004) has more details and some more sampling strategies we could mention separate from the group here. However, for succinctness reasons, and since we presume other researchers can access them, we have chosen to pinpoint the most visible in order to leave much more time to the sampling strategy this study had selected from end to end. We have to add that the precedent statement does not apply exclusively; other strategies came when decisions had to be made either regarding different groups to attend within the same time, or when a group discussion had to be organized quickly.

The above paragraphs have given a quick survey and certainly an incomplete one of sampling methods. Here are some ideas about Snowball sampling strategies as known and used in this study. It is referred to as a very simple sampling technique. It is also known that it does not demand too much and seems to be the ideal situation when there is no list as such of the population studied, or when the researcher does not know participants whose characteristics fit the ones needed. The sampling is constructed essentially through two distinct steps. First, the researcher gets in contact with a few people whom he believes have the needed characteristics. After a second time, these people take the responsibility to contact other people interested in the

topic and answering to the needed characteristics: to convince them to participate in the sampling as respondents. The process will continue until the expected sample is reached (Dépelteau, 2013:227-228). Walliman (2005:279) depicts Snowball sampling in very straight words that read “techniques where you contact a small number of members of the target population and get them to introduce you to others, i.e. of a secret society.”<sup>17</sup> Dépelteau (2013:228) describes Snowball strategies within the following chart:

*Figure 15 Snowball Strategies*



Source: One possible snowball sampling configuration. Depelteau, 2013:228

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<sup>17</sup> Snowball Sample conducted in ideal conditions could be enough to focus our attention on a set of representative respondents. However, the choice made from the beginning turning around a combination of many strategies for finding out how Chokwe identity construction operates obliges us to look in different directions for reaching a large comprehension. Snowball Sampling could enlarge our qualitative perspectives. It is our hope other contributions will better clarify our objectives.

As it can be seen above, the secret of this sampling technique resides mainly in working with the target population. It is in charge of opening other doors and thus permitting the researcher to continue to collaborate with the appropriate population responding to the needed characteristics.

Contrary to both scholars herein mentioned and their description of Snowball technique with only a few details, Bernard (2006:193-194) provides readers with more information. In addition to what the above scholars provide, he categorizes Snowball techniques as what are known as chain referral methods for the study of “hard-to-study populations.” Bernard mentions three main reasons for which a population can be hard to find and study. There may be only a few members scattered over a vast territory. Secondly, they may hide, for they are stigmatized and reclusive like in the case of HIV-AIDS. Moreover, thirdly, they may be members of an “elite” that will not have anything to do with sampling, research, and its results. Meeting a few of them becomes a critical juncture that permits us to slowly find others. Snowball is very much like another technique referred to as respondent-driven sampling, with the biggest difference being that the respondents are motivated with a small payment (Weisner, 2002; Heckathorn, D.D., 1997: 174-99; 2002: 11-34).

The technique described here above was at the basis of this dissertation and permitted us to reach places and people that were not expected from the outset. Generally speaking, the Chokwe populations do not like public shows. They prefer to keep silent. They would only react a bit and laugh whereas their strong reaction as such would appear in their artifacts. For instance, the “Katoyo”<sup>18</sup> mask represents a stranger, a foreigner who does not know the home culture and behaves carelessly. However, the Chokwe populations are also ready to welcome somebody who is introduced as having good intentions and collaborating for the cause of the Chokwe people especially if the person happens to share the same culture with them.

In this vein, the research has had the chance to count on very influential individuals in the three countries. Thus, Mr. Keleji Simeon, a journalist who has been covering Chokwe events in

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<sup>18</sup> On the analysis and the presentation of Katoyo Mask, I agree with Dr. Julien Volper’s comprehension turning essentially teeth presentation. Katoyo mask represents a lack of “civilization”, class, and an absence of skills that would permit somebody to share the same space with the local. Katoyo mask is an outsider who cannot fit in the community because he lacks the prerequisites and the necessary culture. Even though the Katoyo could think to be in a superior position, the local doors would not open to him, thus condemning him to a status of mockery.



Zambia for the last twenty years, was a rare find for this quality of work. A phone call he makes is a miracle leading us to the initiation camps where people are not normally accepted. He is known all over Zambia and has interviewed on the Zambian National Radio so many people dealing with different cultural aspects. His connections go as far as the Democratic of the Congo and Angola. Two more assistants filled the same roles in the two other countries: Claver Mukazo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Pastor Francisco Mutayayi in Angola. With them, it was possible to get the sampling we need, i.e., a total population of 250 for the three countries with 67 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (50 men and 17 women), 95 in Zambia (51 men and 44 women), and 88 in Angola (46 men and 42 women). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the selected people came essentially from Tshikapa, Lubumbashi, Dilolo, Sandoa. Others were met in these places. In Zambia, the interviewed people were met in Lusaka, the Copperbelt city, and in the Northwestern province. However, much of the fieldwork was achieved in Zambezi and Chavuma for obvious reasons, Zambezi is the place where the Likumbi Lya Mize is held every year, and therefore a central place for meeting the Chokwe populations coming from the three countries. In the three countries, the sample turned around a population of both sexes and whose age varied from twenty-five to eighty years old. These people freely answered a questionnaire whose results will be interpreted in the last chapter.

However, another big chance we had was to work in close collaboration with two royal Chokwe chiefs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia. They were very helpful on more than one level. First, they answered all the questions they were asked, as much as possible. They always introduced us to their ministers and advisers to talk about different topics. It was also with them that we had social programs where we could attend rituals, observe them, and locate more people for discussions. In this way, it was possible to construct the frame of this study and design its backbone within interdisciplinary strategies, highly supported by anthropological techniques and field assets. In this manner also, data were collected.

Apart from cultural artifacts, daily family objects, rituals, and traditions already described, the research mainly focuses on Chokwe identities. It was, therefore, important to determine the population that would be studied, especially regarding body (male and female) themes and identity within some locations. The sampled population will include village chiefs also known as local power holders, and body definers figuring out identities. They are the ones who can explain

the configuration of their socio-political organizations over the years. They lived as well as reflected on their exchanges with neighboring ethnic groups. With their neighbors, village chiefs often build up fraternal relations through marriages, or through other forms of connections.

The second group to sample will include artists, i.e., the people producing art. They will indeed be able to mention the reasons why they produce different artifacts, and particularly within what kind of connections define their work with their chieftains and the local population. They will describe human bodies in their works. They will also have a historical perspective on their work and its social connectivity. This group will also consider women's activities in every event studied to have a clear picture of gender challenges.

*Figure 16 Tshikapa Chokwe Artists: Witnesses of the Past and Tradition Innovators*



Tshikapa Chokwe artists work in harmony with their neighbors from other ethnic groups. They have a recognized group with an official state status. They produce artifacts that send to a long past of the Chokwe. Masks: Chinkunza and Mwana Pwo prevail. A close look can detect regional influences. Pipes are such an example. The Tundaji's dancing tail here above is made with much influence from Asalapamsu and Leele. Chibinda Ilunga's statue is in a warrior's position even though we can't see his bag of magic powder. Chibinda Ilunga's face has also features that are a bit different from the ones found elsewhere. The exhibition of a circumcised penis seems to insist on a cultural feature the royal hunter brought to the Lunda/Chokwe empire.

© F.Kaputu Pictures, Tshikapa 2015

The third group that will necessarily be present in the sample will be composed of traditional religious leaders, healers, and diviners (such Mr. Kachongo met several times in Zambezi). They are indeed the ones who currently use the objects that are a part of daily life and those that have acquired an artistic value, but are considered as parts of cults, rituals, magic, and house utilities. This group is known for reviving bodies for both the present and the future often with references to their past and cultural novelties. This group also pays attention to gender challenges. Once discussions are held with people such as Mr. Kachongo, it will be easy to go towards others who attend the Likumbi Lya Mize and take appointments to participate in their religious ceremonies, especially in Chavuma, Kabompo and Solwezi.

The fourth group to sample will include men and women whose age and social conditions permit them to understand lust management and the possible projection on body artifacts and other forms of art. Also, this group will discuss how certain rituals manage the lust observed in the study area. This group will have a subgroup of women in order to discuss gender issues with them.

Our reader will have already observed that these last samples would hardly use the snowball sampling strategies. During personal meetings with people while moving from one village to another, we will have the chance to hold group discussions, and these groups will prevail in order to make sure that answers from the population having the same characteristics are answered by those who have enough knowledge and skills in the needed fields. It goes without saying that process does not in any way contradict our initial strategies.

### **III.8 Questionnaires, Structured, Semi-structured, and Open Interviews**

In order to be able to get a significant amount of data that helped us verify every detail collected during the fieldwork, either through private conversations with local people, or close observations of different cultural events, it was necessary to have a set of questions that would be responded to by the sampled population, and thus serve as another checker of the work. Lamoureux (1995:392) considers interviews as a tool for data collection whereas Grawitz (1990:742) looks at them as communication that links two people unknown to each other who would like to share information on precise topics. Tremblay (1968:312) looks at interviews as an observation technique based on questions addressed to informants met in different conditions,

either by pure chance or by choice following selected characteristics. The communication has the aim to collect indispensable data about one or several questions. Tremblay's definition has the advantage of revealing four different points such as communication, social context, interpersonal relations that enhance the questions, and the results seen as subjective and objective data. Dépelteau (2013:247) particularly considers it as a process of investigation that uses a verbal communication process to get information related to the prefixed target.

Walliman (2005:281) takes the reader to questions, questionnaires, and diaries, and believes that "asking questions is an obvious method of collecting both quantitative and qualitative information from people. Using a questionnaire enables the researcher to organize the questions and receive replies without having to talk to every respondent." The questions are arranged in an appropriate way, to get as much input as possible from the respondent, and eventually, use them in the interview.

There are different kinds of interviews. Once again, we will not waste our reader's time reviewing them all but to insist on the techniques we used. We had closed and open interviews to make it easy for our assistants to adapt to any situation they would experience. Some people liked to write on papers, and many others wanted to talk around a cup of tea, digressing then getting back on track. Such discussions took place with a small group with men essentially five to ten. It is rather around their daily activities such as by the river, common kitchens that my assistants were able to ask for a meeting with women. At the Likumbi Lya Mize, it was possible to organize talks with the restaurants' owners, exclusively women. Such meetings included by some food, and finding a good excuse to engage in conversation. To get some privacy, we went to them at moments when most people were engaged in collective activities. Finally, we had to make use of traditional interviews (translated into Chokwe or Luvale, French and English), structured/unstructured interviews, focus group interviews, and participatory assessment groups. We also had opportunities, from time to time, to use Skype discussion groups in order to clarify something that came out of our reading or from the data analysis. Walliman (2005:283-290) documents the different kinds of questionnaire, interviews, individual and group. They have been useful insofar as this work did not count only and primarily on structured and semi-structured questions. But we had to be very flexible especially in attendance of rituals when our field specialists would suddenly find an unexpected resourceful person ready to talk about the

questions. The long experience of one of our fieldwork assistants, Mr. Simeon Kaleji, gave us the chance to tape record most of the interviews. He is known as a journalist, and most of the people are happy that he interviews them. These recording tools made it easy for us to combine the writing questionnaire with several other approaches aiming at getting the needed information in time, and having the informant eventually play several different roles in addition to answering the questions (Marvasti, 2004:11-14).

### **III.9 Participatory Workshops/Group Discussion**

We organized a total of nine mixed workshops and nine gendered (male/female) discussions, and four focus groups only. There is not much difference between these two kinds of interactions. However, the first one called workshop is more systematic and expects the participants to take part in the discussions that forget the organizer through a dynamic participation and sub-questions. They are organized by a group that has a secretary who takes notes and can offer a summary of the main points discussed. The moderator (met earlier and prepared for the job with the help of our assistants) makes sure everybody talks and participates in the discussion, and focuses on the main points of the discussion. In a way, the participants are also learning, and as they are learning, they are focusing more and more on details that they could not pay attention to at the beginning of the process. Here and there, they would raise a contradiction and make a point about it so that to clarify historical events.

The choice of issues reserved to the participatory groups was made with a specific focus on political institutions today and in the past, material culture in the past and today, sexuality education, medicinal plants, religion<sup>19</sup> and Chokwe traditions. These questions are a part of the issues found in the interviews, and thus, the workshop and group discussion somehow could permit us to go deeper into people's thoughts, especially group participants carefully chosen for their long experience and widespread knowledge of the Chokwe history. The setting that included a fire place and stools arranged according to the village hierarchy permitted those who could speak to freely take the floor. Some preferred to use the appropriate ambiguous language

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<sup>19</sup> In most cases referred to and regarding the Chokwe populations, the readers should keep in mind that religion is considered as a power. It is a power that determines society and its different structures. The entire text, though turning much around artifacts, is an explanation about the power that religion has. It constructs the Chokwe society.

respected in the Chokwe traditions and avoided thus to openly contradict elders. However, as the technique is largely known and easily noticed by locals, somebody else would kindly correct the flaw like in a construction while the talk would continue. Fortunately, all recruited assistants know about challenges and easily understand what has to be addressed again, corrected, or accepted as such as an important information. The participatory groups were had the same responses concerning the way the Chokwe populations worked with their political institutions led by the legendary King. The King and his ministers were operating in such a way as to let institutions live with strong connections to the past. Ancestors were always present.

The process of data collection will largely depend on the communication strategies here above pointed out and regarding each group of the sample. Each group is indeed at the center of the collection of data that will later be analyzed in the light of the Grounded Theory and its several adjuvants here above described. Apart from the sample groups to which a questionnaire was submitted, the focus groups organized around formatted and coordinated workshops. By the way, it is among the focus group participants that key respondents will be selected and submitted to personal interviews for data from oral sources. Group interviews and seminars will be held to deepen critical aspects regarding Chokwe body understanding and cultural development from the colonial times.

Much work was done prior to our presence in the fieldwork. We trained four assistants whose mission turned around meeting early village authorities, getting in their confidence, and plan together our next meetings for which the local leaders invited other village people in making sure that the invitation would reach everybody. Those who were available could not refuse attending a meeting called by their local leader. The same strategy was applied in different places. The village people were informed of our purpose to learn from the past and the present in order to understand especially social organizations, connections with neighbors, collaboration with political authorities. Participatory-based workshops around guided discussions have different goals: (i) to look at art as a medium that bears socio-anthropological, linguistic, historical, religious, and philosophical witness on the development of the Chokwe body management, lust socialization, and identity development; (ii) to document Chokwe (body) identity designs and understanding over time, their visibility and involvement in social views, and fabrics; (iii) to assess their most important changes all along time, and their anthropologico-philosophical

comprehension as agencies; (iv) to raise questions about the adaptability of Chokwe body and lust conceptions to access global polity standards; (v) to mention different socio-economic possibilities that could stem from a wise use of Chokwe body social strategies; (vi) to pinpoint gender issues in the Chokweland and in the world and find out resources from Chokwe traditions that would depict differently gender landscapes; (vii) to illustrate how Chokwe identities historically depicted through an interdisciplinary approach participate in political, policy and polity fabrics.

The participatory assessment was also based on the fact that its indications opened a space that could be regularly checked to find out if what was stated at a given moment was still right. Thus, personal contacts and panel discussions could lead to other contacts and further discussions. To put it short, the participatory work has given orientations for discussions groups and future contacts with localities. Also, a dynamic based on village evening meeting sessions has continued even in our absence. In the evenings, people continued to gather around talks that were only seen as only belonging to a distant past. With the incentive of continuous links from Belgium, Skype conversations, phone calls, and some money sent via Western Union for evening entertainments, we have continued to receive different details from our fieldwork territory. They have continued to come to us until late in the redaction of this thesis and have raised so many new questions that should be considered for further research.

### **III.10 Discussion groups**

With the success of participatory groups, we regularly received messages from people informed about what happened and who seemed to have missed something important. Our work consisted then in keeping contact with a small group of such people. Whenever possible, we met them and organized a discussion about well-selected points related to the general research. Such points included: the making of masks, witchcraft in the past and today, the power of medicinal plants in the healing process, political institutions of the Chokwe royal dynasty, women yesterday and today, sexual youth education in the past and today, the benefits of circumcision. We also from time to time enjoyed discussing their lifestyle and thus were informed what money meant for them and what they had to do to get some of it, how they used it, and how their dependents shared work and different benefits with them. We had two group discussions on honey business connecting the three countries studies. Finally, we had a group debate on the benefits they got



from the ceremony Likumbi Lya Mize and how they could be increased three or four times with much more attention and respect given to women for their work. We never put ourselves in a position to give a lesson, but gave them opportunities to exchange with us through a kind of maieutic process.

### **III.11 Documentary Reviews**

The operation related to documentary reviews should be contextualized within a longer perspective. As a matter of fact, during the academic year 2013-2014, the time during which I served as Zambia expert at the African Studies Centre at Leiden in the Netherlands with a grant from the Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, i.e., the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, abbreviated as KNAW, we had some time to start our systematic record and readings of these sources. To this day, our EdNote library counts about one thousand sources. A specific chance in the process was a meeting with Professor Jeffrey Hoover who has worked since the late 1970's in the region, and whom we have granted with the concept of Cassavabelt. His scholarship documents the arrival of Cassava in the region. It has become the main food for the Lunda/Chokwe and can be tracked in their migration waves and conquests in a crescent region, a kind of extra-large reversed comma area that originates from the Lunda capital, Musumba, goes through the Northeastern Angola, and ends in the Northwestern Zambia. The Chokwe people have also imposed cassava to their neighbors. However, our readers should not forget that cassava was imported from America and arrived with slave trade ships. Hoover was the first one to provide us with a few book titles about the area, and eventually put them in a context that enabled us to move ahead. J. C. Miller (1999, Feb.; 1982) is especially significant for clarifying ideas about land occupation and the penetration of American crops in Africa that has completely changed lifestyles and expectation in many places throughout the continent. If better food meant a different lifestyle for many as well as long life expectancy, the new crops have revealed other secrets that need clear explanations.

A final word on this section will point out the amazing snowball effects these sources have produced. Yes, they were providing me with answers to questions, but at the same time revealing new sources that have enlarged the bibliography to more than one thousand different sources. It is within this dynamic that the research could move from known historians to a few whose works lead to the first contacts that the colonialists had with the Chokwe populations. Carvalho (1890)

and Lima (1971) have led us to the sources of the Chokwe and their rituals conducted in different social occasions. They have thus offered invaluable sources that provide a vision of the identities studied in the distant past, and within the Chokwe occupied space throughout the three countries where they migrated.

### **III.12 Data Collection and Analysis**

The process of data collection will largely depend on the communication strategies here above pointed out and regarding each group of the sample, opportunities, and primarily “Memoing” and “Interactive” capacities. For it is not only a question of data collection, we also wanted to revisit every recorded detail and confront it with the available participant. Each group is indeed at the center of the collection of data that will later be analyzed in the light of the Grounded Theory and its several adjuvants here above described. The sample groups are also the focus groups for which formatted workshops were coordinated. It is among them that key informants were selected and submitted to personal interviews for data collection from oral sources. Group interviews and seminars were held to deepen critical aspects regarding Chokwe body understanding and cultural development from the colonial times.

Fieldwork exercise were taking place in several steps in order to ensure its success. First, a couple of meetings took place with the Belgian supervisors to determine with precision the very object of the fieldwork and its subdivision in different levels that should lead to covering the needed information through the expected contacts. Professor Jan Broekaert had much to suggest considered his long experience with students from Latin America who regularly visit the Leo Apostle Center at VUB. Their success is necessitated by the preparation of clear questions and the provision of contacts that will stand as facilitators during the time the scholar spent in the field. He also mentioned the necessity to speak the same language with the facilitators, and if possible, with the interviewees with whom to spend as much time as possible, in order to build human relationships that facilitate communications, reliance, and mutual respect. He also pointed out the necessity of daily notes taken during the entire time spent on the field even if recorders were used. Personal memories, short personal off record conversations could thus have a chance to be remembered later.

Professor Stroeken often pointed out his experience with the Sukuma from Tanzania. He had to live with them, learn the language and have a family. In addition, he not only underwent initiation but also took part in divinatory consultations. He did everything to understand the situation from within. It is in sharing life with people that he finally could find out a coherence around several themes related to social activities and daily life design among the Sukuma. That is for him the best reward of ethnography – the fact that life is shared with the studied people.

These general lines that are supposed to be applied to individual cases and understanding also took Dietz (2013) into account as far as the dimension of human communication is concerned and its capacity to facilitate data collection with the participation of the locals. The participatory assessment method presented several advantages when combined with the above orientations. It also proved to be quite productive all along the complete fieldwork subdivided into several sections, places and times. It permitted the coverage of the vast terrain that had to be taken into account with several practical questions.

It quickly became evident that several things had to be done in order to ensure a proper coordination, communication, and result collection from the field. The first thing to do was to make sure that a coordination could work with at least three teams of assistant researchers associated with the three different countries under study, i.e., Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia. Several contacts were taken via emails and Skype that led to the identification of three different teams present in the three different countries. A Vademecum was elaborated for the teams and left a big open space for details found useful during the first meetings. The Research Vademecum was quite helpful for the assistants and us. Its main highlights were a reminder of behaviors to be observed and strategies to be adopted in order to get good results.

To empower the assistant researchers with the contents of the Vademecum, a general training meeting was scheduled in Zambia at the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The meeting was important to permit the collaborators to know that they were working with a big team and that a mistake recorded somewhere would have a severe impact on the entire chain. They learned the necessity of being very careful because mistakes once done could not be easily corrected. The meeting discussed the following points: (1) introduction (so that they could know each other), (2) meeting local authorities, (3) sharing interests and a quick survey of the

questionnaire, (4) interview and collecting data, (5) data collection, (6) shipping data, (7) contacts with other teams, (8) going through questionnaires, (9) scheduling team meetings, and (10) scheduling one or two more general meetings, (11) how to save data if something wrong had to happen (for personal security reasons, or following an accident), and (12) compensations. Questions regarding ethics, privacy, and consent were discussed at three different levels. First with the officials of the visited are, then with the local leaders, and finally with the individual respondents in order to make sure that everything went smoothly and led to the best possible results for both parts; the research team and the local populations. That is why we can today count many friends all around the areas visited.

The assistants were taught to introduce themselves in the easiest way to permit their interlocutor not only to remember their names but also to connect them easily with the topic of their conversation. They should, therefore, avoid any attitude that should make them suspect. They should mainly avoid attitudes that could lead to suspicion of looking down on people, or of giving the impression of bringing solutions to all problems. The second point treated was about meeting local authorities. It insisted on respect to authorities and particularly to village authorities. It finally described local habits that may request clapping hands or gently kneeling before engaging in conversation. They should also learn to let the host speak first, and start with a general question regarding anything that may not even be linked to their visit. The starting point was particularly regarded with much attention in so far that it would permit the continuation of the talk. The third point dealt with sharing interests with the interlocutor on things related to the place to facilitate the continuation of the conversation. This point leads straight to the fourth regarding leading the interview while making sure that the data are recorded. Means were provided for recording through a recording machine. Attention was particularly drawn to data conservation in at least two different places. A third copy should be sent to the researcher for an immediate reading and follow-up in case there was anything to be done again. A dynamic was also developed with other teams that could communicate within the same country for the clarification of any question that raised a problem, but also with the researcher himself. A general rehearsal explained how the assistants should go through questions with the interviewees and how they could eventually use local expressions here and there.

Group discussions were the first activity to engage in. These discussions were important for getting data for which the interviewees could not feel certain to give straight answers through face-to-face (one-on-one) interview. Panel discussions were given a great deal of importance as a possibility of meeting with a group of people and engaging in a productive discussion. The group members participating in the debate had the responsibility to find details that justify their answers. Some of the groups did not only have to meet once but two or three times in a village style with talks, discussions, oral traditions, and conclusions that called for another talk. In most of the places, the locals thanked them for the opportunity they had to talk about interesting topics regarding the Chokwe, their past, their present and their future with a specific stress on their material culture.

### **III.13 Data Validity and Reliability**

Apart from the fact that this research counted on documentary sources as primary sources for formulating its interviews, discussion groups, participatory groups, and one-on-one questions, it did not rely on a single strategy to for the validity of the data. It combined several strategies to find out whether data were well-analyzed, and the results reached reliable and valid.

Walkman (2005), Bernard (2006), Deplete (2013), Marvasti (2004), Mack (2005), Mishra (2002, Spring), all mentioned in the above sections of this chapter, offered us enough explanations to understand how quantitative and qualitative methods can be used in social sciences and how they can lead to different interpretations of the results. We particularly contested some orientations coming from Bernard (2006) concerning a visible greater appreciation given to quantitative methods for their statistical detail that he granted with much more capacity to depict the veracity of social phenomena. We rather favored other orientations paying much more attention to qualitative research (Walliman, 2005). It is with the vision of “Memoing” and “Iterative” activities – understood as a recurrent process that asks the same question several times to same and different people in order to check on their answer consistencies and inconstancies and find out the permanent variables and coherent narrative – that we chose our most important result verification strategy. Thus, whatever came to us either from documentary sources or other oral sources had to go through the process mentioned above.

An ethnographic backbone was put in place in order to guide our decisions. If all the same the interview results can be perceived under the angle of some quantifiable data, they came with a big capacity to address specific issues and specific groups of people. However, the entire dissertation is still based on another “Memoing” and “Iterative” activity which checks the veracity of data also collected from other sources, numerical or not. Much work was also done in my absence as I could send different questions through telephones, Skype conversations, or precisions that requested that the assistants travel to given places and apply what was decided in the preparatory meetings.

It is out of that dynamic that finally the dissertation started developing its discourse through different chapters. Each of them can, in fact, be seen through the same lenses that we could call “Memoing-Iterative,” for each has undertaken the responsibility to check over a question and offer an articulated discourse standing for the presentation of a couple of results.

### **III.14 Ethical Issues, Acquiring Research Permission, Informants’ Consent, Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Conducting research about the Chokwe populations, their material culture, lust understanding, and identity construction was not a piece of cake. The Chokwe populations are known for a great attachment to their culture and traditions. They are also known for their personal choice of the people with whom they share their cultural heritage, especially concerning initiations whose secrets are not supposed to filter outside of initiated environments.

Konopinski (2013) informs us that ethics deals with thinking through relationships and responsibilities with particular regard to moral and political choices during encounters in the field. Our attention should also consider that the above should not be confused with an ethical committee. It is rather about the dilemmas and issues that come up during the research process steps. It goes from what we think to do, where we believe we will do it, and how we will proceed in order to reach our research purposes. It is about responsibilities that come along vis-à-vis our informants, colleagues, the countries where we go and their legal limitations, and the public we will deal with.

The main questions related to ethics are unpredictable. Most of the time, in a situation they their specificities that may not have anything to do with what was done before in the same area, and

elsewhere. It is a matter of scaling responsibilities and, at the same time, conducting research fairly. Individuals, groups, leaders taken separately or together may lead to different kinds of responsibilities and, sometimes, to confusion. It is, therefore, the duty of the researcher to make clear from the beginning that he s/he knows exactly with whom s/he is dealing. That knowledge will lead to reattribute credit to specific groups that are thus represented and recognized with appropriate gratitude. In the same vein, it is important to find out if “the so-called gatekeepers” are not filling their partition in hidden scenery.

Nakray (2015:195) invites the researcher’s attention to focus on relevant ethical questions from the beginning, especially when s/he has to go through abnormal, dangerous field sites. The researcher as pointed out in the above paragraphs is likely to lack a way out if s/he has to rely exclusively on the course and advice accumulated during classroom situations. Methodological and ethical issues that emerge often require a combination of many skills to get needed data however unexpected and chaotic the situation may be. Violent situations may happen even if the fieldwork projection did not predict them. Fieldwork exercises always have dimensions that come at random and need to be addressed in time, and in the right way.

The above paragraphs have attracted our attention to what happens at all research levels. The researcher must have the flexibility to adapt to new situations and remain morally acceptable. In this vein, Plemmons (2015:9) discusses the most fundamental strategies to be taken into account at all steps. Paradigms, patterns, and habits build up the “comfort zones” with researchers trained to work, but which may be hiding extreme dangers. The comfort zones may, unfortunately, not fit in all situations and need to adjust to be able to provide the accurate answer to the situation. Getting information and the needed data requires that the researcher be ready to have clear evaluations at all time, and to adapt the ethnographical work to the environment.

In the light of the above pieces of advice and considering the vast area that this research has to cover, we had long meetings with our research assistants for them to be able to react correctly in all circumstances. Besides, introductory meetings with local traditional chieftains or with political authorities revealed themselves quite significant. Local communities were informed of our presence and no suspicion could prevail. At the same time, thanks to the Civil Society Scholar Award, rehearsals were performed earlier with the assistants who were quite remarkable and had the appropriate reactions whenever needed. It is thanks to these strategies that the ethnographical

work was fluid through all steps without any problems. The assistants could cover long distances and spend there enough time while still remaining in touch with the researcher.

The kind of permission we had for this research started with the faculty mentioned above that supported the project and provided us with the necessary scholarship for its duration. That permission was given under the form of working papers including a registration at both universities (Ghent and VUB), and administrative papers for the requested stay in Belgium. Other permissions were asked at all levels the fieldwork was organized, or for meetings with different key respondents. Every time, however, we had to balance every aspect of ethics in order to meet the local expectations, and yet respect our standards. We knew, for instance, that many of our respondents once informed that we had met their local chief would accept talking with us. However, we made it an obligation that they had to give their personal consent. We insisted that they could at any level refuse, or ask us to come again to meet them. We agreed with them and were flexible with their time. Also, we tape-recorded most of our interviews. We also needed their permissions, and quite often, we had the pleasure to watch what was recorded with them. Most of them were happy to know that their material was serving as research that would explain the Chokwe culture. Once they were informed that their culture was getting in the pipeline, they were happy that the world would know how the colonial, postcolonial powers did not understand the Chokwe people and used them for tasks that did not bring them any benefit at all. When reviewing the material tape-recorded with them, they were happy to comment again. At such moments, we had to organize a setting like in the Chokwe traditions: making possible that everybody present could eat something and drink a bit in a kind of celebration for the work done together.

Despite the opening of several voices in discussions, the Chokwe populations are always careful and do not touch upon topics that are taboo. Those who attended initiation camps, especially those who participated in the Mukanda, know that they cannot speak about details with foreigners. It is indeed forbidden to share with non-initiated people secrets only cohorts who were together share, or with other people from other recognized cohorts. We knew about that important detail; we did not insist on forcing them to tell secrets. However, thanks to the assistants who had attended, we were able to make connections that could lead us to many details about initiation camps. It is only through “Memoing” and “Interactive” that we were able after



many attempts to have a clear idea about life in initiation camps. Another good opportunity came at the Likumbi Lya Mize in Zambezi: the masquerade that takes place at the exit from the Mukanda (male initiation held in the forest or the wood far from the village). Here, once again thanks to our assistants, it was possible to secure private moments with special resourceful people. They had some time for us and were able to relate to us details of their long history in what will finally compose several parts of the Chokwe culture.

### **III.15 Limitation and Delimitation of the Study**

The writing of this dissertation went through major difficulties from time to time. At the beginning, the project seemed to analyze a process that would fairly run to its ends. Even though we could predict a couple of problems, we did not realize that we would have to face unpredictable situations.

First, the understanding of the Chokwe needed to go back in history to at least the arrival of the Portuguese on the Angolan coast, one of the ends of the Chokwe's long commercial route (around 1490), especially during slavery. However, sources describing the Chokwe exactly in that time are rare despite their known activities of the time with the Colonials. Instead, we had to use other sources of their later years. Fortunately, Carvalho (1890) and Lima (1971) were very useful and helped to bridge later times to earlier times. Both these resources sent us back into daily activities of the Chokwe as fighters or load carriers for the Colonials on long treks. In fact, the Chokwe's work could be considered as debasing in many ways. However, seen from another perspective, it is thanks to it that the Chokwe populations became so close with the newcomers and were able to share knowledge and skills that increased Chokwe influence around their inhabited zone. This closeness also increased different kinds of cooperation, sometimes deciding what people's communities could do. The Chokwe populations had to be moved far from the interests of the new masters and avoid any confusion.

The second important issue regarded the confusion created by the concept Lunda-Chokwe. Many documentary sources have reinforced the confusion of that concept. It is so easy to use them and to conclude that the Chokwe populations could just be a branch of the Lunda that revolted at a given time and whose roots are still much connected with the Lunda traditions and historical evolutions. Unfortunately, if documentary sources may easily lead to such conclusion, living oral

traditions seem to go in the other direction. While they seem indeed to have shared common roots in their disputed past mythical history, they took different routes with various languages while keeping memetic remnants that still oppose them on questions related to superiority. The fieldwork was significant in this regard because it permitted us to dig further into these differences and clearly understand how Chokwe identities have been constructed over the course of years. These identity constructions have not clarified everything about the Chokwe. There are more and more academics representing both ethnic groups trying to show up proofs of their people's historical superiority.

A third difficulty met during the research was mainly linked to distances to cover. Distances are very long within the same country (as can be perceived from the maps earlier given in this dissertation). Covering these distances and scheduling them alone was enough to suggest putting an end to the entire project. Also, transportation was limited in all directions. Even when a truck was available for a trip, it was not sure the next one would be on time and going in the right direction. Finally, the fact of continuously being on the move could mean important details were forgotten, and that eventually a trip back to the same place had to be scheduled. The project had great assistants completely dedicated to their work who were able to do a hundred things not on the initial plan. Looking back at distances covered and people met, we noted that the project proved to us that areas covered needed better treatment from respective governments.

With the issue concerning distances came another challenge that could not be calculated with precision. To start with, the project did not have finances to cover different fees regarding the field operations. Several strategies were put into use as a result. First, we had to contact people we knew in the area and find out what they could offer while we would be there and thus spare some money. Secondly, the assistants had territories to cover and think about local strategies to survive. With such strategies, the amount of money we could afford, essentially from our savings, was used for fees that had to be paid and for the organization of large group discussion that requested a few materials. Finally, we received some money from the Civil Society Scholar Awards and the Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen (FWO); it paid for trips and large meetings with local chieftains, and the short training given to our field assistants.

In the field of finances comes what we should count as the fifth problem. Our presence in many places meant that there was money with us. People, especially in the Democratic Republic of

Congo, would go to the assistants with exciting plans to go straight to a very reliable source and get the most interesting data. Alternatively, again, they needed some money to travel to a point and come back with valuable material and/or people who could be interviewed in his community. Other times, they needed insurance for the bus or other means of transportation. Suddenly, their telephones would go off. Later, some would confess that they needed that money for solving an urgent family problem. Alternatively, some unknown advisor would show up and promise to schedule the meeting with the chief, then the guy would disappear. Fortunately, for most fieldwork and encounters organized in Zambia, the assistant and journalist Simeon Kaleji's aura preceded our arrival, and things were properly done. In fact, even in the cases of crooks, most of the concerned had nothing to do with the Chokwe people, as such, but nefarious individuals who wanted to meet in private the field assistants for the "easiest way" to get to quick results.

A sixth difficulty revolved around the number and nature of events to attend. One of the key elements of the study was rituals and other social events producing a significant community gathering of people coming from different places. However, they represented difficulties; they were not organized during the same period and they were not organized within close distances or the same country. One such example would remain unforgettable. Tshikapa at the center of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had two specific cultural events. The Chokwe king visited the place for the first time, and the Mutuelle des Chokwe had decided to organize a symposium at the same time. To reach Tshikapa in time, we had to use both a flight and motorbikes. With motorbikes in the daytime and at night, we had to go through nonexistent roads, through dangerous paths to avoid the highly sandy terrain. It was return trip of about six hundred kilometers on the back of motorbikes. At times, falling in the sand, pushing the motorbikes, and sometimes having to walk in order to avoid the worst sections of the road, we had a most horrifying experience. Then suddenly, we met the Tshikapa Chokwe, also on their motorbikes, who offered us a bitter concoction to drink to stop our pain from blisters and body pain from the long trip.

A seventh and less significant difficulty had to do with dealing with women, and getting them to talk by themselves far from odd men's eyes. However, this should not be understood as a major gender issue for almost all the Chokwe have much respect for their women. At the same time, they want them to be safe, and they would not leave them alone with strangers. This difficulty

remained until we talked about it with the Chiefs; they all knew one of the female leaders and made sure she would take care of us. Women have many resources; they only request patience from the visitors in order to follow their stories step by step and connect them to the vast web that includes the entire community's cultural wealth. They have their particular approaches to tackle topics and share spaces that men so often believe naively to be only theirs.

Time, as can be perceived from the above paragraphs, was one of the most difficult challenges, number eight. Some events would take place at the same time in distant locations not necessary within the same county, but they could also happen within a couple of months. To attend most of them, several flights had to be organized from Belgium. It is also time that affects the quality of data analysis and for confronting them with theories. Finally, time played a significant role in the entire research section. Normally, in many universities, doctoral theses are written with a period of four to five years. This one, exceptionally, due to the scholarship offered, CARIBU Migration, had to be completed in a maximum of eighteen months, i.e., less than two years including everything; from planning, fieldwork, data analysis, result presentation, and the complete writing process. Everything considered, time was a motivator and a challenger, as it meant maximizing every minute and multiplying strategies for reading, exchanging, proofreading, while still maintaining participation in community issues, and academic conferences.

The language was a specific additional challenge that counts as number nine. Even though most of the people met spoke Chokwe, many of them also wanted to prove that they could lead a conversation in English, French or Portuguese and that they would prefer to talk about academic matters in foreign languages. For many, it was doubtlessly a way to give a proof that they were intellectuals of some kind. So, in many cases, we had to prepare for language shifts often arriving unexpectedly or just to situations where many languages were used in the same ritual. More importantly, however, were the details that go with a particular language of a place. There are habits related to greetings, conversations, and other exchanges that are unique and that should not be ignored. We had to learn them quickly.

Health was the tenth biggest issue. Traveling in so many places in a short time was stressful. The human body has its limits, and we had to make sure that all assistants used as much energy as possible when needed, but also took enough rest whenever needed. We had to make sure that everyone was treated in advance for malaria to avoid it during the fast work time. In every place

where we went, we made certain that we knew how the medical structures were organized. Finally, the last health issue had to do with food. In the Chokwe customs when a visitor arrives and is accepted in a community, s/he becomes a member of the community and is invited to share meals. Unfortunately, when the guest has to visit many places on the same day, he is likely to eat at many different locations, for he cannot do otherwise without hurting the hosts. The food is good quality and grown in the most natural conditions without chemical fertilizers. However, the quantities served to the guests are always the triple of what people should eat for a meal. We ended up inventing an appropriate strategy since almost all the Chokwe always permit the visitor to take this food. We would collect it in our bowls and take it to the next place. There, out of nothing we would organize a gathering with children. They would be happy to empty our bowls in a few seconds. We would then take some time to find out from them what they knew of their traditions.

Finally, the most difficult challenge of all had to do with expectations from the people we met. Generally speaking, the Chokwe populations live far from the main urbanized centers. People who go to them bring goods to sell or exchange, or take orders for bringing them other goods when they come another time. The question was if we could leave a few things, they could pay with a part of their harvest. They could also partially pay with some money. Then, somebody would need to go in the next season to collect the remaining amount in cash or harvest. We ended giving them whatever we could for free, but also took this opportunity in its positive aspect. It told us how many were deprived of the minimum standard of life, and how they are indeed marginalized within their country. There are things they were discovering for the first time from the assistants, and that pleased them much. Despite their presence within the same country with their countrymen, it was evident that they were kept away from much progress and facilities available in cities. Apart from the material we had, finding out that the researcher was coming from Europe was another source of talks and expectations. Talks, at least, were easy to handle. It was for many an opportunity to talk with an African about Europe and Europeans and to revisit clichés of the white, or to remember images inherited from elders who had either worked with white men or known them while they were in Africa. As for expectations, it is hard to manage them. Anyway, in the Chokwe culture, many topics may be treated just to reinforce friendship since friends need to talk. We now have many friends within the Chokweland. Many are still expecting at least photos that they took with us. They will put them on their walls, and they will

seal forever the friendship that started around a cup of Chibuku, or at the view of a mask. They did the same in the distant past, and those who were faithful enough to go back to them and pay respect to their rituals finally could become Chokwe, or at least be accepted as such. The relations that we have been able to build predict much for a near future. There is a dynamic that would include our results in the local civil society work and in the work of cultural groups (such as the ones visited in Tshikapa in DR Congo, Kabompo in Zambia, and Cazombo in Angola). They are quite innovative and express their discoveries, feelings, and community aspirations through their art productions.

### **III.16 Chapter Three: Concluding Remarks**

This chapter was one of the most difficult to write. The conduct of this type of research had to go through many things, many of them unpredicted, commanded by the nature of the environment faced in the fieldwork in three different countries. Also, writing *stricto sensu* about the methodology followed from one end to another. Everything was not about bricolage conceived as a structuralist method counting on every small detail added to the previous one in order to finally fill in the entire narrative. It is this idea of splitting and connecting that Genette (1982:4-5) pursues in insisting on the critique's "*bricoleur and bricolage*" capacity that tends to give a specific configuration to a narrative as s/he is moving forward in the quest for meaning building, the main object of the research and writing the paper. We more than once behaved as "bricoleur" for gathering details that were slowly put together as the dissertation developed. In using the word "bricolage," we intend to engage narrators freely to give attention to every single detail that the participants may have neglected. However, the right words to be used here are "Memoing" and "Iterative activities" which have the same surface meaning, but suggest further steps and deeper analysis, i.e., putting things together but never in a definite form. It updates every time there is an opportunity to meet an additional explanation and convincing additional data.

However, even though obviously necessary, the above is not enough to explain the contents of this chapter and the methodology that thrashed our way from one point to the next. The first big question we tried to solve regarded the possible separation between quantitative and qualitative methods or approaches. The large literature reviews condensed around this topic led us to

discussions about which of the two would fit in different circumstances. We also had the opportunity to contradict some scholars who took a position in the sense of strongly attaching one method, the quantitative one, to hard research sciences, and the qualitative approach to social sciences (Bernard, 2006). In fact, with the terms used to justify what qualitative research means and how it should go hand in hand with the early stages of social studies, we firmly denied the intention to think that the “Memoing-Iterative activities” were meant for “weak research issues” as the ones that qualitative approaches deal with in almost all cases. We contradicted that idea and reinforced the awareness that it is mainly through a qualitative approach that we can go as far as possible within the culture and understand details, spaces and their local and global connections at any time.

In other words, the above paragraph mentions how data are collected in different fields. It has also given our position according to which the choice of qualitative approach is the best for this research and dissertation. As a matter of fact, this research did not collect data through the presentation of figures, statistics, and their comparison or justification. It is not excluded that figures and statistics also come about as they do in a quantitative approach. Even in the qualitative approach some figures or statistics can come about and help in the understanding of the social phenomenon studied. This research has essentially turned the qualitative approach into a perfect “Memoing-Iterative” application, meaning that are inductive presentation analyzes results and inserts them in a general comprehension of an entire discourse. The quantitative approach could go as deep as this research did with as many participants as 250. If this number represents the population that the interviews dealt with in a straight way, they are but an iceberg tip compared to the population that was consulted for every question and every aspect of the study. For, the “memoing-iterative” application meant even more than all the records we were able to bring with us. Many other encounters and talks around the fire by night, tea by day, or along small paths in different directions were not written at all, but came in as real incentives for more questions and conversations with locals. It is also these long talks that permitted us to link local spaces with global ones.

Otherwise, the most important strategy used for data collection was Snowball. This chapter explained that sources are so different and have to come from different locations especially with the assistance of the respondents inviting more people to come and also participate in the

interview. The success of this strategy depended much on the turnout. People came again and again, and finally, we had to stop because other opportunities came in big numbers as the news spread across the Chokweland. Unscheduled meetings with women, men met at their workplaces, small villages discovered far inside the countries were also very helpful. They were leading their normal lives giving the best answers to questions regarding beliefs, the use of medicinal plants, and the presence of witchdoctors in village ... The combination of Snowball selections and those mentioned above “Memoing-Iterative activities” were quite successful.

Participatory assessment group exercises found their explanations through the ideas of the scholar who conceived it, Dietz (2013). The idea of having participants access our judgment about their cultural facts is fantastic insofar as it permits us to move along with them, to inductively participate in patterns and theories. Because their participation showed different sides of the cultural issues and management, several details came about, and the possibility to move ahead became clearer and clearer. Snowball strategies also inspired group discussions where meetings changed into a collective consciousness activator taking individual input in a way that every detail got re-adjusted at its right place and general level. Finally, when the group discussion was unable to give responses to the questions raised, or when it raised new questions, there were other possibilities as key participants continued to be available.

This chapter dedicated to methodology also made sure to underline a clear though invisible line, a watermark or filigree, an implicit and coherent line that had to show up from the beginning of the dissertation to its end. It was indeed about the research question and many sub-questions it generated. They had to translate and confirm the logic of their answers in line with our main strategy. Through comings and goings, toings and froings, otherwise going back and forth, including backwards and forwards, all research question aspects needed to reflect “Memoing-Iterative activities”.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: FROM REMOTE LOCAL PRIMITIVE COMMODITIES TO REMOTELY GLOBAL VISIBILITY: TSHIKAPA CHOKWE TRADITIONAL CULTURAL FACTS AT THE CENTER OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS AND POLITICS?**

### **IV.1 Introduction**

More and more, the world knows about Chokwe art independently from other artifacts produced in the same area (Jordan, 1998; Wastiau, B., 2006; Bastin, M.L., 1984; Bastin, M.L. et al., 1998; Lindville, M.S., 2003; Aeria, 1977; 1985). As a production of a significant ethnic group, it is hard to imagine that this art is also present in zones quite distant from each other. The first Chokwe symposium held in Tshikapa early in July 2015 was an opportunity to find out a hundred of artifacts that claim their Chokwe identity and origins despite their fabrication far away from the main known Chokwe region. They have been conserved for many years. Some of them were recuperated from customary rituals or made for tourists. Whereas Chokwe rituals still continue in many places, the tourists have disappeared. The country general conditions have deteriorated, and security has become hazardous mainly for foreigners. Some among them like the Americans are clearly notified that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a country that should not be considered for any tourist activity. It is at risk of several kinds of violence.

Interrogating the objects of art about their whereabouts became a pretext to move in a long contemporary political history. It includes population movements, affiliations to African thrones, and a discovery of new political strategies to empower grassroots. The Chokwe artifacts present in Tshikapa stand for a surface representation that otherwise is a front-runner in a long cultural history of many generations. These works of general art presentation and insertion in social productions may easily pass for an attempt to redefine social power organization and distribution in a down-top or a top-down process whereas reaching to local and global consumptions. Within this perspective, nowadays politicians would link contemporary circulation of Chokwe art with possibilities for visibility in local and global exchanges.

*Figure 17 Mwene Mwa Tshisenge, the Chokwe King: Paraphernalia, Interview, Tshikapa Symposium, and Blessing*



This dissertation pays much attention to masks used during the Mukanda and the Likumbi Lya Mize events. The images on this page show another possibility that could turn around the Chokwe paraphernalia. King Mwene Mwa Tshisenge explains their meaning to the researcher and professor Stroeken in November 2015. The King also gives his blessing to the researcher for his responsibility to rightly inform the world about the Chokwe identities and philosophy. King Mwene Mwa Tshisenge is recognized as the royal leader of the Chokwe in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and Zambia. His crown is bigger than the ones worn by local chiefs in Tshikapa and elsewhere. The power metaphor also includes animal skins and tails. The king uses exceptionally powerful animals.

Source: F.Kaputu Pictures

In this vein, Congolese politicians like many other observers are surprised that Mwene Mwa Tshisenge, the Chokwe King, who had never visited Tshikapa, provides them with many opportunities. First, before his arrival artifacts that had gone in hidden places became public: masks, different colorful costumes, whistles, witchcrafts, and songs signed the Chokwe's return in the first position. With the arrival of the Chokwe's king, a new dimension of power was suddenly imposed<sup>20</sup>. The royal power and its governing style could be elevated to the national level. A new political potential for equal power distribution through votes could be considered. Chokwe art thus becomes the backbone invisible to many eyes, but whose cultural wealth conserved for centuries offers anthropological and cultural directions for local participation in national and global spaces.

In the academia, the words Chokwe art and Chokwe history almost automatically send the listener towards a significant group of people speaking a language known as Chokwe and spread all over a big area in central Africa. However, it is so difficult to guess that the Chokwe are not all within the same big space. Even far and isolated, Chokwe communities claim to belong to the same linguistic group (Wastiau, 2006:7-11, Aeria, 1981; 1985). Wherever they are, the Chokwe populations claim to possess the same culture whose roots refer to the same ancestors' socio-political and cultural heritage, the same artistry, and the same social practices (Jordan, 1998; Bastin, 1959; 1969; 1984; 1986; Borgonjon, 1962). The duration and continuation of their cultural wealth over time in different areas is very curious as it is commonly acceptable that change is permanent and affects everything. The Tshikapa opportunity has become ipso facto a prospect to the question above-mentioned, i.e., the Chokwe culture continuation over time, its capacity to cope with neighbors, to socio-politically empower its actors, and put them in an extensive network of connections of different kinds.

Talking about Tshikapa Chokwe artifacts or rather listening to these artifacts speak their language may be quite challenging and risky. These artifacts may finally be a pretext to get into a

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<sup>20</sup> The welcome reserved to the Chokwe king and the public political intentions clearly defined could lead to raise questions of a different order that find much interest in political sciences. We could indeed raise questions related to nation construction, on the one hand, or again questions dealing with State-Nation failure in Sub-Saharan Africa. Chabal (1992) documents much about such happenings turning around nation-state birth or failure. Despite its focus, the present dissertation's endeavor about Chokwe identity construction will mention here and there how the large group of Chokwe population living in the three countries studied manages its political aspirations.

socio-politico-philosophical-religious argument (Tempels, 1947)<sup>21</sup>. The artifacts first dig out a long African metaphysical past, otherwise called African philosophy by the here aforementioned (Tempels, 1947). According to Tempels, the artifacts stand for the window opening on the realm of ancestors. Lima (1971) after an extended field study in the Chokwe world concludes that they have these artifacts at all levels. From the conception of life to the passage to the ancestors' world, different kinds of art are present. They are used for various purposes as cult objects, medium concentration facilitators, and power recognition tokens. As a matter of fact, they come in different forms according to the roles they are expected to fulfill. King's costumes are particularly visible through various badges: an animal skin that stands for the metaphor of their power, or again their head cover that symbolizes both their temporary power, their connection to ancestors, on the one hand, and to a long tree of other Chokwe royals. For, apart from the headdress or crown, there is another artistic object, small, often invisible, that also stands for power, a royal bracelet, "Lukano." They may look at them as objects of art for many, but they are instruments of power that are displayed at the essential Chokwe royal rituals.

The other Chokwe objects of art, and especially masks, are in one way or another related to the power that the royal art objects generate and distribute to the community through different empowerment rituals. Indeed, all rituals with masks or other artifacts come in social scenes with potential directions. Let us call them anthropological windows for understanding a group of people living today in Tshikapa, still looking at their origins from the Lunda/Chokwe empire (J. Vansina, 1966a; 2004). All during the symposium, it was surprising to see masquerades at the main levels of royal welcome, academic speeches, and mainly during the stadium day. They were completely under the authority of His Royal Highness Mwene Mwa Tshisenge. From a pure

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<sup>21</sup> In a previous footnote, we already pointed out how Tempels got into serious problems with the church and the first African scholars. For the church, he was condemned for taking an initiative that was not a part of his mission. He was a Franciscan missionary sent to Belgian Congo in order to preach the Gospel and convert the Africans from their pagan customs. He was supposed to look at all African practices as evil contrary to what in order to bring shed light in the African darkness. For the African scholars, Tempels got in something he was unable to understand. He did not only lack the necessary capacity to understand what Africans were doing, but he could not at all have the necessary will to listen to them, follow them and understand their minds. Also, when he discovered that he could learn from the African, he could not unfortunately engage in a student learning attitude without contradicting his mission. I would like to pay attention to other dimensions, Tempels and most of his critics have never had enough humility to let artifacts, social cultural events, rituals, and the local people just be. In letting them be, they would bring to the world a much more accurate definition of African philosophy without necessarily needing a third interpretation eye or mind. Any consideration of primitivism would leave space to admiration of a system that has built itself and continues its reconstruction through events and meetings.

secular and academic point of view, one could say that masks had nothing to do with a university symposium. If needed, they could be projected through PowerPoint presentations and videos recorded from the long or recent past. However, in the particular context of Tshikapa, masks were an integral part of the entire symposium. They were instead in a plan to reduce everything to traditional Chokwe ritual ending, enthronization, and initiates' social reincorporation in their community re-creation (M. Eliade, 1963c; Batulukisi, 1998).

A small group of artists invited me to their art house. It was already presented as the keeper of Chokwe art traditions. It is in a plot of two small thatched houses. The first one facing the main compound entrance is constructed of adobe bricks and the second is completely built in the old style with walls made of wood planks covered with dried mud. They are both sufficiently high to let any man who is not taller than 1,65 cm to get in without any major problem. Both buildings have a small veranda turning towards the front space. The center of the compound, like everywhere else in Tshikapa, is full of sand. Four big palm trees indicate compound borders and seem to remind the visitor that the weather is particularly hot in Tshikapa. The artists' place called, "Dr. Nange Kudita" is no longer active. Their main sponsor, Dr. Nange Kudita wa Sesemba<sup>22</sup> passed away about a decade ago. Given communication issues that have isolated Tshikapa from the country and the world for its lack of decent roads and flights, the artists' house had no choice but to stock the artifacts that could not easily find local customers, and to some others that could still find local customers.

In the context of Tshikapa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo like in many developing countries, the circulation of artifacts often depends on the influence of the actors have in a given milieu. When they are known, they can develop a network that attracts other people from around

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<sup>22</sup> Nange Kudita wa Sesemba was a University Professor of Religion and Philosophy. Chokwe from Tshikapa, he had chosen as research area and later as personal expertise the Chokwe religion, general culture, and social growth through rituals. He extensively published different articles about Chokwe rituals. His contributions made the Chokwe culture known around the world, and the Chokwe better understood. Practically, his presence among the Tshikapa Chokwe led the artists to pay much attention to their cultural artifacts. Thanks to his contacts in the country and abroad, he could convince several tourists and intellectuals from around the world to visit Tshikapa not only for its commercial sources of attraction linked to diamonds, but for the possibility of meeting the Chokwe artists, and eventually buy some of their works. Through this commodification of Chokwe artifacts, the works of art had another possibility to move around the world and leave some money in the hands of the artists. The financial contribution motivated the artists and permitted them to work together paying more attention to Chokwe art details while making them quite specific and different from other artifacts that the neighbors produced. To make tribal art differences as visible as possible, the artists also presented some pieces from the neighbors. They bought them from other artists and exposed them for sale, at first. Then, they also produced pieces on which they worked together.

the world. That is how Dr. Nange Kudita wa Sesemba was. Through his connection with the western world, he was able to attract people who could come so far and attend the Chokwe traditional rituals. He was an expert on the Chokwe traditions, had written about them, and often presented abroad conferences on them. He was an important piece of the presentation of the Chokwe populations to the world. He was able to motivate artists working in a mixed environment to make clear differences between Chokwe artistry and the artistry of other people with whom they shared the same land. In fact, sometimes these artists worked together in a chain work when they had to produce for tourists. They knew exactly the details to set for a Chokwe piece of art and the details that had to go to other pieces. Slowly these artists became masters who could teach about these differences. When we reached their place, they knew our interests and were prepared with as many pieces of art as possible. At the same time, pieces from other local traditions were near them. To get some financial resources, Tshikapa artists are more and more developing Kuba raffia tapestry and raffia coloring works, and other small things such as a bracelets and necklaces using different material sources. They do their best to please their customers as much as possible. To achieve their purposes and get money in a place that tourists have deserted, the artists dig in the distant past and make artistic objects which they cannot, unfortunately, sell as much as they would otherwise wish. Finally, when there is one rare visitor for whatever reason, the artists will glom onto him/her and try to get as much as possible from the potential patron. The visitor gets the cheapest possible price artifacts and even a couple of small miniaturizations gratis to take as samples to show around. Thus, the artists expect to get their work advertised, with possible returns whenever the security conditions locally and for the entire country could let tourists come. They count especially on the Royal Museum of Art at Tervuren in Belgium, with which they had useful links in the past to come to their recourse in one way or another. Many of the artists know that museums are essentially interested in getting old pieces that reflect traditions and especially people they have been studying for many years. That is evidently not the case of most novelties that the artists implement more and more. In the past, these artists had the chance to work with Dr. Nange Sesemba. He promoted their work and did his best to link local artists with other artists around the worlds, and especially with the Museum of Central Africa at Tervuren. The relationship with the museum was interrupted with the death of Dr. Nange Sesemba. The artists have since then chosen to continue a bit of their work and to try to save the artifacts they had collected mainly for their transfer to Europe. It is

interesting to see them today putting their skills together for the production of artifacts that belong to their traditions. They are also able to make artifacts that go through prevail. It is my hope that the contacts we may now have, even though they may not match what Dr. Nange Sesemba, will help these artists continue their work. The first step could turn around saving what is there and is running the danger to disappear forever. There are many pieces that are exposed to inclement weather and to termites. The artists also have different historical perspectives. It would be interesting to collect these perspectives for the comprehension of people so close and, at the same time, so different living in the same region (Cole, 1985; 1970; Crowley, 1973; 1972).



*Figure 18 Tshikapa Artifacts and Neighbors' Influences*



The above artifacts include on the top left Mwana Pwo masks made from different woods and presenting various textures linked to wood species, artistic work, and additional material used for the hair. The masks reveal a high influence of neighbors' creativity and aesthetics. The Katoyo Mask on the top right is also a special one that includes scarifications, a half bald head with hair represented by a well knotted rope. On the bottom left, a Chihongo Mask that usually represents health, wealth, happiness, and clean environment resembles quite much the local chief on the right hand. The white color used on the face reminds about the clay used in significant rituals. Its presence around eyes, and the mouth suggests Chihongo's capacity to reveal the truth, and on the beard assumed authority and leadership.

Source: F.Kaputu Pictures



## IV.2 Localization

After reading maps of Africa as a continent and within it the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a country, we see that the writings of Kayembe (2015a), Ndua Solol (2015), and De Saint Moulin (2015), and Bastin (1969) concur exactly as far as the information about Tshikapa Chokwe is concerned. These scholars specify the same details on the Tshikapa Chokwe, their language, and location. First, they all agree on the geographical location, i.e., in the Western Kasai Province. Secondly, they all together identify a group of people living in this area as Chokwe. It is worth mentioning that for ordinary citizens, the information here above-given sounds strange. For, it is of public knowledge that Chokwe live in the Katanga province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, northern Angola, and northwestern Zambia. However, the three scholars here above mentioned refer to important Chokwe communities present in Ilebo and Tshikapa for centuries. De Saint Moulin (2015) informs readers that Chokwe's arrival in the area goes together with vast migration waves departed from around Lagos, Nigeria. Kayembe (2015a:21-21) estimates Chokwe's number in Tshikapa about 700,000 and nearby in the Bandundu about 800,000, and more than 1,000,000 in the Katanga province. He also states that the Tshikapa Chokwe represent the highest number of Tshikapa populations far ahead of the Leele and Asalapamsu with whom they share the same land. This calculation, though only an estimation, concurs with what all consulted local authorities have in their archives. In the same vein, the ordinary citizens went as far as to say they could not understand why despite their demographical superiority, the Tshikapa Chokwe had not yet converted it in a local socio-political leadership. The Tshikapa Chokwe are not in the highest position of local politicians. The few that are elected are lost since they do not have solid links with their electorate.

Generally speaking, historical data, oral and written sources, locate the Chokwe populations in a multi-ethnic territory in a vast region of the northwestern Angola. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, they are also present in big areas that cover Western Kasai, and Southern Bandundu with however the biggest group in Southwestern Katanga. Finally, they have also chosen to live in Zambia mainly in the Northwestern province (Wastiau, 2006:7; Kayembe, S.M.T., 2015; Ndua Solol, 2015; Ndaywel E Nziem, 2015; De Saint MoulinMuhunga, A., 1962). In the distant past, oral sources locate them in the Lunda Empire from which they seceded and migrated to the places here above mentioned (Ndaywel E. Nziem, 1998; White, 1959). Their memories still keep

fresh and strong links with the first royal Lunda power effective at first under Chibinda Ilunga's Royal Court, and later under Mwanta Yawvo (J. Vansina, 2004:1-2, 10). At the world level, the Chokwe populations were heard about from the time they met with Portuguese late in the fifteenth century as these Europeans had finally decided to move from the Angolan Atlantic coast in the upper hills of the country in 1489 (Shillington, 2013:128).

The combined number of Chokwe in Katanga, Western Kasai, and Bandundu are susceptible to draw scholars' attention in anthropology, politics, economy, development, and gender, as these figures and their growth would mean a sector of interest for each of these fields. They certainly make politicians salivate. The huge figures may indeed easily look like a potentially open door to glory, a relevant electorate, and powerful positions in a country that has faced many years of violence, insecurity, and war. For many, there is there a genuine possibility to "give back" to the grassroots, if not to their own pockets and eventually get richer as a political career as short as it can be, is still believed to be the most paying. There is a potential power to get political positions in the name of a population often completely forgotten. Politicians meet the large population from time to time during popular festivals and rituals open to the entire country and far beyond, but they always come with electoral hidden agenda and intentions (Piot, 1999:76-104). In other ethnic communities in the three countries considered for this study, politicians have found ways to go back to their ethnic groups to enhance their political positions and influences all around their respective countries. A. Mbembe (1992), A. R. Mbembe, J. (1995) like Piot (1999) look at such big events in the same way. For all of them, these rituals are opportunities that bring people together to recognize values of the past and link them to the glamour and the glory that can distinguish them from their neighbors. In fact, it is finally about any banality that can be quickly changed in a gathering opportunity and a communication network possibility. Besides, as gratitude and recognition remain among the most outstanding values among the Chokwe, any good politician or trickster will necessarily dream about changing gathering moments into high political potential. However, contrary to most Africans that Ferguson (2006:155-175) and Dacher (2003) describe in their mimicries, and interminable wish to be "Westernized Africans," the Chokwe wherever they are, have never been like that. On the contrary, it is clearly reported that their strong will to stick to their traditional values and publicize them to the world has been their long-time leitmotif. Also, anybody going to them in the name of their cultural value is always spontaneously welcomed and easily integrated into the community.

Otherwise, Tshikapa, when translated, is known as a Chokwe's place, i.e., the location where they are home. Within a long time, context, that definition means Chokwe communities are home and are not migrants of any kind in Tshikapa. However, for their linguistic and cultural heritage, the Chokwe populations feel somehow isolated. They share a culture and traditions that concern an enormous number of speakers found in the Katanga province, on the countries and far beyond. That is why a symposium held in Tshikapa seemed the best opportunity to reunite them with other communities and to reconstruct identities based on shared values. Appadurai (1996:15) would look at such an event as culturalism, for its process naturalizes a subset of differences for the common good, and with a projection of a long term. Tshikapa Chokwe had been in the same country, the Democratic Republic of Congo for many generations but have never before showed much interest to break potential barriers and distances separating them from their "siblings" sharing the same socio-political dreams, but living far.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tshikapa is well known for what it represents. It is a diamond town built under the Belgian colonial administration in the early 1920s by "an American/Belgian consortium Forminere that had discovered diamonds at the beginning of the 1900s" (Marcosson, 1921:246). Today, according to Wikipedia, Tshikapa has "The densest source of satellite phone communications." It is understandable. The town produces precious diamond stones in the informal sector largely invaded by local businesspeople selling them to the outside world without necessarily going through government institutional regulations for paying due taxes. Besides, national telephone companies are not always reliable as their networks are easily garbled.

Tshikapa was famous for many years during the colonial time as well as under President Mobutu's first administration. Today, there is still all around Tshikapa a strong inheritance of the distant past regarding old constructions. Contrary to many Congolese towns, even though the concept town should be revisited and adapted to the place, Tshikapa is, at least, most of the time connected to electricity. It received the official town status in 2003. Criteria that motivated the status change include the quick growth of its population. Important IDPs waves moving from inside country insecure places from the eastern Congo and somehow from the Katanga province late in the 80s came to Tshikapa.

Also, it is only located about sixty kilometers from its border with Angola. As a matter of fact, most of the domestic goods locally consumed including mineral water and other foodstuffs come from Angola. Some of these goods arrive through normal business, but mostly through smuggling facilitated by the fact that Chokwe families, for instance, are on both sides of the border. There is also much business with the capital city, Kinshasa, through air cargo transportations though there seems not to be a regular official airline. Consequently, apart from the general architectural presentation of the town, the buildings inherited from the colonial times, and the mining company buildings imposing their presence to the visitor, other constructions reflect poverty. According to our informants (and our observation), the major part of the population is poor in a place where life is quite expensive. The new rich from the informal diamond exploitation sector prefer to hide their wealth elsewhere in the country or far beyond in other countries in Africa or abroad.

Another Tshikapa particularity has to do with public transportation. People use motorbikes whose riders are commonly called either “chauffeurs” or “wewa.” for moving from one place to another. It is hard to find out where exactly the calling “wewa” came from. Many informants believe it is a rude way including a kind of mockery addressed to the Luba-Kasai youth involved in this transportation business. The calling includes a lack of politeness concerning somebody involved in menial jobs, one who may be shouted at impolitely. Some of our interlocutors just look at it as a word addressed to the motor riders to ask them to be careful as they often move carelessly around. The last explanation seems plausible given both these motorbikes’ speed on the roads, and the very quality of these roads. They are full of deep sand, and any careless speed can lead to a fatal accident at any time. Besides, there is no visible protection of a helmet either on the heads of motorbikes’ riders or the transported people’s. There is not any visible administrative measure aiming at people’s protection from any danger. Everybody, at all levels of the society, rides these motorbikes. Parliament Members from the place leave their cars in the capital city, Kinshasa, 845 km away. They firmly believe they cannot use their vehicles in Tshikapa impracticable roads full of sand, thus confirming (Piot, 1999:76-104) here above mentioned. Once elected, many politicians forget about their electoral promises and their electorate as they move to the capital city and join other politicians with whom they find different ways of enjoying life. In a case like this one, Ferguson (2006:158-161) would rather signal the radical mimesis. It is all about the imitation of colonial and postcolonial mimeries and

memberships while at the same time insisting on otherness and positive participation in the common good. The local politicians want to insist on the fact that they have become different from their countrymen. However, at the same time, for another possible electoral exercise, they show up at popular manifestations.

Otherwise, also visible in Tshikapa are big trucks (eight, ten, and twelve wheels). They are the only ones that navigate on the sandy roads particularly in the dry season. However, they also happen to spend three to four days to cover a distance as long as 280 km separating Tshikapa from its main city Kananga especially in the rainy season. These trucks get stuck in the sand often. They have completely damaged roads forcing pedestrians, bike riders, and motorbike riders to move literally off the roads into the bush. Off roads, travelers are reduced to using paths connecting one village to another and whose terrain does not necessarily facilitate given transportation modes such as riding motorbikes.

Apart from official business and undercover activities in big cities all around the world, Tshikapa has some other geographical subdivisions that accommodate people through other community formation criteria. First of all, almost everybody is multilingual and shifts from one language to another. Chiluba, Chokwe, Leele, Asalampasu, Lingala are daily life spoken languages in Tshikapa, each language carrying its socio-political context. However, despite their language capacity, they still strongly identify as separate communities. Their respective numbers as speakers from a distinct language community never reflect in any election or local leadership. The number of speakers of a language does not seem to be an important variable in election decisions, nor in social leadership.

At the time the symposium took place, a particular religious feature was visible. It was during the Islamic Ramadan time. There are many Muslims around even though we cannot give their number with precision. They seem to live in harmony with other religions. Most Christians understood that Muslims could apologize, and leave the meeting, for attending prayers or for the ending of the day sharing food together with family members as Islam recommends. Altogether, whatever their religious affiliation, women seemed to be a particular population category whose evolution is between ethnic traditions and leave the meeting, and religious guidance. Generally speaking, women take charge of domestic works and are particularly obedient to men. Their clothing code, fashions, and hairstyles are under male control with Muslim consideration taken

into account. This clothing code influence reached out to other religious affiliations. Finally, like many other areas around the world with easy access to money through minerals and such transactions, Tshikapa does not have excellent schools and education is not much of the questions put on the table. In fact, many young people we dealt with could hardly speak a few French words (French being the official administrative communication language) even though they were equally fluent in the local languages. They were happy to ride their motorbikes, transport people, or get stuck in sandy paths and mostly informal diamond quarries. They were still aware of an idiom that claimed: “Français ke franga to or French is not money.” Rich diamond dealers used the idiom to mock people who have been through different levels of education but are still penniless.

### **IV.3 Chokwe history**

Regarding Chokwe history, Kayembe (2015a) several times points out that it is misrepresented, and the Chokwe’s participation in local life underestimated wherever they are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Generally speaking, our informants believe revisiting Chokwe’s past could lead to a better understanding of their often-misused history. Without any consideration of the Chokwe as a people strongly invested in a long history, the region past cannot be clear. Chokwe’s achievements permitted them to spread, occupy, and govern a rich region over many post-Berlin conference countries. The Chokwe’s propagation over those states met only one strong resistance. That opposition finally pushed them in three main different directions: Angola, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while many others went far beyond towards the south. The force in question that finally put an end to their resistance came from a strong-armed force from the three dominant colonial powers in presence: British, Portuguese, and Belgian (Vellut, 2006). Despite their forced immigration to different countries under these three main colonial powers, Chokwe people have continued for many years to look at their cultural unity all across Berlin imposed country boundaries. They have in many ways continued several kinds of cooperation and assistance turning first around cultural similarities and leading to welcoming whoever was in need of a shelter. In Tshikapa, some young people revealed that they had at the same time Congolese and Angolan identity cards even though officially they are not supposed to.

In fact, already before the accession of these countries to their independences, attempts were made to unite Chokwe either within countries or across borders. Muhunga (1962) and Ndua Solol (2015) explain how, in 1956, Ambroise Muhunga founded the *Association des Tshokwe du Congo, de l'Angola et de la Rhodésie* (ATCAR). With a strongly pronounced purpose to see the Chokwe people unite wherever they were, work for common interests, and benefit from the experience of the neighboring countries, ATCAR's ambition seemed useful. More focused was the “Ukwashi wa Chokwe” that John Kajila launched in 1956 in North-Rhodesia, Martin James III (2011:34) identified its uniqueness in its ambition to stick a social dimension. This association focused more on the assistance to Chokwe refugees in Zambia<sup>23</sup>. They had fled from independence war violence in Angola, and later on, many still came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo also exposed to violence. In both associations, leaders found unity resources in the long Chokwe history that explain the origin of the people's power, and invincibility over years except by colonial powers as here above pointed out. They also particularly found resources in Chokwe artifacts that mainly embodied “Makishi” and ancestral spirits. Ancestors' power experienced its presence in different ways especially with the products at the center of the Chokwe society foundation at the Mukanda ritual celebration. In seclusion for many months for attending a strong training, the Chokwe youth improved their physical conditions. They also accumulated knowledge about ethnic history, and useful daily skills. Finally, they carefully experienced medicinal plants, ancestral religion, and magic. At this point, the young male Chokwe initiates were ready to return home. They were prepared to be the soldiers of their traditional leaders or settle down as initiates mastering the most important secrets of their history, and life secrets necessary to lead to success in war and peace times.

In recent years, Chokwe populations have increased their migration number in Zambia for obvious reasons. That country has not gone through any war from its independence. Besides, one

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<sup>23</sup> When we met Dr. Sakaimbo on August 31 in Kabwe, Zambia, he surprised us. He is a Zambian Chokwe whose knowledge of past events is extraordinary. He can still remember many things about the Chokwe from the three countries concerned here, “I personally knew John Kajila in Zambia and admired the work he did to make sure the Chokwe assist each other. There were many demographic movements in the three countries and Zambia was already a kind of haven as the colonial powers did not have the same kind of policies imposing suffering on the Chokwe. Later, Ambroise Muhunga also did much in the Congo and was often visiting Zambia. I was very young and, as a student, I saw in these people examples that should be followed. Unfortunately, with the accession of these countries to their independence, things went dogs. Postcolonial governments, especially under the one-party system, made every cultural initiative difficult. The Chokwe were reduced to silence for many years. It is high time the Chokwe come again together and rebuild their cultural power.”

of its ends in the Northwestern province is at the intersection of the three closest countries, i.e. with Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with their borders overlapping. Many people have some family relationships in one, in two, or in the three countries. When moving from one country to another, they count on the support of these family members for their social insertion in their new environment for a long stay, or for regular short visits.

#### **IV.4 Forth and Back, from One Territory to Another: in Perpetual Search of the Original Unity and Power**

Modern Chokwe, wandering from one place to another through the three countries here above mentioned, are certainly in search of a haven, but also with the hope to be in a better personal and group position. It is a quest of power, unity and resources in the past and its justification in recent history that was easily perceivable in personal or group movements. Anthropology-curious readers expect to come across what Ferguson (2006:2) considers with Achille Mbembe as “naming the absent object.” The disregarded long Chokwe presence and activities in the region can be a source of ignorance or knowledge. These people would be dreaming together about their ancestral past, projecting for a possible better future. Scholars could also consider the migration endeavor with Mudimbe (1988) for the “Invention of Africa.” It could apply here as “the re-invention of Chokwe identity” after many war crises that broke apart the Chokwe people’s biotope for many years. Several Chokwe continued taking an interest in dreams of their past, and possibilities about their togetherness to face modern challenges. They carefully addressed both their geographical area and common traditions, with the hope to translate them into common sociopolitical concepts.

Concerning such incessant population waves in different directions, Ferguson (2006:6) reinforcing A. Mbembe (2001:241-242) mentions “the oscillation between the real and the imaginary, the imaginary realized and real imagined... This interweaving is taking place in real life.”<sup>24</sup> Between a past characteristic of its conditions and the present submitted to special and

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<sup>24</sup> Achille Mbembe is one of the African scholars whose name will be mentioned again and again. He is mostly known for structuring African discourses and decolonizing them from the negative impact of colonial powers. He believes that afro-pessimism and Afro-optimism are but the sides of the same coin and depend much on the formulation of the discourse. If it is under a strong influence of the colonial forces, understand also under the forces



scattered group conditions, communications run after truth, reality even though reality mastering is another question. This search of the other in another territory for self-interest or the reconstruction of the past certainly joins what Ferguson (2006:9) considers as fighting from social margins while counting political successes and failures. As many Chokwe move around from one country to another, they have time to consider how their respective political elites provide essential services over years. They often notice how their several politicians simply look at people as donkeys for their dirty electoral business (Ferguson 2001:10). Balancing between “Afro-pessimism” on the one hand, and “Afro-optimism” on the other, the Chokwe wanderers would certainly find whom to blame for staying on social margins.

African democratization has unsuccessfully tried to bring prosperity to critical social sectors putting the general public within a useless globalization “shadow network” unknown to the general public (Ferguson 2001:13-14). During such Chokwe meetings, questions turn around their wellbeing. Either blaming other people for failures or accusing them of the absence of wellbeing, topics related to witchcraft are generally on the agenda. In this vein, Geschiere (1997) tackles a topic avoided in public but usually believed to be present for life success or its failure in many places in Africa. As people get richer and richer, or poorer and unfortunate, witchcraft is said to escort them whatever way they take. Apart from witchcraft that Geschiere (1997) largely elaborates, J. C. Comaroff, J.L., eds (1992), J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. (2004; 2012; 1999), in their many fieldwork publications, even get deeper into religion and its evolution in Africa. They have written about religious implications in social power and security with a particular focus on South Africa. It is surprising to see how they note evolutions in religion from the apartheid to the post-apartheid era. Religion becomes a space within which several social and political instances are built upon while navigating on a broad range of social issues that could lead to question the real aims of religion. At the center of the very different paths that religion leads to, witchcraft stands for a kind of its partner. Both are believed to lead either to success or failure (Strother, 1998:13-14; Jordan, 1994; 1996; 1993; 1998). They thus seem to be moving challenging each other at times or covering each other with a kind of indescribable confusion as they easily play

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that continue colonial powers under neocolonialism and postcolonialism, Afro-pessimism may prevail for generations. However, if Afro-optimism is perceived in the light of a new discourse liberating from domination of all kind, and re-constructing its frame in the light of new connections, evaluations and engagement in global spaces for exchanging with others, the African future might be bright and interesting for its sons and daughters.

the same roles. In fact, since the grassroots do not get access to much education, many important life questions are not raised. Chokwe people often face questions regarding the past, the present, and the future. All these issues concern their wellbeing, identity preservation, and identity construction. Appadurai (1996) is likely to mention preoccupations such as postcolonial subjectivity, rupture with traditions, electronic media versus traditional media, personal versus collective imagination, culturalism, modern ethnicity, or the production of locality (Millis, 1959). Whatever the case, the postcolonial era presents itself as a path full of unknown directions that do not suggest clear solutions for a shared and acceptable wellbeing.

After a close observation of several groups in Tshikapa and elsewhere, identity questions, body participation, initiation, arts, gender, cultural facts and politics, and future construction are topics that fill in Chokwe talks. At the light of the literature that reveals similar phenomena elsewhere in Africa, Appadurai (1996), Piot (1999), Ferguson (2006), and Appadurai (2013) offer new possibilities. They suggest a different look at social phenomena as they reveal aspirations, question the past and the present, and give projections on a future. Even though Tshikapa is far from other centers around the world, it shares global dimensions. For, even though conceived from remote areas once deemed as strongly uncivilized and primitive, now, through the economy, information, interest disputes, and local considerations, Tshikapa shares global flows of media. The example of satellite telephones mentioned at the beginning of this text shows how Tshikapa the small isolated town is globally connected. Tshikapa Symposium included different actors. Their participation not only made the event possible but revealed various levels of interest. It dug deeply into Chokwe history, customs, and culture and the pride for re/construction, and projections and dreams for a better future.

#### **IV.5 His Royal Highness, Chief Mwene MwaTshisenge, local village chiefs and the Makishi moving global**

Of all the surprises met during the symposium, the presence of His Royal Highness, Chief Mwene MwaTshisenge seemed the most important one. He came from very far in the Katanga province. First by road to the nearest big city, second of the country, Lubumbashi, then by flight to the capital city Kinshasa, and finally he reached Tshikapa on the board of a small flight. The distance is not that long if there could be a straight flight from Sandoa, the departure point of the

king. The total distance would then be about 1,250 km. In fact, the king's journey itself is a mystery. In the Chokwe traditions, His Royal Highness is not supposed to leave his palace and go beyond some rivers. It was a taboo observed for many years and only ignored under President Mobutu, who considered himself as the only traditional chief with his power covering the entire Congo. From time to time, he invited for meetings all traditional leaders he regarded as sub-chiefs. They had to respond to his call wherever he would be. Later on, in the early 90's the perestroika effects also touched Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo had to move from one party to multiparty systems. The common public reactions went in the sense of encouraging traditional chiefs to remain in their villages. Many believed that in remaining far from cities, they would thus respect traditions and taboos in their quality of ancestors' guardians and the guardians of the traditional powers. Whenever a traditional chief was in the city, criticisms fused together from media, academia, and even from churches. Mwene Mwatshisenge's presence in Tshikapa could but be a discussion topic.

Historically, Mwene Mwa Tshisenge is the traditional leader of Chokwe populations living in Tshikapa and elsewhere in the Congo, and far beyond borders. Never before was there a traditional Royal Highness Chokwe to visit Tshikapa, put on power Tshikapa village traditional chiefs. During his visit to Tshikapa, the king was present at the most important Symposium activities. He also talked whenever the organizers had placed his name on the program. His speech turned around the fact that he is the traditional Chief of Chokwe that are in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Zambia, elsewhere in Africa, and in the world. Thanks to new technologies and the highly-noted presence of journalists, Mwene Mwa Tshisenge was addressing not only the Democratic Republic of the Congo but the entire world. Thus, the king moved the Chokwe image from local African villages to an international exposition.

His presence in Tshikapa was, therefore, an opportunity for the royal paramount Chokwe to explain to the world his leadership position. He justified his culture as an irreducible fact of the past and the present, and mainly as the principal pillar of the future (Appadurai, 2013). Thus, his speeches whenever given had the capacity to cover many past centuries. He was able to project the Chokwe cultural fact as a socio-political project in quest of its continuing achievement. As a project of its time answering people's needs and leaving space for original expressions both in artistic and social fields that seem to go together, the cultural fact will build the Chokwe future.

The Paramount Royal Chief's statements may look innocent as they concern culture, customs, and physical presence over critical areas. All these statements are as such an opportunity to reconnect Tshikapa Chokwe communities with their brothers and sisters present in other places in the region and especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Concerning the country constitution that recognizes traditional chieftaincy, the Paramount chief's presence bore a clear message to the national government and the world. The Chokwe people, present in many territories in the country, have a culture that has survived for long generations under the colonial and postcolonial successive governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is an enormous potential for socio-political achievements. Thus, the Chokwe population becomes an attraction that all governments must consider differently from the past for Chokwe have survived many conditions of the past and will be able to face the future. At the light of royal speeches, Ferguson (2006:99-102) finds instead that there is a clear suggestion of significant change, in general, politics planning and organization. Through His Royal Highness, a reversed attitude is suggested, that the local grassroots weight more in politics and come in the first position instead of the top down position dictating everything from the central government perspective. By the same token, His Royal Highness repositions his influence as the head of big Chokwe populations whose weight is visible to the eyes of all potential politicians engaged in electoral processes.

As innocent as the Paramount Royal Chief's statements may appear, Appadurai (2013) raises questions worth full attention and that will certainly clarify reasons hidden behind Tshikapa Symposium. Appadurai (2013:179) presents a text entitled "The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition.". Within it, he underlines, "It is in culture that ideas of the future, as much as those about the past, are embedded and nurtured. Thus, in strengthening the capacity to aspire, conceived as a cultural capacity, especially among the poor..." As a matter of fact, the Royal Highness is empowered with a strong culture and a rich past. Both link Chokwe all around the Democratic Republic of the Congo (and beyond). The royal visit to Tshikapa has become an opportunity to show up to the world that Chokwe can be united especially at the age of multimedia that connect the world. The Royal Highness has also found an opportunity to recall to the public mind the Chokwe long history and its capacity to resist all waves of violence faced over long centuries.

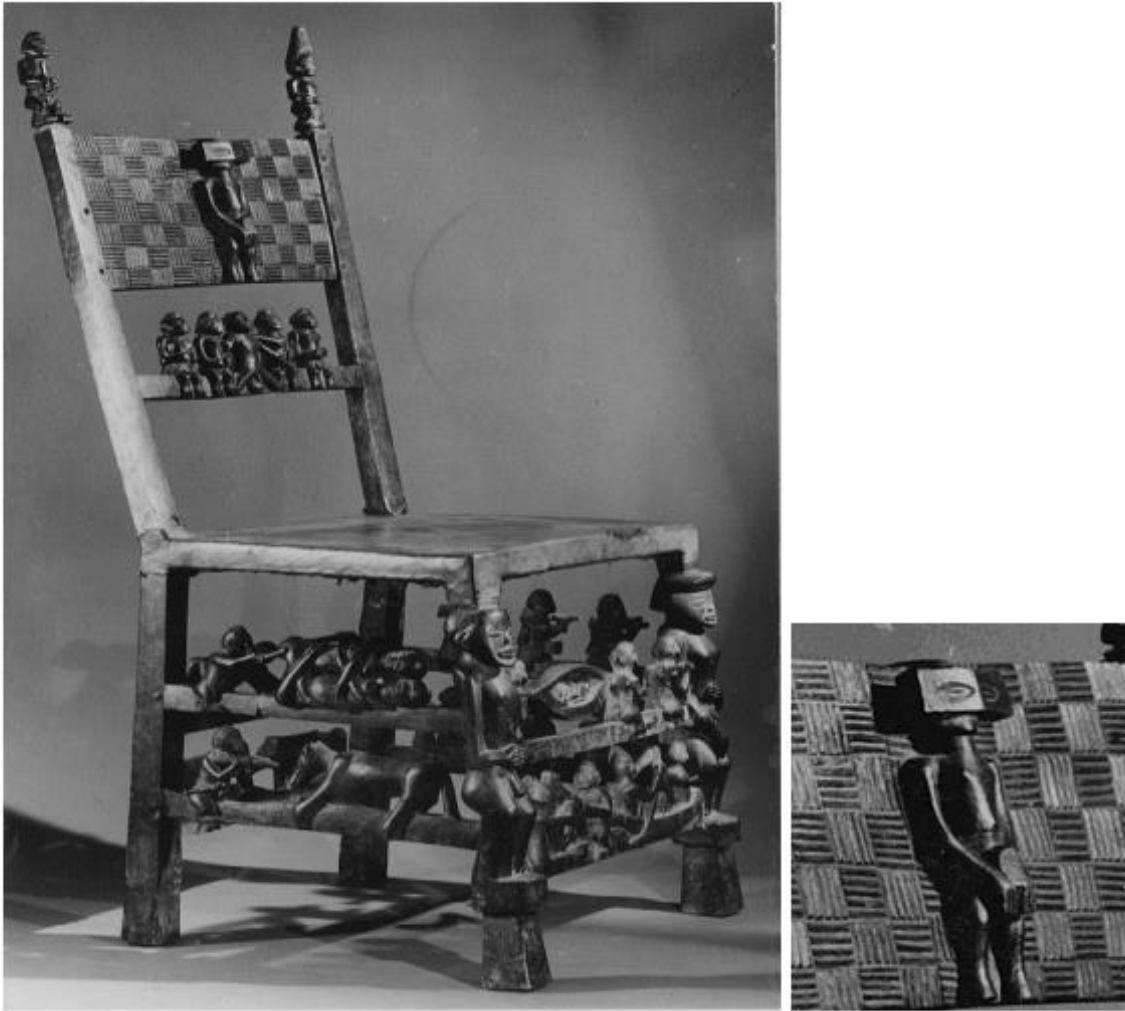
Once again, without stating anything concerning in a straight way politics, the Royal Highness, through his statements maximizes his people's cultural capital (Bonnewitz, 2002). His people display a capital that can make a glorious future, and give a strong foundation for a different society respecting African roots and open to sharing global spaces. Such royal statements as innocent as they may finally indicate the suffering the Chokwe populations went through for many years. They were marginalized for a long time without much participation in national politics. By recognizing publicly that no benefit had gone to the grassroots, the royal speech galvanized them for unity. It also showed to the world that Chokwe are but one people and they can take their destiny in their hands within a country in re/construction.

However, according to Appadurai (2013), taking one's destiny into one's own hands includes a new consideration for commodities. This new consideration also includes a new geography focus especially given the fact that the passage to a global space supposes the fall of ancient physical and psychological boundaries. This focus also includes the considerations of cultural, economic, political routes whose multidimensional flows profoundly affect traditionally accepted beliefs and skills. Presently, once isolated Tshikapa Chokwe have reconnected with their "siblings" from over the country and beyond. The royal presence also underlines ethical motivations that successfully led and linked Chokwe over many years. Through scholars' lenses, i.e., V. Turner (1967), Appadurai (1996), Herskovits (1962), J. Comaroff (1991, Jan.), Heusche (1972), they clarify the understanding of the concept "imagination" in its cultural dimension. It is a capacity that offers an opportunity for the conception and building of a chosen future. His Royal Highness, throughout his presence in Tshikapa, has shown that Chokwe can move from their shadowed grassroots positions. They are called to play important roles in the country and far beyond, thus getting approaching globalization with their historical and cultural capital that give them different voices at all socio-political levels.

It is this last dimension related to political visibility, presence, and grassroots' benefit that may explain the massive presence of about seventy local Chokwe traditional chiefs. They came to attend the symposium, pay respect to Mwene Mwa Tshisenge, and undergo an event never known before their official enthronization by His Royal Highness. In fact, among the gifts offered to Mwene Mwa Tshisenge, one particularly attracted our attention, a royal chair with Chokwe designs. These local village chiefs made possible the power transfer from Sandoa, the

royal palace, to Tshikapa. It is as Ferguson (2006:2) puts it an image of Africa and its endless problems, but at the same time a generic solution coming from local potential, regional capitals.

*Figure 19 Chokwe Chair*



The royal chair, an imitation of colonial chair has however a combination of the Chokwe stool, an upper part of the colonial chair and a summary of the main Chokwe rituals. Mask NGAJI, on the right, is particularly represented as it has to do with the royal powers.

© RMCA collections: Chokwe royal chair a gift from V. Jacobs

Mwene Mwa Tshisenge's day occurs in the traditional way that has always celebrated the royal power, the organization of social structures at all levels, and the continuation of solid links with their ancestors. That day coincides with the welcoming ceremony of the "Tundaji," the young initiates reinserting themselves into their community. After spending a long time at the "Mukanda" camp far from all villages, and under the discipline of the "Tshilombola" their masters, they are ready to get the king's blessings. The initiation masters taught them all life secrets, skills necessary to survive in harsh conditions. The initiates were in conditions where their artistry meets innovation and transformation from internal capacity, even though it may take long years for big transformations to be visible to the large public (Arnoldi, 1995). Such lessons also rightly contradict any assumption about any primitivism, thus confirming its nonexistence, or, at least, its invention (Kuper, 1988).

#### **IV.6 Tshikapa Chokwe Artifacts: An Umbilical Cord to the Distant Past, the Present, and the Future**

There were definitely about one hundred or so artistic pieces presented as Chokwe artifacts and about thirty or more that were exposed as Leele, Asalampasu, and Kuba. Concerning Chokwe artifacts a couple of questions concerned their genuineness, as Tshikapa location seemed isolated from the major Chokwe most known areas, and somehow far from the most known art production regions inhabited by Chokwe people. A quick conversation had to determine how the artists themselves determine the foundation of their cultural trend definitions.

First the artists explained how they were continuing beliefs and customs that their ancestors had brought from the Chokwe long traditions and related rituals. It is essentially through rites and ceremonies that have gone on for many years that artifacts and especially masks could survive throughout ages. It was also surprising to find out that these local Tshikapa artists stressed a detail that historians and anthropologists often point out concerning the production of the same artifacts for generations. In this vein, Strother (1998:XV) insists the repetition of the same gestures for many times throughout years finally lose its main details as firstly observed on the original pieces. Thus, these artists insisted on their relevance to the distant past surviving thanks to their work. They mentioned their work as a group to easily keep track with their mnemonic tradition strategies, and to respond to different local and foreign needs. They proudly also justified their team genius in their capacity to defend and maintain a strong connection with a

long memory while at the same time managing their audiences' various interests. With these words, they join their voice to Strother (1998:XVI, col.2) "Students of invention must come to terms with the role of the individual in culture and the role of competing voices." These artists have, through the years, strengthened their central position within the Tshikapa Chokwe community, especially through their work connections with initiation groups from which they get artistic material and negotiate their originality with local and world spaces (Jauss, 1971; Herbert, 1993; Crowley, 1973).

Masks were the most represented artifacts even though they lacked their costumes. However, by placing the "Chokwe" masks beside Leele, Pende, Kuba and Assalampasu artifacts, it was possible to perceive a sharing surface with other works and other typologies while still keeping strong a continuum of the long Chokwe past. The artists' activities were swinging in the long history, operating a U-turn in the present, and get into the new future. These activities seemed to paraphrase J. C. Comaroff, J.L., eds (1992) as they insist on different attempts to use a production mode different from the past, and still different from the main capitalist trends. At the same time, the team of artists considers that there is not a hermetic barrier separating them from any temporal division, absolute tradition, modernism, village, or city (Strother, 1998:19). In fact, these artists are inventing and re-inventing their Africa while enhancing "Primitive Art" to "Memoriae Loci" (Mudimbe, 1988; Mudimbe, 1993)<sup>25</sup>. Indeed, these artists through their work display commodities as exchange objects bearing more than a simple economic value (Simmel, 1978). The artifacts they had in their hands were commodities far different from a simple understanding of Marx's Capital (Marx, 1971; Bonnewitz, P., 2002). Like Chapman (1980), it is understandable that commodities include several dimensions including but not exclusively material culture, gifts, reciprocity spirit, sociability, spontaneity, man and history, engagement, and exchange conventions.

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<sup>25</sup> With all respect for Professor Mudimbe's scholarship, and particularly its culmination in the "Invention of Africa", all along this dissertation we will, more and more, distance from his main theory for our own slightly different from his. The discourse that cultural events such as rituals, masquerades, witchcraft stopping, divination, palavers and community discussions develop should be left free from any interpretation and presentation. All social events should express themselves and slowly get to their own formulation of questions, answers, and re-constructions of their local and world vision under what should be labeled philosophical discourse. Any attempt to direct their contents in one way or another would be exactly what Tempels and was condemned for. A step further needs another approach that would include a student learning position and much observation of objects in their social context.



Rituals have always been the primary source of Chokwe art production involving initiation masters and their disciples. Their work has continued revolving around the same concepts of ancestors, spirits, mothers, and beauty, often referring to Chokwe migration from Angola, spreading through central Africa, mentioning men's physical strength, and maternal leadership (Strother, 1998:5, col.1). These artists are handling commodities as a bridge to the future otherwise what could be looked at as "the future as cultural fact" (Appadurai, 2013). For they reconstruct, relocate, and relate history as commodities become their commonality, and getting in current trajectories for global focuses (Appadurai, 2013:61-69). It is rather through Bourdieu's social field theory that we are likely to understand how these commodities combine capital accumulation and power struggle within a field. Also, social agents' reproduction strategies, cultural capital continuation throughout time, as well as success and succession in individual and collective strategies within ethnic symbolic capital are taken together (P. Bourdieu, 1976, Fév.;1964; 1992; Bonnewitz, P. 2002; Hilgers, M. 2006, 2011, 2015).

The imitation of the past through mimesis permits the reproduction of the same artifact types through mimetic and possibly through participation in different genres Grimes (2014; 2006; 1962). The artists' leader also explained how their work was done. He is in ordinary circumstances an initiation master and collects initiation masks when the initiates are gone. He is in this way able to keep in the artists' house initiation masks to which they add the ones made for tourists. Whatever mask origins, the artists found a way to mention the word "wanga," a concept for which anthropologists have some trouble to get a right interpretation. Strother (1998:12) happily suggests: "Crudely translated above as sorcery, 'wanga' is the ability to manipulate the material and spiritual world for personal advantage: it is the power-to-make-things-happen." If the artists could not confirm that there would still be some "wanga" in objects they had. At least, they regard them, especially the ones coming from initiation camps, as talismans, for they had still powers that the artist leader, in his quality of initiation master, learned to neutralize, if not to appease (Bastin, 1988; 1984; Glucman, 1954; Hambly, 1935; Hauenstein, 1961; 1985, Jordan, 1998).

Concerning making masks, the Tshikapa artists insisted that they were working like in the initiation camps that most of them attended. The most difficult for them was not going back in the distant past and reproducing their ancestors' skills, but to keep innovating while keeping a

strong link with the distant past. In both ways, they worked together starting with simple talks, discussions dance steps, costumes, and especially mask details regarding material, colors, and season particularities. The ideas are then left completely to the discretion of the senior sculptor(s) for later suggestions that lead to making masks. In fact, this area is sharing land borders with the Bapende that Strother studied. He came to the same conclusion regarding the Bapende's *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi*, and social use from body warming (Strother, 1998:21) through famous dances to drumming beats, and finally to the sculptor's originality (Strother, 1998:28-32; Felix, M.L. & Jordan M., 1998).

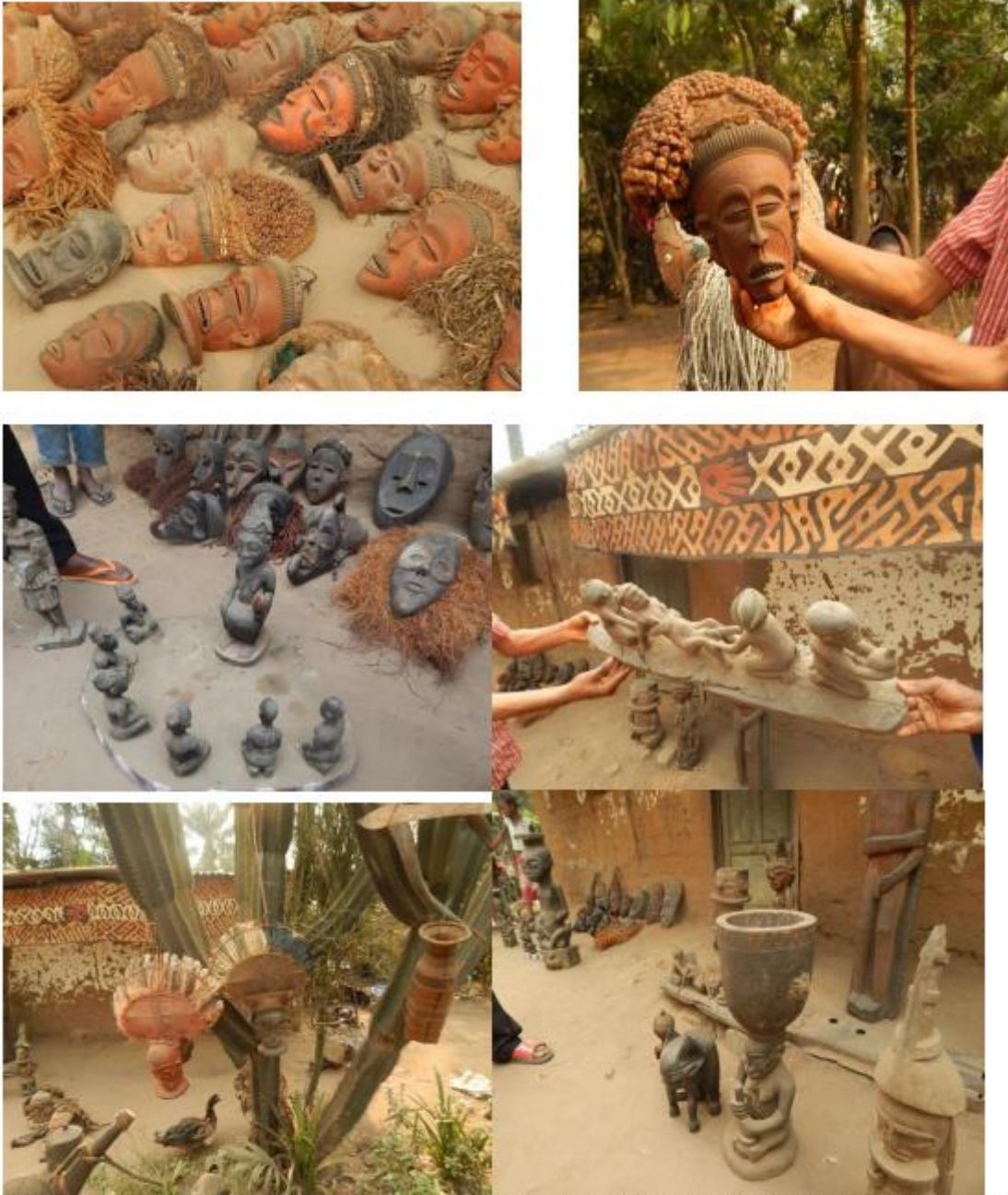
Of all masks presented in Tshikapa, Mwana Pwo were in a good number with different presentations and local influences<sup>26</sup>. A reader of Jordan (2006) would certainly discover Ngondo, Kalulu, Chihongo, Ngulu, Mupala and Chikunza in miniature for which Jordan had long fieldworks in Zambia, and for which his comments, meticulous analysis of material documents these masks from their conception masquerades and their social roles. One specific mask would draw any scholar's attention: Katoyo. Jordan (2006:50) presents Katoyo. It is a mask that was originally made to mock the white man who pretended to know everything, and who could not say much about the Chokwe populations. The mask is presented with a white beard, a missing front tooth, a stupid smile, and tired puzzled face; it was at first intended to engage in a silent dialogue with the colonialists. The Chokwe people had several partnerships with Portuguese for delivering different goods to ports, inside the country. They also engaged in several transactions with other colonial powers until they were forced to move to different directions (Vellut, 2006; 1995).

Masquerade, ancestral communion, and Chokwe society re/foundation could also stand for a topic that represents most of this symposium activities as masks seemed to be present everywhere. These masks also carried with them a long Chokwe history in its dynamics with foreigners, colonialists, enslavers, traders of any kind, independent travelers, postcolonial

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<sup>26</sup> The excessive number of Mwana Pwo masks may be related to different reasons. First, they are the most beautiful masks that the Chokwe produce. Then, they are also the most known abroad. These artists collected them from villages and were sure they could easily sell them. Mwana Pwo masks are considered as the Chokwe landmark. Even though shared with other ethnic groups, Mwana Pwo masks attract attention and easily convince buyers. It is indeed a situation in which a Tshikapa local center of Chokwe art production can be reorganized and continue its productions in traditional styles.

political authorities, and many neighbors. When colonial agents began the collection of “curiosity objects” from African ethnic groups, they were surprised to find out that the so-called “primitive and savages” had an excellent knowledge of artistic miniaturization.



Tshikapa artifacts are rich of many details. Apart from the paraphernalia, they include many masks. Despite the similar features that can be found all around the cultural area, Tshikapa artifacts are specific for the features they share with the neighboring people. A good example would be the production of the Asalampasu raphia whose colors are also used on masks. The Mwana Pwo here on the top left reveal this neighborhood influence as the same raphia comes in the hair presentation. The faces also count scarifications mainly practiced by local people. Finally, it is useful to underline two other features: artistry extends to all domestic objects. Second row from the top, right hand also confirms the use of magic. The Chihongo masks are exposed around a plant known as evil expeller.

*Figure 20 Tshikapa Artifacts*

Source: F. Kaputu Pictures, Tshikapa, July 2015

African artistic skills concerning miniaturization and three dimension productions influenced famous artists. Pablo Picasso (whose full name is Pablo Diego Jose Francesco de Paula Juan Nepomuceo Maria de Los Remedios Cipriano de la Santisima Trinidad Ruiz y Picasso), Henri Matisse, Edouard Manet, Paul Cezanne and Paul Gauguin were the first beneficiaries of African artistry (Arnoldi, 1966; Du Bois, W.E.B., 1947; Gambrich, E. H.. 1995). They were indeed surprised to find out that the primitives could configure three-dimensional art. This discovery and skill imitation was already an interesting show of globalization in the early years of the nineteenth and twentieth century. The “primitive” inspiration was quickly on the basis of internationally famous pieces of art such the *Demoiselles d’Avignon*<sup>27</sup>.

Concerning Chokwe art, it is around 1930 that Gaston de Witte collected Chokwe cultural objects around the region of Dilolo and, later on, the entire sub-region. Other metropolitan officers were performing the same work harvesting artifacts presented as non-compliant with their “civilization” mission endorsed from the Belgian monarch, and considered as the main objective of colonization (Ndua Solol, 2015). A mere observation of such a complete artifact collection might certainly be suspicious of cultural genocide. This cultural liquidation added to the great mission that leaned for a total *tabula rasa* of all the local culture on behalf of a foreign ideology. The local culture was incompatible with modernization. A quick insertion in global mercantile trends needed to get all around new communications, exchanges and trading strategies that would move in an entirely different direction (Cole, 1070; Bastin, 1969; Frontini, 1971; Nooter, 1993).

An alternative to local traditions was offered essentially under Christianity, especially the Roman Catholic mission that according to Ndaywel E. Nziem (1998) subdivided the country in religious order territories. Jesuits took the western Congo, Scheutists the middle Congo, White Father missionaries, Salesians, and Franciscans, Benedictines among the first different groups in the

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<sup>27</sup> This note would like to draw the readers’ attention on the concept “primitivism”. It has drawn much attention from scholars. Primitivism is regarded as a concept that may be approached in different ways. Godwater (1986), for instance, looks at Picasso as having dealt with an intellectual primitivism whereas Gauguin would have dealt with emotional or romantic primitivism. For different reasons, artists are attracted as primitive art has an impact on modern art. The word “primitization” is used with reference to the modern artist’s capacity to use primitivism. Hiller (2006) suggests a fusion of myth, history, and geography in the production and localization of primitivism for the construction and consumption of primitivist art in the western world. In this vein, African art of the distant past was rather collected for western consumption and could thus be treated in different ways.

eastern country had also received their parts to evangelize, let us say to occupy (Kaputu, 2005). It is so surprising to find out that despite this religious invasion under the colonial authority, Tshikapa is still an obvious proof that the forced cultural tabula rasa did not succeed as much as that. Tshikapa cultural details prove that Chokwe art was never so deeply genuine and representative of local beliefs. Chokwe people have still much consideration for their culture. Their different links with masks and other artifacts either as cultural productions or as religious objects are all the same an essential part of their beings as individuals, or community. As individuals, they are linked to each other within Tshikapa. As a community, they are and feel close to other Chokwe communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Zambia.

By the way, the Angolan border being only at about sixty kilometers, community, cultural, trade exchanges are very frequent. Consequently, many young Tshikapa Chokwe navigate through the border and feel home whatever side they are on. These young people reflect a general trend that does not get satisfaction in the local but looks elsewhere for a better possibility. Unfortunately, the outside may not be as rewarding as that, thus explaining a new departure point. Piot (1999), looking at such departure points, repeatedly coins the concept “oriental's.” It is a way to classify necessarily or guide Africans in Eurasian or any other preselected way, vision, a projection that would not reflect local needs. Moreover, ambitions built from local potential and resources are neglected, even though quite often every step is presented in the distinguished name of God.

Given the local resistance to novelty and imposed changes, missionaries also worked as artifact collectors, Jesuits and Franciscans, chose another option. They agreed to get new skills and knowledge in the artifact collection missions. Missionaries were accepting an ethnologist's distance training from their compatriots working in museums. Once considered as pagan and primitive objects, Chokwe artifacts quickly became objects of curiosity exposed to tourists and scholars quite often without mentioning the original context of their production.

Also, names such as Delaere (SJ), T. Forks Maesen A., R. Verly, Don Bequaert, F; Roelands and many others are mentioned for their contribution to Central Africa Museum in Belgium (Volper, 2015). In the collection process, these missionaries interviewed the natives to find out the

material involved in the fabrication, conservation, and the use of given artifacts<sup>28</sup>. Once again, Piot (1999) is quite helpful for the understanding of how magico-religious objects once withdrawn from their natural environment become useless as far as rituals are concerned. They are decontextualized and deprived of vital force support that could come from other elements. Despite multiple joint efforts to end Chokwe's relationship with the supernatural world through the artifact, they remained highly dependent on their traditions. Initiation rites for young boys and girls, for which Tshikapa remains a powerful example, continued. Despite its isolation from other Chokwe major groups as mentioned earlier, the local Chokwe have remained faithfully connected with their deities, ancestors, and art production trends.

Chokwe artifacts include many other social functions that inspired the understanding of African philosophy. Early in the late 1940s, a Belgian Franciscan by the name of Placide Tempels was the first to coin the concept African Philosophy. He inserted some of the artifacts within an extensive network that permitted the comprehension of the main objective behind the gestures found in rituals and people's quest for the divine. In fact, Tempels was the first to understand what many years later Piot (1999) explained about African individuality. Masks and other cultural objects also contributed to individual conception and presentation of the "Force." It was summarized in its variations, maintenance, and its increase from the influx of other natural living and nonliving elements sharing the same environment. Otherwise, all results in some competition of forces because any religious philosophy revolves around these forces. It is, therefore, a question of a special metaphysical school based on a scheme organizing forces in one way or another through personal and community communications, especially through initiation practices included in daily life and other divinations (Stroeken, 2008, Spring; 2006).

Chokwe masks stand for the support of ancestors and God's spirits. It is in this way that Chokwe people (and they are not the only ones to have such a belief) look at masks as a mere manifestation of the divine. A living proof of this belief can still be found in visiting the *Likumbi*

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<sup>28</sup>Today, Africa faces a major problem, it lacks problems like Nange Sesemba, a great supporter of the Tshikapa Chokwe artists. He died too much early to continue his work and lead the artists to an independent level of international partnership. Fortunately, one name is worth being mentioned today. It is Sindika Dokolo whose work through the Fundação Sindika Dokolo is tremendous. His foundation collects artifacts that had disappeared from Dondo museum in the long Angolan war. He promotes love for these artifacts and tries his best to get the Angolan government involved in this work. If Africa can have more such people, museums will be more meaningful and the past will find possibilities to survive.

*Lya Mize* annual festival in Zambezi, Zambia. This festival held during the last week of August offers a significant opportunity to learn how the local population firmly believes in the masks considered as living ancestors. The entire festival turns around the concept “resurrection that” is believed to be true for the Luvale (including under the same name Lunda, Chokwe, Mbunda, Ovimbundu, and Luchazi) sharing the same geographic area and the same culture. They all believe the ancestors and elders dead embody the masks. In fact, the bizarre behavior of masks seems to corroborate the belief largely distributed despite the presence of Churches and the Christian associations largely spread.

These masks are otherwise considered as the manifestation of forces, minds, spirits, gods, and God to the ordinary human beings (Picton, 1990; Redinha, 1949; 1965; Sieber, 1962; Turner, 1962; 1969). Strother (1998) elaborates more on the topic regarding not only the invention of masks but also their connection with different divinities. Specialists from the sacred scriptures of the world rather would use the word “Epiphany” to mark this event as the gods are believed to show up to mortal eyes. The passage of these masks goes with demonstrations of force whose holders suddenly metamorphosed beyond the limits of common sense to mortals do not remember coherent sequences of respective actions. Their physical strength activates under the support of the “Force” that Tempels made the central concept of Bantu Philosophy. That concept has nothing in common with the western understanding of personality growth and independence. This “Force” in question has not much to do with the individual. It rather depends on the community as a whole including the living and the dead, learned practices that make available otherwise unbelievable forces mastered through training.

#### **IV.7 The Sacred and the Profane in Tshikapa Chokwe Art and Daily Life**

Once past the ritual, each initiate gets the status of a man of his village and occupies a usual place in society. In his studies of world religions, M. Eliade (1963b) repeatedly mentions the opposition between the “Sacred” and the “Profane.” The parade of Chokwe masks witnessed in Tshikapa precisely indicates the presence of the sacred and the profane in people’s daily life (Struyf, 1948, 1939). For Chokwe, the sacred and the profane in the religious sense find their full meaning at the moment when masks (representing the divine and sacred) show up to the public. In fact, every time there is another ritual that includes masks, it is like a duplication of the creation scene. These masquerades determine the founding of the Chokwe society showing



different places and different roles expected of each, and the kind of community individuals grow in (Piot, 1999:7). Also, all the public present at the official exit from the initiation camp, Mukanda, sees how strong and strong young “Tundanji initiates are. Their dance steps and fast paces following fast drum rhythms denote a connection with divine powers and human potential to connect with the surrounding world. The initiates are trained in asceticism, self-renunciation, and silence. An acceptance of asceticism accompanies this life as much as possible amidst a minimum of daily needs. They focused on winning over the personal and collective pain. In short, it is a perfect soldier life whose general understanding goes far from the classic military. The Chokwe initiate comes in a wide dimension connecting him to the divine, and to daily life secrets. In Chokwe common understanding, human wellbeing includes physical, psychological, sociopolitical dimensions, young initiates, living and non-living beings, alive and dead ancestors. They are in the Chain of Being where they continue their work in different communities (Cameron, 1998; Hambly, 1935; Just, 1972; Kubik, 1977; Van Binsbergen, 1993; White, 1953; 1969).

These same initiates owe allegiance to the entire community for which they dance right from the moment they reach the public on their way out of the initiation camp. From their arrival, they rather look like soldiers in permission, soldiers awaiting orders from the sovereign<sup>29</sup>. All along their life in the community, they devote their time for public works of community interest while keeping their eyes open on the conquered territory and ancestral practices learned throughout the initiation “Mukanda.” As elite soldiers, back in their communities in peacetime, they will find opportunities to apply different social skills learned during their initiation time. Thus, for instance, they will hunt games, and provide their communities with meat so much needed as part of the Chokwe diet. At the same time, they will be a good example for everybody. They cannot

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<sup>29</sup> The Likumbi Lya Mize 2016 session permitted the visitors to discover something that may not have been neglected in many instances. Apart from the “Nyali” or young virgins presented to King Ndungu, there were also “Tundanji” or young male initiates. However, the “Tundanji” were so special. They were very young and we were later told that they were all around ten. The reason for taking them so young is an evolution that deserves our attention. More and more, parents would like to have all the same their children in modern schools. To make sure that their education is not at all interrupted for a long time that could impede on their possible progress, parents agree that their children attend early the “Mukanda” initiation that will save as a foundation for any other kind of education they are likely to get from school. Thus, contrary to the distant past, after their “Mukanda”, young boys come back home and continue their normal life as boys obeying their parents, and planning their future in a world different from the distant past. They share their daily with their father with whom they remember the main initiation lessons. They are obedient to their parents and to their village customs despite their evolution in the modern schools.

kill any game without prior permission from community leaders. For, any hunting operation is carefully prepared. It focuses on prayer to the ancestors, the application of personal asceticism especially sexual abstinence before, during and just after the hunt. Yes, sex is itself sacred because primarily reserved for the reproduction of other Chokwe. It happens with respect to many taboos. Once the animal is killed, it was not at all a personal prey, but a community trophy that was consequently shared (Lima, 1971:191-287, Turner, 1977: 358-70).

According to most Tshikapa informants, apart from hunting, guarding the Chokwe territory, family life, and a life alert to listen to any call from the sovereign, the young initiates fulfill their daily life know-how accumulated while in the initiation camp. They are artists; they work wood, metal and often compete to offer to their sovereign the best artifacts. Layton (1991), Bastin (1968), Crowley (1973), Crine-Mavar (1968) are quite helpful in the comprehension of Chokwe art as quite different from many neighbors, and far superior to the Lunda productions (if there is any at all). Many neighbors learned from the Chokwe populations and were able to also offer a few distinct features that several Chokwe reproduced and polished and the same of their love of art, and especially the inclusion of artifacts as religious assets. Faik-Nzuji (1979; 1996) give details about the features that characterize African art beauty in general, but also what artifacts produced in the same region with the Chokwe reveal many different feature. The Chokwe populations are quite often on the top of classification. Most of their works of art are about the initiator of the Chokwe civilization, represented as a great hunter; gun in hand, well-positioned legs to go to the battle, Chibinda Ilunga. On his shoulders are suspended a small bag filled with magic powders, and some objects with the power to dominate nature.

Anceau (2004), though mostly about Lunda art, is an excellent source that mentions the particularities and aesthetic values of the Chokwe artifact impossible to find elsewhere in the region. Anceau not only confirms the superiority of Chokwe art in the region, but also its leadership in the sense that many other people learned from the Chokwe to the point that the Lunda would not even produce, but lazily rely on the Chokwe's productions exhibited to the world as Lunda-Chokwe: a confusion presentation well serving the barren Lunda cultural environment (Crine-Mavar, 1968). In fact, from this example several Chokwe, generally speaking, do not think about life without that additional important side related to magic, witchcraft, and the ancestors' power (Geschiere, 1997). In their spare time, these young artists

move in the way of their forefathers. They fulfill artistic objects with figurines of women at work, at home, in the fields, and carriers of life. These female figurines carry over their heads the weight of their community life (J. Vansina, 1999). No surprise at all that witchcraft moves from one generation to the next. It takes different forms adapted to new ways, as all unknown, misunderstood and unmastered social phenomena such as richness, poverty, intelligence, or ignorance are suspicious. Geschiere (1980: 1997; 1996, 1991, 1991, Nov.), largely document such social situations in Cameroon. They explain how different generations partake in practices once treated as primitive, pagan, and outdated. So many people regard witchcraft as practices that stand for old religious beliefs that reward the real believers and punish the bad ones.

#### IV.8 Chokwe Masks and an Idea of World re/creation

*Figure 21 Chokwe Mask Collection (Gaston de Witte)*



Gaston De Witte standing up beside masks collected in the Dilolo region in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1930-31).

© RMCA Collections: Gaston de Witte RMCA  
Archives Masks from Dilolo (1930-31)

Chokwe art as perceived within Tshikapa Symposium pays much attention to the woman. She is permanently present in ideas, in the same way, figurines are mostly about women. In fact, during male initiation, after circumcision, initiation masters offer the initiates social reinsertion lessons (White, 1953; Hambly, 1935). They particularly put emphasis on sexuality perceived not as a personal act of pleasure, or of any proof of personal ability. It is rather a personal link to the cosmos. Thus, for M. Eliade (1963c) the focus is on the sacredness of sex. In this vein, M. Eliade (1996), M. Eliade (2005) much emphasize attention to the collaboration with the Creator through creation myth continuation and update. For, the human participates in the creation and is given the greatest pleasure to collaborate, co-create the world with God. Thus, several Chokwe have the chance to work with gods for the coming of a new world. They fill that world with youngsters whose lives pursue much respect for the ancestors. They also defend the entire culture from being swallowed by foreign powers even though whenever it suits borrowing from neighbors and world connection, they do not hesitate.

Suddenly, the image of the Chokwe woman takes on a unique presentation contrary to the interpretation of the outside world that may see gender disequilibrium and any domination. The Chokwe woman is at the center of social life and the entire culture. Artistic inspirations of female figurines are only a manifestation of respect and gratitude due to women, the mothers, for their participation in world creation and conservation in a kind of cooperation with divinities. The male Chokwe venerate their wives for giving men a possibility to justify their sexuality through procreation. In fact, women are satisfied congratulated beyond any possible limits as reflected in modern gender boundaries. As gratification, the Chokwe system that is essentially matriarchal gives women the first responsibility to take care of children and families and later to give them to the attention of their uncles. Women have much responsibility for children's first education. They, all the same, continue taking care of them much later as they also make sure the male initiation, Mukanda, does not disregard the first one given, i.e., maternal education.

During their permission, i.e., when the initiates are back home, they participate with other adults in the life of "Mahamba" spirits recognized in everyday life and preserved in home altars erected behind houses (Redinha, 1949). Should we talk about borders between art and the sacred or sacred art versus profane art, the sacred and the profane? It is almost difficult if not impossible to distinguish the profane from the sacred. For the profane justifies the presence of the sacred with

which it shares the same presence and the same manifestations through the same human beings and their environment. M. Eliade (1963b:81) points out the necessity to regularly go back to the original sacred not only through initiation long days but also through daily practices. Offerings to ancestors for personal and community accumulation of the “Vital Force” as Tempels (1947) lengthily explains is a necessity. Concerning growth in both human and spiritual dimensions<sup>30</sup>, Van Gennep (1960) seems to give a survey of what initiation rites are expected to bring throughout Chokwe life. The individual stands at the center of practical, philosophical, physical, and socio-economic questions. The initiation also participates in the construction of local and international networks, as they provide the initiates with practical everyday lessons. They finally build solid relationships with the sacred divine, the humankind world and other initiates coming from different places.

During the initiation time, man’s behavior is reinforced through masquerades that propose different character types. Each mask calls for either what is expected and encouraged, or again for what is completely discouraged and forbidden as bringing misfortune to the entire community, and poor life to the actor. Jordan (2006) widely elaborates about several masks, the Makishi. He depicts them with details about their fabrication, social attributes and an important classification including “sociable male characters, ambiguous characters, aggressive, and royal categories” Jordan (2006:23-26). The same categories are found all over areas inhabited by Chokwe. The Tshikapa collection lacks the biggest ones, the royal masks, for the Royal Chokwe had never come. However, when questioned, mask makers know about royal masks. Thus, masks seem to respond not only to a particular nomenclature but also especially to the social conditions required to get deities involved in daily life. However, one mask particularly important for us is the one representing the “other,” foreigner, “Katoyo.” The stranger or the foreigner represented for his lack of mastery of local habits and culture. It is worth noting that the stranger is always a male. At the same time, the colonialists or other ethnologists were spending time in the collection of artifacts; the colonized found a way of depicting a specific character in the artifacts, mainly within one mask. Could one find a better idea than this to speak to the colonizer and represent

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<sup>30</sup> Bell (1997) looks at these dimensions in terms of ritual perspectives and dimensions. Also, in addition to dimensions Bell insists on dimensions because the same ritual may have different perspectives. Our readers should understand that the same ritual may have different dimensions and perspectives from which they could be approached. During the fieldwork conducted in the countries studied here and sharing the same culture, the same ritual could be found serving different occasions.

them in social life? As a communication tool, the “Katoyo” masks easily took different forms insisting on the “other” like a stranger, ignorant of the local customs, divinities, aesthetics, and values. The Katoyo mask often misses one tooth. It has a white face, beard or mustache; the entire face seems to surprise or presents a stupid like smile denoting a person lost and in search of the right way.

In addition, the Tshikapa Symposium also brought up the gender question though without many details based on the masquerades. It deployed enough particulars to raise the question of the matriarchal and matrilineal strong presence and importance among the Chokwe populations. As a matrilineal society, women’s contribution to the social foundation and development also comes from the fact that matriarchy is not disputable. On the contrary, patriarchy could be disputed and changed into an academic or ideological subject in so far as fatherhood may stand for a social construct. Matriarchitarianism rather stands for an inclusive culture that is necessary for the Chokwe history based on conquests of new territories and people. Captured women came with their children. Similarly to Pende culture, uncles play a significant role in individuals life and opportunities and as they assume full responsibility (Strother, 1998:11 col11). Once completing their training through Chokwe education rituals, they had the chance to become full Chokwe through a kind of naturalization in common kinship.

However, concerning Chokwe culture and especially with particular attention to the art-aesthetic-initiation-socio-political life, it is worth bringing in a few corrections that could easily falsify the essential training that the Chokwe youth goes through. The initiation time spent in the forest particularly insists on the enigmatic character of every component of the training, and in a personal capacity to endure sacrifice of any order in complete submission and silence. The secretive understanding includes all human relations and protections even if death may come at the end at a personal price. Also, selfishness and greed do not have their place as they do not come in any possible definition that could improve personal or community evolution either as subjects or commodities. They both reduce possible values and go along with oral traditions about ogres and their orgies. In the same vein, even the concept domination must be taken with much care. In a war context, the Chokwe would do their best to dominate their opponents to get quickly to victory. Otherwise, once hostilities ended, war prisoners and their families did not have any other possibility but to join the large Chokwe family. They would then enjoy the same

rights as everybody else in different communities under the authority of women at first for youngsters, or guides for adults to make sure they all share the same traditions and understanding of kinship.

#### **IV.9 Makishi Masks: Knots, Cords: Life, Death, Ancestors, and God, Visibility, and Invisibility**

Before ending this section, we wish to come back on the Makishi (masks) to give them a closer consideration. After the reading of Carrier (1990:354-378), Adams (1994) our attention has gone to something we may have neglected. The texts are about Papua Guineas but reveal details about basic knots as cordage is given prevalence alongside canoes, stones, and ceremonial exchange gifts. These scholars look at knots and cords as mnemonic and cognitive material. Also, the knots are believed to carry a story with them (Carrier, 1990:354-375). A step further, Gell (1998:111-113) mentions their metaphorical role, as the knots are seen through their capacity to link to the old powers. They are believed to have a protection role towards the living community, for “knotted effigies effect both the sacrificial ‘death’ of the gods’ holding their power at the bay while simultaneously securing the continuing protection offered by them to the living.” These lines document enough on the importance that knots play in that society. There are cognitive as well as spiritual reasons that are presented together. In this vein, Wassmann (1994 ) introduces an understanding of spatial conceptualization. These artifacts are central to human cognition. In fact, earlier, Carrier (1990:212) had brought some light to the understanding of the social role of the knot, i.e.:

The capacity of the knot to fashion de-centered spatial cognition, an incantation of knowledge rather than an interpretation, is of paramount importance for understanding how knotted effigies can visually and conceptually effect a « body politic » that seems at once phenomenal and yet also mystical in nature. The images that appear in and around the space of the knot are a mirror of society, while constituting simultaneously a system of reference for spatial cognition that is independent of particular points of view.

It is so important to note the links that are made with space through conceptions that lead to thinking about the geographical occupation. At the same time, even before the spiritual dimension, the place that the human body fills is so essential as it plays the interface between the profane and the sacred, on the one hand, and the humans and gods, on the other. Kantorowicz (1957: 296-300) had the same considerations in Hawaii, and for him, the above should make



think about the “Sacred Cord.” In his study of the King’s two bodies, he pinpoints how the visible body is but a representative of the one that is invisible. Both bodies are said to be bound with the knotted cord that links body bodies. This same dimension goes with sacred effigies that would link the mortals to the immortals, or the living to the ancestors.

Küchler (2003, janvier-mars) ends the above survey on knots with a hypothesis that we would like to retake here about Chokwe mask knots, art, and precisely masks. Before formulating the hypothesis in question, Küchler (2003, janvier-mars : 212) suggests that the knots, masks, and artifacts deal with a referential theory from which emerges a long cultural tradition. The latter offers the original idea regarding spatial occupation and the connection to the invisible thought about as creator and source of knowledge and skills. Here is the hypothesis,

We could make the hypothesis that artifacts conceived as knot-spanning surfaces work not just in externalising existing knowledge acquired through experience, but serve to order such knowledge in a way that, like diagrams, maps or charts, it creates new knowledge...The idea that an object can be made not for interpretation, but as incantation, capable of entrapping thought...

From the above, we have learned that, in cultures like the ones here above mentioned, knots may not just be artifacts. They may bear another meaning that does not need interpretation, but rather to stand as the communicator of thoughts, ideas, and why not strength. This preliminary leads to the Chokwe, cords, and knots in their culture (Geertz, 1966; 1977). As far as cords are concerned, during their Mukanda initiation, the boys spend most of their time making ropes. The Chokwe elders we met during our fieldwork were united in their response insisting that ropes are crucial in the Chokwe life. They are multifunctional. They are of much use for load transportation, and they need to be particularly strong so that they do not break. They are also used for constructions, and in particular for the top of their houses for which Chokwe people are known as the best builders. However, ropes also come in the making of knots for different purposes in ordinary life.

However, in main Chokwe traditions like in many other Bantu societies, ropes are necessary in the magic world. They mean the absolute and robust link with the master who has distributed magic, or again the one who has given resources and ingredients that help in realizing some kinds of miracles. It is the same style that ropes were used for community links with ancestors or with

Gods. Thus, the ropes used for masks are necessary. The initiated Chokwe look at the ropes used in different rituals as having special spiritual powers. That is why masks are always reserved far from the public, or burnt when they are not important, or kept far from the reach of uninformed people. The same ropes come in vows or link with ancestors or God. Thus, the young people during their initiation spending their time learning how to link their world with the space of ancestors. They repeat these words while making knots. Thus, the sacred is present all along the work that the initiates do, and the exit from the initiation presents itself as an opportunity when the invisible is revealed, and powers distributed.

#### **IV.10 Tshikapa Chokwe Local Village Chiefs**

About seventy local Chokwe chiefs had come to participate in the event and to pay tribute to His Royal Highness Mwene Mwa Tshisenge. At a point, we also learned that His Royal Highness Mwene Mwa Tshisenge postponed their enthronization for fear that some could have usurped the power that was not theirs. His Royal Highness Mwene needed time to clarify every case and thus make of their enthronization a particular social event that media would communicate to the world.

It is worth mentioning that their enthronization in a Tshikapa stadium coupled with the initiates' public Mukanda exit ceremony marked the end of the male initiation. In fact, the public presentation of the initiates in a stadium shows that it is possible to make a selection of some ancient traditional rituals. It is also possible to move them to a national and global levels not only through media but also through cultural domestication for personal and collective identities. Artifacts' capacity to share meanings with the entire world once their social dimensions clearly explained and placed in context is but extraordinary. Coupled with the mask masquerade, the enthronization in the presence of Mwene Mwa Tshisenge becomes a "mimesis." As such, it could go with Mbwangi (2014-2015) who considers such a cultural manifestation as a theater. Moreover, it is a reproduction, a repetition of what the world was once in the "Illo tempore." M. Eliade (1963b) and M. Eliade (2005) mention how cultural manifestations build up a possibility of going back to the roots, and in a few cases to the roots of creation in the collective imagination. They offer a robust identity connection throughout times. It is, all the same, important to share Piot (1999:79-98,131-140) whose view of popular cultural manifestations opens our eyes to other details. Indeed, for him cultural manifestations give a chance to meet

with ancestors and raise questions about daily responsibilities and achievements. As people meet after coming from different places, they can question their everyday social possibilities, and leaders' capacity to reveal their uniqueness through specific social achievements, as they accumulate visible and provable indicators. Leaders also, whatever their social functions at local or at national levels, feel the need to come back and, at least, find an excuse to show their oneness with the local people. Whenever possible, leaders also come to justify their failures, explain their achievements and their potential limitations, and share projects. Many would still know that public promises may be empty and ended as soon as pronounced. However, they will, all the same, enjoy spending moments with their competent or incompetent leaders.

#### **IV.11 Mwene Mwa Tshisenge's Stadium Speech<sup>31</sup>**

When Mwene Maw Tshisenge, the King of Chokwe, reached Tshikapa, even though he was still unknown to many, his name went viral as it crushed all other authority and became first position everywhere. We could just look at this phenomenon as a mere protocol effect that elevated him to that level of fame and curiosity. However, for the sake of this study of material culture and identity construction, our attention can be drawn by other particularities that this section will go through. First of all, concepts such as commodity, cultural identity, traditional versus modern identities, individual identity, community identity, identification with the other, identification in the other, and cultural facts. After considering these concepts, our expectations will aim at seeing what kind of Cultural Revolution the Chokwe king has brought. It is also all about the potential

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<sup>31</sup> It goes in these words: "Kachokwe, Laula, Laula, Pwa... My dear people thank you so much for your welcome and for making of this day a big day. From our arrival, it is obvious that we are in the Chokweland. I would like to thank the President of the country and his different ministers for making this happen. They have indeed understood the value of our traditional institutions! Here we are looking at these different signs of our traditional power. Admire the symbols that are in the way we sit down, and the local chiefs are all around me. Look at the animal skins they use, look at their attires and principally at their headdresses. The Chokwe people are alive, and our ancestors are present in this place! During this event in the stadium, we are, for the first time, going, to welcome the "Tundanji". They were away for long months and lived far from their families in order to learn the Chokwe secrets of life. Now, they have come to lay down to their king for their submission and for showing their readiness to work for their respective communities. Nobody should tell you lies that our ancient institutions did not have social values. They were all turning around such ceremonies whose symbols build strong societies. The Chokwe populations always lived in a very strong society. We are a strong people and our long history is built on our capacity to unite and look at the future together. Today's politicians can learn much from us. It is not only learning from us in the past, but learning from us today. Our court is organized on the same presentation as in the distant past and we are quite successful in our relations with our people locally and in the foreign lands.

that could still come from the Chokwe fighting traditions to bring changes to the general order in the city.

Appadurai (2013:9-60) presents a book chapter entitled “Commodities and the Politics of Value” that can help much in understanding the presence of the Chokwe king in Tshikapa. The king does not exclude himself from the order of commodities. In fact, he is a valuable commodity that attracts all people’s attention. As such, he could be compared to anything that would have a fiduciary representation, and even more, he represents a significant value that gets deep in a long tradition and that has gone through time and changes.

Also, in a comparison with masks, the king’s headdress could be called Likishi (the singular form of Makishi). The masks commonly called Makishi become that certain agency sending back to a long time in the past through a mimetic role, and negotiating a global space through ethnoscaples, mediascaples, mediascaples, and technoscaples (Appadurai, 1996:33). These fluid spaces connect remote areas to global spaces as cultural facts redefine commodities through geographies and politics of value that reconstruct concepts, imaginations, and shed light on new social relations (Appadurai, 2013:9-60; 1996, 5-9). By the mere presence of the king, the distant past is visited again, the interpretation given again, and the Chokwe culture gets in the Politics of Value locally and globally.

In the presence of the king in Tshikapa and particularly during his official presence, speech, and the public reception of the initiates, mimesis as Grimes (2014; 2006; 1962) points out in different long narratives is at the center of the celebration based essentially on the commemoration of the past and its reproduction for people's survival (M. Eliade, 2005; 1963; 1996; 2004). The entire event looks like a theater from the oral traditions regularly repeated, annually presented in a season (I. Okpewho, ed., 1990:80-97; 1993, 253-290; Ngandu, K.P., 1984:15-34). The local public and regular visitors (to chief’s palaces) know it by heart but still come across unexpected novelties every year. Mudimbe (1993) rightly looks at this kind of artifacts as “*memoriae loci*” as they display the distant past and the Chokwe in constant interaction and memories. Still the same masks and artifacts move a step further in a futurist direction for spaces to accommodate them with a quick technologically progressive evolution. The time is aggressive; the present time is submitted to continuous changes in multimedia and technological tools. Global thought waves

and trends include Africa as a big target, and Tshikapa precisely as remotely full of global active actors as Appadurai (1996), Piot (1999), and Ferguson (2006) would certainly put it. These local players (like their peers all around the Chokwe world) stand for commodities clinging between subject-object as the cultural fact opens their way to a global space (Appadurai, 1996; Appadurai, 2013).

Looking at everything that goes on around Tshikapa, there is much surprise to notice that the distant past has succeeded to imposed itself in the full modern times. Also, Mwe Mwa Tshisenge has gone to what could be called a foreign land, or, at least, the Diaspora of the Chokwe mainland. It is also surprising that in a country where the government is omnipresent, the traditional Chokwe King be present and give a long speech turning around political expectations. For the king, together the Chokwe from the Democratic Republic of the Congo can achieve much for their welfare, and impose their traditional government style as the best in the entire country. Finally, the king offers the Chokwe another potential that would result from their collaborative with the other Chokwe living in other countries<sup>32</sup>. Appadurai (1996; 2013) provides an additional but necessary tool that will facilitate the understanding of the Tshikapa Chokwe through their business and imagination activities. By their presence in the stadium, the Tshikapa Chokwe, the media, and the entire public linked their remote place to the global space. Imagination stands for the capacity to lead actions in a way that brings solutions to individuals and their community through new mental spaces, and commodities that could not be thought about earlier (Appadurai, 2013). However, this day evolution has completely broken and changed spaces and has linked people, distances, and areas that could not otherwise be open to any new consideration. Appadurai's presentation of the concept imagination has many similarities with the same concept that is explained early in the 60's (Millis, 1959). Millis inserts the concept in

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<sup>32</sup> Mwene Mwa Tshisenge makes strong political statements and breaks silence over things that have happened from the independence of the three countries where the Chokwe are. Otherwise, the three important colonial powers of the time, i.e., Belgians, British, and Portuguese had pushed the Chokwe in three different directions of their respective colonies. Despite their forced separation, the Chokwe continued to interact, and to exchange different commodities for their survival. In fact, the Chokwe willy-nilly established a kind of virtual country of their own where everything was based on their long exchange customs, and administration with regard to rules. In this way, they were called rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, abandoned in an area full of killing mines in Angola, and in a nationally neglected region in Zambia. Mwene Mwa Tshisenge represents a revolution insofar as the Chokwe distant past neglected for many years is suddenly coming as a frontrunner for the construction of national politics. Finally, the presence of the king with a speech including the Chokwe from the three countries is a big revolution. It is like an attempt to bring back the Chokwe back their historical departure point. It is a rebel speech insofar as it openly goes against local political situations that have isolated the Chokwe in the three countries.

sociology and looks at it as a social manifestation of search.

Thus, that exercise reorganizes social spaces and opens psychological understanding as visitors come and go, stay for long, or permanently, and bring with them material and immaterial commodities that are shared or exchanged through different possibilities. Through their activities, these people change the social rupture separating them from their distant past by negotiating spaces to accommodate to new kinship understanding, which shows their capacity to adapt their cultural background to a quickly moving world around them.

As pointed out earlier the concept *identity* under its different forms also imposes itself through the stadium day. At the arrival of the Chokwe king in Tshikapa, the country is undergoing several crises in its vital sectors. First, the country had seen many war years. Many internally displaced people were roaming around the country, and many others had gone to the neighboring countries. Secondly, provincial governors and commune burgomasters have been working for many years extending their normal office terms. It was their interest to stay in power at any cost. Thirdly, for many analysts, the country was divided into two distinct parts, the east, and the West, the East believed to be the power leaders and as such suspected of contributing to the general crises. To make it short, discordances and inconsistencies characterized the highest levels of the countries. Whereas the country government ministries advertised the exceptionally high economic performances of the last years, the situation at the grassroots level did not reveal anything progress at all. Many were still among the people living on less than one dollar. Consequently, whereas a few seemed well off and running big cars, many inside the country were indigent and could not recognize belonging to a country worldwide known both for its resources, and population youth. All vital sectors were thus facing different crises.

With references to above-mentioned such crises, Golubović (2011:28), Touraine (2005), and A. Giddens (1990) concur about their considerations of the necessary links with identity questions, constructions, deconstruction and reconstruction. For, the first identity understanding goes hand in hand with the concept “We” that stands for belonging to a place and a group. Togetherness has always prevailed as a way to avoid loneliness, isolation, and possible death. Collective identity thus becomes essential as it permits cohesion and a possibility to look ahead with serenity as security, personal and collective insurance do not represent any threat. In the current conditions

of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the collective identity is severely undermined to the point that the national identity may be questioned. The arrival of the Chokwe king in Tshikapa plays a significant role for it brings on the frontline of the country an example of a collective identity that unites the Chokwe populations from around the entire country. Through the gathering of so many people around the king, the Tshikapa Chokwe are offered an opportunity to re/create another community identity, or, at least, to dream about it. Moreover, many politicians find a significant opportunity to mention “national identity” in the name of people who live in the same country, the space that offers an opening to citizenship.

On the same identity topic, Golubović (2011), Friedman (1994), Bauman (1998), and A. Smith (1991) pinpoint identity as a concept that is not naturally given, but that gets in the process of cultural acquisition, definition, and construction. For, culture offers a “referential-value” to individuals as they have the possibility to get a framework within which personal identities may be thought about with the pride to mention where an individual or a group belong. The arrival of the king leaves open space to raise another aspect of identity. Golubović (2011:31) digs from Mucchielli (1983) two principal forms of identity that apply to the reality of Tshikapa. He mentions “Identity with the Other” and “Identity in the Other.” Mucchielli underlines the passage from collective to individual identification. All along the autonomous process, the individual progresses to becoming a conscious subject. The individual would go from a cultural pattern to finding a personal identification. In this vein, A. Giddens (1990) mentions historical, traditional, modern identities finally as symbolic constructions that assist people to recognize and mark their location within the culture at a given time, and eventually to preserve that place.

It is strong of the above considerations that scholars such as T. Van Meijl (2008, Fall;2006) mention concepts such as “Multiple identifications” or “bicultural individuals” for individuals navigating a world where several cultures are growing at the same time. Tshikapa as such is a good example of the identities that can be perceived through different material culture events. The local people speak different languages and easily shift from one language to another without any difficulty. In the same vein, they are ready to understand features related to other cultures and interact accordingly from languages, religion, and cultural events such as masquerades without forgetting their group, the group to which they belong. Unfortunately, the Chokwe people despite being the majority, were finally silent and submitted to other cultures as they did

not have much to offer; they were somehow hidden. Moreover, they lost the first position that was theirs. In fact, they were the most numerous of the place. Looking at cultural facts from global perspectives, Appadurai (2013; 1996) rather considers the concept heterogeneity as reflecting the situation in which individuals, as such as the Tshikapa Chokwe, are connected to different cultures that their personality reflects, and thus the construct their identities (Geertz, 1966; 1977). A step ahead, Otto (2005) makes an important contribution with two main concepts tradition and agency. Otto looks at tradition as an essential ingredient insofar as it builds up a foundation for identity construction. Culture becomes the ingredient that organizes the agency that communicates both community and personal identities. Sökefeld (1999) finally takes what looks like both anthropological and psychoanalytical perspectives as he looks at Self and identity in the line of personality achievement, and a kind of process of individuation. The individual is at the center of nature, personal instincts and capacities to choose from the community and social norms to achieve and reflect in a personal way cultures exposed to, personal skills, and finally identities at different levels. For, finally cultures give a context of communication, self-construction leading to “Unity” and “Uncertainty” participate in what Van Meijl (2006) calls a Dialogical Self. It is a situation wherein an individual has the possibility and even the capacity to draw resources from different sources, cultures, and traditions (Geertz, 1966; 1977).

Mwene Mwa Tshisenge has brought forward spaces through which the Tshikapa Chokwe, who were hidden, can now show up publicly and have different possibilities to celebrate or construct their identities. Mwene Mwa Tshisenge, through his visit to Tshikapa, has filled the role of the wise Africans reminding about the importance of the ancestral wisdom that comes from the elders’ mouths. In the same vein, he has gone to the source of traditional wisdom and has brought it to the entire population of Tshikapa. They have the opportunity to think about their destiny and, if possible, change it. Hence, what could be seen as a traditional identity is offering an opportunity to mute in new identifications. In fact, Vellut (1995:319) informs readers that early in the nineteenth century the first young Chokwe and their wives had decided to move from Tshikapa and all the areas around to go their way. They had decided to move from the Lunda’s excessive authority. They had decided to go on their own to join the highly-populated areas containing attractive markets for the sale of wax, ivory tusks, and the harvest from their fields.



#### **IV.12 Chapter Four Concluding remarks**

Looking at Tshikapa Chokwe, both artifacts and symposium through lenses borrowed from Piot (1999), Appadurai (2013), Ferguson (2006), and J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. (1999; 1992; 2004; 2012) imposes given reflections, and conclusions hardly avoidable. Either Mwene Mwa Tshisenge's presence in Tshikapa was planned for attending the Symposium or not, he brought much change to the socio-political environment and interactions between Chokwe art and traditional royal institutions. Whether he had agreed with politicians or not, with scholars or not, with the local Chokwe population or not, his presence at the symposium led to a redefinition of Chokwe identity. Through his talks, the royal contributed to the re-production and reinforcement of identity and suggested a socio-political development pattern unseen before not only in Tshikapa but also all around areas inhabited by Chokwe (if not all over the entire country). His Royal Highness brought an understanding of modernity and globalization that do not necessarily come up in western traditions in so far as they do not stand for a stereotype (Piot, 1999:3). Also, it dilutes any image of modern power but rather goes back to the mythic Chokwe power sharing and individuality-collectivity creation dynamic (Stroeken, 2008, Spring; 2006). By going to the sources, the presence of Mwene Mwa Tshisenge portrays a world image within which nobody has absolute power as such as everybody owes back to the community according to one's position, expected capacity and skills. Arrows pointed at everybody for sharing skills and the "Vital Force" can represent this situation in the South African philosophy, "I am because you are" (Bangura, 2005). Everybody is responsible for the community with the same Royal Highness at the center.

The entire symposium has finally elicited shared responsibility and leadership while insisting on the kind of identity that obviously characterizes such environment. Individuals as bodies and agencies work a bit like commodities (Ferguson, 2006). The commoditization process goes up to a point where they lose their subject capacity. They become commodity objects filling places in the creation picture that comes out of the masquerade show, and that does not exactly reflect Chokwe tradition expectations, which combine individual aspects and community endeavors. This subject-object swinging that Piot (1999:7) mentions becomes an identity dynamic that shifts not only in gender considerations but also permanently from individual to the community and vice versa. It finally makes it difficult for any binary system to stand into two completely

independent poles. The so quickly swinging and shifting make the insertion and adjustment of any western images impossible in the purely Chokwe agencies and beliefs. Borrowings from other cultures are left without any other option, but to represent an alternative, or at least, the possibility, to stand for small additions to the community and personal identities.

At the light of Piot (1999:6-17), none of all anthropological traditions turning around structural-functionalism, or Marxist practice theories despite their famous authors' names and pointed research, offer the best alternative for the Chokwe populations, as they fail to provide readers with a decent overview regarding kinship. The Chokwe presentation of kinship does not get in the western understanding of family or cousin relations for social relations that may lead to brotherhood and sisterhood, parenthood and family links are many and varied all leading to an extensive network difficult to understand from the outside (Piot, 1999:7). Besides, Africa itself cannot be at all considered as a unit as far as kinship is concerned. There are many variables and patterns concerning community decisions about family construction, and decision-making in the process of any possible change. Chokwe kinship understanding is similar to the description Strother (1998:4 coll) gives about the Pende concerning the concept mother, for instance: "is a class that includes the biological mother, her sisters, and the daughters of the mother's sisters." However, there is a kind of consensus concerning neighbors and longtime friends who can through rituals and daily proofs ascend to the status of blood brotherhood and sisterhood, giving them the right to protection, citizenship, and participation in rituals otherwise only reserved for locals. In fact, every case deserves full attention and cannot find satisfaction on the main basis of comparison with the neighborhood, for Africa is so large and hides many details regarding kinship. The Chokwe's is but one case that has its particularities.

Doubtlessly, the arrival of the Chokwe King in a Congolese diamond town sent clear signals to political administrators. It gives a new message regarding potential political governance. The King's approach considers as priority scheme a reconsideration of the government mission as a full representation. He gives much weight to social groups for their capacity to produce the power that will finally top up the state and reflects leadership qualities for social welfare. The bottom line of consideration (even though there are contacts with renowned leaders) has taken the initiative to show that the country cannot go forward without traditional authorities who have the secrets of local participation through habits built over generations (Ferguson, 2006:97-99;

Bonnewitz, 2002).

In the same vein, Piot (1999:15) is right to raise a sensitive question regarding power contest. As a matter of fact, the consideration of individuals through interest groups may vary on a broad spectrum as here above pointed out, for individuality does not necessarily respond to a pre-established pattern. Individuals stand for agents within an extensive network that makes possible the understanding of the Chokwe society and its particularities. The self is believed to find its resources within a diffuse world of spirits that masquerades happily represent. Thus, if Tshikapa took a specific orientation regarding Chokwe's history for many years, it also took care to replace its groups within a context of its fundamental relations with its historic neighbors. The Chokwe people feel the necessity to free themselves from their closest neighbors to affirm their identities overshadowed over years. In taking such a distance, a recurring question may turn around ancient brotherhood always claimed with reference essentially to a female ancestor Lweji. This ancestor's relation that both Lunda and Chokwe recognize is rather taken profit of by Chokwe to show that the Lunda are their nephews and, therefore, should show respect for their Chokwe uncles as Muhunga (1962) and Kayembe (2015a) largely argue. This example illustrates how family relations may be pushed as far back in history and still motivate community behaviors today. It goes without saying that scholars would be expected to clarify such debates on family links. However, it is not surprising to find out that the same scholars may for their affiliation identities be pushed rather argue in one way or another or to stand as the defenders of their family tree and power over centuries (as a few cases earlier mentioned).

For looking at the future, Anthropology comes as a guide out of a nourished fire and puts an end to people's brouhaha, fears, and useless discussions. It suggests the best ways to look to the future. Appadurai (2013:3) purports "the victory of a politics of possibility over a politics of probability" for calling for communities to design their future by taking the "right risks, the right speculations, and the right understanding of the material world we both inherit and shape." It is indeed important that the Chokwe find out that it is not only about dreams and projections. It is also about finding the right balance that takes into account history, dreams and the real needs of its population viewed from its ancestral understanding. It is also a question to get updated through modern and postmodern global realities that impose themselves in specific cases (Docherty, 1990). It is thus understandable that "world changes have affected disciplines"

Appadurai (2013:4), and anthropology finds itself studying the circulation of commodities and people over time. In the case of the Chokwe populations, objects not only circulate but also get connected with people and thus get different values. In the same vein, the Chokwe populations here above-mentioned swing between individualities and commodities' poles, on the one hand, and between knowledge and labor, on the other. They also swing between commodities and life history, on the one hand, and morality and commodities, on the other. In swinging like that from one pole to another, they slowly design a general politics of value concerned with finding links between their history and geography.

The challenge for many years over the two last centuries pivoted on the belief that none of the so-labeled primitive art, practices, community organizations could cope with modern society. Colonial powers forced that strange belief into developing countries. In the postcolonial era, politics like "Recours à l'authenticité" in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, "Ujamaa" in Tanzania, or "Humanism" in Zambia, or the recently publicized (but old of age) "Ubuntu" in the post-apartheid era opened new possibilities (Bangura, 2005). None of them opened space for new identity expressions or proposed specific ways to celebrate modernity and postmodernity, and their fluidity (Piot, 1999:21). On the contrary, postcolonial Africa, mostly Sub-Saharan Africa stuck to patterns inherited from the long colonial capitalist past that marginalized local chieftaincies and with them rich traditions from the local people. In fact, Chokwe mercantilist traditions developed all along the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries showed a large capacity of population movements, exchanges with communities through movements over territories and possibilities of transnational movements. Even if most of these movements were hand in hand with violence related to community protection or construction, it is clear that local people developed trade, and valued human relations in the same way, which increased through contacts with European countries.

The Renaissance located itself either after the slave trade, at Independence time, or during Perestroika when the West and East blocks were affected by changes brought unexpected things to Africa (Bangura, 2014, February:15). The continent underwent its beliefs especially with a kind of focus on local provinces. Unfortunately, these new strategies were essentially based on theories of imitation (Piot, 1999:102). In fact, Piot (1999:80) shows how imitation led to more divisions engendering different person types involved in changing habits. Food, houses,

beverages, customs would result in hierarchies in a way of forcing people to accept inferiority positions. All the above according to Piot (1999:131) leads to a kind of “Mimesis” not going far in the past and trying to justify orientated positions and conducts. Modernization and postmodernization would thus seem like the only privileged few people within the developing countries here above mentioned. Mwene Mwa Tshisenge’s globalization consideration suggests that Chokwe cultural wealth stands for a starting point for positive development, governance, national politics constructed from the grassroots, yet different from the distant past giving much weight to the grassroots as the first level of power.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CHOKWE WELLBEING: RELIGION, MAHAMBAMBA, MEDICATION PREPARATION, ENTERTAINMENT, WITCHCRAFT, AND IDENTITIES

### V.1 Introduction

This chapter has chosen to reveal how the Chokwe populations look at their wellbeing, and the activities they deploy to make sure they reach the “Uchokwe,” i.e., their specificities as Chokwe, a state that can be considered without any doubt as such. Once again, the chapter will move from several perspectives with the hope that their contribution can shed light on the chapter topic, and, in fine, on a better understanding of the Chokwe identities. The chapter will be an opportunity to discover the Chokwe people in their environment. Maximizing every detail for a better comprehension is a way in which their identities are constructed, and how finally the human body is called upon to fill the agency role.

At the end of this chapter, our reader should be able to understand how the concept of religion, and philosophy can be observed at in the Chokwe communities. Clearly, the readers will discover how the Chokwe people organize their links with their divinities for the sake of their communities, how their rituals have come to be a part of their social life. The readers will also find out how many Chokwe care about their community relations, and how they care about remaining members of their community. Finally, we hope to achieve an evolution from the last chapter by presenting human relations with divinities, human relations as a source of wellbeing and welfare, and how these needs are expected to be reached with the material that nature has provided the Chokwe with. And the assistance of trained people in the fields that permit the use of plants or magic. It is also about how artistic productions are involved in the communication process and seen as the sine qua non-condition for contacting ancestors and other divinities.

Wellbeing understanding depends much on societies where people live, and on their aspirations as communities, and nations. From the above chapters already, we can draw many on lessons regarding the Chokwe populations’ wellbeing understanding. From the Tshikapa symposium, our readers certainly understand how it is important for the Chokwe people to stick to a communal life with the royal family, and through it with the elders, ancestors, and God. Actually, Mwene Mwa Tshisenge’s welcome will be remembered for many years to come. Once he set foot on Tshikapa airport, all the local Chokwe focused on his exceptional personality not only because he

had come to Tshikapa, but because he was a representative of the deities in his position in the Chain of Being.

From the interviews also conducted during last year's fieldwork, it seems obvious that among Chokwe, religion goes hand in hand with wellbeing insofar as it reveals relations between the human beings, male and female. The creator is the source of harmony, and leader towards sources of happiness, justice, and social organization (Firth, 1981). This understanding does not much vary: either the Chokwe is in an urban or rural environment. S/he has the same strong attachment to religious matters that are believed to give him specific protections. Interview result figures given and interpreted in chapter nine of this dissertation speak for themselves. Once again, even these figures should lead to confusion, for the Chokwe is likely to take whatever seems to offer protection and to promise better days whatever way it comes. Thus, the concept of witchcraft also comes in and may play an ambivalent role regarding wellbeing or its contrary. For in African places, as Stroeken (2010) points out, magic and witchcraft often share the same space of power, benefit, and may include the same understanding of gift, sacrifice, recognition, and expectations.

Of much importance for us, and with reference to identity different dimensions, this chapter will try as much as possible to integrate some of the theoretical concepts from Jean and John Comaroff regarding religion, ethnicity, politics, and wellbeing. As noticed in most visited places, a massive (re)turn to old practices regarding Chokwe wellbeing understanding is believed to be the most practical response to various needs. Personal and community satisfactions are not met through alternatives proposed through urban activities. However, before getting to such considerations, it is imperative to discuss social institutions that tend to lead Chokwe to their wellbeing.

## **V.2 On Religion and Human Wellbeing**

The Chokwe populations believe in one God called Kalunga and whose name is also Nzambi. Regarding the name Kalunga, (Lima, 1971:74, Turner, 1977: 358-66), confirming what we learned from everybody in the fieldwork, speaks about a supreme being who does not necessarily have any form, but whose powers are omnipresent and omnipotent. Kalunga is also believed to be independent and to be in such a high and protected position that human beings cannot touch

him. Kalunga is believed not to take part in people's quarrels. Many Chokwe believe that they have other means to solve their own issues without necessarily having to go through the creator, Kalunga. In order to ensure communications with Kalunga/Nzambi, the Chokwe populations are given "Hamba and Wanga" to be able to solve their issues. "Hamba and Wanga" will take up much space in the coming pages. Let us say for now, they are a sum of positively, spiritually inspired spirits, spiritually dedicated medications, spirits and ancestors dedicated to personal and community welfare. These spirits are also empowered to fight the evil whatever its form and presentation to the Chokwe. However, as we shall see these concepts "Hamba and Wanga" and their contents are largely ambivalent. They have different presentation types that can be anthromorphic, zoomorphic, phytomorphic, and they could also result from a selection of representations of divinities. For them, different cults are celebrated at various times of the year or according to what happens in families and in communities at large. Thus, if we need to talk about Chokwe religion, the path to follow is the one leading to, and deeply involving "Hamba, and Wanga at the bottom line of Chokwe religious identities (Lima, 1971, Wastiau, 2006; 1998).

Otherwise, the name Kalunga is found in daily language with reference to a place such as the sea. Here, the wide space and its unknown coverage behind any reachable horizon refers to what Kalunga stands for as his capacities are unreachable, incomparable, and none of the humans or of the divinities are able to approach Kalunga's majesty. Readers of the Christian and Jewish Bibles will certainly discover if not similar reverences, then certainly synonyms used for both Kalunga and Yahweh concerning their respective powers, and considerations even though the two cultures developed in different locations, continents. Scholars of religion, such as the Kenyan Anglican, Mbiti (1990) will therein doubtlessly discover one of the reasons many Sub-Saharan Africans have straightforwardly moved to Christianity. All the same, such statements should be taken with much reserve concerning the Chokwe. Jordan (1998) has noticed that the Chokwe and their allies have joined other religions quite late. It is only lately that more and more Chokwe are joining Christianity. In fact, Jordan (1998) rather links that move to Christianity with the faith growth of Pentecostal churches, which in many ways accept bridges from local faiths. Pentecostal churches operate in similar ways with traditional practices, and in cities. Kizobo (2001) and Marcel (2004) explain that these Pentecostal offer spaces for practices once excluded from urban cities as pagan. To return to their existence through Pentecostalism is an easy way to raise people's interests. Their interactions with biblical traditions also present another orientation for some



people living on the margins of big cities to start miracle churches. These churches enrich the organizers quickly, and people have a chance to move through their church hierarchy that they can eventually lead as bishops and archbishops, titles copied from mainline churches. An important confusion deliberately prevails in the use of concepts such as God, evil, witchcraft, miracle, and good luck as people run after opportunities that may change their life. They find these concepts in the new churches, and quite often look at them through their local traditional lenses. Marcel (2004) observes that places of prayer have provided a pretext for people to gather to try to solve their social problems, without any consideration of dogmatic and religious questions. Such village customs endanger urban life at several levels. For example, people tend to ignore expertise needed in many fields. Quite often, Pentecostals mix traditional beliefs, those of mainstream churches, Pentecostalism, and especially rituals based on listening to a medium. The latter links them to ancestors; a revival of Old Testament testimonies puts them in direct contact with God.

Such a confusion level has only reached a few Chokwe. They have several ideas about Kalunga, in the sense of how important he might be. However, at the same time, his majesty and power cannot be totally grasped by humans. The image used reflects the impossibility that the human being has to see beyond a given level. This also may look as a metaphor about what the human being may not be able to grasp beyond a certain level of what belongs to the divine. A reference to M. Eliade (1963b) may prove quite useful as by opposing sacred and profane he seems to translate what the Chokwe understand of Kalunga, on the one hand, and the Chokwe environment, on the other. Kalunga is able to see and understand what goes on in the profane environment, but the human being does not have the capacity to move beyond a given level for he is limited, unless otherwise trained through different rituals. Going through given training rituals and transformations may lead the human being to growth in his skills, knowledge and capacities as he is empowered to better understand Kalunga's powers and different ways to have access to blessings and life opportunities (Stroeken, 2010). It goes without saying that to realize such an endeavor there are many conditions to go through, either as an apprentice or as naturally born gifted individual connected with powers. Such examples may be found around places where Chokwe live, or may possibly be studied from their neighbors who practice different kinds of shamanic relations often connected to trance. These religious practices are generally speaking performed within a given environment that responds to required conditions. The first one is a

continuation of works of art pointed out in the previous part—used for ceremonies and rituals. During these opportunities, people, either alone or in group, come to celebrate commemorations linked to ancestors, take this time to learn more about them, and find out the social roles expected from them.

### **V.3 The Mahamba and the modern Chokwe**

As previously pointed out in the preceding section, the “Mahamba” may be given different definitions related to their social functions. They can be seen as divinatory instruments insofar as they are the small artistic objects that the diviner uses to perform the ritual connection linking the living human being to ancestors or to God. Thanks to that connection, the living can understand different parameters that their society goes through every day activities. However, when presented as figurines made from anthill, clay, wood, ivory, etc., they would stand for the intermediary step that permits people to connect with the Sacred as soon as the diviner gets the necessary link. When the Mahamba are presented as dolls, they are often looked at as the depository of given powers that may be directed to people either for punishing them or for increasing their own capacities on different levels of “spirituality.” These powers seem ambiguous and depend on the one who uses them (Geschiere, 1996). They can be hazardous as they may lead to harmful and perilous consequences. And if the one in possession is filled with good intentions, and has chosen as a mission to work for the community wellbeing and welfare, the force will have positive powerful implications in socio-spiritual life (Jordan, and Lima, Turner, 1977: 358-74).

When presented as miniatures, the Mahamba are often considered for personal protection purposes. When seen under the visible form of an animal skin, they are rather the visible expression of man's capacity to displace the animal powers in a combination of its instincts and physical supremacy. These powers are believed to increase man's capacities in many daily necessities in fields such as: vision/sight, smell, touch... but also the capacity to be physically as resistant as the animals in question. The belief in such forces is publicly celebrated through names that are given to people at their birth, or at rituals organized at different occasions, or again on several consultations in the scope of diseases when either the patients, or the diviner themselves get in trance (Frontini, 1971; Jordan, 1994; 1998; Nooter, 1993; Sieber, 1962).

Also, generally speaking, with regard to the different kinds of needs here above mentioned, the Mahamba come under different forms: zoomorphic or anthropomorphic. All the Mahamba are rather approached under a kind of school with regard to a learning process that leads exceptional individuals, the diviners, to know as much as possible a number of things through regular practices, and through conducting an ascetic life as pointed out in the previous part. With the increase of personal experience, the diviner may go as far as to fabricate additional Mahamba like the previous ones and at the same time quite personal. It is that personal Mahamba use and capacity to contextualize them in times of diseases, good health, unknown phenomena, and social needs, the Chokwe public, and more and more anybody else from other communities sharing the same space with the Chokwe, can go to the “Tahi,” the diviner for family and community reasons.

*Figure 22 Tahi: Chokwe Diviner (MRAC)*



The royal Museum of Tervuren, Belgium gave permission to use this old picture. A "Tahi" has a headdress of feathers the same found on the royal mask "Mupala". The "Tahi" has a consultation basket that has different objects used in the raffling for getting an explanation to offer to the client. The big basket behind the "Tahi" has various medicinal plants and magic powders also offered to the client according to needs. On the left side of the "Tahi" are two music instrument, rattles. The "Tahi" needs them to get into trance, and mainly to mark the transition from the profane to the sacred.

Generally speaking, in spite of the presence of born-again churches that seem to have recuperated so many people, interviews conducted among the urban and rural Chokwe have clearly shown that the majority of them have much respect/fear for anything related to what may be called traditional spiritual organizations, and especially to the Mahamba. In fact, many among the Christians still visit the Tahi for various questions especially the ones related to their survival in big African cities, jealousy, success and witchcraft (J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. , 2012, July; Geschiere, 1997). Some of these Christians have gone as far as to give these traditions a bad connotation, but generally speaking everybody believes the “Mahamba” and other such “fetishes” can absolutely lead to excellent results, or on the contrary, when in the hands of badly intentioned people, to social catastrophes. The Mahamba number is so big and may lead to given confusions with regard to the role they are expected to play in society. Despite what could look like additional confusion in understanding Chokwe people, more people living in urban centers travel long distances to meet exceptional “Tahi” and their Mahamba. Some other people rather prefer to deal with the “Tahi” who have traveled in the other direction towards urban settlements. Despite their abbreviated ways, deals fixed in terms of money rather than natural gifts, the urban “Tahi” have their own ways where success and failure are counted differently. People go where they can get in touch with “Mahamba” in order to get answers to their social issues. Some of these “Tahi” interpret in their ways urban phenomena, and propose sudden solutions that are supposedly reached through important gifts and sacrifices (Stroeken). The urban clients expect to be healed from diseases or to have luck in their work, find love, and achieve harmony with nature and neighbors. These kinds of “quickly reached solutions” reached their highest urban popularity when HIV-AIDS situations were so desperate, and deaths were unavoidable. The urban Tahi had now opportunities to suggest their solutions as inefficient as medical ones, but still attractive because of the magic attraction that could still create some kind of last minute hope. Modern medicine had shown its limits; many refused to believe HIV-AIDS would just be another incurable pandemic. Witches were believed to be responsible for sudden sad deaths, and social malfunction (Geschiere, 1997; Kaputu, F.U., 2010). Whenever Mahamba came in use and ancestors received them to solve their social issues, they were respected and seen with much respect. Whenever they are connected to ancestors’ spirits presented through masks, the Chokwe from yesterday or today look at them as a gift from ancestors and God (even if in some categories the human maker seems to prevail) in order to solve daily issues (Wastiau, 1998).

All the same, the “Mahamba” are divided into three different categories: first, “Mahamba a Makuluana.” These are the Mahamba that are doubtlessly known as coming straight from ancestors. They are attributed original powers and are linked to population movements. Or they are believed to be the property of exceptional ancestors, like the cultural hero Chibinda Ilunga. They were able to manage their civilization without any big issues, or controversies with other people. The statue of a cultural hero carved with a special bag for carrying magic powders, and other magic stuff necessary to bring victories, and harmony over, and the capacity to hold the lands that the ancestors gave the Chokwe. These “Mahamba” are also about the vital force the Chokwe believe to come from the ancestors and God that give them the capacity to change their bodies in a communication agency, and in a solution provider to all situations without necessarily using other means but the body itself.

The second category, “Mahamba maha,” are the ones that are connected to a period of time, to historical events. The Chokwe believe indeed in the evolution of questions, problems, and the nature of solutions that may be required to solve situations through the “Tahi.” Thus, the public should not be surprised to see the “Tahi” going around African urban settlements. Through their traditions, they have the vocation to go where there are problems and to bring adapted solutions. Questioned on this particularity of the Mahamba going to the front of problems, Charles Kamboyi from Zambezi District, our host during our fieldwork in that area, described how the Chokwe, for instance, were able to run towards HIV-AIDS situations without any hesitation. According to Mr. Kamboyi, the Chokwe traditional healers discovered a process where they could deal with early cases whose AIDS had not yet dangerously propagated. They found out how to treat early stage cases by submitting their patients to human immunity booster roots and other plants. They also largely relied on personal contacts as far they could escort their patients through the communications. Did the Chokwe “Tahi” really heal HIV-AIDS? There is no scientific proof about that. And if that was the case, the entire world would be now running towards the Chokwe healers. I think what Mr. Kamboyi finally meant was that the Chokwe healers, “Tahi,” are prepared to face situations. Compared to the modern medical world, we could think about the World Health Organization and its different structures permitting it to face urgent health situations, even if the answers may not be necessarily positive and appropriate immediately.

Finally, the third category includes the Mahamba called “Mahamba Njize.” They are a proof of the Chokwe capacity to travel from their spaces to the neighbors, eventually learning much from them. Many Chokwe are indeed happy to learn whatever can contribute in one way or another to their social achievements. They learn whatever is positive from other people and can contribute to their social growth. If learning is easily associated with skills, intelligence, and social practices as the ones regarding annual rituals, there is more. The Chokwe are happy to learn from their neighbors about how to take care of the people who are sick. The learning happens in different ways. From their neighbors, they learn the necessary skills and ingredients for using their plants and may even take seeds to grow at home, or transplant young trees to grow them within the Chokwe vicinities. In this case, they integrate the plants in the Chokwe rituals and continue leading their social life with these new borrowings. Quite often, with time, any reference to the outside world is left out, as the plants have become completely Chokwe.

Another style of borrowing may consist in using rituals from another group when they are believed to be important. Whatever the case, today, urban healers are the ones who are quick to learn different practices in order to maximize their connections with their urban clients. One famous example of borrowing that has come from the meeting with Portuguese can still be found with Mwana Pwo mask. Some of these masks have a cross on the face. Most of our informants believe it is an inheritance from the “Christian” Portuguese. As such it has completely become Chokwe. In art and social criticism, the Likumbi Lya Mize, for instance in Zambezi district in Zambia, offers opportunities to see how the initiates are able to include new masks in the procession. These new masks have references to modern material such as computers, wigs, or simple useful daily material such a canoe (Jordàn, 1993). We completely agree with Lima (1971:83-85) that, if we agree with this third category and we cannot do otherwise with reference to the second chapter, we can still perceive possible confusion, and risk in the classification of Mahamba. They may not only easily overlap categories, especially if they are in the possession of the same “Tahi,” but they also qualify for addressing different social issues and treatments of different diseases (Jordan, 2003, 1998; Kuntz, 1932).

However, we would like to look at the Mahamba subdivision into three through other lenses specifically through Jean and John Comaroff’s understanding of ethnicity and its construction, and also through Geschiere and Stroeken’s presentation of witchcraft, and finally through the

Appadurai's view of cultural facts. First of all, there is a possibility to stay linked to ancestors' ways all throughout time, and changes. In the repetition of the same kinds of treatments and rituals, they show up a proof of their gratitude and faith in their cultural heroes and civilization founders whose long-time heritage has successfully survived. The three subdivisions that the Mahamba display in Chokwe religious, medicinal, and spiritual treatments also present us with a people who can use different possibilities within a wide range of time, contacts, and reflections. The Chokwe people cannot spend their entire social life only in sticking to the "Mahamba a Makuluana," i.e. to the religious, philosophical (metaphysical) and social values that they have inherited from their ancestors who lived in the distant past. Their life social dynamics oblige them to find solutions in their neighbors' practices, and have a high sense of discernment in their communications with God and ancestors. In the same vein, J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. (2012, July) have noticed in their research in South Africa that Black South Africans have been able to not only adapt to new situations and integrate them as part of their life, but also to borrow from situations to undertake socio-religious transformations from unsuspected sources, such as Jewish communities. Herein, they face different social issues through similar institutions they were submitted to for a long time. Thus, new churches are born under the pretext of religious revival, but are in fact new dialogue spaces, and opportunities to bring into society a new leadership and a social hierarchy. This approach tries to build a different environment based on new philosophical contributions. Thus, the third in the "Mahamba" classification" becomes a large metaphor that can be attributed to learning from the "Other" within social ranks, or through those who are close in order to give the quickest possible solutions to the faced issues. "Mahamba Njize" can also be lifted to the level of personal and community thoughts that permit personal and group survival. It is all about dialogues at different levels, personal, community, for different exchanges. Here the points that Stroeken (2010) explains are of much help. Through following communication lines that suggest ways to power at large or participate in ways of keeping power, people's behavior undergoes changes and find motivations to move in different directions (Wastiau, 1998). The same kind of power construction theory is found in Geschiere (1997) whose observation of witches in community beliefs allowed scholars to discuss different social links. For, certain symbols or personal attitudes determine the lines that power follows. In the same vein, symbols reveal different dimensions of the word power as they reveal those who take right social decisions. However, decision makers presented for their capacity to integrate people



may end up bringing new dynamics contrary to community interests and requesting new profile types. New identities are thus built in putting people at the crossroad of the past considered as a backbone, on the one hand, and following the ideological line of an already constructed future, or again of a future in construction, on the other.

By the way, Stroeken (2010) provides our readers with a comprehensive drill that serves as an excellent addition to Appadurai's cultural fact consideration (Appadurai, 2013). It is all about epistemological concepts that organize social life around power observed through magic and witchcraft. Both words apply their impact in contacts with the "beliefs believed" (Stroeken, 2008, Spring). Both are concerned with sudden powers that magic reveals as a result of a long process of skill learning, and an inheritance of long traditions. At the same time, witchcraft has a long tradition but with mainly bad intentions, and the capacity to claim other people's lives, ruining them physically and/or putting an end to them.

However, the Chokwe populations cannot only be perceived through the lenses of the above power representation and acquisition, contrary to the description we gave of them as a fighting people, involved in conquests and submitting their neighbors to their culture. At the same time, we noted that Chokwe were specialists in strategies aiming at conquering other territories, and changing their neighbors into new Chokwe. For several Chokwe, it was not only the acquisition of lands and territories; it was about including people in their strategies and making them believe in Chokwe polities as the best way to survive within a dangerous world where attacks could come from anywhere. In addition, as starvation was at the door following rainfall shortage implications, the Chokwe's friendship or submission accepted often represented the vest option (J. C. Miller, 1982; Miller, 1969; 1970; 1988; 1998). Many communities had to face starvation, on the one hand, invaders and dangerous traders on the other (J. Vansina, 1962). Within those daily dangers, the Chokwe strategies in the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century surprised everybody. They could get involved in long slave trade routes, but also quickly adapt to other trades as soon as slave trade was forbidden, or still favor the local use of slaves wherever needs were expressed. At the same time, they were among the first to conquer spaces and buy slaves not for sale but to increase their population growth, and thus become a local power that others were afraid of. The Chokwe brought in manpower to build a big influential area of their own (D. M. Gordon, 2009, Oct.; Vansina, 1962), and articulated their beliefs and connections with ancestors accordingly.

The preceding parts also mentioned the Chokwe capacity to quickly integrate into their community whatever good practice, material, spiritual, philosophical, social, they found during the time of their conquests. By borrowing such a vast array of their neighbors' society, they facilitated the integration of the newcomers in the Chokwe communities, for they could still recognize their traditions, and they viewed Chokwe traditions as a rich contribution to the first ones. These borrowed innovations included artistic, religious, social-community, and development-technological ones that could become a part of the Chokwe's functional, socio-organizational habits that the Mahamba represent.

A close look at the Chokwe appropriation of their own religious characteristics, as well as those of their neighbors and those they consider as contemporary, modern, or answering their needs, can show us other dimensions above purely religious ones. J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. (2009:1) leads the reader to perceive a religious quest as a specific ethnic dimension, for ethnicity is at the same time the same thing and many others. Ethnicity depends on social needs and structures while "increasing the stuff of existential passion, the self-conscious fashioning of meaningful, morally anchored selfhood, ethnicity is *also* becoming more corporate, more commodified, more implicated than ever before in the economics of everyday life." Many Chokwe indeed look at the contribution from the Mahamba, Tahi, and other rituals as a strong opportunity to reveal their temporary particularities and strengths to lead their social lives/identities. In this vein, J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. (2009:1) adds: "Cultural identity, in the here-and-now, represents itself ever more as two things at once: the object of choice and self-construction, typically through the act of consumption, and the manifest product of biology, genetics, human essence." Almost all Chokwe choose from what is available in order to construct their identity for the present needs as well as for the insertion in a long power vision. Thus, we could consider both power understanding and expectation on one hand, and the Chokwe religion, on the other, through J. Comaroff (2012:5-8) regarding religion not only identifiable "with the divine and the supernatural" but mainly as a cultural system definition not only of a "natural kind," but rather "socially and historically arbitrary."

Many Chokwe seem to use a state religion, a part of the society, since no one can imagine life without it. In addition, that religion does not offer a clear border between the sacred and the profane, thus leading to a confusion impacting people's daily life in the sense that everything is

rather more sacred than profane. Thus, the study of the “Mahamba” will show that the Mahamba utilize medicinal effects on humans, treatments of diseases with plants, and contributions of spirits. Such treatments could be separated from ancestral rituals and prayers from the diviner or the “Tahi” or even from the expertise of “Tshimbanda” supposedly dealing more with spirits presence in humans. The general confusion of people was deliberately stoked for the survival of the Chokwe system. It was the only possibility for attracting many neighbors looking at the healing dimensions, and at the interventions of spirits without getting details regarding each Mahamba particularity, amidst the social norms linked to each of them (Wastiau, 1998, Redinha, 1965; 1949; Lévi-Strauss, 1982; Jordan 1998; 1996; Hauenstein, 1961, Cole, 19970, Bastin, 1959; 1969).

Lima (1971) offers an opportunity to focus on the Chokwe religious situation and reinforce the understanding of its politics, and impact on politics. Social construction leads the Chokwe populations to have the kind of life, and the kind of environment that they would like to have and live in. The “Mahamba” are such a big structure that covers every single detail of their life. The fact that “different specialists” come together to take care of different aspects of human wellbeing puts the population in a general climate of perplexity under several practices needed to take care of different social issues. The Chokwe people’s long tradition shows a complexity that mixes health issues and other spiritual preoccupations regarding people. Consequently, when somebody is in search of an aspect of wellbeing and goes for consultation, s/he ends dealing with many personal links for the appropriate treatments on different levels for various reasons related to personal and community dynamics.

The Mahamba are organized around the “Tshipango” and are a kind of microcosm regarding different human aspects, and the divinities that participate in human wellbeing (Bastin, 1984:361-403). These “Tshipango” may also be regarded as specific places for prayers and sacrifices where patients receive the medicine prepared for them. However, both the consultation and the medicines are not gratis. They cost much for the patient in terms of time, energy, sacrifice and gifts, and from time to time, imposed ascetic privations for a better functioning of personal and community life. Medicinal plants are often employed to cure different diseases (Redinha, 1949; Martins, 19930. Additional rituals are necessary for healing psychological issues that come along diseases, and are quite often addressed through medium trances (Kaputu,

2010). However, the healing conditions in which the entire process takes place is not only exasperating and demanding, but includes conditions that cause visible exhaustion to people. Whatever healing and treatment conditions, nobody can choose another type of life since personal and collective salvations are profoundly intertwined, located and comprised in the Chokwe commonwealth evolution, the sine qua non personal and community passage to any happiness. Lima (1971) documents Mahamba and explains them in detail with regard to their types and the diseases that are treated. The Mahamba include figurines done mainly from dried wood and trees, ones that are attributed different names according to their specific specialties. Apart from the “Mahamba,” there are also “Ngombo” figurines. However, contrary to the “Mahamba” that include principally wood, the “Ngombo” have horn, feathers, clay, and wood and are used in the divination basket. The Mahamba include many figurines, lions, dogs, guns... whereas the “Ngombo” are also used as “Tupele” in the divination basket and represent different social faces and human fate. That is why when used in the divination process, the diviner is sure that the “Tupele” can indicate the right way to healing and ridding bad spirits.

J. Comaroff (2012), J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. (2012, July) confirm the above as they shed light on the discussion and understanding of a couple of things regarding religion. Jean and John Comaroff’s research conducted for many years in South Africa has demonstrated that religion is involved in many other things apart from the religious services. J. Comaroff (2012) underlines how powers and religion intermingle for the production of leaders and their people through leadership and submission. Thus, what is religious or magical is always believed to impact social life in a way that meshes the sacred and the profane. The arrival of mainline and born-again Pentecostal churches plays the same role once only attributed to the “Mahamba” under their different presentations.

In the same vein, when looking critically at the “Mahamba” as religious paraphernalia, it is not a matter of simple religion per se, but a combination of so many other aspects related to consultation, gifts, and self-imposed sacrifices within which the human being continuously constructs and reconstructs personal and community freedom. It is this dynamic opposing or rather linking the individual and the collective sacrifice that Stroeken (2010; 2006; 2008) calls “Shingilo” within the Sukuma people of Tanzania. Besides, the Chokwe construct ethnicity on an idea that includes not only a language, but the inclusion of hierarchical consideration about their

leadership and to their brotherhood and sisterhood, which embrace more than blood kinship, bringing them together under values, and similar chromatic banners, and tastes concerning rituals, masks, and popular joys, family and social organizations (Firth, 1981). Despite everything that seems to build the Chokwe society as one, the group of leaders stand on one side of their society whereas the entire population and its aspirations are on the other. This opposition does not present a situation that could suggest any soon major social change. The leaders manage to get a complex situation full of different aspirations going for years ahead, and they would also prefer to be assisted by everybody else to keep the status quo (J. Borgonjon, 1962; M. Jordan (2010; M.L. Bastin, 1968, White, 1962).

J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. eds. (1997; 1999) inspires us with an understanding of the Chokwe religious situation from the distant past to this day, even though we are dealing with two different locations and social situations on the same continents. Our comparisons do not put much stress on the same binary opposition line with on the one hand, the leaders, and the led people, on the other. The organization of religion in the Chokwe space leaves no doubt about the expression that J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. (1999) use: “banality of power.” These words are helpful in penetrating the world of diviners. They conduct everything with a “dualism” and “banality” that leave the world around them under a strong influence of the invisible they are the only ones to master. They “navigate” between these worlds trying to bring results to the public while imposing fears from the lack of knowledge of the invisible. A simple administration of a concoction made of plants or other ingredients drawn from the environment all around them seems to be inefficient until magic from the invisible comes. As if this was not enough, the celebrants in most cases were just on one side of their world. The entire community was on the other side and made sure to present the offerings that the celebrants expected. These offerings of different kinds were of a heavy load. They did not have any clear pre-set list of the valuables presented every time that people requested prayers and spiritual interventions with the hope of solving their immediate issues and shaping their futures.

In fact, closely observed traditions seem to have been “fabricated,” the celebrants and ritual leaders, the “Tahi” and the “Tshimbanda,” J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. eds (1997:9) mention the concepts “mimesis” we already discussed in the preceding chapters, and the concept “dramatis personae.” In fact, a meeting that puts together people and the religion organizers turns out to be

all about “mimesis” inasmuch as everything ends up being a theatrical repetition of an exercise that was done long ago, may be in the “illo tempore” with the ancestors (M. Eliade, 2005). At the same time, novelties are permitted provided the organizers find them convenient and adapted to ceremonies, and for the continuation of the longtime traditions, the backbone of the Chokwe populations.

J. Comaroff (1991, Jan.) recounts the first meeting of the British and the Tswana in South Africa through the mechanical watch that they were brought and that stood at the center of two different groups: the local group and the foreigners. Also, when the text describes how the mission is built to serve for what the colony should look like, we have an example of a forced communion. However, it would not put an end to the dualism opposing the African community considered on the margins of the Metropole that Europe represents. With the age of modernity, even though Stroeken (2010) mentions the possibility of several modernities, pairs of reality superpose two different sets with the leaders on the one side and the led populations on the other. The Chokwe populations have continued for many years their own traditions; it describes a social life within a dynamic depending much on the powers “Tahi” are the only ones to have access to.

#### **V.4 Chokwe Art, Religion, Philosophy, Culture, Identity or Primitive Art and “*memoriae loci*” or from Artistry to the Sacred**

Van Gennep (1960), Propp (1968), M. Eliade (1963b; 1996; 1998; 2004; 2005), Campbell (2004; 1969), Price (2003), and Kaputu (2010) concur in pointing out that generally many cultures around the world believe that man’s meeting with the Sacred passes through a group or personal experience that opens to the “Other.”

So often understood as a distant presence, it is approached through meditation or through other community practices that change artistic objects into religious representation or media through community rituals--and other celebrations that determine a social insertion value. Once considered sacred, daily used objects, natural phenomena, chosen human beings get a social status otherwise unsuspected before. Their unknown nature and stature quite often impose fear and attraction at the same time towards the unknown. As soon as that meeting moment is passed, man looks for ways to access the same experience once again. The revival of such meetings and experiences has led human communities in the organization of rituals, rites and religious ceremonies converted into religions identifying communities as far as their religion, culture, all

along passed centuries and all around continents, and socio-political attitudes are concerned. Hebraic, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist traditions can be considered in this scope. Chokwe are not an exception; their art serves primarily to the construction of relations with the divine world through masquerade and mimesis as earlier pointed out<sup>33</sup>.

To make sure that the meeting with the Sacred can take place as a community central pillar, initiated people organize training sessions for both men and women in age. During these sessions, through continuous efforts – ablutions, gestures, sacrifices, food restrictions, sacrifices, daily habit control, self-sacrifice, ascetic practices – initiates are gradually introduced to the perception of other reality levels and to the awareness of changes that may affect their consciousness (Kaputu, 2010). Slowly, entire communities participate in rituals and make of them their identity indicators as compared to their neighbors. Also, Mucchielli (1983), Friedman (1994), and A. Smith (1991) present different identity dimensions that may be perceived in the connection with the “other,” sharing the same culture at a local ethnic, or national levels. Unfortunately, anthropologists in the past did not pay enough attention to cultural central position as the main vehicle of identity, social construction, and social project understanding.

In the case of Chokwe, the first ethnologists were misled in their belief that the numerous objects they saw all around were primitive artifacts without solid artistic tradition. On the contrary, as Mudimbe (1993) points out primitive artifacts are but “*memoriae loci*.” They contribute as geographical determinations in space and time, determining religious specificities as this section will later on demonstrate. Masks (Makishi) are but the results of collective efforts to access other levels of reality and to structure beliefs placing spiritual forces at the center of human life. Even though Ethnology has assisted much in the building of an understandable explanation of rites and rituals, both Anthropology and Ethnology from the western perspectives seem to act from the outside and do not, in many cases, reach the capacity to experience any consciousness level change or reality perception difference, as the Chokwe involved in their own culture might do.

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<sup>33</sup> The University of South Africa (UNISA) gave me an opportunity to attend a symposium of New Testament and Early Christian Studies (September 19-21) on the main theme of Supernatural. My communication was informed by the Zambezi Makishi masquerade at the Likumbi Lya Mize. They are a perfect visible testimony of the Supernatural to the Chokwe/Luvale and to many other people who share with them the belief that ancestors are alive. They are the spirits that the creator sends to assist people in their daily life, or sometimes to punish them when they derail from the basic principles linking living communities to ancestors through Vital Force.

The ancestors' cult observed in many places all around Africa contributes to the building of the Homo Religious whose culture reflects different features in cosmological myths, and other oral traditions reorganized through rituals whose symbols show access to the Sacred, renewal, re-creation through people's contributions and participations (Saliba, 1976). By the same token, rituals provide answers to existential questions, and justify cultural origins and respect throughout time. Thus, for instance the Chokwe populations may question Mwene Mwa Tshisenge's power. Apart from the ancestral tree that goes as far as the "illo tempore," many variants of oral traditions reconstruct among many things migrations motivated either by identity necessities, or by the need to move towards more fertile lands. Thus apart from masks, the Chibinda statue remains at the center of the military idea insofar as it promotes the necessity of hunting, man's courage, magic, land control, and the control of submitted populations.

In agreement with Piot (1999:76-104), Chokwe masquerades participating in the Mukanda public coming-out ceremony (and in other rituals) distribute powers, efficacy, and identities through a social spectrum whose members, subjects-commodities, and make them "real." In addition, we agree with Mácha and Pellón (2014:40) and (Jordan, 2006; 1999), that masked characters represent alterity and are often differentiated through their roles. Masks are identified through costume details, and through spaces that they occupy through dances, and the network that they finally construct. That is why earlier in this dissertation, we referred to the Mukanda exit ritual as a "mass" and mimetic ritual; it commemorates the possibly first ritual that refers not only to creation, but also to the distribution of powers and positions to different actors. Thus, the masks represent a social environment in which individuals play different roles even though, as earlier pointed out, they all share Tempels' concept, Vital force (Tempels, 1947). Tempels' understanding of "Vital Force" with its increased and decreased possibilities are at the center of African philosophy, and these different possibilities may help individuals grow in one way or another.

The understanding of cultural events does not necessarily concern Cartesian drills conceived around a binary drill or system opposing wrong to right. Chokwe cultural coherence looks at life perceived *as a totality* participating in ancestors' continuation, wisely picking up necessary novelties, social, technical, and political visions (Piot, 1999). Socio-political novelties incorporated through artistic influences were exchanged with neighbors and distant visitors.



Rituals, food, housing and clothing habits, and ancestors remain the real leitmotif that demarcates cultural quarters; they appear through an identifying mythic continuum leading to the origins, on the one hand, and to life improvement, on the other, through decision making.

Thus, the Mukanda initiation becomes a training for a better understanding of death as part of life, and as a transformation process that enables human beings to participate in divine decision-making and life re-construction. The Mukanda exit summarizes the above. The scenes that sometimes feature chaos (generally linked to surprise, misunderstanding, misinterpretation and suffering) often also go with the ritual celebration. It thus makes a completely realistic picture of life, including order versus disorder, good versus evil, with the potential identity indicator of an unpredictable future that subjects-commodities may lead to in the case they had to leave the harmony meant by ancestors<sup>34</sup>. The Chokwe culture also features ambiguous situations seem to give another message. It is the role of leaders to decode situations and make decisions for their community.

In this vein, Tshikapa Chokwe Symposium (July, 2015) reserved another surprise in the sense that Mwene Mwa Tshisenge, the Chokwe king openly went against traditional rules and protocol. He participated in a recorded focus group discussion turning around his view of royal functions within communities exposed to modernity, quick changes, and different kinds of violence. In a long elaborate answer, he presented himself as the guardian of traditions, responsible for keeping alive ancestors through different rituals. By asking from ancestors' wisdom, and by making sure that rituals related to different events are properly celebrated, the king stays at the head of the Chain of Being, close to ancestors and God. At the same time, with the help of his advisors, the king had the moral duty to perpetuate the principles that organized Chokwe people's vision of the world. In the distant past, the Chokwe king was not supposed to go beyond certain rivers, and was somehow secluded in the royal place in the name of traditions. The Chokwe king consulted

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<sup>34</sup> For Mr. Kachongo one of our major informants in the Zambezi area, the Mukanda initiation is a big school during which the initiates are particularly led to know the value of what is good and what is bad. It is also the time during which they learn that any kind of injustice is to be avoided because it is paid for. The initiates learn to stick to positive values and to the respect due to elders. Even though they may be quite young when they attend the Mukanda initiation, when they leave they have learned lessons for their entire life. Death, for instance, is no longer looked at in the same way and the same fear. It is positioned in old age. It is perceived as the necessary transition to ancestors and to fulfilling a stronger presence in the community. However, only those who have had a good life would be able to enjoy the transition and thereafter a special presence in the community.

his advisors, and they offered the needed sacrifices in order to permit the king to go beyond assigned rivers. Thus, the Chokwe king changed traditions, and was able to travel as far as Tshikapa for meeting a larger Chokwe community under the king's traditional authority never met before. By going to Tshikapa, the king showed an example of cases where traditions may be changed. By the same token, he got at the heart of an anthropological debate regarding cultural facts, and the life of cultural commodities (Appadurai, 2013; 1996; Ferguson, J., 2006; Friedman, J., 1999). The Chokwe king succeeded in making a transition from the distant past to the global future. The personality of the king as a royal "commodity" of the distant past had succeeded a revolution not only by changing taboos of the past, but also by imposing his presence in modernity or what Stroecken (2010) would call modernities. Also, with a specific reading of J. Vansina (1962; 1963; 1966; 2004), Vellut (2006; 2005; 1995), and J. C. Miller (1999, Feb.; 1982), Mwene Mwa Tshisenge, the Chokwe king, can easily be seen playing the same socio-political game the Chokwe populations have been apt to play all along their history. Several Chokwe have always chosen to take clear positions with different partners either in trades, administration, or in different wars. Several Chokwe were leaders in different ways especially in exchanges with a global space, thus exchanging different commodities at local, and global spaces.

In fact, like in the distant past, whatever the circumstances, the king had to make sure his people were safe and were choosing the best possible ways to get in modernity without forgetting their sources. At the same time, he had to look at his own actions in order to make sure he was playing the role ancestors approved, and that did not change his people into puppets following and repeating whatever was produced and supported or instance by the West, or in this case, by the country government. To make sure his people could follow him and understand his positions, he had to give proof of his personal powers here above referred with regard to Vital Force distribution day at the end of the Mukanda ritual. The same powers are referred to under "Mahamba," and "Ngombo."

Also, during the Chokwe's king stay in Tshikapa, at different opportunities, it is reported Mwene Mwa Tshisenge demonstrated that he had super powers. First, on his arrival at Tshikapa airport, it is reported that as soon as his royal cane touched the airport tarmac, he was able to neutralize all evil forces. It is reported that some among the sub chiefs had wanted to test his powers in

different ways, and ended finding that the Mwene was well prepared and equipped to fight any magic powers. Finally, in a challenge of magic power demonstration, a particular sub chief did not yet understand that his royal highness was ready to face all invisible challenges. The Sub Chief had continued to test the royal powers; his royal highness chose to mobilize him. The Sub Chief was overcome through the use of powers. They destroyed whatever magic the man could possess and neutralized him far from everybody in the bush for at least two days. The Sub Chief was looked for and nobody could tell where he was. Finally, his royal highness showed the people in which direction they should go in order to find the lost Sub Chief.

Many Tshikapa Chokwe confirmed the above. Had everything really happened in the way here above described, or did anything similar only happen? It is so difficult for any neophyte be him a scholar of the Chokwe to penetrate such structures and understand what actually took place. However, as pointed out earlier in this paper, Tshikapa people were happy to be with his royal highness, and to look at him as the real representative of ancestral powers. In addition, his presence permitted them to insist on their specific identities in a context where they are exposed to different cultures. A. Giddens (1990), Friedman (1994), Bauman (1998), A. Smith (1991) largely document such different kinds of identity, thus confirming the presence of several identities. The Chokwe populations had cultural bridges with the other people around them, as their artifacts can also be another proof. All along time, the Chokwe people had managed to build strong socio-economic-political structures that have survived over time.

His royal highness, Mwene Mwa Tshisenge had achieved for Tshikapa Chokwe a narrative that goes through public rituals aiming at determining identities, building the foundation of Chokwe power through a public event, his arrival and stay in Tshikapa. and giving precision to social roles and identity references that keep leading people to their land (Piot, 1999). In the process, he was able to redefine, reconstruct the Chokwe identity that the neighborhood had seriously gnawed upon. Through a long absence of traditional political institutions, and a dangerous vacuum from public responsibility, the Chokwe people had lost visibility in Tshikapa. Other social actors had quickly filled up the socio-political space. In order to fully occupy the socio-political space neglected for so long, the Tshikapa Chokwe Symposium quickly became a part of the spectacular rituals changing commodities, engendering subjects, hierarchies of value and economy through the presence of celebrated spirits and ancestors made visible through masks

(Appadurai, 2013).

The above would explain a return to the primordial time that could not take place without the presence of masks, large celebrations of music and dance, and especially the exit of the “Tundanji” initiates. They are full of energy, dance, jump and show their capacity as the Makishi reveal the presence of powerful spirits whose strength overpass any demonstration from an ordinary human being. All their actions are believed to come from ancestors. Many scenes performed during the presence of the King in Tshikapa are but a part of “mimesis” that would easily be understood in a kind of religious rituals, based on the re/celebration of the primordial times of creation Grimes (2014; 2006; 1962). M. Eliade (2005), Taussig (1993). Auerbach, Said, and Trask (2013) explore situation where social events represent divine designs related to creation, and communications linking divinities to human beings. It is not surprising to find out that several narrative accounts circulate and explain every single event with a specific connection to Mwene Mwa Tshisenge standing for the hero, the re/creator, the identity constructor, and the leader for the future of his people.

Scholars present to Tshikapa symposium can easily replace storytellers of the past because of the particular ways in which their texts were read, and the unselected audience that listened to them. They could also, at the same time, stand for what they are, scholars giving testimonials regarding Mwene Mwa Tshisenge’s royal powers, and the long Chokwe past. Whatever they are taken for, they first of all stand for narrative tellers whose stories are co-created with the audience. Apart from the meeting place that seemed peculiar, if not inappropriate for such events (for a church is expected to hold western inspired religious ceremonies), the public itself was not *strictu sensu* appropriate for academic lectures with the risk of producing demagogical discourses. There were kids, adults, local chiefs, literate and illiterate people of different ages. The scene was a reminder of a traditional evening entertainment open to everybody, intending to celebrate a gathering without necessary turning it pedagogical. That is why the event included music, mainly refrains. Many other opportunities gave the floor to the public who could also intervene and quite often led the audience in songs and dances that interrupted the lectures for quite long in a style of oral productions (Zahavi, 1998). Finnegan (2012), Kesteloot (1993), I. Okpewho (1992) would rather perceive role distribution and “Mimesis” at a high level that has achieved a re/creation of the Chokwe world. For, as Izzo (2015, Spring:1), the event was but about “narratives of modernity

with African genealogies”); the word Chokwe should replace African to make the quotation perfectly adapted to the Tshikapa Symposium. Also, if Palmer (1979) is known for the classification of audiences in oral literature between the first and second audiences according in the roles they play, then the Tshikapa event presents another dynamic with the speaker-audience interaction. There is a kind of brouhaha specific to the climax reached when the Mukanda initiates show up and everybody joyfully celebrates and forgets about social hierarchy. The entire event has become the celebration of a commodity, a cultural fact that reinforces identity, and the sense of belonging, while digging deep into their past.

Thus with the help of the artifacts, the participation of masks, and mainly the presence of the king as the event focus, Tshikapa Chokwe have recovered their threatened identities and are proud to show it to everybody. The stadium event comes in at the right time when everybody is ready to shout a kind of identification credo to the power of Mwene Mwa Tshisenge, much in the same way the initiates who have completed their Mukanda initiation training season came to the same king as the visible source of their powers. Through their quick body dance movements magically rotating around their narrow hips, their bodies change into communication agencies. Their acrobatic movements describe all ways the Chokwe populations underwent from the primordial times when their ancestors distributed powers to the world that were at first condensed in the body of their cultural hero, Ilunga Chibinda<sup>35</sup>. In this vein, Giersdorf (2013:56-58), Hay and Foster (2013:15-16) concur in their scholarship in recognizing at first how the human body displays different forms of art, and communicates motions as both the body and the dance become agencies of the sacred. Apart from displaying aesthetics, the community participating in the dance through body movements dance their world into being. Dancers were constrained by the socio-cultural circumstances that led to their birth, growth and development within a culture they identify with. Giving consideration to the above with respective lenses from

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<sup>35</sup> The speed of the “Tundanji” in all their movements and especially in their dance steps reveals the incredible powers that their apparently small bodies hide. They are rhythmically shaking their hips and the skirt like garment made from grass and a symbol of the connection between human and natural forces turning out a long history and representing it to the public. In fact, the “Tundanji” have always been there in the history of the Chokwe and their adaptation to temporal needs. The presence of the “Tundanji” at this particular moment in the history of a convulsive country could turn out to be like a revolutionary sign saying more than the king’s speech, for socio-political events deserve a quick turn that would find its strength in the Chokwe past, and commitment for wellbeing. Such an interpretation, for obvious reasons, can never be presented officially without leading to a retaliation from the power. However, the symbols are there and should lead politicians to look for originality in the distant past of the Chokwe.

P. Bourdieu (1997), A. Giddens (1999), Clark-Rapley (1999), Nellhaus (2004), Payne (2013:127) looks at how the socio-cultural environment transforms people in cultural agents who become the co-creators of the world in which they live. Thus, in participating in their cultural event based on welcoming their king and hearing academic speeches, popular celebrations and music, masquerades and dancing processions have changed into living commodities that give life to people, their identities, and above all motivate them to face local, national and international identity and polity challenges (Appadurai, 1986).

### **V.5 Body Agency in Chokwe Art, Religion, and Philosophy**

From the above section, it is obvious that the Chokwe body is already shown in its medium capacity moving between two poles of subject-commodity in rituals going back to the primordial times, and gathering symbols of their existential myths, epics, and all other oral narratives depicting their temporal and a-temporal actions. Thus, the “Mimesis” in action concerns recurring events, for instance agriculture and farming, sending as far back as when people started to strategize about their survival (M. Eliade, 1963c; 1996; 1998; 2005). Time, events, and rituals are present on a continuum spectrum in which novelties borrowed and exchanged with neighbors characterize the Chokwe world as pointed out in the section here above. Actors are very important for any process achievement<sup>36</sup>. Tshikapa Symposium achieved a significant connection with the distant past as the initiates’ bodies filled the bridge role for sharing their ancestors’ blessings with the entire community. The initiates went through different cultural operations that prepared them for the D-day of their social reinsertion. One of the major operations they underwent was their circumcision that consisted of three major parts. First of all, the gift of their skin that is believed to be full of magic powers. Many people among the Chokwe and their neighbors are ready to pay much in order to use penis skins for getting different magic powers. Secondly, the circumcision operation comes with a waste of blood that stands for a sacrifice offered to ancestors, a sacrifice far better than any blood that would come from an animal (M.

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<sup>36</sup> Stroeken (2010; 2008) all along his research in the Sukumaland in Tanzania has demonstrated how the Sukuma participate in the construction of their being within a community. When they attend a diviner’s consultation, their participation directs the talk and the search of whoever is responsible of the ailment. In the same vein, the Sukuma take part in the rituals, rites of passage that lead them to another level of their life.

Griaule, G., 1985; 1975). Thirdly, the initiates' capacity to keep silent in spite of their suffering during the operation is important for the entire Tshikapa Symposium. Even though the suffering undergone during the circumcision is only reserved to male initiates, its mimetic role and symbols covers social reproduction including birth labor, and other events related to family life, community collaborative, labor generally speaking, and social construction in a clear passage from a pure metaphor to reality. It is this same social reality that Mwene Mwa Tshisenge brought back to the entire Tshikapa Chokwe community. None of the Tshikapa Chokwe indeed was pleased to be completely invisible under the leadership of small communities. However, with reference to the local context, as well as the Chokwe traditions in general, human bodies played the most important role in the entire change process and new identity acquisition or update along the newly admitted and graduated initiates. By the way, Trudon Kashilemba, a Catholic priest and a Chokwe from Tshikapa, compares the Mukanda and its exit to priesthood ritual and the sacrament of priesthood through which the priest candidate offers his body in sacrifice in public. Through singing, dancing, body shaking, the Chokwe imitates as well as priest candidates all aspire to a quick change, communion with their respective communities. Well before reaching the last step or ordination, the initiates' bodies are well trained and have reached a new dimension that permits them to move between the world of the living and the world of the ancestors, or the saints as they build a communion between the Sacred and the Profane. Also from a pure agrarian symbolism, the human being is invited to perceive another symbolism as the human body becomes the recipient of the Sacred. In fact, the human body becomes a "Temple" or a "Tshipango" that welcomes the sacred, brings different resources to human community.

All participants to the Mukanda ending ritual take part in dances and in a kind of euphoric atmosphere that recalls the primordial times effect. In fact, many oral sources refer to the distant past when the ending of a Mukanda initiation was celebrated in a kind of orgy. It included dances, songs, noises, food, and alcohol, but also a free sex space. There was indeed an additional ceremonial part dedicated to the celebration of the phallus and the vagina as human components making possible the human participation in the creation work otherwise reserved to God. The same kind of ritual is also performed at the birth of twins for the miracle they stand for. Human bodies become able to get in the divine space and capacity as they also produce more than one baby. Thus, ipso facto, sexes change in important body parts that participate in the connection with the divine, the sacred and the power that recreates the world under the authority

of Mwene Mwa Tshisenge. Furthermore, artists take care to represent on artifacts these scenes including especially but exclusively circumcision for men, and clitoris lengthening for women (contrary to what is done in other African areas where women's genitals are partially or completely mutilated). These artists stress features neglected by other artists. These scenes are often presented on the royal chair as they altogether participate in the Chokwe life vision that puts the royal leader at the center of a community that leaves much space to the Sacred.

Otherwise, the artists' work in both symmetric or asymmetric modes that raise attention to particular body spaces, confirming aesthetics that may use different rules from the ones used in western schools. In this vein, Pasztor (2005:3), Gell (1992:15), V. Turner (1977), Wastiau (2006) concur about art, style and ethnicity and the fact that artifacts get within liminality and communitas. According to their social context of production, whatever they represent male or female, they are within the basic understanding of art, for the choices are primarily social rather than artistic per se. They participate in a religious vision. They stand for social indexes as agencies giving meaningful depictions of stories while, at the same time, changing the human body, dance exhibitions in art as such. It is with this understanding that Gell (1992) wrote a so interesting text turning around "The technology of enchantment and the enchantment of technology." Material, colors, form and messages implied get in a social organization where the artists' work in team all along Mukanda training seclusion in order to produce artifacts that innovate and, at the same time, keep strong links with the distant past, the "illo tempore" (Jordan, 1999, Summer; Wastiau, B., 2006; Jordan, M., 1999; Eliade, M., 1963). It is through this collective work that the initiates facilitate their community relations with ancestors; the religious dimension keeps rolling. As a community, the initiates learn to discover life-death-life in a continuum that leads to ancestors. The initiates' engagement during the seclusion time turns out to be an investment for the present and the future of their community. Everybody can finally benefit from the ancestors' multidimensional assistance.

#### **V.6 Arts, Bodies, Tradition and Religion Keepers**

Trying to develop a theory of Chokwe aesthetic has to consider several perspectives with regard to the very object of this research (art, material culture, and human bodies) in order to avoid a biased understanding. Africa is indeed a very big continent that has several groups of people. We can, for instance, mention Zulu, Chewa, Massai, Sotho, Kongo, Mende... These groups live in



different areas and develop diverse approaches to artistry. The Chokwe media, as here above pointed out, are used to portray community moral issues, and to connect with ancestors, and God. In addition, Mudimbe (1993:101-110) looks at such artifacts as memory, historical or archival. They are the traces that get deep in the distant past, bring to the present, and transfer to the future. At the same time, the artists have the responsibility to find the right moment to include features from the outside world, to filter them. If these features can bring solutions to their community, as novelty keeps the Chokwe world rolling, they adopt them.

However, the community has also to understand that through arts, sexual attributes are sometimes exchangeable, for instance, the exclusivity of masks won by males even when they are supposed to depict female social roles. In fact, exchanging gender roles can also be understood under the perspectives of the human body that can be used for different designs and choreographies. The human body can bring shared meanings through rituals that lead to maturity, and social conventions through body expressions. The hidden faces may be masculine, but the mask will still be female, and fill roles reserved and expected from women. Thus, female bodies seem the most guaranteed media to ensure social continuation not only through procreation but also through special education. Their capacity to connect and to give new life is exploited in masquerades that duplicate social roles (Jordan, 2006).

Chokwe art aesthetic bears features from its culture and shows up symbols, colors and rhythms that exhibit different patterns as they track back a long history made of both good and bad encounters going on for centuries (Jordan, 2006; Turner, V., 1966; 1975; 1977). Artifacts would thus be an excellent way to find out how the Chokwe populations have shared technologies with their neighbors (Strother, 1998). Many times especially in the past, the analysis of an African artifact from a Eurocentric perspective would lead to inconsideration and misjudgment as to mention but one with reference to the labeled “primitive Art” (Christensen, 1955; Mudimbe, V.Y., 1993; Errington, S., 1994; Foster, H., 1985; Myers, F., 2005). Such a judgment is rather part of a cultural imperialism that would look at the European artistic productions as the best ones whereas African productions would be the “Primitive ones” or even the “Savage ones” as some anthropologists thought at a given point of human history (Goldwater, 1938). Despite the treatment reserved at first to African art, Loria, Boni, and Galante (1995), and Segy (1958) confirmed how famous artists such as Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Paul Gauguin, and their

followers got their inspiration from African art objects regularly shipped to overseas museums.

For ethnologists of the time, a Pan-Africanist Theory turning around African artifacts and concentrating on studying similarities and differences in the African artistic productions would rather be the best opportunity to know them (Mudimbe, 1988:103). Ethnology in this sense was rather used for colonial purposes instead of trying to find out how the aesthetic concept was approached though differently. For Mudimbe (1988:104), the colonial invasive strategy in the colonized cultural spaces can be perceived through a quickly growing number of ethnographic museums in Berlin, Oslo, Yale, Harvard, Paris, Tervuren... for “for decoding exotic, and primitive objects as symbolic and contemporary signs of a Western antiquity.” Objects of art or ethnographic artifacts have their cultural value much related to the socio-cultural environment where they are produced. They stand for the basis of any possible functional criteria or classification. It was therefore a big mistake to have a Western approach trying to find in African art what the West expected to dig out of its past. It goes without saying that memories are necessarily different and differently archived, as they refer to different identities (Mudimbe, 1988:105). We completely agree with Mudimbe (1988:106) that an African art classification criteria should include a socio-cultural milieu of their production, their social culture referring to the main social activities of the group, and finally the function or use in the group in question. The third consideration will certainly lead any researcher to the discovery of objects of art that are rather linked to the social function they fulfill, such as divination, dance, conception, birth and death rituals, and entertainment. Lima (1971) considers that Chokwe artifacts’ social functions epitomize art in the relations it makes possible with ancestors, and rituals that celebrate serviceable presence. It is this wide consideration that led J. Vansina (1985) to the conclusion that everything in the Chokwe life is art. It is produced with a threefold aim that considers its daily use, the inspiration related to the precise sector, and the social spaces and possibilities that can be perceived through these cultural commodities leading to ancestor awareness, as well as exchanges with neighbors, and close and far foreigners (Appadurai, 2013).

Figurines appear in many Chokwe objects that are in one way or another connected to women viewed as guardians of traditions, and mothers. They are especially the very proof of men’s masculinity insofar as it is only through a successful and conclusive relations with women (through marriage) that a Chokwe can prove his capacity to be a co-creator. Through procreation,

the Chokwe, male and female, get the certainty of their connection with ancestors and God, and a proof of the right use of Vital Force. Supporting Vansina's socially oriented and inclusive aesthetic presentation aforementioned, Mudimbe (1993:10) mentions somebody else who totally shares the same view about African art. As matter of fact, Brain (1980) concurs with both Mudimbe and Vansina as he states,

Art in Africa has always been very much a part of the people's life, manifest in every aspect of their working, playing and believing worlds; yet almost every general survey by a historian or ethnologist has been primarily devoted to the aesthetic appeal of the work of art or the peculiarities of its style and form.

Apart from the obvious fact all objects collected as artifacts should be perceived as fulfilling different functions as here above mentioned, it is also obvious that they are produced within a complex environment including various motivations for the artist and the community. A social group receives the works of art within the understanding of ethnic ancestral heritage with a particular touch of the producer. Whereas the object of art illustrates itself through its details that lead to a specific group, and to its need, the material used may also serve as an indicator of its purpose and destination. For, most objects are made with specific tree branches, roots, or other natural material. That is why Mudimbe (1993:107) looks at all these artifacts through an "archival dimension" that bears commemorative functions at the same time that they determine human and geographical locations in following given local paradigms and patterns. It is with these details that apprentices are trained to commemorate their original creativities along genealogy trees that public memory, or the collective consciousness, were able to carry on for many generations the ethnic art that has developed religious and socio-political dimensions. Oral history traditions based on local expert narrators' historical details can be able to give approximate periods during which artifacts and social events developed for stressing community organizations. It is worth mentioning that Africa is a continent full of diversities and multicultural trends that share much in common. Yet, at the same time, differences will point out several directions, zones, ethnic groups, and social sectors. In this vein, for instance, J. Vansina (1999:7) brings about the concept "Oikoumene" in his description of art, architecture in North Africa as he gets a clear understanding that every piece of utility object is to be perceived through the presence of several cultures and civilizations whose influences came through temporary or long commercial, administration, and cultural contacts. In the same vein, Chokwe

art covers cultural productions of a big area. Its features are shared within a vast territory that gathers people sharing the same values, and the same vision of ancestors while sharing the same rituals.

The concept “Aesthetics” can be considered as the science of perception and the starting point to find out how materials are given form, movement, direction, line, composition, and life. The same concept also confers the opportunity to find out how Chokwe artists contribute to the perception of “chaos” and re-creation processes confirming a continuum line within the mythological order of their world in being. The succession of chaos and re-creation leads to the desired order that brings about the Chokwe society in its fullness moving from a pure myth to contemporary communities in motion.

Having in mind Brain and Mudimbe’s considerations of aesthetics, we would like to consider other presentations that would help us get deeper in the Chokwe’s specific relations with artifacts. From the interviews we conducted, the focus group discussions we had, and the observations we could get all along social events we attended in Zambezi, Chavuma, and in other parts of Zambia, it became more and more obvious that the Chokwe people wherever they are (Zambia, Angola, and D. R. Congo), sites considered for this research, generally confess not only their admiration for their people’s artifacts, but pay a particular tribute to masks for their religious roles, and social organizations (Firth, 1981). They all recognize how these artistic objects lead to ancestors, and are primarily a source of pride, didactic materials, a way to personality reconstruction, wellbeing providers, religious representations, mimetic indicators, and social community signatures over time. Thus, all consulted people concur with Mudimbe’s African art commemorative and archival understanding that would include remembrances of locations, specific people or group of people, historical events, and specific contexts. We would like to consider these archival features through “identity classifications,” “identity recognitions”, or identity construction.” As a matter of fact, Mudimbe (1993) and Brain (1980) here above mentioned both look at artifacts as a bridge whose beauty (or aesthetics if so considered) translates social functions and the community (world) into being. We should therefore refer to Chokwe identities through Chokwe artifacts’ functions. Van Damme (1996:11) rather focuses on people, in culture and through an empirical basis, “generally contextualize carefully collected empirical data by situating the latter within their sociocultural matrix and by advancing

systematic connections among them.” Getting deeper into the context, the art production process necessarily comes to disclose how a particular human community has been able throughout years to construct connections between abstract productions and daily life, details that are likely to include people’s Self presentation, and community construction. Finally, Chokwe artifacts may eventually be regarded through religious representations that organize social creeds and their projections on ideals represented by cultural heroes. Thus, the Chokwe populations will see similar comparative associations that link Jesus with a wooden cross, or the Virgin Mary with a statue of a young beautiful girl in praying position.

### **V.7 Identity Artifacts or Self-Community Identification Process**

J. Vansina (1999), Brain (1980), and Mudimbe (1993; 1998) often cited in the above paragraphs led us mainly to figure out Chokwe art conception, creation, and consumption. It is our understanding that criteria used in art production process largely vary from one context to another, from one part of the world to another even though similarities may be noticed here and there. As for Chokwe art, according to Mwene Mwa Tshisenge, production canons, generally speaking, often depended on the royal court that had its own art experts (one of the king’s Ministers) who attend the Mukanda initiation camp and teach the essentials of art production<sup>37</sup>. As community products, Chokwe art draws the public attention in the direction of social signposts, reveals self and community recognitions at several society levels. In this vein, Van Damme (1996:XIII) rather points out at “the culture-boundedness of aesthetic preference... generally recognized in anthropology” based on cultural features that fit in the context and please as they clearly reveal “sociocultural values and ideals” which in turn can lead to a range of preferences.

The king’s interviews we had at Tshikapa (see small section in the footnote) led us to find out

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<sup>37</sup> The Tshikapa meeting was particularly a good opportunity to interact with the Chokwe king. We interviewed him concerning art production and the Mukanda initiation: “I have a Minister of Art and Culture! Do not be surprised. We have continued our long traditions. The king’s court has always highly competent people who help him and ensure that traditions are rightly transmitted from one generation to the next. That Minister and his team attest of the work done in the Mukanda camp and congratulate young artists for their originality. The Minister submits to the king the original pieces and the results of competition that they have organized. Otherwise, other pieces of art may also come from independent artists or those who work at the court. We are working hard to make sure artists feel protected in their work and that they find enough support at our court. They are important and help us keep our traditions while also sharing with the world at large.”

what happens at the royal court. Art production is seriously considered and given much attention. That is why among the people who work closely with the king is Minister of Art and culture. He makes sure that artifacts are being produced and that the long traditions inherited from ancestors are perpetuated. When competitions are organized, the best pieces will be taken for the palace. However, like in many other parts of the world, the king and his ministers consider the protection and promotion of artists as their primary role.

Apart from the artistic aspects as such, much attention is rather given to artistic participation in religious ceremonies. There are indeed artifacts, such as certain masks, that participate in the presentation of the supernatural. Also, they stop being artifacts from the moment they get in the ritual for masks or the Makishi become then the embodiment of the powerful spirits. In fact, they become these spirits that can bring much trouble if they are not well controlled. During the Mukanda initiation, the specialists meet and study all these aspects. They also find some time for training young generations to be able to identify carved masks, identify them by names and slowly locate them in their social functions.

### **V.8 Quest for Religious Dimensions in Daily Actions**

Reading Mesquitela Lima's dissertation entitled "Fonctions sociologiques des figurines de culte Hamba dans la société et dans la culture Tshokwe (Angola)" published by the Instituto de Investigacao Cientica de Angola in 1979 gives much meaning to this subsection title, and especially to the comprehension of contextualized Chokwe art objects as bearing a special personal seal and often a community landmark. Lima (1971:91) gives many accounts that still circulate in different variables among the people we interviewed even when in quite different regions and countries. The first story moves from Mudimbe (1993). It is more a question than a simple observation of "Memoriae Loci." It is not even about "Imago Dei" or "Imago Homini" as M. Eliade (1963c) would put it. It is not even about self-image as one perceives in a mirror. It is a question of what should be considered as simply one's identity presented in the introduction of his dissertation. The first narrative is about a chief hunter whose hunting skills are no longer productive at all, as if his skills, for no apparent reason, have completely stopped. He cannot hunt, and whenever and does so, he is unable to bring anything home.

He decides to go through an ancestral ritual that is supposed to bring him back luck, i.e., games

that he would be able to kill, and thus access to edible meat. The entire ritual and narrative revolve around two small anthills (Ifika) fixed to the ground. The hunter carved eyes and a nose with a knife, using a “Tshishindjaka” plant as a belt that he put on the waist of each of the anthill statues (or human representatives) while he sang and called on his ancestors to protect him and bring him luck in hunting<sup>38</sup>. The hunter also took from the same plant a kind of belt that he put around his waist. Then, taking to both anthills while still singing, he brought them to his village where he had already prepared a small altar behind his house<sup>39</sup>. Once in the village, the hunter performed a second part of the ritual consisting in washing the anthill figurines with a concoction made from different tree leaves (essentially from the trees known as mulombe, musole, ushiya) mixed with some specific eggs (from Tshilyapaputu) and red clay. Later on, the figurines were powdered with cassava flour. The assistance excluded only slaves participated in cleansing with another concoction from a calabash. The hunter sprinkled their arms and torsos. Next day, the hunter went with kaolin clay to offer to the figurines.

It is important to note that the ritual does not only include the hunter himself whose being is extended in the figurines here above presented. The community is also participating at different levels mainly in cleansing their bodies, taking part in payers as they escort the hunter and see him leave at the altar his gun, powder and any other fetish to use for hunting. More important even is the fact that the entire village is invited to participate in total village sexual abstinence for the hunting operation to be successful. The hunter has engaged in a religious process that includes submission to his double represented by both figurines, and looking at them as the obliged communication passage with his ancestors. If he does everything perfectly and sacrifices things to the figurines, he is sure everything will be perfect. Missionaries called such practices pagan, and considered them as impossible to coexist with Christian practices. Yet, closely observed they belong to the same environment where divine forces are expected to be reached through

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<sup>38</sup> The main song turned around sacred words addressed to ancestors whose protection was expected in order to assist the hunter in getting games. The “Tshishindjaka” plants also participated in the sacrifice offered to God and ancestors as a submission token. The Chokwe were raised with a particular attention for these relations with ancestors. The more their relations were good in the eyes of ancestors, the more the Chokwe could expect a good life and retributions.

<sup>39</sup> These altars have disappeared in most places under the influence of Christianity. They are nevertheless still present in rare places such as in villages far from Sandoa still performing ancient rituals. I also found them in other rare places in Zambia and Angola, but every time connected to the presence of a healer, a diviner, or traditional hunter.

sacrifices and prayers addressed to spirits through artifacts.

On the next day, the entire village came to the figurines for offering sacrifice for the hunting. Finally, the chase was successful. The entire village rejoiced as it had enough meat to live on, and sang in recognition of the assistance received from ancestors.

However, when we decipher the above entire ritual that Lima (1971) documents with many details, there are conclusions that impose themselves and that should help our reader better understand how body wellbeing and the community prosperity often go together. First, let us consider the transfer that takes place from the hunter to the figurines. It is a sort of psychoanalytical operation that determines his “double,” a concept recurrent in Carl Jung’s literature (C. G. Jung, Read, H., Fordham, M., Adler, G., 1977). In the same vein, one could also perceive other concepts from the same scholar, concepts that turn around shadow, animus-anima, and self. Understanding the “double” will certainly make sense for trying to grasp witchcraft in modern times (Geschiere, 1997). Also, understanding how witchcraft operates will certainly also help see reasons why so many people are aware about it. We should also understand how the hunter leaves his entire personality in the hands of the figurines. He does not only leave his gun and his magic powder bag, but his entire personality is left to the care of his ancestral spirits. It is as if the hunter is himself going through a new birth operation to put him in harmony with the hunting spirit. Everything the hunter does about hunting and the ritual brings good results to his village, and permits everybody to get enough meat to live on. It is in fact all about personal sacrifice for the common good, the lesson that the initiates learn during their seclusion from their community (Stroeken, 2010).

A new birth is always an event that mobilizes everybody in the village and requires the participation of everybody to welcome the new baby. It is the same logic that prevails when everybody in the village is at first invited to escort the hunter to the figurines, and presents a sacrifice that will make his hunting successful. The village is also invited to observe total temporary sexual abstinence for the hunting to be successful as their community Vital Force convey the same spiritual energy to the expectation. The entire village agrees to focus its attention on what the hunter is doing, and on the benefit they are all expecting from the hunting. They all come together as a community to welcome the newly born village member whose social activities will participate in the survival of the entire community by bringing edible meat. The



different actions performed prior to the hunting are about changing the hunter in a new being whose purity would easily permit a kind of communication of the animal world so that this world also accepts to offer a sacrifice to the human kind, or accepts a sacrifice that consists in offering food to the Chokwe community upon ancestors' order.

The psychoanalytical features here above mentioned also include other aspects that permit the former hunter to change into a new hunter who can agree with ancestors, develop fruitful hunting operations, and thus participate in the survival of the entire community. That (re)conversion supposes a serious consideration of his personality for finding out what has failed and has led him to not getting games, that could be what Jungians would call "shadow" or "the least known part of his personality." After accepting the shadow as a personal weakness, the hunter goes through the ritual with a spirit clearly showing that he is ready to amend his behavior towards ancestors and towards his community. In fact, the hunter is perceived as more open to the needs of the ancestors and God represented by these figurines. This conversion is his personal recognition of what he really is in his innermost, the female within him or the anima inclined to loving, one who gives to his community, thus allowing him much more capacity to assume his self<sup>40</sup>. The hunter has gone through a total metamorphosis that has permitted him to recognize his incapacity without the assistance of ancestors. He has had the opportunity to openly accept humility instead of being boastful towards the community.

Piot (1999:131-155) describes a similar situation to the one here above depicting the Chokwe populations as a large community. Mimesis, medium spirits, local art, and modernity, tradition, and innovations go hand in hand and were found the most characteristics of the Kabre annual ritual in Togo. Despite their particularities, the Chokwe populations like the Kabre have many of similarities regarding community members coming together for celebrations, and sharing the same beliefs. Both societies are quite dynamic, identities are regularly put in question and reconstructed through community rituals. At these events, every Chokwe has the opportunity to renew links with the community, and to question personal identities. Also, artifacts of any nature included in the event could be looked at as either as components of the rituals or didactic materials that lead to easy personal journeys and self-discovery, or again as an opportunity to

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<sup>40</sup> Such concepts from Psychoanalysis were largely explained and used in Kaputu (2000, April).

discover what individualities are built of within a dynamic community.

Moreover, in the same way Piot (1999:131) points out at Kabre rituals organized in the calendar year for the community identity update, and re-construction, the Chokwe populations meet for the celebration of the “Uchokwe” through the meeting of the living, the dead, the ancestors, and God. In both cases, Kabre and Chokwe, annual events and rituals reinforce their recognition for sharing the same life perspectives as these ceremonies “provide the occasion for initiation and funeral ceremonies, mark important transitions in the work cycle, and articulate relations/hierarchies between different communities within the large region” (Piot, 1999:135).

In displaying artifacts and rituals through elaborate ceremonies, the Chokwe people have the opportunity to practice several scenes regarding community strength acquisition, their opposition to colonial forces, and to interact through mimesis everything that participate in their daily life. In fact, M. Foucault (1972a:229) would add a dimension we have not so far clearly pointed out: discourse. As a matter of fact, the succession of artifacts, scene rehearsals, and multiple interactions, choreographic, oral, and verbal, are but a “violent” discourse that constructs the Chokwe society and brings changes whenever possible. Thus, fertility, abundant life resources, and dynamic community life contrast with infertility, desert, witchcraft as they reflect and fall in Foucauldian binaries. The dry season refers straight to the ascetic life that most initiates go through during the most drastic time of the year. Ceremonies developed in different seasons of the years aim at showing how it is difficult to get what is outside and insert it inside, for that is the main purpose of communing with spirits and ancestors. Most of the rituals request personal effort to get things done and to reach different levels of personal development. Mimetic rituals show up how individuals are mostly responsible for their own progress, and efforts to resist spoliation, falsification, adulteration, and denaturalization.

A very good example of Foucauldian discourse violence can be found in different masks. To mention but an example, the mask known under the name of “Katoyo” comes about as hostility to the colonial. As a matter of fact, the mask depicts a white man recognizable through his mustache, and missing a couple of teeth. Still his face expression shows at the same time surprise, bewilderment, amateurism, a sense of loss, childishness, and a kind of call for help. The mask is all about mocking the colonial force that may think to have dominated the Chokwe populations and to have completely mastered them. It all comes back to repeating one of the first

words of this dissertation, “Chilima.” The colonials are lost and they cannot tell how far they are with the Chokwe, not even if they know a bit about the “Uchokwe.” This message is also addressed to other foreigners who need to learn through the “Katoyo” mask that it is impossible to get to the core of a people’s culture if much time is not been spent on learning their culture, and making of it their life. As the colonial context did not permit a direct confrontation, masks became an excellent way to express different feelings while at the same time staying in the register connect with traditions, ancestors, and god, the source of the Chokwe power. Katoyo as mask plays the role of the outsider whose knowledge and skills are limited and often diverted by wrong impressions. These wrong impressions start from the outset due to slanted considerations of artifacts, and particularly masks. For the foreigner, the masquerade is just filled with nonsense, infantile, and useless objects that the local population, like children, handle with much imagination for their supposed connection with ancestors. The foreigners, in these days, could not understand much about these artifacts and their connections to spiritual dimensions.

Thus, artifacts are at the center of a complex process where the artists may produce them for religious purposes as such, but they participate in many other specific uses. From admiring artifacts, accepting them as opportunities to connect with deities and ancestral spirits, and different community members, they also offer many opportunities for persons to connect with themselves and discover what they are exactly. These artifacts finally become more than pictures. They play the “double” role, or actually the same people. For Jordan (1998:11), “Chokwe move a lot,” and thus, they actively confront problems that happen in their daily life as a society with the assistance of their ancestors. And the Chokwe people also try to find metaphysical explanations to all phenomena surrounding them, the first ones being those related to human conditions, and to sharing powers with ancestors and God. In the long process raising questions and seeking answers, the Chokwe finally comes across an alter ego through art production in the presence of ancestors and deities, as they foster better connections with the world (Jordan, 1998:21).

It is so interesting to know that artifacts get in the class of commodities whose value changes with time, depends much on the people who have access to them, and use them. Appadurai (2013; 1986) looks at commodities in the scope of life. They have a life, can change, and get different dimensions in time. They can also benefit from exchanges, and collaboration that artists may get among them in different circumstances. In this capacity, the masks commonly called

Makishi become that necessary agency sending back to a long time in the past through a mimetic role, and negotiating a global space through ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, mediascaples, and technoscaples (Appadurai, 1996:33). These fluid spaces connect remote areas to global spaces as cultural facts redefine commodities through geographies and politics of value that reconstruct concepts, imaginations, and shed light on new social relations (Appadurai, 2013:9-60; 1996, 5-9). Thus, despite what some people could consider their awkward forms, masks are important at many levels that would otherwise be impossible to guess. They are cultural, and their importance for the Chokwe has to do with their social life and identity construction (Jordan, 2006).

### **V.9 Chokwe Religion through Tempels' African Philosophy Perspectives**

Placide Frans Tempels was a Franciscan Missionary Father who worked for many years in central Africa, principally in the Baluba area in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Baluba kingdom was next to the Lunda-Chokwe space. The Chokwe cultural hero, Chibinda Ilunga, came from the Luba world. Tempels studied the Luba culture and noticed that the Baluba - like the Chokwe - were much attached to both birth and death and vowed absolute respect to their ancestors through different rituals. The ancestors were presented as the pioneers who had left the main solution paths to social life issues, suggested the main lines to follow as well as partners to take into account. In addition, they were always ready to come to the rescue of those who continued to pray, and have much respect for ancestors. The ancestors' spirits were always helpful, and contactable through religious structures, and adapted artifacts. The Makishi, were considered as the most important partners for facing daily issues. Through his close scrutiny, Tempels was able to formulate in clear words the Chokwe's vision of their world, contacts with neighbors, and foreigners with formulae reserved to human and divine relations. Thus, Tempels' discovery contradicted all theories of the time that pretended Africa had no history, or philosophy of its own, and was simply prelogical (Hegel, 1975:190; Levy-Bruhl, L., 1935:17)<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> In many ways, these unjust judgments and ridiculous statements about Africans, their history and philosophy, were at the roots of studies of philosophy that have lasted many years, and have gone through different orientations around important scholars' names. Through his research in the Katanga province in the Democratic Republic of the

It is the study of the Africans from Katanga that permitted him to write the book *Bantu Philosophy*. Divided in seven different chapters, the book primarily tackles the theory of “Vital Force,” “being is force, force is being,” before shedding light on divinities, people and society. In stressing the African ontological principles, Tempels questions different theories developed with regards to African beliefs and world vision regarded as primitive. The religious scholar points at social and philosophical keys that converge to God the primary source of every existence. This position thus completely denies the widely spread ideas of animism and superstition as foundations of the African society. In using the term Vital Force as a contemporary equivalent, even though all the same different from the concept “being” as presented in western philosophy, Tempels pinpoints at the particular dynamic character of the African whose life goes far beyond death following some hierarchical evolution in which God, spirits, divinities, ancestors, elders and the entire nature participate. If God is self-created, all his creatures turn around man and may contribute to increase his Vital Force and presence all around the world. Tempels lived with these Africans and was, in fact the first western intellectual to coin and tackle meaningfully the concept African philosophy. Tempels managed a meaningful understanding of different relations developed within the human community through the Chain of Being as a whole, and mainly through the Makishi seen as ritual organizers channeling the Vital Force to different destinations. Concerning the Chokwe populations, notice that Jordan (2006) has noted the same order in the masquerade as in the royal procession. Masks have the same titles and come in a similar order when they are in the procession. Whereas countless spirits are venerated through different rituals, they play a large part in the traditional religious life, at the same time they make unquestionable survival after death. In fact, in such an environment full of spirits in the presence of ancestors, Parrinder (1971:60-68) observes that magic only comes at a very low level as it is taken for granted that all power comes from God, ancestors and spirits even if the power has to go through intermediaries connected through religious rituals.

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Congo, Tempels reacted to the European vision that thought Africans could not have a philosophy. G. James (1954) and Jahn (1961) went a step ahead and insisted on Africans’ rationality. However, Africans needed to take things in their hands and thought they could better describe realities of their culture, and their dynamics in relation to the past, the present, and the future. Names such as Mbiti (1990), Hountondji (1996), A. Mbembe (2001; 1992; 1995), Masolo (1994) have moved far away from Tempels’ descriptions, and have been able to get involved in different aspects of African life.

Tempels strongly believes that the Chokwe people exactly like the Luba's Chain of Being displays large structural representation connections of all elements, metaphysical, physical, human, animate, inanimate, material and immaterial that come into consideration in their social existence understanding. The latter offers a view that includes God, spirits and divinities, ancestors, elders, society and extends to nature, natural visible and invisible forces. With God, the omnipotent, omniscient, the creator at its top, the Chain of Being portrays him as somehow distant from daily realities and questions though definitely the owner of the lands, seas, the skies and their occupants whatever their nature. In the same vein, he owns spirits and has absolute control over bad spirits and can leave them free in order to punish human communities for bad behavior and disobedience. Consequently, different channels of communications insert God's presence and will in any visible or invisible, living or dead, natural and material items filling the world. God, it is believed, operates from far but through his many agents, essentially ancestors and spirits, sharing power, knowledge, secrets and competences with him. Among God's agents, Makishi play a central role in the human community as they make possible the circulation of its Vital Force and its benefits to every community member according to personal virtue, need, responsibility, community dedication and divine devotion. The Makishi contribute to social growth, cohesion, material and spiritual prosperity. At the same time, they are looked at for their contribution to the detection of possible dangers in order to divert them from the community<sup>42</sup>.

The Chain of Being locates dead ancestors very close to God. Death is indeed perceived as a journey that leads the living towards the creator for sharing with him a new kind of life – still a continuation of existence – that allows omniscience, omnipresence and the capacity to assist, punish or forsake community members. If death brings sadness because of the loss of a parent, it is all the same the most appropriate way to have access to the Vital Force and an opportunity to

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<sup>42</sup> We appreciate Tempels' efforts to penetrate the heart of the African life and try to formulate and share explanations. However, like many other African scholars we can but condemn him for having seen the truth and refused to communicate it rightly in the name of his mission. We can but condemn him for having refused to get in a new "School" where he would be a good student of African elders. He would not be taught everything. But, he would increase knowledge from sharing daily life and seeing the Africans live together and experience Vital Force. He quickly collected several things related to religion, dreams, psychology, anthropology without putting them in a bigger context of discourses and beliefs that could, eventually, lead him to find out that the Africans had a better structured religious discourse presentation than the one he was part of. If he had gone as far as that or simply if he was able to recognize and defend similarities, his name would be remembered differently as a resistant of the colonial administration. He would have a better understanding of what he had quickly identified as "African Philosophy."

channel it to living community members living according to gods' and ancestors' norms. It goes without saying that the ancestors honored and counted in this group are mainly those whose courage, sacrifice, self-mortification and denial permitted total and happy life to their community. This means that these ancestors qualified their lives with different initiation sessions and ordeals that changed them completely from egotistic beings to community devoted builders and servers. Their names are perpetuated in common memory, oral narratives, myths, legends, epics, proverbs, riddles and other chants, and songs recorded in folk artistic productions. In other words, such individuals have progressed, thanks essentially to the Makishi's assistance, guidance and their community structural configuration, from ordinary individuals to extraordinary resources and God's helpers. Such individuals are in Van Gennep's classification based essentially on initiations, group insertions and evolution from one social group to another and are the major references of a community history<sup>43</sup>.

The respect given to this category of dead elders is reflected in the relationship developed with living ancestors, very old people but still consulted for many reasons. In many places, they are referred to as the living encyclopedias on their way to God. Despite the explosion and development of modern education, these living ancestors are still referred to as living encyclopedias on the top of social hierarchy for the simple reason that they are the ones mastering life secrets and sharing them with youngsters. Life knowledge cannot be reduced to writing and reading or to skills gathered from books or collected from modern sciences; it is rather the capacity to face challenges, repeatedly question time, space, beings from their origins, social conventions so that to put people at the Chokwe center of everything as the "Axis Mundi"<sup>44</sup>. Living ancestors perpetuate the community culture through ages and negotiate its meetings with new comers, cultures and life styles in selecting the ones that can be easily

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<sup>43</sup> Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* mentions many rites observed in several communities especially in Australia and Africa. It is through cyclic and continual passages from one rite to another that people (here the Chokwe) grow within social groups and get to social leadership. Not only do rites become enmeshed in social configurations, they also contribute in philosophical and religious visions that construct community frames. In order to move from one initiation period to another, several lessons are learnt and assumed in public life. Application successes in daily social issues are the key to the passage from one circle to the following one. This process ineluctably leads earlier or later to death, the obliged passage to the ancestors' world.

<sup>44</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* observes how in many mythological social buildings, man is at the center of the universe. Everything contributes to man's growth as well as to his responsibility to build and understand the world. The human stands at the center of the world and gets through different training sessions and apprenticeships that ensure him/her benefits from all possible sources that bring the Vital Force needed to live along the path left by ancestors and increase spiritual capacities.

inserted in the group without changing its fundamental nature. Thus, the Makishi make sure that the Chokwe populations live in their times, and at the same time, carry with them long traditions. Understanding such simplicity and complexity at the same time amounts to placing the Makishi in their social functions as community adjuvant agents around whom life takes its different features and builds its full meanings.

It is from living ancestors, encyclopedias, that active elders get instructions and moral codes that they distill in the growing community. They learn among so many things how to welcome visitors and how possibly to look at them as brothers and sisters, or eventually conclude with them blood pacts changing them in brothers, sisters and clansmen around ontological values. Thanks to the same encyclopedias, elders also fix norms to be followed in all social relations especially in the case of family building, sexual behavior, marriage, divorce, trade, farming, birth, death, widowhood... Above all, they ensure that natural elements facilitating daily life be available throughout all seasons and annual cycles. The elders have also in charge the planning of different initiation sessions addressed to youngsters both males and females. They try their best to follow the pattern of community behavior learned during the Mukanda initiation. The Makishi come from this very dynamic group. The latter grants them with additional and sacred functions only peculiar to them and scarcely shared with exceptional men. As shamans<sup>45</sup>, the Makishi carry along the totality of female functions as life bearers, organizers, spiritual guides and connectors to divine and spiritual forces in order to guarantee Vital Force presence, circulation, and growth. They also live as referees thanks to whom the borderline between the sacred and the profane is made possible and discernible all along their participation in everyday life. The Makishi are often consulted before an initiation as they stand for the background configuration opening to self-reliance, community responsibility, and religion, a concept that O'Dea (1966) largely elaborates<sup>46</sup>. Campbell (1990:1-24) locates the community life quest to the

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<sup>45</sup> Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow: a Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan* offers a complete chapter on ascetics. It also depicts how the ascetic gets in training leaving out many daily habits in order to reach the profile that facilitate religious communications and social responses. The ascetics are depicted living in isolated places, on mountains and close to the sea.

<sup>46</sup> O'Dea (1966) defines religion not only as rites, rituals and ceremonies that gather people in order to stand together for their devotion and submission to the creator's will, but as the sum of daily human negotiations, conducts and social organizations that bridge human communities with divinities and spiritual realms. It is generally believed that it is out of personal and collective efforts to lead pure lives and show absolute respect to the dead, spirits, and God



beginning of the humankind's needs to understand people's origins, evolution throughout times for possible explanations of different phenomena and events surrounding daily life, and for connection with ancestors through religion.

The Chokwe populations, unfortunately, had to face the colonial times in quite drastic conditions that imposed them to forsake their traditions, and above all religion. Under colonialism, both the Chokwe religion and secular education were violently rejected and replaced by western systems (Durkheim, 1965). Similarly, many other African communities had very weak educational systems (Ndaywel E. Nziem, 1998:353); some affluent families sent their kids to schools in big cities or even in Europe thanks to their connections with missionaries. At the same time, several education programs designed for African Schools concentrated on local education of church catechists, i.e., agents who helped spread the Gospel and needed just reading and reciting prayers. Such agents were exempted from paying taxes and helped propagate the colonial law and its consequences. They were unfortunately not trained enough or at all to get involved in their community development.

In the case of the Belgian Congo, missionaries were prohibited from starting anything new, any education trend without clear permission from the colony. In other words, they were viewed as King Leopold's agents and later on Belgian agents. They had to teach colonial languages, and missionaries had to regularly submit reports to the government. Despite such conditions, missionaries agreed to carry out scientific studies ordered by the government on geography and linguistics (Ndaywel E. Nziem, 1998:352-353). Those studies did not give much knowledge on community development. Consequently, the Chokweland remained disconnected from modern development for many years both during the colonial times as well as the postcolonial era as it was rather viewed as a very distant land lacking any immediate mining opportunity – at least at that time. Besides, as Lima (1971) points out, the Chokwe people had much independence, and considered they were at the center of the world, and that everybody in relation with them should understand that, and pay attention their vision instead of a top-down consideration, completely unacceptable.

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that blessings are believed to be pouring, or on the contrary drying out, for individuals, community members or the community per se.

Whereas, the Holy See required developing missions within a country, military reasons were often stressed by the colonial powers to extend the western presence far inland. Some schools encouraged youth to become soldiers and builders of colonial posts. In one way or another, unfortunately, missionaries always had to preserve the interests of the colony. African students were taught to look at the metropolis as theirs; the king or the president was their king or their president. They internalized the belief that to be called good citizens, they had to work for a foreign country, building missions, excelling in the kitchens of their masters, and being their best servants. More and more, black intellectuals accepted the fact that they were much closer to whites than to their own countrymen. This moral catastrophe persisted even after the independence because most of the African elites were more attached to capitalist expansion than to their countries' development. In the same way, presidents would align themselves with western countries where they would invest their countries' revenues, while looting their treasuries. The case of President Mobutu of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is still very fresh in many people's memories.

Most of the young soldiers trained to work for the metropolis took for granted that they were working for the benefit of their masters. The colonial education was purposely shallow and avoided any kind of comparison with the western world. Young people were primarily trained to become manual workers. Consequently, at independence only a few Africans were intellectually able to work in offices or to fulfill any other function required of a civil servant. Such young people were completely bewildered and lost the understanding and the role devoted to Makishi. They rather confused the Makishi with other charlatans or simply impostors providing customers with magic powers. Such is the case of the Nganga, fortune tellers that often oppose people over causality and occasion controversies that leading to social communities' disintegration. But, most of the Chokwe people who did not at all demarcate from their traditions continued to look at them as their source of life, strength, and connection to ancestors.

#### **V.10 Chapter Five Conclusive Remarks**

In spite of slight differences from one linguistic group to another, the Bantu generally refer in the same way to realities surrounding them, God, and their ancestors (G. James, 1954). Ancestors play a key role in everyday life whereas elders stand for the ones who have the responsibility to lead the youth on the right way. In the Chokwe vision, life and death operate as faces of the same

coin. In the same way, a newborn is welcome for life continuation, death is also looked at as life continuation as it permits ancestors to join God, the world of spirits that pour the Vital Force on the community. Human communications, relationships with new comers as well as relationships developed with nature and natural forces all are perceived with regard to life and the Vital Force as distributed by ancestors. In moving from one initiation group to another, people learn how they need to serve their communities while taking on leadership roles.

The Chokwe populations are well-known sculptors and blacksmiths famous in their region. Their masks are expected to fill different social functions concerning rituals, dividing the world around them in profane and sacred, even though the separation point may be difficult to locate. These masks are anthromorphic, zoomorphic and, quite often, mix from both. At the beginning, the masks were made from natural material. However, with the evolution of time, like in Zambezi today, the artists are more and more borrowing from what modern industry can offer. They are used in masquerades for public celebrations, while at the same time, they offer an opportunity to continue the Chokwe's veneration of ancestors while leaving them at the center of their society. Making masks is the most significant activity of the majority Chokwe artists. However, they also excel in carving statues that are quite massive. Both masks and statues obviously reveal the Chokwe's world vision, with their inside power, and capacity to fight adversity while focusing on the communion that links ancestors and their community.

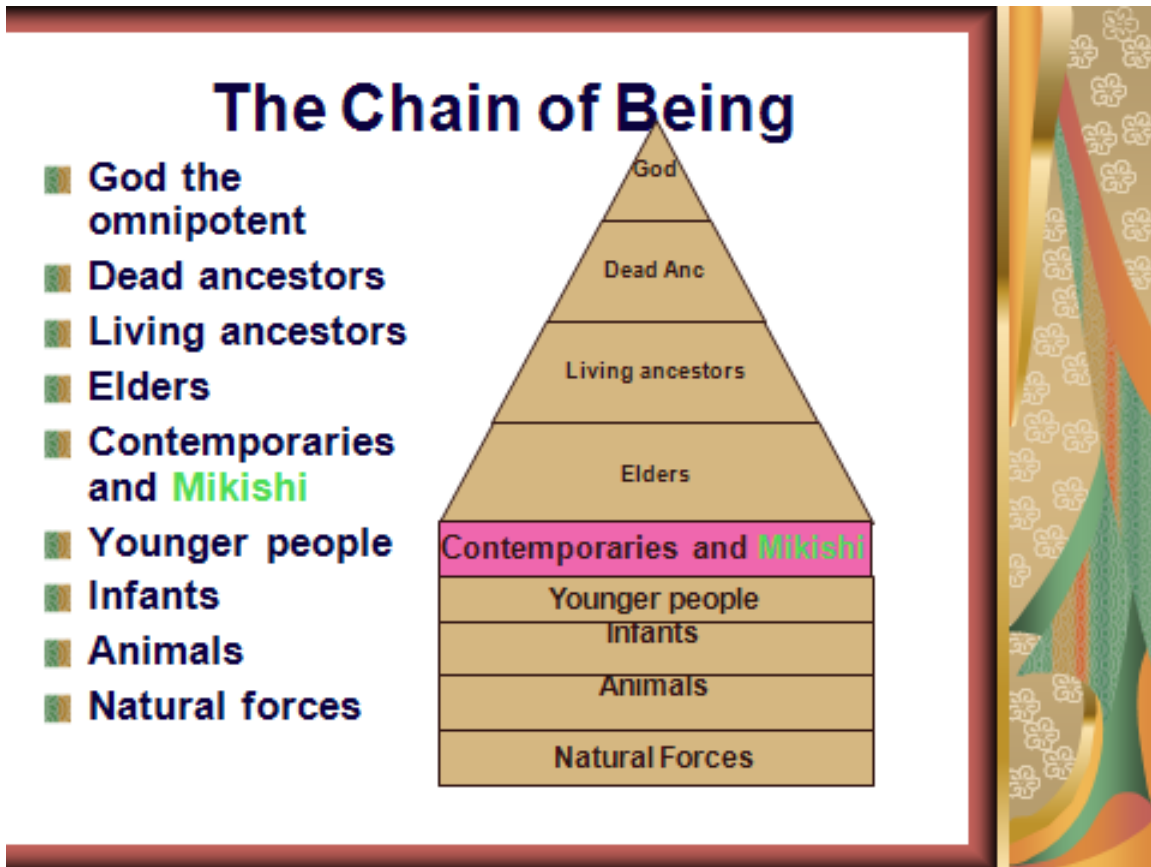
Even though Chokwe religion is open to the entire community, it is all the same esoteric, as the main organizers are just a few among the elders, and a few who can rightly deal with Mahamba, Ngombo, and who can become Tahi. Through initiation groups and practices, initiated are trained to get different skills that facilitate their knowledge of religious secrets, and eventually leading to playing get in the religious leadership. The Chokwe people, as ethnocentrists, even though they communicate with the outside world and the neighbors (especially women and their children) they easily include in their community, think that they represent the world, and are at its center. It is that vision of the world that may have contributed to their aggressiveness so visible especially in the cultural hero's statue (Lima, 1971:74).

Masquerades and rituals commemorate famous ancestors for their contribution to the world where the Chokwe populations live. These ancestors also help people to understand that God is far. His main role limited itself essentially to creation, and he stays far from the human beings. It

is rather through “Mahamba” and “Wanga” that the Chokwe community consult for both spiritual and material, sacred and profane that they become familiar with through consultations. Different divination objects that are at the same time religious and magic permit an easy communication with the special beings called ancestors. However, as far as the intermediary actors are concerned, they may be divided into different categories regarding their social roles. First, the concept “Nganga” calls for attention as it identifies a supernatural being, also a maker of “Kapuma/Tupuma,” the fetish needed to find out the witch. However, the same concept “Nganga” means the witch who can use the supernatural force to hurt others, and eventually to take away life.

Apart from the above, there are important personalities whose participation in human social life makes it better. The Tshilombola, the Nganga Mukanda along with Nganga Mbuki (Doctors) take part in the Mukanda initiation and have the main role of leading the initiates to learning new skills, and the knowledge of Chokwe religion, and other ancestral values. They prepare them to deal with the Tahi, diviners, and the Tshimbanda (exorcist)... It is all the same important to note that at the end of the day there is big difference between the Nganga and the Mahamba. The first one works on the basis of “Numa” or talisman, whereas the second counts on powerful ancestors and spirits who help in the fabrication of Mahamba. According to Lima (1971:324), the Chokwe people make another clear distinction between the use of Wanga and Mahamba. Whereas, the first one involves forced obedience, and a complete submission, the second, the Mahamba, rather turn around a permanent search of harmony, social equilibrium, and counting much on ancestors for getting the best solutions for the community. In fact, everything is seen as operating within the Chain of Being that links all the living Chokwe, different spirits, and the entire nature to the Creator as shown in this chart borrowed from one of our PowerPoint presentation on Chokwe culture,

Figure 23 The Chokwe Chain of Being according to Tempels and Lima



Source African Literature Course Slide, Ghent University, 2013, F. Kaputu

The Chokwe Chain of Being presented here may be regarded as a microscopic representation of the entire Chokwe world that includes the participation of the living and the nonliving elements in the construction of the physical world, and social and metaphysical representations.

Finally, this chapter gave an appreciation of Placid Tempels' "African Philosophy". It showed that the missionary had never gone enough in the works and the local discourses for him to be able to talk about African philosophy. He lacked enough courage to go as far as recognizing that his mission had no reason since he had nothing to teach the Africans. On the contrary, he should be the one to change into student discourse into production practices and life organization for the understanding of what he could then call "African Philosophy". He also lacks humility as to recognize that the world he represented had to learn much more from African than the contrary. If

he was certain of his findings, he should have left his order and gotten into the African order. Despite these criticisms, Tempels will be recognized for pointing out something that was unimaginable in those days. The West considered to be the only thinker and light in a dark world. However, Tempels had found substantive thoughts, social, and cultural facts that were in full contradiction with the western superiority assertion and colonial pretext to invade Africa.

## CHAPTER SIX: WELLBEING COORDINATION AND WELLBEING SEARCH IN THE CHOKWE IDENTITY

### VI.1 Introduction

Continuing the preceding chapter, the first part of this chapter depicts how growing Chokwe children are given the possibility to prepare their adult life through rituals and initiations, describing songs sung when the initiates go the Mukanda and what their community expects them to achieve. These songs are also about the profiles young people are supposed to achieve, and assistance they get from their community through elder and organized institutions.

The second part of this chapter will be more practical and give an account of a few of our visits to the “Tahi”, the diviner, and the “Chimbanda”, the healer. This narrative will help our readers to find out how the ancient customs are continuing, and how urban healers and diviners have operated changes to fit in the urban environment. For the same reason, our readers will be able to understand that the urban or rural Chokwe still keep their traditions with their ancestors at the center of their life, and in the organization of their future.

At the end of this chapter, it is our hope that our readers better know what the male initiation, “Mukanda”, stands for, and how it has been able to survive over time. The readers of this dissertation will also find out about routes the Chokwe populations still follow during their wellbeing search. More and more, these routes are no longer reserved to the Chokwe people only but are accessible to many other who find them interesting. In urban places, various health markets participate in wellbeing search and construction. More often now, traditional healers migrate to cities in a bid for more interesting markets; they can provide their medicinal treatments to urban settlers in a better way. The new environment has obliged them to adopt given lines of treatment (Dekker, 2010).

It is also our hope that our readers will understand that personal identification is not only viewed through beliefs (believed) as underlined in the last chapter, but also through healing systems and food. That is why this chapter will, albeit very quickly, offer some information about the food the Chokwe people eat the most, and how they identify with such foodstuffs. It is also curious to find out the reasons why these food habits have continued throughout their history.

Finally, this chapter will portray the Chokwe populations and their health and wellbeing traditions today. The Chokwe may have regressed much as far as political institutions are concerned, but they have certainly kept growing their cultural influence in the sub-region. If many people are attracted by their art, and especially by their masquerades that are today abusively used for popular open celebrations that politicians organize, they have at the same time been able to continue their traditions. People are all aware about their masks and know that they have another dimension different from the popular showing of them. As a proof of the masks' unknown powers, people often seek Chokwe healers and diviners. Many urban settlers do not always have enough discernment to choose the right healer or diviner; they select them on the basis of widespread rumors, and go for the one who seems to be more popular without following exactly the traditional paths.

In addition, it is important to address a warning to our readers who may be, rightly or wrongly, expecting more than the contents of this chapter about wellbeing, health and healing in mediumistic situations, and therapeutic plants in African societies. It is a matter of choice to concentrate on the broad outlines of this research regarding Chokwe identities through material culture, even though material culture could also be viewed through different perspectives if that was the main objective and key topic of the research. As a matter of fact, Hicks (2010), and Glassier (1999) demonstrate that material culture can be studied under different formats. Material culture can take various orientations for pointing out the human intrusion in the environment or for making a distinction between nature and culture. Material Culture can also show how humans shape and recreate nature. In the same vein, material culture could also cover broad subjects including, but not exclusively, folk studies, history, geography, architecture, culinary, landscapes, and cultural turns. Presently this research has been paying much attention to objects as social makers in the understanding of Woodward (Woodward, 2007). B. Fowler (1997:81) also joins the aim of this study. It reveals Bourdieusian understanding of commoditization and aesthetic in the sense that cultural objects behave as symbolic identity codes, thus joining Appadurai (2013; 1986; 1996), Anderson (1991), Ferguson (2006) whose analysis of cultural facts from local and global perspectives largely cover this study.

Otherwise, other scholars have successfully covered the other areas of much interest that have in many ways inspired this research, though still going their way. For instance, Koni (2008), Koni



Muluwa (2009) present interesting studies that turn around local linguistic identified items approached through material culture perspectives. Thus, plants are seen through their different capacities as food, magic, and witchcraft ingredients. We could also, in the same way, congratulate for their research Essane (1998), **Bossard (1987)**, Janzen (2002), Last and Chavunduka (1986), **(Feierman, Janzen, & Studies, 1992)**, and Mvone-Ndong (2014a; 2014b). Their major works turned around several axes regarding medicinal plant identifications. They also considered their uses, therapeutic evaluation, contribution to their respective country health systems with, in fine, the objective to consider an appeal for de jure recognition of African famous traditional therapeutics. A step further, in the line of Benzie and Wachtel-Galor (2011), D. G. Fowler (2011) tackled scientific data to consider in the study of plants and their impact on health systems. However, this section aims at the observation of what most Chokwe have been doing for many years for their wellbeing, and how eventually their choices have persisted through many years and have opened global spaces.

## **VI.2 Chokwe Male Initiation: to the Mukanda Camp**

To understand how initiation is practiced and how it has survived through years, we have selected a number of Mukanda initiation songs including the departure from the village, the sojourn in the camp of initiation and the return to the village. These songs insert the initiate Chokwe in creation, cosmogonic, and etiological myths accessed through verbal and choreographical presentations, musical words, rhythms and trance, the phono-aesthetics and the logocentricism. Our aim is intercultural and interdisciplinary linkage, rather than ethnographic representation with all the risks of cultural essentialism. We will demonstrate how these songs concur with the Process of Individuation that Marie-Louise von Frantz (1975) and other psychoanalysts use for showing personality growth (C. G. E. A. Jung, 1978). It is also our belief that introducing a part dealing with initiation in which circumcision plays a very important role will open new horizons in the understanding of the Chokwe identities. Besides, as scientists have proved a serious decrease impact of circumcision on HIV-AIDS propagation and contamination, the Chokwe culture has gained much more visibility. More and more scientists advise that circumcision should be compulsory through cities and villages. Such an operation will surely be very successful and will bring to good results insofar as it is going to meet customs and traditional needs, and will

reinforce traditional values stressing purity, abstinence, and planned procreation. Still, questions are raised concerning such a cooperation since circumcision comes as a part of an initiation in a Mukanda camp that is far from using new medical techniques<sup>47</sup>.

At twelve or earlier, in many cases, there is an initiation rite for the boys' official integration into elders' groups. They receive an intensive training through different physical and moral exercises aiming at building their personality and spirit of friendship. They are essentially empowered to face different life struggles. These exercises help boys to come into their own responsibility, realize their identities, end their childhood, and integrate adult society with a clear sense of personal and community responsibility. As long as he is not married, the African male participates in common work and is educated through rites and obedience to adults, who impart their wisdom, knowledge, and skills (L. V. Thomas, 1997:124-160).

The departure to the Mukanda camp takes place within a chaos; things are turned upside down, a surprise that takes almost everybody at random, especially mothers who are not informed at all in advance of the event. The Mukanda initiation is always organized in the dry season during which cold, violent winds and whirls coming from the Atlantic Ocean continuously blow on the continent. Turning winds blow up dust and dead leaves. At the same time, winds puffing in the trees produce different shocking sounds. All the vegetation has dried up and does not show any sign to burst out again soon, it looks completely dead. Trees are uprooted here and there. No farming work can be thought about, and everybody stays indoors leaving only to fetch dead wood, water; to visit the granary; or for some important and exceptional palavers. When there are some sun rays, men all the same come out and share local beer around the traditional chieftain while discussing topics of any use to the village and the clan. In this time, wild beasts are very dangerous, hungry and kill whoever dares to go lonely around in the forest. The Chokwe

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<sup>47</sup> More and more, the Zambezi region is using new habits regarding circumcision. The traditional small sharp knives are left out for new medicinal practices. During the operations, modern methods are used as they are believed to be cleaner and safer, and they do not seem to go against ancestral rules. The other steps are followed normally. Is it because of the new practice that the shooting ritual is moved from the circumcision event? However, the shooting has not completely disappeared. The Zambezi region has moved it to another important step that comes after the Mukanda Initiation as a part of the Likumbi Lya Mize masquerade. When, on the third end of day, the Makishi reach the outskirts of the Mize palace, they are stopped. They cannot approach the palace. Finally, a well-placed advisor of the king comes with a gun and shoots and the gun is turned towards the sky. Without any control, the Makishi wildly run in the direction of the palace. They look like soldiers running for their position. In fact, that is the end of the day. The Makishi vanish in the wildness of the night.

populations do not have a chance of finding game easily; all beasts have either gone to better or hotter places that are hardly accessible. The novice initiates are informed of this and cannot under any pretext leave the group to wander in the wilderness where a lion could happily devour the errant.

During their isolation around wine and palavers, men study in details when the event, i.e., the Mukanda, can be scheduled and coincide with the beginning of a new moon understood as a special entrance in a new cycle, the Mukanda is indeed an initiation in adulthood. The Mukanda aims at changing initiates into new beings. The initiates are carried from childhood to manhood and have through the initiation the chance to get in the social hierarchy, which may eventually put them in a position to lead and defend their social community.

M. Eliade (1963b) would rather look at the Mukanda whereabouts through an eschatological environment, i.e., one which predicts catastrophes, apocalypses and the end of an era. Nature contributes to such a vision as the sun disappears and leaves space for heavy cold clouds. Nights look extremely long, cold, fear, death and phantom-like shadows are said to wander everywhere. At the same time, the organizers of the Mukanda meet in secret. Briefly speaking, it is as if everybody is prepared for a kind of renewal or rebirth of better weather. Life in villages is tough because food is not easily found and the cold creeps into all parts of human bodies. The community must transit from its degradation and lack of communion with nature – the nature which has suddenly become hostile through destructive, violent winds, horrifying sounds, beasts feeding on careless community members – for its re-creation through a dynamic mythic process leading back to the origins. According to Mr. Kachongo, one of our fervent male guides and informants, the Mukanda ritual is a process of re-creation from degradation, apocalyptic chaos, upside-down world vision to a cosmological equilibrium through short cycles. Human sacrifices, ascetic life and the uplifting of individual spirits to ancestors, all translate a significant religious meaning which matches with Thomas F. O’Dea’s understanding of religion (L.V. Thomas, O’Dea, T.F. , 1966). It also fits many other definitions and presentations that M. Eliade (1998; 1963; 1996; 2005) document, as they give many other such illustrations about myth transformations in time.

The chaotic situation takes a religious meaning understood at first only by some initiated theologians, and masters of initiation. They are the only ones able to interpret signs and guide the

community on a secure line and thus avoid remaining in a chaotic, apocalyptic situation. The entire community is invited to participate in the process, either by just looking at its evolution – the case of mothers who cannot take part in the Mukanda but can still provide with food for the initiates – or the case of men who are involved in secrets but must not reveal them to their household. Wise men organize meetings to think about details, all rituals related to the Mukanda and to make sure that it clearly shows the close relationship linking life to death as well as death to life on both sides of the same coin. In August 2016, Mr. Kalyata and Chinhama, both leaders of the Kitwe Luvale Association, helped us understand something important in the Mukanda process. It is one of the costliest operations that requires much time to be successful. Local leaders meet a couple times to make sure they will have enough food for the initiates and visitors who sometimes come from the most unsuspected places, all needing to be fed. Villages work together for many months to make sure that they have gathered enough food and that they have clear plans to cover any situations. Our informants also pointed out the fact that the main steps regarding the Mukanda initiation up to the Likumbi Lya Mize masquerades are planned with huge quantities of alcohol brewed locally. Once the quantities needed are reached, the steps can go ahead. Most of the breweries use grains from the harvest of that year. The necessary quantity for the brewery is malted with small quantities of water under a covered place.

The major sacrifice requested from everybody is to curtail unworthy daily habits, so that every initiate understands his role in community life. The future depends on an institutionalized community behavior whose profane dimensions are worthy of a wide religious perspective (Thomas, O’Dea, 1966). As a matter of fact, the future is built on the community acceptance of values, ideas, orientations which install ancestors and other divinities at their center. For, it is mainly a question of establishing a lifestyle around the sacred that adjusts to daily contingencies, human powerlessness, despair, frustrations, deprivation and isolation. Indeed, every human action has to deal with its own odd character, and with its disappointment from time limitations and humankind’s power illusions. Amid such incapacity to master circumstances and events, the Chokwe, i.e., male and female, in the boundaries extending in different countries previously mentioned—lives daily in impotence which resides in a complete but gradual submission to ethical norms inherited from Kalunga, God and the first ancestors since the “*illo tempore*” (M. Eliade, 1963b:58).

It is the presence of that chaos, upside down ideas, at the end of a given era falling apart, that these Chokwe songs reveal a hope for novelty along those who escort candidates to the initiation camp [songs I, II, III] <sup>48</sup>. In the first song “Mwanami Yakwo,” tears are observed running on mothers’ cheeks. Mothers implore their children to accept to be taken to the forest, to welcome that “death” to bury their childhood and instinctual pleasures linking them egoistically to their mothers. They have to operate in complete detachment, for the community expects them to be close to all community members, and fill their respective responsibilities. Freudians would speak about the end of the Oedipus Complex and the transition towards a new identification (Freud, 1950). The initiates have to learn that their actions should be an outcome of their faith and communion with the Unknown ensuring and assuming the “Uchokwe, i.e., the fact of being Chokwe,” and their world vision. The second song, “Kumbi Lyoliya,” goes one step further. It is more than a mere symbolism but shows that kids’ departure into the forest coincides with the total vanishing of the sun. These boys seem to take sun rays and gaiety with them from their community leaving their villages in complete chaos, as everything is upside down. The boys escape from the chaos without leaving any solution to the community. According to Daco (1965:309), such kids are nevertheless given an opportunity to contribute to their community survival through their complete personal gift to the Unknown as a sacrifice.

That is why the third song “Kumbi Liolinayi” deals with metaphysical questions. The distance between the Known and the Unknown, the Visible and the Invisible being virtually very long, a process of evolution from the first to the second imposes itself. This process aims to link them to both the Unknown and the Known as they will coexist within the initiates. It is so curious to see that the same sun playing such a big role in symbolism used for the departure of the initiates is also the main feature that characterizes the main royal signs. Songs to the glory of their mothers

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<sup>48</sup> I. Mwanami yakwo

Mwanami yakwo (chorus) Oh, oh, yakwe  
 Mwanami yako (chorus) Kanda ukevwa woma  
 Yachilombola yako (chorus) Oh, oh, Yakwe

Do go my son

Do go my son (chorus), oh, oh, do go!  
 Do go my son (chorus) Do never be afraid  
 Do go initiate guide (chorus), come on, do go

II. Kumbi lyoliya likatoke (chorus)

The sun is setting off (chorus)

III. Kumbi lio linayi. Kumbi (chorus) Liolinayi (2X)  
 Lioninayi likatoke kumukanda (chorus) Lioninayi

The sun is gone (chorus) It is gone (2X)

The sun is setting in the initiation camp (chorus), There, it is  
 gone

Kumbi lietu lio (chorus) Oh, oh, lioliene lina holoke

Our sun (chorus) oh the sun sets off on the horizon

look like a “credo” in the Uchokwe units far origin which Mircea Eliade illustrates in linking human memory to an identity starting point “ab origine,” or mother nature. Song [III] shows that mothers’ submission to the on-going ritual gives a sense, a direction and meaning to their offering, or sacrifice, to the Unknown, Kalunga, and ancestors. In the coming chapter dealing with the Likumbi Lya Mize, the writer will raise the reader’s attention toward Chokwe women’s capacity (or let’s say women’s capacity) to implement meanings in social events and daily activities. They thus ensure their sons’ insertion in a social life and within a social hierarchy outgoing from the Unknown and into repetitive cycles returning as far back as to the creation scenes. This first part has shown through songs [I, II, III] that the Chokwe populations move from a cyclic chaos linked to immemorial times and social norms that have gradually built their society. The cyclic evolution includes death. It changes the ordinary order of the nature. The vegetation and beasts are changed making their participation in harmonious social life difficult. This lack of harmony brings anxiety to the community, and harmony can be perceived only through personal renewal at the meeting of the “Known” and the “Unknown” within the human being.

Also, the beginning of life in the initiation camp is characterized by a complete submission to the Unknown represented by the guides “Chilombola,” the initiation masters. All initiates are fully shaved as a sign of their total submission. At the same time, the haircut shows that all initiates are alike and have to behave as one community sacrifice, a gift to the ancestors. All along their initiation, the initiates get in a metamorphosis process leading them to become “Pneuma” or spiritual breath, smoke, incense rising to the Creator as a sacrifice, or again the blood that goes with animal sacrifice, and some Thanksgiving in African traditions. This starting point looks like a duplication of the departure scene where mothers are portrayed offering a sacrifice of their sons. Here, the initiates stand for that sacrifice per se to get entirely in the Uchokwe and ensure its survival. Through this ritual, they are having access to the Uchokwe and make it alive once again in continuing cycles of the circumambulatory process started from the origin and going on through times. They are moving slowly and slowly towards the masculine principle yet still keeping the virtual link to the feminine principle present in their beings and seeded by their relations to their mothers. Daco (1965) would represent the relation to both masculine and feminine principles in psychoanalytical terms in insisting that none can be a man without being man and woman in the psyche, or a woman without being woman and man. The Chokwe ideal

worked on by this initiation would be to lead the novices to become whole beings linking both principles, or rather representing the androgyny. The fact of being both male and female within one's own being pushes them to an absolute respect for women, mothers whose existence makes life possible.

Songs reserved for the sojourn in the forest go in this way. They describe the totality wherein power and impotence, one thing and its contrary be suitable in a binary system; good and evil, black and white stand together in the same chromatic field where enchantment and disenchantment come in succession (Gell, 1992; 1998). Novices are introduced to the binary representations that do not leave room for any ambiguity. They rather explain or, to mention M. Foucault (1972a:229), better provide a "Discourse" discourse about the initiates' daily life where the sacred and the secular share side by side a succession of confrontations of violence and peaceful coexistence. From the beginning, the initiates are absorbed in a circumambulatory evolution, never straight, but shifting in a succession of light and obscurity, intelligence and stupidity, pleasure and suffering succeeding to each other and leading all the same to maturity, individuation and totality. In this context, the artifacts, and essentially masks that participate in the initiation, embody complex ideas, and change human bodies and dances in artifacts (Gell, 1998:15).

The initiates undergo the most significant individual physical suffering when the circumcision takes place. The physical wound stands for a symbol. Through the removal of a part of the skin and the human body, the initiate gets in a symbolic representation where he sacrifices his entire being and, ipso facto, transforms himself in the community sacrifice offered to ancestors and Kalunga, God. On a psychological level, this sacrifice aims to remove everything that reduces man to confusion between good and evil, light and darkness, pleasure and displeasure, briefly speaking leading man to confusing the life binary system. It is a process of individuation where the initiate goes to the Self and the Communion with nature, and the creator. At the same time, the initiate is enabled to consider positively all values that contribute to full life and its harmony with nature. Thus, given taboos and interdictions are observed in a bid to reach given behaviors, get food, trees, water, animals and peace. In the same vein, the initiates develop a microcosm essentially turning around good relationships with neighbors, human beings and natural forces. It is a school of what their life will be.

The circumcision takes place at dawn when the weather is freezing, dusty and misty. The novice must do his best to avoid crying. A gun is shot to celebrate the successful candidate whose personal strength has won over physical suffering. The wound participates in the sacrifice and in the personal efforts to move towards supernatural forces. The wounded initiate is taken care of every morning at the river using icy water to clean the wound. During the day, the penis is introduced in wild fruits juice with healing virtues. The juice has therapeutic effects but much hurts. The initiates are thus led to interiorizing suffering as an integral part of life and requiring daily efforts to face daily challenges.

Despite the intense suffering, the initiation camp does not have a special program of rest for the initiates. On the contrary, they are expected to participate in daily activities, and must be very careful to avoid hurting their wounds. They are not spared from their social obligations towards their initiates' community. They are the ones supposed to look for firewood for their protection against the cold. In the wood, they follow their guides. Apart from collecting wood, during their walk in the bush, they are taught all secrets about trees, roots, leaves, barks, and clays, from their names to their curative and nutritive principles. They are also taught to know about planets, Chokwe history, and their connections with ancestors. The same time serves for learning war strategies.

Songs [IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX]<sup>49</sup> describe and illustrate their initiation camp life. The name "TSHALA" is given to the initiation master who teaches young people to get in the a-temporal space, i.e., in the mythic space. It is indeed considered that it is within this space where the

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| <p><sup>49</sup> IV. Mwanami ngusambilile kama!<br/>Mama e, e, mwanami ngusabilile kama mama ee</p>  | <p>Embrace me my sun<br/>Yes my child come and embrace me</p>  |
| <p>V. Kandanji lelem ooo (chorus) oh himaya</p>  | <p>I, the circumcised, pass and go forward!</p>  |
| <p>VI. Yatshilombola yako (Chorus) Yako, yako, yako<br/>Yako, yako kanda ukewva woma<br/>Kuze munayi mukangulamina<br/>Nukangulamina mwanami</p> | <p>You the circumcised guide, go on, do not be afraid<br/>Where you, take care of my child<br/>Do not be afraid<br/>Take care of my child!</p> |
| <p>VII. Mbangu e, Mbangu (chorus), Oh, oh tata Mbangu</p>  | <p>Our father Mbangu come to our rescue!</p>   |
| <p>VIII. Ukangutalila mwanamie Kumukanda (chorus idem)</p>   | <p>You will take care of child at the initiation camp</p>  |
| <p>IX. Ifwale (chorus) E, e, e<br/>Twalenga (chorus) E, e, e<br/>Mweswe matifulale (chorus) Wafwee</p>   | <p>We are going around<br/>Any who would dare to look at us<br/>Will be punished of death</p>  |



initiates meet the true “Initiation Master” and founder of the Mukanda. This founder is sometimes called “**SAYENGELE**” or again “**SONGO MAKALA**.” The initiates must slowly find their tree going from the Known to the Unknown history, to the “*illo tempore*.” Apart from these lessons, the initiates learn how to give the Chokwe people a place within the cosmos. For their security and progress in the world, the initiates learn to know how different Chokwe alliances with neighbors and foreigners were constructed, and how more could be begun in the future, without forgetting the exceptional pacts with beasts, plants and planets under the forms of totems and taboos (Freud, 1950). These alliances are concluded through taboos, interdictions to eat protectors such as tortoises or some other animals such as elephants or crocodiles. The observation of these taboos harmonizes contacts with nature, and these animals become protectors. The Chokwe people will never talk in bad terms of their totems. The initiates are asked to keep absolutely secrets everything they learn in the forest except with initiated people. They are also taught to build a brotherhood of all initiates whatever their villages of origin (or from whatever post-Berlin conference state). In the same way, they learn to create brotherhood with exceptional foreigners through blood ceremonies.

During their exile from their villages, the initiates learn to know Chokwe women’s place in their society. If they have to endure many sacrifices during their initiation, they also have the opportunity of refilling their energy with food provided by a timeworn woman. Once again, this old lady stands as a symbol of the female principle in all men and ipso facto in all society. The initiates cannot think of their society as the world without women. This old lady cooks for them. Psychoanalytically, this old lady stands also for a wise woman supposed to help when new beings are being born. She is there helping the initiates to have access to a new life as men. Eventually, some of them will become initiators. The presence of this woman also stands for the “Anima” present in all men. The old lady is called **Yamukanda** to symbolize the household as the center from where everyone can work on personal links with the sacred, and the place where the warrior rests, and celebrates life in its fullness (Sellier, 1970:18).

Scholars such as Propp (1968), Kunene (1985), and Campbell (2004) also exploit isolation in myths, epics, and other narratives of the kind. They present a process wherein the central character suffering from a lack of harmony and undergoing a general chaos goes elsewhere to

seek for peace and rescue. According to our informants Kachongo, Chinhama and Kalyata, this journey allows the character to reach physical and psychological maturity.

Propp (1968) particularly underlines motifs found all along the ways followed by the hero, and that show the progressive growth in different life sectors. These motifs and problems oblige the hero to go into exile, and to become a better person on all plans.

The scholars mentioned above concur in looking at the exile as always temporary and never definite. It is motivated by the apprenticeship of new arts, military, ideological, religious, secrets needed by the hero to get a better community. These writers' theories developed by oral narratives, tales, legends, myths, proverbs may be used in the study of the Chokwe folkloric songs that depict different narratives. Such songs also provide an easy passage from reality to fiction (Segal, 1998). Dathorne (1975), referring to such artistic productions, puts a special stress on the first audience as compared to the second audience, both understood as the producer of the verbal art and its consumer or the audience. These traditional songs show how the art producer and the consumer work together to get the final product, and finally construct the version that will move to next generations.

During their sojourn and isolation in the Mukanda camp, the Chokwe initiates lead an ascetic life and slowly and slowly become new beings Mircea Eliade calls androgens. The last step of their sojourn in the forest turns to the use of sex to a complete music of two or three times. Their learning does not turn around the libido as such. It is an approach of man's participation in the Creator's action. The creator and the creature participate in creation in immemorial times, with this period man becoming co-creator, creating after God and giving life to new beings. This specific link with God justifies phallogocentrism despite much reverence and respect reserved for women.

Given the importance of this people's participation in creation, all other natural elements may be used to ensure access to the Vital Force. Consequently, the "intercourse" becomes and participates in the phono-aesthetics seen especially in songs exhibited at the birth of twins, and art at the same level like masks of gods that lead to God (Campbell, 1969). In the same vein, the sex is also sung as the means to participate in the perpetuation of the humankind. The initiates gain knowledge of the secrets of aphrodisiac plants to make sure their participation in the

humankind future. Nevertheless, for the sacred character of creation, the initiates are taught to have a religious respect for women. It is indeed thanks to them that men have the chance to live their Uchokwe, participate in the creation of the humankind, and keep their link with the origins. With Bellemin-Noel (1978:63) what seems linked to fiction in the songs stresses men's capacity to live again and again the human capacity for creation and invention like in childhood.

When the coldest and awful weather is over, and the climate starts being more and more interesting, skies are clear, reddish as a prelude to the full sun. At the same time, initiates' hair has grown up on their heads; everybody believes that a new cycle is near to start again. Initiates spend time learning the behavior they will have to observe once back in their community. This behavior includes physical and psychological life aspects as pointed out in songs [X, XI, XII]<sup>50</sup>. All during these songs, the initiates are taught to stick to a hierarchy of values and considerations in daily life about the creator, ancestors dead, living dead-living, elders, contemporaries, youngsters, natural forces (Mbiti, 1990). Particular stress goes to women, queens of life, initiates are taught to respect and cherish them, to work for them, to look at them as goddesses, value their daily work, and to leave them space for their human social dreams. The initiates learn that women's pieces of advice should never be neglected, for they also have different capacities to pray and connect with ancestors, good spirits and God. Also, their curses or sometimes witchcraft can be very harmful and dangerous. In the same vein, when they cry because of injustice, mistreatment or negligence, the Vital Force comes in to avenge them (Lima, 1971).

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- <sup>50</sup> X. Mwatshisenge Mende (chorus) Oh yaya      The traditional chieftain Mwatshisenge walks with pride  
Enda Mwatshisenge (chorus) Enda      Proudly, he walks
- XI. Olo, olo (chorus) Eeee      Oh my God  
Olo, olo (chorus) yetufwe akuiza kalangula khongo      Our friends are on the other bank of the river Thamba  
Ndjele, ndjele (chorus) Kwata muya      Ndjele, Ndjele, the team chief takes the seizes of the belt, we  
are going to dance
- XII. Nyi atata nyi a mama, atshivenu ee !      Do listen dear parents, dads and Moms  
Kutfunga yitfwamo yipema nyi yaya Mwatshisenge      We have learned to make nice chairs thanks to  
Mwatshisenge munwamba      our elder brother Mwatshisenge  
Kutfwama kupema nyi mama Kasemeneasemene      You said he was not good enough, that it should be  
Malenge  
Kasemene munwamba      We have spent good time with aunt Kasemene  
You said she was not worth.

Song [IX]<sup>51</sup> mentioned on the previous pages takes on a protective dimension in the hierarchy leading to the Vital Force represented by Mwandvunba, the elder brother. The song turns around respect due to the **Mwandvumba**. He is the elder to all the initiates. He has a place in the hierarchy in which all elders alive and dead have a seat. He is in a mythic world, symbolizes all these numerous connections with other seniors, parents, dead and all initiators going as far as to the “Illo Tempore.” That respect is reflected in the initiates’ daily life through their behavior towards traditional chieftains and their courts. Before going back to the village, that social hierarchy is reviewed several times with the help of songs, tales, legends, epics and mythic narratives that give several examples, and end with lessons to be memorized. Proverbs and riddles are also learned; they belong to a special language mastered only by initiated guys who can decode them as well as use them to solve daily issues. They are part of the wisdom whose idioms are used either to end a palaver or to choose the right way to follow. All this wisdom gives a large place to farming and to working the land with hands as reported in the song [XII] “Nyi atata, Nyi amama.” Initiated people transmit from one generation to another all wisdom coming from immemorial times. All tools used for work, chairs, pots, knives, machetes, hammer, axes, hoes participate in the Chokwe work, and in their relation to the first ancestors, constructors of the “Uchokwe.” Finally, the “Uchokwe” stands for a prayer that changes the human body in a medium that ensures communications with the Creator and with God (Pasztory, 2005:3; Gell, A., 1992:40-63; Turner, V., 1977).

Also, before going back to the village for sharing daily life with their family members, the initiates have to show that they have been able to get in the invisible world through their mastery of masks’ power. These are essentially the following: **Kalelwa, Mulimbula, Tshileu, Mulenga Ngondo**. These masks represent good spirits’ assistance to the entire community. These spirits also punish the village when it goes against the Vital Force order and does not respect the hierarchy.

Once they have interiorized these realities, the initiates start executing song [XI] “Wawa Mama Yamie.” This song invites them to go on the other side of the river – to their village. There, they are supposed to bring salvation and the examples that all youngsters need to follow for their sake

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<sup>51</sup> Ifwale (chorus) eh eh eh



Initiated guys can then only go back to the village where everybody is expecting them. They are welcomed as heroes. Past initiated welcome them, and together they start showing how they can get in a trance, dance and show up spiritual dimensions of their beings. They undergo competitions which reveal to everybody if past initiated are still respecting taboos and working on all spiritual connections. Otherwise, this meeting becomes an opportunity for them to train again under the guidance of their current initiation masters. Despite the almost one-week village feast, the initiated are still kept apart from most of the village. They should not be put under the influence of evil, for temptations can be very great after all the time spent in the forest. They have to keep in mind that they can share secrets only with other initiates, but are to remain silent with all other people. Otherwise, damnation will be waiting for them.

Despite the progress of urbanization and modern times, this culture does not seem to have been swallowed at all. It has succeeded to survive in many forms. First of all and far most important, songs of initiation are so important cultural data. Several musicians go back to them to find inspiration for their artistic works and clear messages to transmit to human communities. Most of the time, they even insert in their music most of the old melodies and convey the specific messages to their listeners (Sasa Chokwe). Several ethnologic, historical and anthropological studies are still led to finding how this wealth of the past could still serve (Jordàn, 1993; 1998; 1999; 2006; Watsiau, B., 2006; Vansina, J., 1999; 2004; Bastin, M.L., 1984; 1998). Chokwe songs and dances from the lower part of Congo have traveled to the Diaspora: Brazil, Cuba, the United States and many other places (Fryer, 2000; Livingston, T.E. et al., 2005).

Scholars demonstrate that these songs are an excellent way to archive the past and to go as far back as immemorial times. These songs also trace the passage from reality to fiction, from daily life to spiritual dimensions and mythic dimensions. Thanks to them, everyday reality is otherwise perceived whereas man and woman get a special place in the cosmos. They have also demonstrated that they are part of universal cultural patrimony. They share much of their characteristics with many other universal cultures which have succeeded passing from one generation to another. It is with such a survey that necessary circumcisions may easily get understood. At the same time, different underlined values given to life will seriously contribute to decreasing prostitution, propagation and contamination dangers. It is worth mentioning that the areas where circumcision is still practiced do not have a high rate of HIV-AIDS propagation

indeed as elsewhere. All the above could give a chance for an excellent encounter between tradition and modernity.

Finally, in the scope of this research, these songs have demonstrated not only the terrain they are from, but have continued the central theme about Chokwe identities perceived through material culture. Also, in the light of (A. Giddens, 1993), we can easily understand that the Chokwe traditions and music have gone their long way in history, and as such have connected old traditions and modernities while keeping a strong connection with the distant past as their essential backbone. Concerning the celebrations that take place when the Mukanda is, our readers understand the early comparisons with the Kabre of Togo still stand, as the Mukanda remains an important gathering opportunity not only for the ordinary Chokwe, but also politicians, tourists, and neighbors (Piot, 1999). Finally, Appadurai (1986; 1996; 2013), Ferguson (2006), Stroeken (2008, Spring; 2010) are of great assistance. They help to understand the Mukanda narrative here above presented. It is a question of commodity authentic life, and the human capacity is commodity-subject, and to choose for the personal good and the good of the community. Beliefs displayed during the time spent in the Mukanda camp are believed and taken as the special opportunity to connect with ancestors, God, and to build strong traditions within the community.

As for young girls, they gradually enter women's groups, learn their future social roles through their mothers and aunts in helping them perform various domestic works and listen to their advice on different topics. They gather from time to time to mark their integration into the clan - through symbolic gestures<sup>53</sup>. Also, they have slowly and slowly access to various secrets related to keeping house, marital conventions, and clan relationships based on a dual organizational society within which the parochial expression only looks like a mere formality. Women control daily life and highly contribute to building a shared vision. Girls gradually enter women's groups. As mothers, they have childbearing as their main social responsibility - giving life to the world - their most important function. They also learn the ethical value of motherhood as they have to lead kids to their first steps in daily life as well as in men's groups. They learn to think of

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<sup>53</sup> Arnold van Gennep (1960) repeatedly mentions, for instance, how girls' first menstrual blood becomes part of cyclic rites that mark the passage from one age group to another. Above all, their training consists in taking care of life in general and in particular in assuming their responsibility as the ones giving birth. It is such an education that also prepares them to find out the ones that can be selected and trained for taking care of initiates in the future.

an entire life in which men and women join to build their world obeying ancestors, God, gods and spirits.

Through initiations, males and women were prepared to their different works. These initiations were playing the role schools play today. In fact, men, for instance, had not only one initiation but many others. Apart from the Mukanda that is widely spread and quite well known by people, they mentioned other kinds of initiations such as the Mungonge or the Kayanda School. Whereas the first initiation turned essentially around circumcision and learning Chokwe history, the second one is reserved to the bravest of the courageous and only lasts for one night and one day under the supervision of Mungonge Master, Shamazemba to whom personal requests must be addressed in time. The aim of this initiation is to engage with other people through the worst possible scenario of difficulties and suffering and end them with a strong personal character. Then candidate accepts to undergo any suffering and yet remain profoundly loyal to freely chosen institutions, contracts, or other obligations are freely taken in the scope of one's growth or for gratitude for sponsorship. This training is always given to a group of people, contrary to the female first initiation, Tshikumbi also called Ukule, that was given to Chokwe girls as soon as they had their first menstruations.

The Mungonge is open to the Ngalami, i.e., those who have already undergone the initiation that turns essentially around circumcision, Mukanda. The so-called Tshitondo, i.e. the uninitiated, are kept far away. It is also the case with strangers for the Mungonge is presented as “Yuma ya Kumahetfu.” It is indeed seen and understood as “an ethnic thing.” Even more, it is property that should not be shared with strangers. The Mungonge goes through different steps here quickly described.

### **VI.3 General Call: Challenging Shamazemba**

The call is open to Ngalami who would like to get through the Mungonge. In fact, the concerned go towards the Shamazemba. They are supposed to take the initiative without anybody telling them what to do. They also make sure that sick people and very young people are excluded from their cohort. The small group of volunteers go straight to the Shamazemba and address him in these words: “We all would like to get initiated to the Mungonge. We would like you ‘Kuteteka.’”



We would like you to flog us, whip us as much as you need, impose on us the most horrible suffering. In doing so, you will prove to our eyes how much brave you are!”

Shamazamba reacts, “I swear by the Mungonge I went through that you will suffer today.”  
“Kayanda kaami, musono kumuteta.”

Despite his decision, Shamazamba cannot engage in any action by himself. He needs to communicate with village elders to deal with a committee in charge to organize rituals. The Mungonge initiation candidates are also organized in such a way that they can fill some roles especially the youngest ones.

From the village are selected two masked men all putting on white clothes. They are called “Mbongo.” The first one is called “Mbongo wa Lunga” and is supposed to mime men. The second is called “Sakaji” and mimes women. Both have much experience in their life.

Apart from the Mbongo duo, Shamazamba needs instructors. They are called “Mfuja Zamba.” They are very strong men. They are supposed to stand for death, phantoms, and they are worst torturer supposed to make the night unforgettable. Their faces are never seen, and they spend their time running from one place to another while being on their hands and feet and their heads turned downwards and hidden between both arms. The group also includes a herald who passes messages, calls for Myadi’s meetings. His name is “Shamakolo.”

Finally, on the list comes drum beaters. The drum “Tshinguvu” is played. However, contrary to drums that are usually heard, this one covers the initiates’ moans. It indeed covers their suffering and reinforces the rhythm of the one who is beating them and pushing them through unimaginable suffering.

Once the elders have given the green light for the Mungonge to go on, the initiates are led to a place where they clear up a ten out of twenty limited by two poles. One is called Mbongo ya Lunga and Tshikopo, the other. There is also a small enclosure called “Mayila.”

### **VI.5 Arrival, Personal Call and Questions**

It is late at night around 20:00, and Shamazemba calls every candidate and questions him. Shamazemba remains invisible. The candidates are questioned but are not supposed to answer questions. The series of questions ends with the words “Mushingenu” or otherwise said in English “Be cursed!” These words stand for a prelude to the cursing suffering they will go through. After these questions and the cursing, they are supposed to sing for coaches: “Tshimbungu Mutoma, Tshimbonga Mutoma!”, “White Panthers, White Panthers!”

### **VI.6 Tragic moments**

It is the worst moment of all! The drum-beaters, start also singing: “Mwalomona” or “Beat them!” or again “Mwetshenu atetee” or “Leave him to cry!” These are invitations to the White Panthers to beat them as such as possible. They are thoroughly beaten. They are rolled on the ground, beaten again and again. Their bodies are blisters all over as they are completely changed with many open wounds. It is dawn and the suffering bodies have lost their energy and are completely hungry.

The Herald invites the initiates for food. They all believe it is time to restore their bodies. Unfortunately, they are only served a little-smashed food on top of a baton. They automatically engage in cries and the water on their blisters make them even cry more. They cry! The more they cry, the more the invisible man asks them to confess all their sins. And they go on mentioning all the wrongs they did to anybody. Their memory seems to be clear enough as to remember all details of their distant past.

### **VI.7 Sending Them off**

As the day gets clearer, the initiates are freed and asked to take their first bath with only a cloth hiding their sex. In the village with elders who had attended the Mungonge in their time, they dance the “Musheta”. It is the dance of the “dead.” This step includes the most important communication level we could call “Ending and learning.” This is the most important step that turns around questions and answers. The exercise is called “Pango.” The initiates are asked

questions, and give answers that describe everything they went through. It is a kind of second confession that leads them to draw conclusions about their training.

## **VI.8 Two visits to the Tahi: Wellbeing Search**

### **VI.8.1 Introduction**

On 20 November 2015, we went to consult a Chokwe “Tahi” in the quarter of the city of Lubumbashi called Zambia, next to Ruashi commune. The city of Lubumbashi has six municipalities. The most urbanized of them and the oldest is called Lubumbashi. The others are Kamalondo, the first one, auto-constructed, from around 1914, by the Africans who were working for the colonials living in the then Elisabethville, now Lubumbashi. There are also Kenya among the first though at its beginning it was called Nyashi, i.e., constructed with grasses and tree poles. Katuba followed it. Both Kenya and Katuba communes grew up very quickly as they were reserved for the urban poor, with only very lower percentage of the population having a small job in Lubumbashi city or in other companies that would have men gone for a couple of weeks (Dibwe, 2013, July). Next is Kampemba, one of the biggest communes. It is the place where public companies were the most developed during the colonial times at first, and then in the first years of the postcolonial era. It has also grown much especially in its commercial areas that are the arrival and departure points for trucks that bring fish, corn, and other agricultural products from far located villages and different lakes inside the Katanga province. Also, it has developed as a habitation area. Then comes Ruashi commune known for its historical role for temporary transition area that the colonial power offered to its foreign workers. In those days, Ruashi was the place where foreign recruits for work in the Katanga mines were left for a few weeks before starting their job in the mines. These workers came essentially from Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, Zambia, and Angola. They had a contract with the same advantages like locals, and in the long run no attention at all was paid to their origins. After many years, and with the succession of different governments in the postcolonial Democratic Republic of the Congo, some of these foreigners went back to their respective countries whereas many others smoothly became Congolese through an ethnic dynamic similar to the earlier pointed out regarding Chokwe population movements. Even though demographic movements are not as significant as for the Chokwe populations due to a specific context of the frontiers of the three countries here above studied, the countries from which came the foreign workers also share bothers with the

Democratic Republic of the Congo. On each of these borders, both concerned countries have all the same ethnic groups at their respective borders (Barth, 1998).

The “Zambia,” we had to visit here is not the country, Zambia. It is simply a name given to that part of Lubumbashi, a portion of the Commune Annexe. That is the sixth commune of the city of Lubumbashi, and it is a kind of belt that goes all around the city. Zambia as a name was given in function of the local population. In fact, the lands of Zambia belonged until recently to a traditional chief Bukanda. The Bukanda population speaks Bemba. Bemba happens to be the language spoken in the Zambian Copperbelt, a prolongation of the Congolese Copperbelt. Even more, so many Bemba families of the Congolese Copperbelt have their relatives in Zambia. That is why the name Zambia was given to that part of Lubumbashi. This place was also known as one of the cheapest markets where farming products from villages arrive and people from all around the city of Lubumbashi coming to purchase them.

Zambia is a slum dwelling with anarchic constructions and not a single straight road. The populations do not have access to water and electricity facilities. They fetch water from wells unfortunately often dug not far from toilet holes. Also, the entire Zambia is in a kind of valley close to river Kafubu. In the rainy season, there are regular floods that easily fill toilets pits, and the wastes go straight to the water wells. Most of the local people cannot afford a permanent full-time job. They are among those who go daily to the city for little jobs and celebrate whenever they have an opportunity to come back home with enough food for the day. They eventually celebrate their daily victory through drinking local alcohol, “Lutuku,” brewed with corn, cassava and sweet potatoes that ferment for a couple of weeks. Then, the fermented mass is placed on slow-burning fire, and its vapor cooled and stocked before being offered to alcohol seekers.

Consequently, Zambia suffers from endemic diseases and presents a place where beliefs “believed” are quickly developed. Magic and witchcraft are mentioned for both a success or a failure. By its position, Zambia is a transition place that welcomes people who come from villages, and who cannot reach one of the communes of the city (they do not have any substantial income). It is in this environment that those who can offer medicinal plant assistance from the past, or the diviners who are supposed to change the destiny of urban people, come for a possible betterment of their life. When they lose their jobs, when they go across sexual dysfunction, when they think they have been bewitched, they do their best to come incognito to Zambia

witchdoctors. Do they get there what they need? They meet there a kind of satisfaction. We decided to meet there a Chokwe witchdoctor. This narrative counts a few moments of the project, the encounter, and the aftermath.

We found the witchdoctor through a sentry of the University living near Zambia, and who happens to be a Chokwe. We pretended to have different issues that only a “Tahi” freshly coming from the Chokweland could solve. The “Tahi” was found and the appointment scheduled. Professor Koen Stroeken, student Kristien Spooren, the University sentry, and a driver (another Chokwe) came with us. At the entrance of Zambia, the “Tahi” had sent somebody to wait for us on a motorbike. He went in front of us. The car was left at a short distance, a few meters from the small house where we had to go on foot. Those who had come with us did not even ask if they should stay outside during the consultation. They all came with us as we entered the small room. A few more people found there, and who could not get in, stayed next to the main door so that to follow what was going on inside. The day was completely hot; the small room was full of flies. We were left alone for some time. The small room was fully packed, and the waiting time, though relatively short, seemed long. Finally, the “Tahi,” to some extent limping, arrived, said hello, and went to the second small room from where he put on his consultation uniform while singing.

### **VI.8.2 First Contact: Song**

The first contact was completely through his song. The Tahi had sunglasses. His body was fully covered with powder. As he was singing, he was also pouring powder on the visitors. The powder was so heavy that all the flies disappeared. His assistant had previously recommended us to remove shoes. The song was addressed to his ancestors, and he was asking them for power. However, at a given level he sang: “Indele yami baneze or my whites have come.” It is as if he was waiting for a visit of Europeans. For, the meaning of that melody could be “my bosses have come, I will be all right.” In fact, the talk we will have later on will prove it. At that point, it was also clear to me that I (a black African) was not important concerning given aspects of the consultation. Much more attention was given to the whites.

### VI.8.3 Consultation

As soon as he had come from the other small room (certainly the sleeping room) while continuing singing, his song made more and more mention of the name “Ida”: “Ida wami twaya ku Mulonga or My dear Ida come to solve problems.” It was evident that Ida was his source of inspiration. He finally sat down close to a small table that was in a corner of the little room by the entrance of the other room. On the table were a Christian rosary, bracelets, a few roots, medium size plastic medicine containers, a mirror, all of it on a hand made napkin. There was a small statue that the “Tahi” was addressing in the name of Ida. When the “Tahi” stopped singing, he wanted to know why we had come. He was speaking Chokwe, and the University sentry offered to be the translator for Professor Koen Stroeken and the student Kristien. He was the first to speak and said he would rather deal with the case of the Chokwe populations in the group because he had much to tell him. “Tata, I would like to tell you that whenever one has gone for hunting, the only possible rescue he can get is from the one immediately following him.” He placed himself in the position of the one who was after me.

The Tahi engaged a conversation in which he was trying to persuade me that my late father was strongly connected to ancestors and feeling enough power from them for my protection during my entire studies in the land of the white men. He once again interrupted the conversation and went on with a short song in Kiluba mentioning the French word “cercueil” (coffin) that a given Kilumba had taken. He then went on to say that I did not have to worry about any sickness; it belonged to the past. However, he needed to deal with me to prevent that evil forces hurt me. For, there were many evil forces in Europe that did not like me at all, and that did not like my friendship or collaboration with Professor Koen Stroeken. These forces are evil and can only be fought with the Chokwe power he was alone to possess. In the absence of my father, I needed strong protection, for many did not understand why “Tshombe” had sent me for studies in Europe. They did not appreciate that I should be the only one benefitting from Europe. I would need to take an appointment and come back to him for special treatment.

To Professor Koen Stroeken, the Tahi said two things. First of all:

- Can you be happy if you lose something?
- Who is the girl beside you? Is she your daughter? Is she your wife?

– She is like your child and you are happy to have her beside you. It is the same for me. I am glad to have this guy beside me. My “Kitobo” is beside me. He is like my child. He is learning from me. In the same way, your girl student is learning from you. I will not continue; I need 100\$ for me to continue.

A discussion was engaged. With his experience of such consultations in Tanzania, Professor Koen Stroeken found the right words to make the “Tahi” understand that it was not the money that was important in such a process, but that he had to make sure that his customers were satisfied at first.

Then, the time of the student Kristien came. The Tahi covered her with powder and even asked her to turn around to make sure the powder was everywhere on her body.

– You do not have to worry about your sickness. I am taking care of it. However, I will need to go to your bed to protect it from evil. They are jealous, your classmates because you are so bright and so intelligent. I will protect your body and will provide you with the best possible protection.

He powdered her entire body while calling upon his Ida. Then, he stopped singing and was telling the student that she needed to take him with her. In Europe, the “Tahi” said, he would be more helpful. He would not need much assistance since he could sleep anywhere; a simple carpet would be enough for him. However, he would take good care of Kristien, the Belgian student, and protect her from any kind of sickness.

When it was evident the consultation had come to an end, we asked for a Q&A time. Questioned on the reason he had a big Christian cross on him, and that the small table also had Christian material, the Tahi surprised us. What he said was for everybody. He was not exclusively for Christians. Besides, Christ had many powers that he also needed in his profession. Finally, he also said almost everybody in the city of Lubumbashi was Christian. It was important that his visitors understand that he understood their faith and was sharing with them the same preoccupation. However, the Tahi also offered them the opportunity to access ancestors’ powers that could possibly solve their problems and bring them solutions.

After the consultation as such, we tried to do our best to take off the powder that was all over the bodies. We were offered water to wash hands. The consultation was officially over. However, before leaving, we had to take care of financial aspects. I asked the others to leave so that I could

deal with the “Tahi.” We finally agreed on an amount of about \$60. He wanted to escort us to the vehicle while still in his Tahi uniform. I refused and told him that he had to go back to his other clothes, that we would be waiting for him, and we would go together. He asked for my phone number and left us at the vehicle waving at us in a kind of winning way, so that the neighbors who had come out to look at the whites would understand that the different and special customers had come all the way from Europe to visit him. It was obviously advertisement he could not afford to miss, an opportunity he needed to maximize.

As a matter of fact, this visit nearly traumatized us for many reasons. His price was very high and did not get along what other diviners were doing. The time we spent with him was filled with intimidation. His clients were treated as an opportunity to get money and build a kind of personal kingdom. He failed to get his clients into a network. The entire episode had many aspects linking it to “Mimesis” and the long Chokwe traditions Grimes (2014; 2006; 1962). However, the “Tahi” thought he he had to show modern knowledge that could please visitors without necessarily using the right communication or helping his clients reach a sense of satisfaction with their contribution. In acting like a teacher who knows things, but cannot put his students at the center of all activities, he failed to offer any sense of satisfaction to his students.

#### **VI.8.4 Making the Point of this Consultation, and Tentative Interpretation**

The issue of languages is not to be just considered regarding the Belgians who attended the consultation. The Tahi himself did not use only one language. He used Chokwe, Lunda, Luba, a few French words, and Kiswahili from Lubumbashi. He was not only shifting for any precise reason like making the audience understand, but everything was done to show that he was quick to get into and out of a trance and for a dialogue with the public. In fact, in the Chokwe trance traditions, the Tahi who are possessed can use a language that only his assistant can understand and interpret for the public. The Tahi seemed to have that tradition in mind. He wanted to use his assistant to take that part of the job. At the same time, he needed to show the visitors that he could exchange with them without the help of anyone. He also wanted to make sure that he had the absolute control of anything going on around him. He wished for the visitors to understand his messages, and to excite them to come again.



However, whenever he was speaking to “Ida,” he made sure the conversation was in Chokwe. He also ensured she would be pleased by adding words such as my dear, my beloved one, my help, and my guide.

#### **VI.8.5 Conversation with the visitors**

In his conversation with the visitors, he quickly put away the issue for which they had come by pointing out that it was already dealt with. In that way, he washed away all requests regarding diseases. He attacked with as much strength as possible the issues that were not raised, and asked his customers to come again for that one. When the Tahi addressed a client directly, he made sure he would look in the customer’s direction while pretending to read from a sheet of paper.

We can understand a few things from his language skills. First of all, he is prepared to live and work in a place like Zambia where the “rich” people from the city come to him for consultation, getting them to rely on him. He would speak with them straight and then have a few meetings outside of the consultations, using marketing strategies to help him gain more customers from around the big city (Dekker, 2010:1-17). Also, the Tahi said he had come the all way from Angola, the source of his “Ngombo” or the healing power he has (Katz, 1997). With the languages he spoke, it was easy to believe that he had spent time in different areas and was communicating there as well. The areas in which the Chokwe populations live have the characteristics mixed with other people speaking other languages. That specific mention of Angola was another marketing strategy to show that his powers came from far, from the Chokweland, where the Chokwe people are believed to be extraordinarily empowered with traditional magic and medicinal knowledge.

#### **VI.8.6 On the Main Questions of the Consultations**

The Tahi avoided giving a straight answer to the questions he was asked and put them aside because he seemed to have found more important issues among the patients. Speaking so was, in fact, a double strategy aiming at giving satisfaction and raising curiosity, and a reason for the customer to come again. Thus, the Tahi insisted that there was nothing to be afraid of with any disease. He had taken control of any kind of sickness. However, there was something more important to be worried about. The guardian, my father, had passed away, and his absence had given evil forces the opportunity to have easy access to me. This was a real calculation based on

how old I looked, and the fact I could not know what exactly my father was doing for me. He was certain my father was dead, and he had to suggest a surrogate father who would be playing the same protective role against evil forces. He was so convinced of the death of my father, and probably even gave me an age that is not mine. He went on to draw further reasons for his intervention. He also located the time I was sent for education to Europe around the 60s when Mr. Tshombe had something to do with the Congo and mainly with the Katanga province. (I was only three or four at that time.) His talk also tried to prove how he was the most appropriate person to take a case like mine that needed much protection from ancestors.

It is the same strategy that the Tahiti continued with the two others, i.e., Professor Stroeken and the student Kristien. To Professor Stroeken, the Tahiti also gave some satisfaction through a tricky sentence insisting that they both had disciples, and that they would get satisfaction when things were well done, i.e., when disciples were successful. It was as if Professor Koen Stroeken was inviting the “Tahiti” to share secrets about how to attain more satisfaction from things done by close collaborators or disciples.

### **VI.8.7 Short Analysis**

To put it short, the Tahiti led us to believe that the most important thing we needed was protection. The only place we could get it was from him. In many ways, his marketization was at least theoretically great. He did his best to show to his customers that he had what they needed to solve the issues they were facing in their daily life. In fact, despite his social life on the margins of the city, and at what could be called the border entrance to the village area, the Tahiti has shown that he is not excluded from information and communication technologies. He has shown that when dealing with customers such as these coming from the North, he has to turn his consultation around what is common to everybody in the world: the fear of the unknown and its consequences. This is the global threat of shamanism that has persisted through ages (Kaputu, 2010). Appadurai (2013) and D. Miller (1987) can be quite helpful to get a different consideration of the way this Tahiti deals with ancestral heritage. He has succeeded in a process of commoditization. The Tahiti has shown his capacity to change the consultation strategies in a commodity.

Also, the Tahiti has shown that his business, if we can call it so, can be upgraded to a new level. He stands firm on the ground, different from the traditional Tahiti, who is receiving gifts without

insisting on any monetization. He takes the risk to mention clearly the amount of money he is expecting (Dekker, 2010:1-16). His ideas have shifted to a presentation that includes business aspects, even with expatriates. He manages his communication spaces in such a way that his customers can easily navigate through health and healing systems of the place while offering easy access to foreigners. By acting in that way, the Tahī has sufficiently blurred the “emerging markets for health and healing”; for, his customers will continue to use different health and healing systems (Dekker, 2010:10-13).

The Tahī mentions money at the right time when his clients cannot operate a return, a U-turn. Whatever their considerations, his customers would be ready to consider his “African” market, entrepreneurialism and mercantilism, turning around and following the rules of his time (Ensminger, 1992). If he were dealing with people in need, they would certainly be happy to give the money and buy some hope and enchantment for a better future. It is, in fact, a dimension of modern communication and business opportunities (Hart, 2010:3, 30). In fact, the Tahī’s capacity has displayed a way of thinking, feeling, acting, and behaving that would lead us to think about Foucault’s understanding of modernist violence in its contingent, as well as arbitrary constraints instead of opposes the present to the past and produces a double-hinged subjectivity. The Tahī gives proof, even though limited, of the knowledge of the world (globalization), and of the knowledge of the subject (enchantment-disenchantment-commoditization) he is supposed to deal with (M. Foucault, 1972a).

Despite a close relation with the somehow illiterate world, his closeness with nature that could lead many to mention how primitive his entire business is, the Tahī's power is prevailing through the discourse that attracts. It raises curiosity, pushes the intellectual to analysis, the common people to a solution discovery without guessing that there could be a lure. They could even think about a delusion, but would still follow the general path. The Tahī has given us an opportunity to look differently at modernity. It is not associated with a melting pot or exposed to destruction crashing down the old tradition whatever its shape. It does not aim at leaving the entire space to novelty, but a way of getting the best of anything new while keep respect for the ancient (Bauman, 1998). The melting pot is also a religious elasticity as most people belong to a modern religious line but at the same time search for health and healing from traditional sources (Dekker, 2010:144-172).

The Tahi has given us an occasion to face a couple of theories in anthropology (Ortner, 1984). First of all, Anderson (1991) mentioned the concept of national imagined community that refers to transnational or postnational imagined diasporas. In fact, the Tahi reveals through his discourse violence towards daily habits and what some people could easily think to be the prevailing of the time, i.e. the novelty. Novelty is largely built on a large consumption of what could come from elsewhere around the world. The Tahi has shown that from his marginalized Zambia he can reach out to the world. By responding in his ways to the fears that both his fellow citizens and foreigners face and question, he let them come to him for different reasons and satisfy their thirst. If some would come to him for getting reliable solutions to their problems, others would still come to him to find out how the long time traditions would still be able to continue in a world that has totally changed. Appadurai (1996:33, 40-54) mentions spaces that include ethnoscape, technoscape, financescape, mediascape, and ideoscape, unbound not only physical territories and demographical growth and circulation, but also and more important for a worldwide open for ideas, good and bad, to circulate (Elliott, 2013).

During a few exchange words with the Tahi, he pretended he had come from Angola, in fact from the farthest place linked to the presence of the Chokwe people. Then, he also recognized that he was not gifted at the beginning, i.e., from his birth, but had learned through his grandma. That could be true insofar as the Chokwe tradition recognized such a kind of succession. However, at the light of his work, we could also say everything was but a pure invention. As soon as he heard that we could in the next months also go to Zambia (The Republic of Zambia) to find out how the Tahi worked there, he readily told us that he would also be in Zambia in the coming months. We added we had plans to visit Mwene Mwa Tshisenge in Sandoa in June 2016; the Tahi told us that he would already be on that side of the country. The above is another feature of modernity that quite often, some people pretend to have answers to all its questions. Thus, our famous Tahi could have grown up in a village, maybe attending the Mukanda initiation and then would master a bit the essential of witchcraft doctors' practices that he brought to the city. The story about his wife or girlfriend, Ida, also seems strange. The name itself has nothing to do with the Chokwe culture, but possibly an adaptation of Sasa Chokwe music that mixes old traditions and modernity. Whatever way we could consider this Tahi, an adventurer, a businessman, or an opportunist, he stood more for a shock absorber of issues people face in big African cities.

Zambia is a clear metaphor for the absorption of urban beliefs (believed) (Dekker, 2010:1-16; Stroeken, K., 2008).

*Figure 24 Traditional Chokwe Doctor (Tahi) Giovanni Ricardo Dauda Tshisola from "Zambia", Ruashi, D.R. Congo*



Picture with the Tahi after the consultation: Professor Stroeken, the Tahi, student Kristien S. and Felix Kaputu. The other visitors could not be visible. The Tahi was happy to be in the same picture with special visitors.

Source F. Kaputu Pictures 2016

## **VI.9 Visit to the Second Witchdoctor in Zambia, Tshipoya, Northwestern Province, Solwezi**

### **VI.9.1 Introduction**

The second visit detailed here took place on January 8, 2016 in the Republic of Zambia, the Northwestern Province, Solwezi in Zambia-Compound quarter. It used to be in the same situation like in Zambia, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, with the re/opening of Kansanshi Mining Plc, many people from around Zambia migrated to what is now called the New Copperbelt in reference to the Copperbelt. The former space called Copperbelt used to be the economic engine of Zambia. Its mines were once very powerful until when their copper was over, or the 1990's mining crisis arrived.

Zambia-compound was built on the same concept of people who had some small jobs in Solwezi rural town, or again those who had decided to live there and go back to their farms during the rainy season for agricultural works. Living in the Zambia compound was a real choice that permitted them to stock closer their harvest for sale closer to town, and eventually to get on a truck to go and sell their produces either to the Copperbelt or to the Congolese border distant 120 km. Zambia-compound had also become a slum dwelling in which the poor could pretend to be living in the city while continuing most of the rural customs. Like in the situation studied in the Congo, from its beginning, Zambia-compound was the place where people are coming from the rural town or even from the Copperbelt to collect traditional medicinal plants, or magic ingredients supposed to solve suddenly all problems.

With the opening of the mining and the sudden population growth, Zambia-Compound also got its population grown more than ten times. In fact, those who came to Zambia-Compound expected to get a job from the mines and eventually move to the town or build a mansion that would attract the attention of everybody. However, the mine mostly needed qualified people, and the ordinary citizens could not compete with them. Consequently, they packed in Zambia-Compound, and village quarrels followed them. They needed to have more luck, protect what they had succeeded to get their houses, bodies, and family members. They consequently linked their life expectation and changes to their relations with witchdoctors. At the same time, they are

happy to be close to many churches, and to a government hospital, even though often lacking to cover all their needs. In these conditions, witchdoctors also got more and more clients.

It is in this place that Tshipoya decided to get a small house and live. We were curious to find out what part of Zambia he had come from only to see that he did not come from Zambia. He had come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from a small town close to the border with Zambia, Kipushi. The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had completely deteriorated in the mining sectors. Kipushi is a small mining town whose economic activities completely decreased, and became catastrophic not only for the workers of the mining company, but for many living close to the mining town and whose life depended on the income of the mining agents. As soon as Tshipoya heard about the opportunities that the town of Solwezi was offering, he left the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His family used different ways to reach Solwezi. He moved in a couple of villages all along the road. He was known, and the villagers were happy to welcome Dr. Tshipoya, offered him food and a bed. In fact, only the village leaders had the advantage to get him for one night or so since he had to continue. He was not alone; he had his assistants. He was welcome in most places because the local population needed their village to be cleansed, and many individuals also had their needs to express. They paid for the sacrifice either in nature or in money. He got goats, chickens, and money. At the beginning, he had about seven assistants, and he ended up having only two. The others had preceded with the goods he had collected since he did not want to go with them and influence in one way or another the presents he could get from other people. His fame had preceded him, and gifts were prepared for his arrival. It was useless to ask him what papers he was using to be and live in Zambia. He said he did not get in Zambia by using the porous border. He had gone to both the Congolese and the Zambian immigration offices at the border. They knew him and gave him permission to go to the Zambian market that was operating on Tuesdays and Fridays. From there, people had taken him in charge, and he arrived at his destination after ten days. At his arrival, his family was installed, and his assistants had got him a small farm not far from the town. It was big enough for his animals to live in peace with neighbors. Gifts were still pouring at the house where his family was when he reached Zambia-Compound. He chose all the same to have an office from which he would be operating. It was a small house built of grasses and poles and adobe bricks. It had besides it a small shelter with four tree poles and a couple of benches for his

customers. In a corner of the plot was a huge heap of roots of different sizes and grouped separately.

### **VI.9.2 Reception Room**

The shelter serves as the reception room where patients, or let us call them customers, come for consultations from early in the morning. Tshipoya is usually a name of witchdoctor and the arrival of this man to Zambia-Compound was preceded by his fame, and people came from far for different kinds of consultations. When we arrived the three of us, two assistants and me, we were warmly welcomed by a very young man who seemed to be the assistant of Dr. Tshipoya. He gave us a seat and, even though he knew about our arrival, he behaved as if he was not aware about us. Long before the appointment, I had exchanged emails with a Zambian “relative” and asked him to find for me several people I could interview in the scope of my studies. He had sent me a long list of individuals, and then finally we agreed on some of them. He met them and fixed details for the interview. Dr. Tshipoya was on the list, and he did not mind to welcome somebody from the academia. We were told he was jubilant and was expecting our visit at any time convenient for us. His assistants took our names and asked if we had any particular problems. He reminded him of the contacts my “relative” had taken with h Dr. Tshipoya. He added that was also an opportunity for a general checkup. He went to Dr. Tshipoya and after a while came back and asked us to be patient since he had another patient in consultation. By the way, we were not the only ones in the waiting shelter. Six women seemed sick and were also waiting. By their conversation, we could tell that was not the first time they had come. They had already come some times and needed either more medicine or another consultation. They did not seem at all to be in a hurry and expected that Dr. Tshipoya would also give them as much time as possible. We thought we would be in a kind of row and would come in the seventh position. However, the assistant came and told the women that Dr. Tshipoya had to take care of visitors who came from far, he had apologized and asked them to be patient. We tried to say they should not worry about us; we could wait. The women were flexible, did not mind their time at all, but also joined the assistant to say the visitors had to be taken care first.



*Figure 25 Waiting Room at Dr. Chipoya' Place*



It is to this extremely poor shelter that many people from the northwestern Province, Solwezi, Zambia go for a necessary consultation covering physical, mental health conditions, and other issues related to job search, luck and wealth. This shelter is the waiting room.

Source: F.Kaputu Pictures (Solwezi, August 2016)

### **VI.9.3 Consultation**

The assistant came to us and offered to guide us to Dr. Tshipoya. He asked us to remove our shoes and to leave them by the door. As soon as we were furtively moved in the consultation room, we were offered three small stools to sit on. We clapped hands as locally done for greetings. Dr. Tshipoya responded in clapping hands and in speaking English. He asked us if we could speak the local Kaonde language, and did not seem to mind the answer we gave. He continued in English. Dr. Tshipoya informed us that he was expecting us after he had met my “relative,” and had already had a personal consultation to check out if the people who were

intending to pay him a visit had good intentions, and if they were not bringing evil with them. The conclusion was right, and he was happy to welcome us. Then, he changed the language and moved to locally spoken Kaonde and said he wanted, all the same, to find out from us what we needed.

I took the floor to explain to him that I was happy to consult with a Chokwe Doctor because it would give me an opportunity to know my ancestors' wisdom, and eventually be able to talk about it to other people around the world. I then told him that I was often tired in the mornings and did not feel like to communicate at all until early in the afternoon. Besides, I had quite often migraines, and my blood pressure was not good. I also added that I had consulted a doctor in Belgium, felt better for a while, but only a few weeks after my condition was even worse.

In his response, he once again changed languages. This time, he spoke Chokwe, starting with an exclamation:

– Uli Kaputu wa kumayetu, mwana wa Mwa Tshisenge, Mwana wa Ilunga Chibinda

Uli usoko wami, usoko wa kumayetu ku kafakumba, ku Dilolo, ku Sandoa, ku Tshikapa, ku Lunda Norte, Ku Lunda Sul, ku Lyambeji (Zambezi), mwana me!

You are Kaputu from home, son of the king Mwa Tshisenge, son of the cultural hero Ilunga Chibinda. You are my brother, my brother from home Kafakumba, Dilolo, Sandoa, Tshikapa (in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Northern and Southern Lunda (in Angola), and Zambezi (in Zambia), my son!

He went on with praises like that for a while and seemed to be lost in his words that were automatically coming. He profusely mentioned Chokwe ancestors and declined the name Kaputu connecting it with the Chokwe pride as the first to have had strong relations with the Portuguese and other Europeans, to have resisted them, and kept their ancestors alive. The Chokwe populations had taken the best from Europeans regarding daily life, and rejected what they did not need like their religions, and were able to build their history that he was carrying. He then seemed to have come back from whatever planet he was lost in and said he had understood, shared his compassion for the suffering. He added that the Chokwe populations had never forsaken anybody in suffering, and especially if he was their son and was in need. He concluded that it was time to listen to what they would say when he would be in the official uniform and trance.

He asked us to go back to the waiting shelter as he would be leaving for a while and come back shortly after with the ceremonial uniform. We went back to the shelter. Dr. Tshipoya went to a close by house. After about ten minutes, he came back to the consultation room, and he had a woman with him. The assistant, once again, led us to the door and repeated the same recommendation regarding shoes. Dr. Tshipoya introduced the woman, mama Kitobo, as the one who would be interpreting for us. Dr. Tshipoya had put on a white robe, covered his head with a white scarf. His face was completely white. He asked us to kneel down and drew a heavy line with kaolin chalk first on the right hand, then exactly in the same way on the left, from the shoulder to the finger. He then moved to the face and covered its top with much kaolin chalk. Meanwhile, he was cantillating, chanting and droning with a small voice. As he finished with us, his body was shaking, his eyes turned up as if he would fall fainting out. Then he called on the woman and asked her to interpret for us. To our big surprise, she did not need in fact to interpret; the man was speaking Tanzanian Swahili while in a trance. The woman was doing her best, and we were now listening to two different speeches and find flaws in the interpretation. The woman was hesitant in her Swahili and the three of us could speak Swahili. Still the question was why the trance language was Swahili and if this was another shift that Dr. Tshipoya had decided to take. If it was his self-decision, we should then put in question his qualities as a medium. The mediums met so far in our research on shamanism did not remember the language they had used or the contents they had given.

The contents transmitted while he was in trance can be summarized in the following lines.

– You have gone to the land of the white people and have forgotten your ancestors. You never pay attention to them. You do not have anything to represent their presence in your life. It is so simple to have a small dish with white Kaolin clay on it, or just white flour or powder. You should put that small dish at the head of your bed and consider it as an altar where you offer your prayers to your ancestors every day before you leave your place. Now because you have been so negligent, you have migraines, and your body is shaken with what you call high blood pressure. We shall give you our ancestral medication to take and your blood pressure shall go immediately down. Your migraines will also disappear for a couple of months until when you show that you are with your ancestors through a daily devotion. There is another problem you did not mention; you have serious issues with your family members. We mean your brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts. Stay away from them! Do not rely on their faces, and the laughter they may have when

you meet. They do not like you. They will poison you. It is one of them who will be engaged to kill you. Beware we have warned you. We will help you also on this point for one simple reason. Your parents have asked us to warn you to prevent you, and protect you as much as we can. We have warned you! One last thing, we have noticed you were strongly connected to your ancestors. You have still the potential and could do the work we are doing. We will need to awaken the dormant potential and activate it through training sessions that could take a couple of months. Whenever you could be around again for a couple of weeks, we will be able to achieve that. We have been happy to meet with you, and will continue to act in different ways to be with you and make sure you have good health.

Then came a farewell song glorifying the Chokwe cultural power and leadership. He mentioned how the Chokwe had always been the best warriors of their time and the defenders of the weak people. God had created them to take control, and their ancestors always filled them with blessings. Then, silence came again, and the room was quiet for many minutes.

*Figure 26 Dr. Tshipoya's Assistant*



Dr. Chipoya has a large stock of roots from the forest. His assistant (on the picture) had escorted him to collect them. He knows them and whenever he is asked to collect some, he knows well how to do the job. Pharmacopeia can heal diseases. However, it is so sad to see that the roots are exposed to the weather and handled without any hygienic condition. They could be better treated.

**Source: F.Kaputu Pictures (Solwezi, August 2016)**

#### **VI.9.4 After consultation conversation**

When Dr. Tshipoya had completely cooled down, he invited us to get in an open-heart talk. He wanted to find out if we had heard the message, and what it was exactly. It was as if he was learning from us what the medium had told us. He proposed to offer some explanation wherever there would be a shadowy zone. To start with he insisted that he did not know anything about my family composition and that he was not informed about any distancing or detachment from ancestral practices. However, he could remember from the conversation he had with us before the mediumistic time. The description he was given of my ailments corresponded much with what happens to the people who face a kind of negligence of the ancestors and are reminded through body pains that might end as soon as they were on good terms with the ancestors. He offered a powder to be drunk like tea in the evening for two weeks to get the Blood Pressure stopped. He did not agree with the idea of getting to take medicine every day as my physician had recommended. That was too much and for him a sign that the West has still to learn much from Africans, for a medication taken every single day of one's life would completely disorganize human physiology forever. Such an approach would change man's nature. I was happy to get his medication and tried it that evening but did not take the medicine the Belgian doctor had prescribed. On the next day, my blood pressure was indeed very low. However, I did not agree to pursue that experience. I was afraid of possible consequences that would happen once I would be gone and far from Dr. Tshipoya. I chose to use the medicine on which I could easily rely and for which I could meet the doctor and discuss with him.

#### **VI.9.5 Analysis of the Mediumistic Narrative**

This narrative opens our eyes on an international phenomenon regarding shamanism. It among many things raises our attention on the fact that we have here a more reliable narrative that does not isolate Dr. Tshipoya, but rather put him in the family group of so many shamans spread around the world and often called by different names (Kaputu, 2010). Price (2003:3), Hideshi Ohashi (1984:66-79), and M. Eliade (1963a:3-5) would look at Dr. Tshipoya through the prism that would interchangeably look at the concept doctor with a shaman and other such names turning around primitive religion, magic, or again mysticism. Dr. Tshipoya's discourse rather leads to a distant past of ancestors, but at the same time displays knowledge of ancestors.

His mediumistic discourse stands for proof that, through the medium, the living can get in the transformation of time with the present being linked to immemorial times (Campbell, 1990:1-24). However, his discourse has another particularity that insists on linking the living, the dead and the ancestors through dialogue, a communication that the Japanese blind mediums from the North, Itako, would call “Kuchoyose” or a conversation with the dead (Kaputu, 2010:155). Dr. Tshipoya reported conversations not only with ancestors but also with my parents recommending him to get good care of me. That is a feature going through the mediums around the world. In the same vein, Dr. Tshipoya has professionally avoided the use of the concept “sacrifice” that is so crucial in both religion and mediumistic presentations. However, it is still all the same present in his discourse that supposes I not only turn back to ancestors but have a specific relation with a special small basin that would be at my bed’s head all the time. Also, he offers his medicine for which he does not ask for any payment, and does not mean that I would in one way or another participate in any sacrifice. In playing on the relations to re-construct with ancestors, insisting on their implications even in the medicine that doctors such as Tshipoya give, the bottom line is that there is a sacrifice that the community must offer. That is exactly how the Hebraic concept “Zebah” should be understood in relation with the sacrifices that may take different forms (Robbins, 1998:286).

In another comparison with other mediumistic forms going on around the world, Dr. Tshipoya has demonstrated that he could be indeed that medium through which ancestors could have their contacts around the world and with the people they could choose. Compared to the first case, Dr. Tshipoya could also indeed have memorized attitudes and things, but his “Mimesis” is rather a success in the sense that he was able to operate a clear detachment from the material and fill in the “double role” through the mediumistic situation as the medium per se. In the entire process, like in Kaputu (2010:157), Dr. Tshipoya has somehow done his best to convince us that there is much to find in primitivism in duplicating a “Modus Operandi.” This process includes welcoming the customer and having a first warming conversation. The second step includes the mediumistic discourse that may need an interpreter or could go straight from the medium to the client. The third phase would be the restitution to the customer in the sense of getting clarifications and necessary details on the mediumistic discourse and interaction. These are the steps that are learned through training habits (Kaputu, 2010:174).

Kaputu (2010:175) raises another important concept that leads us to the first consultation we had in the quarter Zambia of the “commune annexe” of Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: customers around the witchdoctors. It is essentially about an international space related to marketization, commercialization, commoditization; supply and demand law. Dr. Tshipoya has demonstrated that by his welcoming quality and the care offered to his clients, he could welcome them in better conditions, and have more and more come to him. Through his linguistic capacities, he can manage with them all and make sure that they have the needed communications in real time. Contrary to the first Tahi consulted, he is more openly relying on the ancestors' assistance. He knows that his patients navigate health and healing and mixes different practices, he makes sure that without having an open war he can still subtly push them in his direction that combines ancestors' words and as much as possible the resources that nature offers. The many roots place in a big heap testifies of his belief in what nature can provide. He is moving in modernity while trying his best to valorize the old traditions.

The two cases here above presented offer an opportunity to perceive how the Chokwe traditions and identities have progressed throughout times. The idea of getting the assistance of ancestors and, at the same time, living in the world of their time, marks the particularity of what they are today, and what they are likely to be in the future. However, when looking at Chokwe witchdoctors from both examples here above treated, we could easily agree that they have resisted time, and have successfully integrated wider spaces where they share their skills with other people. It is evident that some of their practices can seriously be put in question. They still represent an open window to look at the Chokwe past, their present, for a better projection of their future within the areas studied.

This second example may not seem directly connected to the previous one, or the first part of the dissertation which focuses on the initiation. However, its main connection should be found in the readers' discovery of different social activities that result from the initiation training. The Chokwe society counts much on the social functions that organize everybody's daily life. It is from the initiation camp that different individuals' potential for exceptional social needs such as leading their community members in rituals, and social life organization are maximized and the trainees prepared for their social responsibilities.

## **VI.10 Plant treatments or Wellbeing Search with Plants**

### **VI.10.1 Introduction**

At this level of the survey, we would like to have two more cases dealing rather with health questions and their treatment with plants. We would like our readers to understand that all cases do not only go with the intervention of witchdoctors or shamans. We would like to show two cases where two Chokwe like many educated others have tried to present their skills in a clear framework. As with the first example, we will take one healer from the city of Lubumbashi and will point out some diseases that he treats through clear prescriptions. We will also show how academics have taken profit of the situation and have started using this knowledge in the scope of public health with the hope that there will be possibilities in a near future to produce medicines based on their awareness and understanding of the Chokwe past.

The second example will lead us to an overlapping area: Zambezi, Chavuma, and Karipande in Moxico, Angola. This second example covers a good part of the Northwestern Province of Zambia and the next province in Angola. Here, we will leave an elementary school teacher lead us around his home plot and explain to us what the Chokwe populations in that area can do with plants around them. The first case seems systematic in its treatment, and in its cooperation with university academics in search of health solutions from plants that grow in different areas, and in using the Chokwe wisdom that permitted them to survive over centuries. We could see here another way in which Chokwe traditions and healing identities have taken new strategies and integrated new spaces (Katz, 1997).

### **VI.10.2 First Phytotherapist: Papa Muteba**

The tall and slim man of about 1,80m introduced himself as Muteba Nswana. He also joked about his age seventy-three years. He looked as if he was rather in his early fifty. He had arrived in Lubumbashi ten years early, i.e., in the beginning of the 2000s though it was not the first time he had lived in the city of Lubumbashi. He was born in Luau in Angola from a family that was on both sides of the border. The biggest part of the family was in Sandoa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where he moved he had moved as early as when he was ten. It is in Sandoa that he



attended the Mukanda initiation. During that seclusion, he had learned to know the first medicinal secrets of most plants he has continued to use since then. Then during the Katanga secession, 1960-1963, when he had joined the “Gendarmerie Katangaise,” he confirmed his capacities as traditional healer because he was always there to assist his peers quite often in harsh conditions. They fought forces that were far stronger to them, UN Forces. The troops around him needed healing and magic plants that he could afford to provide. Whenever there was a kind of truce, he spent his time collecting plants. As he was not the only one to know phytotherapy, he also learned from his comrades, especially the ones who had come from the Buzelaland, another territory of the Katanga province. With the end of that war they had lost, he had gone back to Angola and could not come back soon to the Congo since the gendarmes were declared public enemies. He served a couple of rebellions both in Angola and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Finally, when Mr. Muteba thought he was cleared he came back to the Congo, he decided to leave the arms completely and became one hundred percent times phytotherapist. He came back slowly almost following the railway from Angola to the first main town Kolwezi, then Likasi, and finally he decided to live in Lubumbashi, the commune of Ruashi from where he could easily go to different bushes to collect plants, roots, and other secrets hidden in nature.

He had just healed the daughter of a long-time friend. She had a form of the epileptic disorder that made her fall and faint for about one hour. Her parents had gone with her to the hospital; Lubumbashi doctors had tried their best, but the situation did not change at all. They went to Mr. Muteba (everybody uses to call him Papa Muteba) and the situation was solved. We paid a visit to twenty-five people he had treated from different diseases; they were all satisfied. Some of the cases mentioned the fact that they did not have only a physical health issue but had some other problems linked to unknown forces. He could address them all, and they were happy. Finally, we decided to go through a consultation and follow his treatment strategies closely. However, before that, we had observed that Papa Muteba was always like most of the Congolese working in an office. He was spotless every day. It was impossible to guess he was handling plants. He had a bag like an ordinary student, and even that added to the confusion about his age. He seemed every day quite young. It was so difficult to get him on the phone. He said he was reachable late in the evening when he was making plans for his next day. We took an appointment through one of the friends he had healed from hemorrhoids and diabetics. The man is still working in the offices of Public health of Lubumbashi. He was close to different Doctors, had undergone several

treatments, but he had still much sugar until when he met Papa Muteba. In a maximum of four days, he was completely healed, and whenever he went to the laboratory for checking his sugar level, it was satisfactory. When we finally met, Papa Muteba, it was so amazing to meet somebody so enthusiastic. He apologized because the University guest-house wing where I was lodged had the same name with a hotel that was not far. He had gone to that place at first.

– *Je suis désolé, je m’excuse pour ce retard* (I am sorry, I am late)

His French accent was perfect. Nothing could tell that he was the one with the story here above written with him moving from one country to another, having dropped out of school quite early in his life, and finally from the army. He was happy to meet us and quickly wanted to find out why we had looked for him. The best strategy to facilitate our meeting was to talk about insomnia, migraines, and also high blood pressure. He went on laughing.

– *Petit problème ! Votre ami vous a sans doute dit ce que je suis en mesure de faire, et il n’est pas le seul.* (Small problem! Your friend has doubtlessly told you what I can do and he is not the only one).

– 110/80 *Voilà ce que votre tension sera demain !* (110/80 that is how your blood pressure will be tomorrow morning.)

Papa Muteba went on talking about other cases he had treated, and the satisfaction he had received for so many years. He was working in the city of Lubumbashi and was serving its different six communes. He did not need to follow any particular formula. He just asked me for each of the ailment what I was exactly feeling. He behaved as doctors do at the hospital, and criticized Western medicines that were always coming with significant side effects. Finally, he opened his bag and said he always had something to treat high blood pressure since it was the most recurrent disease among men of a given age, and most those who were active. He washed his hands in a basin, took some dried leaves, crushed them in his hand and asked that we waited for twenty minutes. Meanwhile, he sent his assistant to buy from a close by market from where were sold products from distant village traditional eggplants. As soon as the assistant was back, he washed the eggplants and asked me to eat them and drink the concoction. Both the concoction and eggplants were seriously bitter. I ate the eggplants. On the next phase, Papa Muteba invited me to call him on the next day early in the morning to inform him of my blood pressure. It was indeed quite down and around his provisions.

We met sometimes again. Then, in the fifth meeting, I offered him a big bottle of beer and peanuts exactly in the way people used to take them. It was the beginning of a long friendship. He found out what I was doing and what I needed from him. He asked me to make sure he would have the sacrifice that would permit to get in the forest and share secrets. We selected some issues he was treating mostly in the city of Lubumbashi. He agreed that I served him as his assistant for ten days. Finally, we got from one of his assistants the following table for the diseases he was currently treating. The table is exactly as it is in French. We will try to offer its translation in the attachments at the end of the dissertation.

*Figure 27 Papa Muteba: Medicinal Plants, Curing and Healing Chart*

**TABLEAU SYNOPTIQUE DES PLANTES MEDICINALES UTILISEES A LUBUMBASHI<sup>54</sup>**

N° d'ordre	Pathologie	Nom de la plante	Préparation et Dose journalière	Durée de traitement	Site géographique	Observation
1	Hypertension artérielle	Lupapi	Feuilles de lupapi séchées et pilées. Poudre de ces feuilles plus six aubergines préparées et pilées. Boire le mélange	Trois jours et si stabilisation de la TA, faire lécher la poudre pour finir le traitement	Buzela hinterland	Lorsque la TA est stabilisée et que le malade lèche la poudre, la guérison devient complète
		Kidibushi et Matungulu	Racines pilées et mélanger avec de l'eau froide, conditionné dans cinq bouteilles	Cinq jours		Guérison constatée après le respect de la cure

<sup>54</sup> A translated chart is given at the end of this chapter.

		Nkoyo Ngulumbe mushi Kipapai	Racines de ces trois plantes et à boire un verre le matin et un autre le soir	Quatre jours		
		Mwabi Pemba	Ecorces de cette plante, écrasés et la poudre est mélangée à l'eau. Boire une tasse par jour	Deux jours	Katanga	Efficacité très avérée en cas d'hypertension artérielle
	Hypotension artérielle	Lupapi	Feuilles de lupapi séchées et pilées. Poudre de ces feuilles plus six aubergines préparées et pilées. Ajouter du sel de table raisonnable. Boire une cuillère à soupe du mélange		Buzela hinterland	Lorsque la TA est stabilisée et que le malade lèche la poudre, la guérison devient complète
		Kidibushi	Racines à faire bouillir et ajouter et boire un verre trois fois par jour	Boire jusqu'à la stabilisation de la TA		Guérison avérée
		Matungulu	Racines à piler et mélanger avec cinq tasses d'eau. A boire un verre deux	Cinq jours		

			fois par jour			
	Dysfonctionnement sexuel pour homme	Tambo Mutshi Kisanga Nkoyo Umbanga Mbaji	Ecorce pilées et rendues en poudre et mélanger les poudres de ces trois plantes. Bouillir de l'eau et ajouter une petite quantité du mélange dans un verre, à boire une fois par jour.	Cinq jours		Guérison progressive avérée et effet multiplicateur est l'amélioration de l'appétit.
		Mweyeye	Racines pilées, mélangées avec de l'eau et faire bouillir pdt un petit temps et faire un lavement	Trois jours	Lubumbashi	Effet collatéral est que ce produit soigne aussi l'hémorroïde
		Mivwa Kasangala	Racines pilées et rendues en poudre et mélanger avec l'eau, bouillir et boire le mélange refroidi, un verre deux fois par jour			Racines fraîches, la réaction immédiate, le même jour et si seches, la réaction est attendue au deuxième ou troisième jour
		Mukangana Djamba	Couper les racines et bouillir le mélange.	Quatre jours		Guérison avérée

		Kafupa	Mettre dans une bouteille et boire demie verre deux fois par jour			
	Diabète sucré	Musefu	Feuilles séchées et bouillir un gobelet d'eau et descendre l'eau bouilli du feu ajouter le médicament et attendre le refroidissement. Boire cinq cuillères à soupe deux fois par jour	Dépendant du taux de glycémie		
		Kavumba-Mbelo Kihenge Kya Banta	Racines rendues en poudre Racines rendues en poudre Mélanger la poudre de ces deux plantes avec de l'eau bouilli, à boire refroidi et non chauffé. Un verre trois fois par jour	Cure de six jours avec un contrôle de la glycémie		
		Mufwaka wakaponda	Racines travaillées et rendues en poudre.	Cure de sept jours		

		Kifubia Kakoke Koke	Mélanger la poudre avec de l'eau, bouillir et boire à une température tiède.  Un verre trois fois par jour			
	Epilepsie (crise épileptique)	Tshikotshiko tshi  Cambolokon i	Racines rendues en poudre  Utiliser ce produit dans l'eau tiède en réalisant le lavement matin seulement	Cure de cinq jours		Ils sont unanimes qu'il faut décrire les crises pour identifier la gravité et leur type spécifique. Le traitement en dépend.
		Pampi Mulume	Plantes à fleurs de la famille des morigacea.  Racines et prendre des écorces des racines et rendues en poudre. Bouillir le produit et faire le lavement et la racine est bouillie et la potion doit être bue.	Cure de sept jours	Sites de Lubumbashi	
		Diabilonda Kahanzula	Racines à bouillir et boire, un verre deux	Cure de sept jours		

		Kifubja	fois par jour			
		Nez de l'antilope Nez du porc	Travailler pour les rendre en poudre. Mélanger avec l'huile de palme et sucer de petites quantités jusqu'à la fin de la quantité préparée	Durée indéterminée jusqu'à la fin des crises		
		Kidibushi Kadimba-Dimba Mulembalem ba	Racines à bouillir et la potion sera bue, un verre deux fois par jour	Cure de sept jours	Sites de Lubumbashi	
	Infection urinaire	Katshoma	Feuilles de cette plante à bouillir et refroidir. Prendre trois cuillerées par jour	Cure de trois jours		
		Mulembalem ba	Femmes : Les feuilles fraîches, pilées et utilisées comme ovules vaginales au coucher	Cure de quatre jours	Sites de Lubumbashi	
		Kadimba Dimba Plus feuilles	Hommes : Enlever l'écorce en petites quantités,			



		de fougère	mélanger avec l'eau et utiliser un entonnoir en feuille et instiller le produit dans l'urètre			
		Kilala Kanga	Racine et bouillir. Boire la potion un verre deux fois par jour	Cure de sept jours	Sites du Katanga	
	Blennorragie	Mupenda soupe Kakosa	Feuilles à bouillir et faire boire un verre deux fois par jour	Cure de deux jours		
	Brulures	Kidibushi	Plantes à fleurs et à épines. Prendre l'écorce plus un pagne de femme à bruler. Mélanger les deux choses et appliquer sur les plaies	Application jusqu'à la cicatrisation		
		Escargot	Calciner l'escargot et mettre la poudre sur les plaies	Application jusqu'à la cicatrisation		
	Migraine	Mukuta Lwenye Mujila Kutenga	Prendre deux branches plus la plante Lwenye Mujila. Bouillir le		Lubumbashi	

			mélange et appliquer sur les plaies. La racine de Mukuta calcinée est rendue en poudre et appliquer sur les plaies			
	Menstruation	Kalama Kalume	Racines à bouillir. L'eau collectée à consommer, un verre deux fois par jour	Cure de trois jours	Sites de Lubumbashi	
		Swanshi Muswaswa	Les feuilles de ces deux plantes à bouillir pendant une courte durée. La potion est à boire, un verre deux fois par jour	Cure de sept jours		
	Diarrhée	Muhumbu	Ecorces à rendre en poudre ou écorce mélangée avec de l'eau après ébullition.  Selon la gravité, boire deux verres si le cas est grave ou un verre matin et autre le soir.		Sites de Lubumbashi et certains du Katanga	
		Umbudi	Racines rendues en	Boire jusqu'à		

		Watanda	poudre. Prendre un demi-verre mélangé à l'eau bouillit. A boire en petite quantité jusqu'à l'arrêt de la diarrhée	l'arrêt de la diarrhée		
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Source : Papa Muteba Phylotothérapeute, November 2006

#### VI.10. Conclusive Remarks on Papa Muteba's Phytotherapy

Mr. Muteba is a special Chokwe phytoterapist. He has gone through many experiences all of his life. Apart from several languages he was also able to speak given languages linked to his background in both Angola and the Congo, and his experience with different kinds of military forces. It was also obvious that he used his time in the city of Lubumbashi to work around hospitals and thus to propose alternative treatments, affordable to many. He has been able to market his skills, and thus he has become a commodity highly appreciated by different clients. The entire city of Lubumbashi was there to offer him opportunities to cash and to be known as an excellent healer.

He did not at all make a public mention of ancestors, or organize a particular treatment for them. However, he confessed that he practiced a couple of rituals with the people who could get specific appointments at his home. He knew them and offered them what they needed. Generally speaking, he praised his work and the income he was able to secure thanks to it. He all the same finally made a mention of ancestors and thanked them because they had always assisted him to get the best solution, and he had never failed any case for which he was called, and attended. Papa Muteba is fully flexible. He would keep silent about his ancestors and would stick only to the use of plants if the customer was expecting that from him. He would also use plants in many connections with ancestors if it was the need of his customers and the best way to his relations with a given category of customers.

### VI.11 Second Phytotherapist: Mr. Kamboyi

So different from the previous one, Papa Muteba, Mr. Kamboyi is a Zambezi retired elementary school teacher who grew up moving in and out of Angola through Chavuma border in the Zambezi district. Born in Angola in 1950, he had moved to Zambia as a child and lived in Chavuma from where there was no difference for him between the spaces next to both borders. He was home on both sides and had only to be careful through the long Angolan war. Still, he was going there for different reasons, and he also traveled from time to time to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for visiting some uncle families. In fact, he felt home in the land next to the Zambian border in the three countries. Mr. Kamboyi attended school in Zambezi, and finally got appointed as elementary school teacher, a job he carried on until his early requested retirement because he wanted to have time to continue enjoying life as a farmer, phytotherapist at times, and mostly New Apostolic Church leader for the North-Western Province. During the time he was teaching, he always took his holidays for meeting his family members involved in medicinal plants. In addition to everything he had learned during his initiation, and the time he moved from one village to another, he had decided to start writing down the medicinal recipes he had learned with as many details possible. With much patience, he did that work for many years and had a big block note finally. Unfortunately, a crazy man put fire to his house. Mr. Kamboyi lost everything in the fire, especially the medicinal notes he had so cheerfully collected and kept for so many years. The fire accident seemed to mark the end of the whole story, his love for medicinal plants, and his major connection with his ancestral knowledge.

However, “*Chasser le naturel, il revient au galop,*” he soon found himself writing down what he knew by memory, going to Angola, and traveling through Zambezi especially when he was not yet the leader of his church. He also paid a couple of visits to his uncle, a well-known healer in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He got a new notebook, though not as big as the one he had before the fire incident. However, it was even richer because it had added new diseases and their treatments. Also, he was now sure about the value his notes had, as he could use them for training other people, and for getting in a kind of competition every time there was an outbreak of an epidemic or other forms of diseases unknown to both medical doctors and phytotherapeutics.

Charles Kamboyi invited us a couple of times, and finally went with us on his long way meetings that needed his attention, and for which he each had a clear solution, with naturally reinforced

Chokwe traditions. In all situations, we came across he called them with a scientific name, and told us at what level the illness was. He explained to us what could be the advantages of undertaking his therapy, and why the time the family would take to reach the modern hospital could be fatal for the patient. Furthermore, he gave us the impression that he had the right discernment and would eventually advise that the case go straight to the doctor. For the first time, I discovered that particularity. Most of phytotherapists pretended to be able to solve all situations. They also openly said that Western medicines were not good for the Chokwe at all. They were put them in difficult situations that kept them moving from one ailment to another. Once somebody was amidst the turmoil of diseases, the sick people moved from one suffering to another. According to Mr. Charles Kamboyi, he thought that the best way for everybody was to find the easiest path to wellbeing.

In fact, throughout the years, he developed a central concept he called “easy wellbeing for all” based on the Chokwe integral healing through health treatments and adapted rituals dealing with psychological issues that they face. He developed his concept from his knowledge of the Chokwe traditions that he has been following for years. He found out that the Chokwe settlements were figured out in the same way. Houses were always built in places where they were very close with trees. Mr. Kamboyi told us that these trees surrounding houses were not there by chance. Some were there because of the nature of the places they had chosen. Some others were planted because the Chokwe populations needed to have them close to their houses. Mr. Kamboyi elaborated a documentation that showed that this consideration of trees had continued throughout times. The Chokwe, wherever they were, made sure the plants around them could serve more than one purpose. Thus, fruit trees were in many cases used for treating a couple of diseases. Other plants were not there so much for their ornamental effects, but rather for their body maintenance therapeutic results. Mr. Kamboyi insisted that most people nowadays fell sick because they did not have any notion about body maintenance, and body agency achievements.

To the question aiming at finding out if he ever applied or used any divination, Mr. Kamboyi did not give a straight answer until when he was completely sure I had nothing to do with his church and other local people. However, when we got well acquainted, he instead engaged me in a conversation about his cows and how he took good care of them. He then made it clear that if Mr. Kamboyi took care of cows he had the obligation to take care of the people around him.

**Figure 28 Evil Expelling Plant versus Wellbeing Inviting Plant, tomatoes, cassava plants, dead tree**



Mr. Kamboyi's compound is constructed in the Chokwe traditional way. All plants seen have around have been planted either for their nutrients or for their health potential, or for both. The case of the evil expeller plant is striking. It is located at the center of compound and seems to be particularly respected. Curiously, beside the big expeller plant is a smaller one that is well known for making possible the coming of good luck and fortune to the entire compound.

**Source: F.Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2015)**

- *Do you know that there are in these lands individuals who can bewitch cows and kill them under the pretext there is an epidemic fever or something else? Do you know that most witches are happy when people suffer? Absolute poverty is the only thing they can implement and hatred the only social behavior they often need to see (Dewey, 1922). As I told you, I have about one hundred cows on the other side of the Zambezi. I have suffered much to reach that level.*
- *In the first years, my cows were often the victims of thunders. Do you think this was a pure chance? They did not want me to look rich and to be different from so many people. They wanted me to be exactly like everybody else. It is considered like a big sin to be distinct from a few individuals who consider they are the leaders.*
- *Did you want to be a leader?*
- *I have never wanted to be a leader, and wanted to construct my life as I have always dreamed about it. I wanted to get a few things for my family, to get enough resources for the wellbeing of my family members. It was just impossible to react or to adjust to their will.*
- *What did you do?*
- *I went to the resources that were present in me since my childhood.*
- *What do you mean?*
- *In my childhood, I could identify wrong doers, witches, and other bandits, and my many people were coming to me to help them with different family issues as I could interpret their dreams.*
- *How could you do that?*
- *I had inherited some powers from grandfather. When I was very young, I almost passed away. I was rescued at the last minute when a medium prayed for me. I gave the name of the spirit of grandfather and said I would be safe if they gave his name. My name was changed, and I was then seeing things, and predicting the future for some people.*
- *Oh, so you are a diviner!*
- *Oh, don't speak up! Keep silent. I can do a few things now only for my friends, and only when I have noticed that medicinal plants cannot end problems.*
- *Is it because of your responsibilities at your church.*
- *Yes and no, because the same church organizes prayer sessions, and asks to pray for certain people and purposes. At the same time, in private sessions for a few individuals, I use my other resources and can find out about witches.*
- *Let us go back a bit to our starting question, do you challenge witches?*
- *Yes, and I do send them to hell when it is necessary, however not by bewitching them, but by sending back to them their evil powers as I did to save my cows.*
- *How so?*

### **VI.11.1 Mr. Kamboyi's Treatment**

This talk informed us of the way he treats people. Apart from the part mentioned above related to plants, we wanted to know more on other aspects of the healing he was providing. However, we did not want to hear that from him. We rather asked him to let us choose among his patients those we could interview. The first one we met is called Miko (Michael). He is a Chokwe, born at Chavuma border on the Angolan side. He had come to Zambia as a grown-up man with Angolan refugees in the years of the UNITA rebel movement was fighting government forces. He lived for a while in the refugee camp, but did not find the structure interesting, and decided to go and live in his uncle's village. He was welcome, given food for the first while he was taking care of his land plot until when he became productive. He produced many sweet potatoes, pineapples, onions, and he also had honey. Henceforth, he was regularly on the trucks for the Copperbelt, or again for the Congolese border of Kipushi. Consequently, he regularly got money, and soon he had goats, chickens, two bicycles, a big radio, and television. By village standards, he had become newly rich and an esteemed reference for the youth. Many parents wanted their daughter to be married to Miko.

Miko never had any interest in marriage as such especially after so many horrors he had witnessed during the war. From time to time, he could bring back a woman home, and asked her to leave before the morning since he did not want the village to know that he could also have love affairs. With the money also came a given arrogance. Every time he had gone to town for selling his harvest, he also brought back alcohol that he would share with others. He told them that was what they should drink instead of drinking locally brewed and dangerous spirits. He was not sure, but he was later told that once drunk he y attacked the local people who were once so good with him. He was accused of insulting them, treating them as lazy people, unconcerned with their lives and future. The locals, his uncles, did not like that and some decided he should be bewitched and cursed him with epileptic seizures. If they were rare at the beginning, they finally became frequent. He had escaped a couple of times to fall in a fire and a river. He lost everything and became quite poor. One of his cousins decided to bring him to Mr. Kamboyi.

Before the arrival of Miko, Mr. Kamboyi had a dream about his arrival and about what had happened to him. When, later in the afternoon, Miko escorted by his cousin arrived, and as soon as Mr. Kamboyi saw the visitor, he remembered his night dream but kept silent for protocol



reasons that wanted him to formal welcome his visitors. He then addressed his visitors telling them that he knew they would visit them for that disease precisely. It was a punishment Niko had received from some elders of his village because they considered that he was too much arrogant and needed to give him a lesson that could lead him to death. Miko was surprised to find out that Mr. Kamboyi knew so much about him. He decided to talk about everything he had suffered for the last two years and to recognize how his behavior was when he was drinking alcohol. He also acknowledged that he was not grateful to the people who had welcomed him at his arrival from Angola, and who had completely integrated him as a family member. He was sorry for that but did not think he had to get the punishment he had received, and which had made him so weak, poor, and desperate.

In response, Kamboyi asked the visitor to be courageous and to face his healing that could take a couple of months. He also asked him to go and talk with his village chief. Mr. Kamboyi suggested that he met the village chief just for saying he was grateful for the chance he was given to be part of the village. Mr. Kamboyi pointed out that he did not need the divination basket for that case, not even for another. He recommended that the guy also remember his ancestors and confess to them. Mr. Kamboyi brought him leaves of a given tree. Miko had to boil them and use the warm concoction for a complete intestine enema. Miko had to do so for twice a week and during one month. Reported again at the beginning of the second month. Once again, Mr. Kamboyi told him he was expecting him. Also, he had continued to work in that case in particular through his vision and dialogues with the witches. He had identified clearly the nature of the attack. They had sent a wild boar to possess Miko and lead him to whatever could kill him. He was happy Miko was there he would exorcise him. Over that night, he asked Miko to stay in under the open shelter. Mr. Kamboyi came with boar grease and applied a massage all over Miko's body. He shook it several times and finally told him he was free but should continue to drink the medicine he would give him. From that day, Miko recuperated his health very quickly and was finally in the process of reconstruction his wealth assets.

The second case we interviewed about extra treatments involving more than medicinal plants was a woman called Kaji. She had been pregnant five different times and every time she lost the baby in her third month. Her husband had begun to be so anxious and repeatedly raised the question if he did not need to get a second wife so that to get a child. The woman had drunk whatever plants

she was asked but the same thing kept recurring. She was desperate and was advised to pay a visit to the New Apostolic Church leader, Mr. Kamboyi from Zambezi. When she arrived, she was welcome as a family member and given food and a bed for the night. Early on the next day, Mr. Kamboyi knocked on her room and asked her to wake up. He told her what he knew about her story, and asked her to remember how her relations was with her grandma. She remembered and said she was loved much and had received many gifts from her. However, Mr. Kamboyi pointed out the old woman was sad and died sadly because she did not know why his son had not named that girl after her grandma. Because of that sadness, she was not peaceful in the world of ancestors and needed to communicate with her granddaughter to tell her the truth. However, Kaji could not communicate, did not pay attention to her dreams or other social signs. In vain, the grandma had also tried to contact her son, Kaji's father, and with Kaji's mother. They had converted to Christianity, were very active in their churches and did not mind at all to think about their late parents, or about the ancestors. For them, their church had forbidden them to mention the dead. It was a sin. They had to rest in peace while waiting for the resurrection day.

It is out of despair that the old woman had decided to send directly strong messages to Kaji herself. Kaji broke in tears and found that her grandma despite the love they had shared was not kind enough. The sacrifice she was paying for that lack of communication was too much important. Now she was running the risk of losing her marriage. Mr. Kamboyi asked her to understand the situation, forgive her grandma and be ready to communicate with her. As for what the grandma needed her to do, Mr. Kamboyi told her that she needed to change her name and be named after her grandma. She was given leaves of a Mutondo tree and roots from another tree, Musefu. She was supposed to boil them and to wash her body before going to sleep. She did so for three weeks and then revisited. However, for going back to meet again with Mr. Kamboyi, she was asked to be with her husband, and another family member. As soon as they came to the house plot of Mr. Kamboyi, she experienced a trance. She was speaking on the behalf of her grandma and said she wanted Kaji to change that name and be called Pemesa, the name of her grandma. From that day, she was asked to continue and using the same herbs she was given for her showers, and to drink from a couple of plants. When she got pregnant, in the fourth month, she went back to thank Mr. Kamboyi, and she visited him again with her first-born boy.

### **VI.12 Wrapping with Phytotherapists: Questioning Health and Healing Treatment**

After going through the secrets of both phytotherapists here above mentioned, Muteba and Kamboyi, there a couple of points that deserve our attention. First of all, we have been able to find out that the Chokwe traditions have been able to go throughout times and ages and have reached this century. However, similarly to our earlier demonstration concerning Chokwe culture in general, and art in particular, medicinal treatments and healing practices have also demonstrated that the Chokwe practices have continued to open to neighbors' contributions (Katz, 1997). Thus, practices especially in the major cities easily borrow from neighbors and easily continue the Chokwe traditions easily borrowing and accepting what comes from neighbors as long as the borrowing permits satisfaction. In earlier pages, this dissertation also pointed out how the neighbors' values once integrated into the local vision.

Both these phytotherapists above mentioned raise critical approaches regarding health and healing treatments. It is all the same obvious that, contrary to what Dekker (2010:1-16) mentioned early in this dissertation concerning the possibilities that some patients have to navigate health and healing systems, they do not face necessarily clearly situations that could facilitate their navigation. They are often lost without clear ideas to follow. Thorton (2010:144-172) informs readers that in Mpumulanga it is not at all surprising to see patients using different systems of health and healing treatments to recover their wellbeing. They navigate in a blurring system that combine systems otherwise thought different. The people go toward what provides them with the best ways to get results.

However, most important of all are the new patterns in both cases here above pointed out. The traditional health practitioners have a behavior similar to that of their patients. They navigate either in a world combining several practices openly, or in a hidden way. In fact, even the example of the Tahi from "Zambia" in the Congo, the diviner goes for "demythologization" (Kaputu, 2002; 2010) in the sense that he does not go for the main reasons that Christians use crosses. For him, the cross is a source of powers, the powers he needs to heal his patient. He takes the power but does not mind about the contexts in which that power is used. Mr. Muteba, and Mr. Kamboyi also navigate in a blurring environment where systems vary, meet, and take different directions. Mr. Kamboyi to start with him is officially the leader of a local New Apostolic Church. In that name, he is not supposed to escort us to the annual masquerade, Likumbi Lya

Mize, without risking his church position. However, it is also the same Mr. Kamboyi who advises that given health issues have to be treated through a traditional approach. He has reached a level where both systems are intermingled in a blurry whole as he gets his patients treated, keeps his position at the church. His insistence regarding the dream part seems to be encouraged by his reading of the Bible to which he does not refer at all to his explanations.

With his treatment style, Mr. Muteba gets in the blurry situation where the Chokwe people and modern tradition are in a kind of confusion. He has accepted to go around the city and mainly to show up in hospitals. This contact and way of addressing issues could be thought as an acceptance of modern treatment paths and patterns. However, going around proved to be quite useful. He is clearly a double personality – when he goes to hospitals and sells wellbeing to Doctors and their patients. Mr. Muteba welcomes home a category of the population with whom his language turns around practices of the past, and consultations that rather put ancestors at the ancestors. In the case he treated that was also turning around epilepsy, he had come to the conclusion that the daughter of a friend was bewitched. The navigation in an environment that includes old traditions and using modern practices are not characteristics of only patients, diviners and healers navigate in the same way.

### **VI.13 Chokwe Food and Wellbeing**

Brulotte (2014:66) describes edible identities and pinpoints how the identity process formation may be engaged in food and foodways that respect traditions and get their credentials through their capacity to construct an idealized and complex heritage through years. However, it goes without saying that such a process is not a fruit of fixity, but rather a result of fluxes that construct and deconstruct their patterns before any identification and pretention or reflection of the “local,” “ethnic,” “national,” or “terroir.” Dietler (1996; 1990) goes a step further and indicates how through eating and drinking power structures are constructed. P. Bourdieu (1984) rather links the eating and drinking habits to “distinction” that we could in the same vein look at as social structure, or social class formation through community dynamics, heritage, and social capital accumulation through generation, and Habitus construction and reinforcement.

Supporting Garine (1991) and P. Bourdieu (1984), Chastanet (2014, Dec.:3-7) directs the discussion in the direction that permits the readers to take into account the fact raising the

question related to the meaning of eating and drinking in African societies may lead to the understanding of many social constructions, and to the reconstruction of cultural history and its diffusion. However, Africa has stayed for too long on the margins of alimentation history. It is only through anthropologist and historian narratives that food history was approached. It is only from the early 2000's that food, feeding, community alimentation is approached from the local population contributions. It is indeed a globalization contribution that puts global and local (global-local) contributions within disputed spaces through different media and dialogues that African foods perceived as commodities in media depict new consumerist factors (P. A. S. James, I., 2010; Appadurai, A., 2013; 1996; 1986; Bourdieu, P., 1990; 1984; Anderson, B., 1991).

By forcing their social presence and discourse, different foodstuffs construct what is worth being called “the inventors of traditions that move in time and submit to encounters and exchanges” (Hobsbawm, 1983). In this vein, even though food spaces may be ethnically bounded, Wenzel (2016:620-621) rather looks at these spaces as barometers that contribute to different groups' integration for the building of new community identities, or rather for continuing isolations. Thus, Warde (1997) considers food consumption as responding to different social patterns reflecting for local cultures and its reflection on globally shared spaces. For, as Pratt (2000) points out both new media and spaces contribution in food distribution and consumption around the world, thus building and reinforcing of traditions.

The present section that concerns Chokwe food cannot avoid the discussion here above summarized. It is indeed linked to a specific people known for its many activities within a well determined geographical area. This space is particularly remembered for the Chokwe secession from the Lunda-Chokwe empire and their change in active long route tradesmen. The same spaces also record the Chokwe's capacity to offer their services to different local leaders of the time. They were also a kind of local power that conquered neighbors, and especially freely borrowed from them whatever could contribute to the Chokwe's visibility and power. It is evident that through all these encounters and exchanges food had its special place.

The last part of this chapter connects diet and body feeding as a logical part that goes with wellbeing insofar as foodstuffs contribute to health. Also, in this part shall we pinpoint the food that the Chokwe populations consider as their traditional recipes, and how they think they contribute to the constructions of their identities. It's hard to predict what these considerations

will lead to exactly, but we can already say that the same characteristics based on borrowing from neighbors will again show up here. We could, therefore, see again to the same view where borrowing may seem strange at the beginning yet builds the backbone of the food system.

Oral history teaches us that the Chokwe people are hunters. This information could lead the reader to think that they are mainly meat eaters. However, that is not exactly the case. There was a time when their traveling activities, local conquests, and contracts with local chiefs and foreign tradesmen activated their hunting orientations for selling elephant tusks, for producing meat to eat or to sell. The quick growth of inhabited cities, quick growth of populations quickly decreased the games in circulation and hunting became more and more difficult. Local rules also in a country like Zambia forbade hunting and punished it as an illegal activity.

Prior to the government decisions, the Chokwe people had started moving toward cities for the promotion of agricultural activities, and for offering to urban settlers these agricultural products, as pointed out in the previous chapter. They were among the first to in the inlands to be in contact with European tradesmen. They are among the first to have received American seeds and to have integrated them into their culture with a few that became quite popular.

#### **VI.14 Sources of information**

Apart from the fact that we have lived for many years in Chokwe communities, for this study we visited an interviewed Chokwe women in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Tshikapa and Kasai), in Angola (Lunda Norte) and Zambia (Zambezi), or ten women in order to understand their culinary secrets, and to see if the same pattern was followed everywhere.

We noticed for instance a continuation of the same pattern started in the illo tempore from ancestors, which concerned having a kitchen behind the house either under a shelter, or outside. The shelter is readily available and has openings that let smoke leave the kitchen place so that women can cook without any problem. Inside the haven, on top of the fireplace at the level of about one meter and seventy centimeters, the ceiling is developed in three big drawers. The first one contains kitchen utensils. The second has the food ready to be cooked and eaten. The third one is the store that has the seasoned food including especially dried cassava, corn, mushrooms and other vegetables for the dry season, dried and smoked fish smoked meat.

## VI.15 Most Eaten Chokwe Food

*Figure 29 Chokwe Food*

	Chokwe name	English name
1	Shima ya Lubaa	Cassava flour Fufu (hardened porridge)
2	Cidanda mukamba	Roasted softened cassava mixed with roasted groundnuts
3	Katapi	Groundnuts
4	Thamba	Sweet potatoes
5	Chingulu	Yam
6	Mulembwe	Okra
7	Kalembwila	Sweet potato vegetables
8	Cise	Sorrel
9	Salula	A variety of peanut
10	Kamtatya	Tomatoes
11	Jilo	Eggplant
12	Wuwa	Mushrooms
13	Katete	Bitter leaves
14	Ndungu	Pepper
15	Sapola	Onions
16	Makunde ake	Lentils
17	Makunde a Chibyi	Beans
18	Yishi wawisu	Fresh fish
19	Yishi akuma	Smoked fish
20	Thuyapwa	Salted fish

	Kayapwa	
21	Yifwo ya wisu	Fresh meat
22	Yishi Yakuma	Smoked meat
23	Yifwo ya mu yambu	Game meat
24	Mayungu	Caterpillar

Foodstuff from the Chokweland, souce: Collected from fieldwork in Zambia, Angola and DR Congo: July-August 2016 F. Kaputu

In light of the list above, we can agree with Parker (2014:27) that American imports, corn, cassava, cocoyam, reached Africa in the sixteenth century. Sheehan (2010:24) gives more precisions regarding these crops, and describes how they reached the Lunda-Chokwe area through Angola in the early sixteenth century. In the same century, (Bower, 2008:26-27), in addition to the above crops, adds grounds and peanuts that had also reached Africa from America. Clark (1982:646) depicts how Okra moved around the world, getting in a long journey from Africa. Urquhart (1963:98) signals the presence of sweet potatoes in Africa, and precisely in Angola in the sixteenth. At the same time, Lane and Restall (2012) mentions the presence of chili, beans, and squash reaching Africa from America. The same crop circulation routes are mentioned in many other sources; more details are depicted in a book about the movement of vegetables in Africa (Collins & Burns, 2013). It is so interesting to know that the foodstuff that so largely labeled Chokwe have, in fact, a long history of their own that connect them to the history of the continent and its meeting with foreigners.

#### **VI.16 Chokwe Food rituals and Identity Constructions**

The American continent food crops mentioned in the list above have quickly inserted the African continent and have quickly merged with local habits and rituals. Osseo-Asare (2005: XIV) describes how these foreign crops have rapidly become a part of the local cooking habits to the point that many people had widespread similar culinary styles:

Familiar “American” cooking techniques such as deep-frying and slow cooking, or the use of ingredients such as peanuts, chili pepper, okra, or watermelon, or even



the cola in Coca-Cola, were many cases introduced in the sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, new world foods such as corn, tomatoes, cassava, and chili peppers....

Osseo-Assare enumerates all the above crops as part of the migration called “Columbian Exchange.” However, when closely observed these same crops seem today as an integral part of “sub-Saharan African cuisine and culture.”

Apart from their quick presence on the African continent, the crops mentioned above also brought essentially the same cooking format. Until today, the main kitchen consists of “a thick, filling starch of porridge eaten with a sauce or stew, sometimes called relish. The starch is a boiled or pounded form of roots, such as African yams, cassava, cocoyam, plantain, maize, millet, sorghum, or rice...” (Osseo-Asare, 2005: XV). Another important culinary feature resides mainly in a cooking style that requires fire, and a fireplace that is designed in the same style. It consists of three stones that are placed in such a way that they can hold the cooking and boiling pot at a short distance from the fire in such a way to leave enough space for the fire to burn. The most used cooking fuel is firewood, whereas in the city charcoal plays the same role. The charcoal is used on different forms of braziers (Osseo-Asare, 2005:XV). Many Chokwe proverbs and idioms are often constructed are the image of a fireplace as an expression of unity, household life, family survival, success, and future guarantee.

Also, whereas this commonality has reached out to most countries around sub-Saharan Africa, Osseo-Asare (2005:XVI) pinpoints particularities that include the kinds of oil with which the meal is cooked. Palm, peanut, coconut oils are geographically distributed according to their availability, and their accessibility depends on financial means. The variety of vegetables though much adapted to most African seasons and locations are more and more grown according to local habits. Thus, green leaves, pepper, onions, tomatoes are widely present on the continent. According to financial means today, or techniques in the past, different kinds of fish, meat and poultry are added to the sauce.

### **VI.17 Chokwe Culinary Identities**

The above section has given a survey of the crops and many common culinary features that most people share all around sub-Saharan Africa. Taken as such, our readers could easily believe that most of the sub-Saharan African eat the same foodstuffs cooked in the same way, and presented

almost in the same way. However, approached from anthropological perspectives, culinary presents many differences related to localities and locally shared habits. The Chokwe populations have also their cuisines that distinguish them from their neighbors.

In the large cultural group that the Chokwe people belong to, food may be approached through different perspectives. In this vein, De Boek (1994, June) displays details that are worth mention. First of all, hunger is clearly perceived as an unnatural phenomenon that goes against the natural order of things. As such, hunger's metaphor goes as far as to exclude not only fertility from women but as a transformative agent that fights the reproduction process and blocks the matrilineal receptivity at the social level. For, there is a wide metaphorical component that links the alimentation system with social reproduction through a continuation of cosmic vital force. As such, hunger stands for a source of social disintegration and fills the fulcrum function that highlights male and female social roles. Men are seen all around the spectrum as filling food productive functions. Women, on the contrary, are rather receptive, conservative, and distributive to their society as a whole. In starvation times, ethnic charity as such largely decreases, but women still find ways to take care of their men and make sure they have enough to eat.

The Chokwe's matrilineal social progress and component reflect through food production and distribution (De Boek, 1994, June:257). Men are seen filling the productive process that also reflects the male role in marriage. Thus, through farming, harvesting, eating, cooking, and also through the respect of certain taboos regarding foodstuffs, the community produces social patterns that it reinforces throughout time. Manhood, womanhood, the gender that are characteristic of what has been labeled the "Cassava Belt" (Hoover, 1978a). In fact, all around the Cassava Belt, hunger is considered as a foreign and dangerous phenomenon attributed to an evil foreigner. It is also seen as an enemy that whose belligerent capacity kills, ends life. Food is integral to a seminal metaphor as far as it bring life, renews it, and enables prosperity for long cycles (De Boek, 1994, June:258-271).

The rainfalls were quite often a big issue all around the big region. Droughts came with diseases and forced populations to move from one area to another, and in some cases facilitated slavery as certain chiefs would sell some of their people in order to get foodstuffs. Similarly, heavy rains also brought their problems; the population would be exposed to famine and other diseases. Thus,

rainfall rhythms determined population density and movements in given directions (J. C. Miller, 1982). Foodstuffs became an essential power, more important than weapons.

Food possession in these days – and in many places still today – could be viewed as a significant power, a weapon to fight the strongest enemy. Colonial powers could use it to persuade populations to move ideologically in one way or another. Among the first to be in possession of the new crops and food from America were the Chokwe people due to their activities with the Colonials on the Atlantic sea coast. They were indeed the most dynamic people on slave routes and they ensured the security of the first colonials who got far inland on the African continent from the Angolan coast. The possession of these crops added to their power and influence in the region where so many small communities were already afraid of them. Their military force suddenly gained a new dimension and they could also impose famine on their enemy. They thus became very close collaborators of the colonial projects, and eventually, with time, the enemies of colonialists representing a danger to the colonial empire and its free expansion. It was the reason why, finally, the colonial powers of the time and the area, British, Belgians, and Portuguese, decided to push the Chokwe in three different directions, and thus put them under the authority of the three respective new rulers to control them, and stop any velleities of power (Vellut, 2006).

Vellut (2006; 1995; 2005) along with other scholars largely comment on the invention of African borders. In the case of the Chokwe, they were pushed into three different directions, three different close countries. However, those who caused the decision did not realize the people would not accept it as easily as that. For, despite the artificial borders the Chokwe communities have continued to be linked through their customary rituals, traditional hosting spirits, and more and more in the same kind of position against the central colonial and postcolonial governments that marginalized them in the three countries.

An important question still disputed regards the Chokwe's origins and power as such. Quite often, they are mentioned along the Lunda and are delineated in a compound word, Lunda-Chokwe, Chokwe being in a second position. This compound word could be a source of long discussions that many scholars have documented at different levels. Hoover (1978b) and Hoover (1978a) document the Ruund experience and history largely, and thus, happen also to talk about the mythical history of the Chokwe in their relations with the Ruund empire. Hoover is

particularly interested in the succession history on the Ruund Power and leadership. He is also the one who links the population migrations within the large area under the influence of churches especially the Methodist Church.

J. Vansina (1966; 1963; 1966a; 1966b, 1985, 1990, 1996, 1999, 2004) incontestably remains the giant of the area with his expertise versed in many critical sectors. Art, history, ethnography, culture, oral traditions all come along scholarly mixed in his publications shedding lights on different social life perspectives of the local populations (Hines, 2000). He is among the first ones to attempt to present cultural differences among people who could otherwise be seen as the same. As far as art is concerned, he makes the discovery of art that is present in every part of life; every utensil used can be perceived and fabricated as an artifact, finally making life an art reproduced or a mimetic reproduction of mythical experiences (Mbwangi Mbwangi, 2014-2015).

The cultural experience of the area is further documented in the scholarship of Victor Turner. Even though he pays much more attention to the Lunda living in the same area, V. Turner (1975; 1967; 1977) penetrates the cultural secrets of the area and goes particularly in the domain of rituals that give a broad comprehension of what is happening in the Chokwe cultural and identity constructions through time. He attended several healing rituals and compared them through years. He found similar patterns and the use of similar words, actors, and practitioners in the region.

The scholars mentioned above contributed much to enlarging the documentary research in lines connected with cultural manifestations, material culture, lust comprehension, and identity constructions. They have facilitated the beginning of a series of questions that had to come along the field. Their precision of places, people, villages, and rivers were quite significant in leading curiosity towards given respondents rather than others. From their input, it became possible to go to other sciences such anthropology, sociology, and other interdisciplinary disciplines for epistemological and ontological designs of the present research moving ahead. The clearer the epistemological and ontological details were, the more the designs were able to cover a bigger study area. And more documentary sources were needed and included that slowly led to clear dimensions of interdisciplinarity.

A step further in Chokwe food can find another large metaphorical connection linking the kitchen cooking fire to the public eating place the “Chota” where men eat, share food with their

neighbors, and welcome visitors. In fact, the “Chota” is built as an open shelter with free from all around. Most of the time, it is round and is located at the center of some family houses. The houses belong somehow to the same family members. A man may live together with his brothers and cousins in the same village section. They share their main meals, or at least one meal a day, the main one in the evening when every man is back from daily work. Much of this daily work is done in groups in such a way that the men come back to their village together. From their arrival, they share some delicacies including local beer that their wives brew for them. Under the hot ashes of the “Chota” fireplace, men will bury sweet potatoes and groundnuts that they would eat while waiting for the main course, i.e., several dishes coming from their wives, and from which they eat. As they eat, they appreciate the quality of the food they have been served. Also, could we use a comparison from the previous presentation of the kitchen, its fire place, and its threefold ceiling for conserving food, the ready to eat, and the utensils used for serving? The smoke that eyes cannot stand reminds them of the labor that precedes birth. Finally, the food is like the baby that comes to the world. The “Chota” is thus that first place that serves at the same time as a cradle for the newly born, but can also be compared to children exposed to the public.

Witchcraft is present everywhere, and it is believed to change the expected real evolution of any project. Presently, the entire process that leads to the presentation of a good meal on the table can be a victim of a kind of witchcraft. In addition, even before the kitchen, especially in the case of meat, several Chokwe believe that in the process of witchcraft a trap may get a game that is not supposed to be eaten, but whose appearance resembles a given edible animal. It can thus be an old sorcerer on his/her way out who could be caught. In such a case, the meat would be tasteless despite any ingredient used to make it better. It goes without saying that many local intellectuals (in Angola, DR Congo, and in Zambia) have put to question this kind of statement: meat eating and meat taste are often associated with witchcraft in oral traditions and beliefs organized for many years.

Back to the Chokwe kitchen, it is important to keep in mind with Stein Frankle (2005:136-150) that magic that refers to rituals that compel the supernatural to move in one direction or another with the expectation to reach different results accordingly. However, the magician is in many instances distinct from a sorcerer considered as an evil figure whose work is essentially anti-social. Karioki Onyancha (2014, Nov.:269) gives a crucial information that should help our

readers understand the broad extension of witchcraft without any barrier that would separate the colonial from the postcolonial times. The beliefs in witchcraft have continued indistinctly of the time, and have, on the contrary, succeeded their integration in the modern times with an exponential increase against any expectation in urban settlements (Geschiere, 1997). A Chokwe woman can easily believe that jealous women have bewitched her sauce. She can also believe that her harvest stock has mysteriously disappeared under the witchcraft, or that her stocked sweet potatoes could for no objective reasons lose their taste. In the same vein, she could also believe that her cassava flour supposed to last a month would only last two weeks. To avoid such consequences, there are easy actions that are advised. Either just putting a piece of charcoal in the flour or a piece of evil expeller plant in the barn are believed to be enough to protect food from witchcraft.

### **VI.18 Chokwe Recipes**

As indicated in figure 24 above mentioned, there is a way of guessing what and how the Chokwe eat from the list of food. However, there is a dimension that is not visible from a simple view of that list. As a matter of fact, J. Vansina (1999; 1990; 1996; 2004; 2010) indicates how art is everywhere. Our curiosity questions that statement in the Chokwe Kitchen and food presentation, at first, then in the food consumption through recipes as such. Everything to our understanding requires artistic presentation. The kitchen, in fact, has its thatched roof renovated regularly to avoid parasites destroying the stocked harvest. The Chokwe people are known for the artistic work with which they decorate the roof with a top well fixed that permits waters to rapidly flow down. At the same time, the winds are unable to blow away the roof that protects their crops. Apart from the roof, the poles and branches used are of exceptional quality that termites cannot easily attack. Women, in the same way they take that responsibility of their sleeping huts or houses, also plaster the walls with the clay that will last as long as possible. They also look for different clays of different colors or use roots that provide them with colors to draw suggestive designs that suggest food environment. The “Chota” that welcomes men is also well decorated, but in a very simple way with many stools around. It is a place for food but also for entertainment and the judgment of issues related to the community life.

Most of the used utensils are in clay slowly burned under required temperatures. They are well done, robust and rest for a long time. They also mostly serve for cooking slowly food such as

fish, corn, beans. The Chokwe usually like their food well cooked, hot temperature, hot with pepper, and filled with many onions. Apart from other utensils here above mentioned, one of the most important details is to be found in the small mortar. Big mortars are used for grinding cassava, corn, sometimes sorghum and millet to get the flour necessary for the starchy preparation. Women take care of that work. They also use the same mortar for grinding peanuts, cassava leaves, and other nuts. It is through that work that women fulfill their maternal care, and thus provide their households with good food. With the small mortars, they make sure to have them spotless. Men design them with suggestive female figurines reminding Mwana Pwo masks of the female beauty and kindness. These mortars are always present to all meals and are full of the hottest pepper of the season. There is also another small mortar that contains tomatoes and onions pounded together. The eaters are free to use as much pepper as possible, as well as a good portion of salsa that they mix with their condiments—they much enjoy the taste. Sometimes, they have competitions to find out who can consume the hottest food.

Apart from pepper, onions, and tomatoes that go with all condiments, the Chokwe populations are also known for cooking recipes based on sorrel as a vegetable. This vegetable plays the vinegar role and may be mixed in small quantities with other condiments such as fresh, dried, smoked, salted fish, or with tiny fishes (fried). Sorrel can also be cooked on its own; its sour and vinegar taste is used as an appetizer that entices people to eat as much as possible in order to get strong enough to face different jobs mostly reserved to men. Otherwise, it is also mixed with eggplants, mushrooms, or in right quantities of tomatoes to get enough sauce. According to their inspiration, Chokwe women are often able to produce recipes by mixtures of different vegetables fresh, or the ones that were dried under the sun, or again under the action of smoke. Meats, mushrooms, fishes, sorrel, tomatoes, onions and pepper seem to be the basis of such mixture possibilities.

Another vegetable that comes in different mixtures is called “Katete.” It is known for its bitter taste. Besides, this vegetable very quickly gets small green fruit like bursts that are also very bitter. This vegetable can also be cooked alone and is known for its many therapeutic effects of cleaning blood, male masculinity maintenance, and reinforcement. However, these bitter leaves are often mixed with other vegetables. The mixtures are loved because vegetables are liberated from their possible insipid taste. These bitter vegetables are often associated with the Chokwe

people in general. With time, other ethnic groups have also learned to eat the “Katete” and enjoy its bitterness. Quite often, men enjoy also eating its uncooked fruit minuscule bursts. They are quite bitter, but men will still eat them. They are believed to have their therapeutic effects for blood pressure, and male potency.

The starchy hardened porridge has its own obligations. For it to be called excellent, it must be cooked in such a way that when eaten it does not leave dirty spots in the hands. As a matter of fact, once the food has reached the “Chota,” there is a kind of ritual that starts. First of all, according to their age, everybody present in the “Chota” washes hands. Secondly, the meat may be divided into as many parts as there are people, everybody puts the received part either on a small side dish that can be either made of a small gourd split in two, a significant leave of banana. In recent times, such small dishes are bought from shops. In the third position, if there are many people under the “Chota” the starchy hardened porridge received from different houses is divided in such a way that everybody can easily eat. The sauce is also distributed on dishes that are close to the eaters. In the fourth position, pepper, onions and salsa are mixed with the sauce. In the fifth position, they start eating. The small portion of starchy hardened porridge that is taken in hand is rightly fixed, split in two, then one part is plunged in the sauce before being directed to the month. It is then slowly chewed and swallowed. During all the time the meal takes, they talk about different topics. At the end of the meal, the youngest change water from the container, and the elders are the first to wash their hands and leave them to dry. They are then offered drinking water that was conserved in clay made pots that keep the it fresh. That water is usually fetched from the village wells or river early in the morning,

As they wait for their evening entertainment, and all along their entertainment, the Chokwe people will continue eating some delicacies. These delicacies are primarily turning around groundnuts, corn, cassava, sweet potatoes termites, and forest and village fruits. Some of these delicacies are roasted and shared on the “Chota” fireplace. However, quite often they also come from the kitchen and under better forms. From the kitchen, they are presented as mixtures, or separate with a bit of a salt and a bit of pepper whenever needed. In fact, there is a Chokwe idiom that reads that the “Chota” is a place of entertainment and food. While men of all ages are there, they listen, and they eat. Once, they have eaten enough they start running and sweating for their



digestion. As soon as they have digested, they would come back to the “Chota” and eat repeatedly.

### **VI.19. Chapter VI Conclusive Remarks<sup>55</sup>**

From its opening, this chapter ventured to study the Chokwe wellbeing as it is conceived and lived. First of all, a look at the initiations particularly in the “Mukanda” initiation to find out the ordeals through which boys go to prepare them for their social obligations. Through a selection of songs, our readers were able to see the conditions in which the boys leave their village, and the training they go through during the time they spend in the initiation camp. A particular stress was put on the curriculum developed for the training. It includes several steps concerning ethnic history and the meeting with different people through alliances. It also involves the history of wars, conquests, and the forced inclusion of many neighbors in the Chokwe land and philosophy.

That first level of training is followed by a more practical level based on different skills. The boys learn how to knot ropes at first. Then, they are trained to carve masks and other manual objects and drums. A third level of training turns around their bodies. The boys learn how to use their bodies as an instrument of communication for joy and sadness. Their bodies are taught to be able to detach from daily preoccupations. Through dances, the bodies can show up agility and give proof of the fact their owners are afraid of anything. They are ready to live like soldiers and face any danger.

During their training, the initiates are also taught to identify and know different virtues of medicinal plants. They would identify them and in the evening, they would still repeat in the group the names of the plants they had seen and their use. Apart from the plants, they also learn the other strategies that should be used for healing wounds. It is also during this same time that the initiates are introduced to other dimensions regarding falling ill, health, and healing. They learn how witchcraft can bring about diseases and death in their community, and how eventually they could stop evil.

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<sup>55</sup> As this chapter ends questions may still be raised as it offers an education environment that prepares for the survival of different Chokwe communities. Also, that education environment has given its proofs for centuries and is likely to continue for many years. However, we should not see here an exclusion or an attempt to refuse western education. They are not incompatible. Western education providers need to get negotiation spaces for the organization of adapted education for local needs, connections with the entire world, and keeping with distant African cultural traditions.

The last level of training turns around their capacity to face suffering and to overcome it. The initiates are supposed to give a proof of their physical capacity to face pain during the circumcision. As the Chokwe people were among the first to get firearms, they used them during this time. Whenever the candidate was circumcised and did not cry, or show any sign of suffering despite the pain, a gun was shot to celebrate victory<sup>56</sup>. It is with the capacity of fighting soldiers that they are ready to go back to their community. They are willing to offer their physical service to their king for fighting their people's enemies. They are also prepared to face different difficulties that may happen in their personal life and to their communities.

This chapter also studied different healing systems. Modern witchcraft doctors still keep their links with the Chokwe traditions as far as the major lines are concerned. However, as they face a high competition in cities for diviners come from different horizons on the one hand, and as mainline churches and their various avatars also offer different possibilities to question health and healing, on the other, the Chokwe healers adopt new attitudes. On their long traditions of borrowing from neighbors, they also borrow from the people they meet in city and integrate new techniques in their skills. Like their clients, they are often moving in a blurry environment where different traditions are mixed to lead them to do their work. More and more, they serve not only the Chokwe people but also many others who are coming to them. In this way, Chokwe identity-building experience has thus the opportunity to continue counting on neighbors to figure out the future and increase its visibility. Traditional healers have in different ways kept their links to the sources of their ancestors, but they have also quickly and efficiently penetrated the modern world around them to pick up here and there whatsoever contributes to their presence and evolution in the present world. These healers act like the young artists who participate in the Mukanda initiation when they carve pieces of art; they also include in new pieces in their creations. There are new pieces called Chiwigi, Helicopter, and Computer (Jordan, 2006:24, 36).

Wellbeing also includes food and eating manners. This chapter has given a quick survey of the main food the Chokwe people eat. It has also given the main recipes they consider as their specificities. However, for the sake of equilibrium and comparison with what is now known as Chokwe cultural borrowing capacities, we also, at least for some foodstuffs, gave their continents

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<sup>56</sup> As indicated earlier, this shooting custom has not disappeared but has changed its intervention time in the long Mukanda initiation long process. It now ends the third day of the masquerade in the Zambezi region.

of origin and approximate arrival time to Africa. Once again, the Chokwe populations adopted the new seeds for their rich nutrients and slowly included them in the diet and identities.

*Figure 30 Synoptic Table of Medicinal Plants*

Order number	Pathology	Name of the plant	Preparation and Daily Dosage	Duration of the treatment	Location	Observation
1	High Blood Pressure	Lupapi	Dried and ground lupapi leaves. Powder these leaves plus six African eggplants prepared and crushed. Drink the mixture	Three days and if stabilizing BP, lick the powder to finish the treatment	Buzela hinterland	When BP is stabilized and the patient licks the powder, healing becomes complete
		Kidibushi and Matungulu	Roots crushed and mixed with cold water, packed in five bottles	Five days		Healing observed after the treatment
		Nkoyo Ngulumbe mushi Kipapai	Boil the roots of these three plants and have a drink in the morning and another in the evening	Four days		

		Mwabi Pemba	Barks of this plant, crushed and the powder is mixed with water. Drink one cup a day	Two days	Katanga	Highly proven efficacy in hypertension
2	Hypotension	Lupapi	Dried and ground lupapi leaves. Powder these leaves plus six aubergines prepared and crushed. Add reasonable table salt. Drink one tablespoon of the mixture		Buzela hinterland	When BP is stabilized and the patient licks the powder, healing becomes complete
		Kidibushi	Roots to boil and add and drink three times a day	Drink until stabilization of BP		Healing proven
		Matungulu	Roots to pound and mix with five cups of water. A drink twice a day	Five days		
3	Sexual Dysfunction for	Tambo Mutshi	Bark crushed and	Five days		Proven progressive

	Men	Kisanga Nkoyo  Umbanga Mbaji	powdered and mix the powders of these three plants. Boil water and add a small amount of the mixture into a glass, to drink once a day.			healing and multiplier effect is improving appetite.
		Mweyeye	Roots crushed, mixed with water and boiled for a short time and make an enema	Three days	Lubumbashi	Collateral effect is that this product also heals the hemorrhoid
		Mivwa Kasangala	Roots crushed and rendered in powder and mix with water, boil and drink the cooled mixture, one glass twice a day			Fresh roots, immediate reaction, same day and if dry, reaction is expected on the second or third day
		Mukangan a Djamba  Kafupa	Cut the roots and boil the mixture. Put in a bottle and drink half glass twice a day	Four days		Healing proven

4	Diabetic sugar	Musefu	Dried leaves and boil a cup of water and bring down the boiled water of the fire, add the medicine and wait for the cooling. Drink five tablespoons twice a day	Dependin g on blood glucose level		
		Kavumba-Mbelo  Kihenge Kya Banta	Powdered Roots  Powdered Roots  Mix the powder of these two plants with boiled water, to drink cooled and unheated. One glass three times a day	Six-day cure with blood glucose control		
		Mufwaka wakapond a  Kifubia  Kakoke Koke	Roots worked and powdered. Mix the powder with water, boil and drink at a warm temperatur	Cure of seven days		

			e. One glass three times a day			
5	Epilepsy (epileptic seizure)	Tshikotshiko tshi  Kambolok oni	Powdered Roots  Use this product in warm water by performing morning enema only	Five-day cure		They are unanimous in describing crises to identify severity and their specific type. Treatment depends on it.
		Pampi Mulume	Flowering plants of the family Morigacea. Roots and take root bark and powdered. Boil the product and do the enema and the root is boiled and the potion must be drunk.	Cure of seven days	Lubumbas hi Sites	
		Diabilond a  Kahanzula  Kifubja	Roots to boil and drink, one glass twice a day	Cure of seven days		
		Nose of antelope	Work to make them powder. Mi	Undetermi ned duration		

		Nose of the pig	x with palm oil and suck small amounts until the end of the prepared amount	until the end of the crises		
		Kidibushi Kadimba-Dimba Mulemba-lemba	Roots to boil and the potion will be drunk, a glass twice a day	Cure of seven days	Lubumbashi Sites	
6	Urinary Tract Infection	Katshoma	Leaves this plant to boil and cool. Take three spoons full per day	Three-day cure		
		Mulemba lemba	Women: Fresh leaves, crushed and used as vaginal ovules at bedtime	Cure of four days	Lubumbashi Sites	
		Kadimba Dimba More fern leaves	Men: Remove the bark in small amounts, mix with water and use a sheet funnel and instill the product into the			



			urethra			
		Kilala Kanga	Root and boil. Drink the potion a drink twice a day	Cure of seven days	Sites of Katanga	
7	Gonorrhoea	Mupenda soup  Kakosa	Leaves to boil and have a drink twice a day	Two-day cure		
8	Burning	Kidibushi	Flowering and thorny plants.  Take the bark plus a loincloth to burn. Mix the two things and apply to the wounds	Application to healing		
		Snail	Calcine the snail and put the powder on the wounds	Application to healing		
9	Migraine	Mukuta  Lwenye Mujila Kutenga	Take two branches plus the Lwenye Mujila plant. Boil the mixture and apply over the wounds. The calcined Mukuta root is powdered		Lubumb ashi	

			and applied to the wounds			
10	Menstruation	Kalama Kalume	Boiling roots. The water collected to consume, a glass twice a day	Three-day cure	Lubumbashi Sites	
		Swanshi Muswaswa	The leaves of these two plants to boil for a short time. The potion is to drink, a glass twice a day	Cure of seven days		
11	Diarrhea	Muhumbu	Peel to be powdered or bark mixed with water after boiling.  Depending on severity, drink two glasses if the case is severe or a morning and other drink at night.		Sites of Lubumbashi and some of Katanga	
		Umbudi Watanda	Roots made powder. Take half a glass mixed with water boiled.	Drink until stopping diarrhea		

			Drink a small amount until the diarrhea stops			
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Wellbeing, disease treatment, source : Papa Muteba Phylototherapist, November 2006 (F. Kaputu, Translation)

**CHAPTER VII: FROM LIKUMBI LYA MIZE MASQUERADE FESTIVAL TO FEMINISM AND GENDER AMONG LUVALE, CHOKWE, MINUNGU IN ANGOLA, ZAMBIA, AND D.R. CONGO THROUGH FRETZ'S STORYTELLING AMBIGUITIES, HERMENEUTICS, BOURDIEU'S FIELDS, AND APPADURAI'S GLOBAL CULTURAL DIMENSIONS**

*Figure 31 Likumbi Lya Mize: Procession Beginning*



Pictures of the Likumbi Lya Mize august, 2015. The long procession starts from the ancestral cemetery on the Zambezi eastern bank at dawn. The Masks walk in queue and their masters make sure they are protected and keep discipline. As the procession goes on, the mask become more and more active and close with the public.

**Source: F.Kaputu 2015 Pictures (Zambezi, August 2015)**

### **VII.1 Introduction**

When the Likumbi Lya Mize Zambian Masquerade moves in the small town of Zambezi (see map Fig. 9), the public discovers about one hundred masks of different sizes, costumes, and walking styles, communicating in different linguistic and gestural ways. At first, they are distant, hesitant as they look like bogy extraterrestrial beings. They terrify everybody. The public follows the masquerade from a given distance while trying to find out how far these masks are human beings. Women are the most frightened and hide at a distance from which they scarcely peep. As the procession goes on through the main small town roads, the masks undertake dances, show their physical strength, and finally share their hilarious capacity as opposed to their

monster-like look. When the procession reaches Zambezi eastern bank plain, the masks are ready to engage in dances with the public. The dances they engage in have a large metaphorical dimension through symbols that reveal social constructions. Masks and other artifacts worn in the masquerade translate what goes on in society and duplicate the social roles that people fill (Jordàn;1993; 2006).

Their dances can reveal the meaning of their social attributions. At the same time, they interpret social characters, stress the evil to avoid, and the good ways to follow for better social construction. Dances behave as a medium that permit different body expressions and group participation in mimetic production that links to a distant past. From the spot where they are, through their dance steps, body and group choreographic movements, social groups connect with ancestors, and open spaces to talks and discussions with invisible spirits. Through their costumes and colors, dances and music instruments, the population comes together to commemorate the most important values that have built their community and have inserted a dynamic society throughout entire generations. Through these dances, dancers change into communication agencies that lead to the distant past, and translate what the Chokwe people ever went through for the construction of their world, identities, and dynamic exchanges with close and far neighbors (Gell, 1998; Nellhaus, T., 2004; Otto, T. & Pederson, P., 2005; Erlmann, V. 1996; Kringelbach, H.N., 2013; De Bruijn, M. van Dijk, R., Gewalt, J.B., 2007). On the second day, the masks continue to come closer and closer to the public and to prepare them for a general gathering to the royal palace, Mize. The closeness observed seems to slowly lead everybody to understand that the Sacred and the Profane have their meeting point in the Chokwe body as a community. Individual Chokwe dealing with personal and social questions can reflect either the Sacred or the Profane, ethical and religious achievements, through the body agency. The third day reveals a grandiose event through the cultural ritual whose roots go as far back as the first ancestors (even though celebrated in Zambia only for the last sixty years commemorated in August 2016). Despite its beauty and attraction that busy media and extremely pleased visitors share with the world, the Likumbi Lya Mize Masquerade may have a hundred different interpretations.

The present chapter gives one possible interpretation once the event goes through gender lenses and globalized scholarship. Its seemingly exaggerated masculinity revealed through muscular demonstrations and fearful scenes could hide messages that may need a given decipherment. A

gendered perspective will certainly reveal dimensions that could otherwise be neglected. And global perspectives will differently depict Zambezi women. Through the masquerade that deploys large scenes describing men in their most visible masculinity and similar achievements, there are still questions about spaces through which the procession goes from one end to another. There is a geographical space through which masks go, and at the same time, the same space is also the place where the Chokwe, indistinctly men, women and children move and participate in social construction. Through different local spaces, various exchanges that construct the “here and now” community, with bridges to other parts of the world through many communication patterns (Appadurai, 2013; 1986; 1996; Anderson, B., 1991; Ferguson, 2006). Whatever the patterns of communication with other spaces and culture, the Chokwe culture will still emphasize its connection to the backbone that sends memories to its long historical origins, the “illo tempore” (M. Eliade, 1963a; 1996; 2005).

This chapter is about the Likumbi Lya Mize Masquerade held in Zambezi, Zambia, every year in the last week of August. I attended it both this year (2016) and last year (2015) in the scope of research on Chokwe identities and material culture. For each season, the masquerade had about one hundred masks that moved out of a cemetery in a long procession and participated in different activities for five consecutive days. The masquerade came at the end of the Mukanda initiation rite that secludes in the wild bush (or forest) young boys for a couple of months while introducing them to manhood. This rite of passage is presented as exclusively an inter-male thing. It is the pride of manhood that is finally exhibited to the public through the long procession, dances, choreographic shows, and an imposing appearance in the royal arena in the presence of the Luvale king, Ndungu, the President of Zambia, Edgar Lungu, and other distinguished guests.

However, when looked through gender lenses, the ritual heralded as the obliged masculinity social and public demonstration has several shadows that divulge a high presence and contribution of women. Contrary to any expectation, a huge number of women participate especially in the last steps, their contribution so important in the preparation coming before the Mukanda. In fact, they also seem to take into their hands what seems to be the most significant part of the ritual that comes under the presentation of the Likumbi Lya Mize. Zambezi women have recuperated the ritual, and have upgraded it in the scope of a global event that attracts

visitors from around the world, and develops additional touristic and commercial activities that finally merge in one and the same Likumbi Lya Mize.

I intend to lead my readers to understand that the Likumbi Lya Mize Masquerade offers a careful observer an occasion to better understand Zambezi women. They struggle their way in globalization and mark their presence in male-led institutions, a fight that needs international support in addition to different agencies they have developed locally (Appadurai, 1996).

The following paragraphs describe what I observed in the Likumbi Lya Mize. They also elaborate on the masquerade as the entire event happens when young initiates are getting back in their daily society. What happens leaves enough room for questioning how gender considerations can be perceived as the complete celebration gives proofs of what the initiates can do for their society. The question's pertinence comes about as longstanding memories relate man-woman relations while at the same time visible social novelties introduced through negotiation strategies in their society seem to offer new perspectives. Appadurai (1996) offers concepts that permit to comprehend different communications regarding culture, finances, music (media), technologies from one space to another. Thus, for instance, the masks commonly called Makishi become that necessary agency sending back to a long time in the past through a mimetic role, and negotiating a global space through ethnoscaples, mediascaples, financescaples, mediascaples, and technoscapes (Appadurai, 1996:33). These fluid spaces connect remote areas to global spaces as cultural facts redefine commodities through geographies and politics of value that reconstruct concepts, imaginations, and shed light on new social relations (Appadurai, 2013:9-60; 1996, 5-9).

From a gender perspective, a question regarding man-woman participation in these new inventions and somehow in the initiation itself can still be raised. The readers will find with us how a long masquerade procession despite a high presence of local women would keep them on the margins if not for their forcing capacity. Finally, the Makishi's knowledge and skills change in a mimetic event that presents large genderized social areas going far in the "illo tempore" and upgraded daily confrontation perspectives (M. Eliade, 2005). The procession succeeds to bring together people of different ages, backgrounds, races, scholars, and very ordinary people. They spend long moments of fear, suspense, knowledge processing, skill learning, also bonding and partnering history reconstruction. They have the opportunity to reconsider man-woman oppositions and complementarily through Makishi's actions. The event leads to a better

understanding of traditional social institutions, in general, and to a better view of gender in the past, today, and with strong light beams for the near future in a quick postmodern development (Appadurai, 1996:4-5).

All along the Likumbi Lya Mize ritual, mimesis is at the center of the celebration based essentially on the commemoration of the past and its re-production for people's survival (M. Eliade, 2005; 1963; 1996; 2004). The entire event looks like a theater from the oral traditions regularly repeated, annually presented in a season (I. Okpewho, ed., 1990:80-97; 1993, 253-290; Ngandu, K.P., 1984:15-34). The local public and regular visitors know it by heart but still come across unexpected novelties every year. Mudimbe (1993) rightly looks at this kind of artifacts as "memoriae loci" as they display the distant past and people in timeless interaction and memories. Still the same masks and artifacts move a step further in a futurist direction for spaces to accommodate with the quick technologically progressive evolution. The time is aggressive; the present submitted to incessant changes in multimedia and technological tools. Global thought waves and trends include Africa as a big target, and Zambezi precisely as remotely full of global active actors as Appadurai (1996), Piot (1999), and Ferguson (2006) would certainly put it. These local actors (like their peers all around the world) stand for commodities clinging between subject-object as the cultural fact opens their way to a global space (Appadurai, 1996; Appadurai, 2013)

Masks and Mask makers easily accommodate in new generations as traditions open new mask categories representing new modes, scientific inventions, and new ideas. Global challenges led to the fabrication of new masks such as Chiwigi, Helicopter, Computer, or Condom.



*Figure 32: Innovations, Fish and Tower Masks*



Source: A slide from “From Masks to the Supernatural” by F. Kaputu

The initiation masters and their students are full of challenging and innovative ideas that they develop all along the initiation time. More and more Zambian women put on wigs to have a specific kind of hair. The mask mocks the practice. It is a way of recognizing and insisting that Zambian women do not need any wig to replace their hair. Helicopter and Computer masks stand for a proof of partaking in globalization from the remote Zambezi (Piot, 1999). It goes without saying that a mask such the Chiwigi may also be regarded as a mockery of a significant wish to imitate what is borrowed from global spaces, even if it does not mean anything for the local populations. The Luvale land is located far inside Zambia but would like to show that it may enjoy all fruits of global development.

By looking at the masquerade as Chokwe/Luvale material culture, it is, I believe, possible, to get serious hints that reveal how gender issues are regarded, and treated today in these communities.

Well-interpreted, the actions the Makishi and the participants are involved in all along the Likumbi Lya Mize procession activities will certainly give us an opportunity to visit gender understanding in these communities. We will be able to find out what the general male intentions are, and how women meet them with a specific technical device: ambiguity. The same device will certainly show their capacity to manage cultural fact transfers as actresses on a global space (Appadurai, 2013).

At the end of this chapter, the readers will be able to find out how gender works among the Chokwe populations. Hopefully, the finds will note specificities that differentiate its presentation from other places in Africa and in the world. By the same token, this chapter will give its contribution to general questions regarding gender where Africa is often misunderstood, misrepresented, and included in over generalizations. The Chokwe populations have their ways of dealing with social questions and share much with their immediate neighbors without the exclusion of an interesting contribution that could come from important visitors.

## **VII.2 Location and Likumbi Lya Mize origins**

Zambezi is one of seven districts of the Northwestern Zambian province. In 1907 under the colonial times, it was called the Balovale District in reference to the majority of its population even though there were already majority competition claims from the Lunda occupying places within the same area (Muzata, 2015). However, later on after the independence and responding to President's Kaunda's motto "One Zambia, one nation!" launched for the sake of a better integration of ethnic groups, the central government changed the district name into Zambezi. This modification put much stress on a local geographical referential name about one of the Zambian biggest rivers, Zambezi. It flows throughout the district, and at the same time federates lands and its people from different origins while making real the presidential invitation for any Zambian to feel home anywhere in the country.

Zambezi district shares border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola and has ethnic groups straddling official territorial border countries: Luvale, Chokwe, Minungu, and Mbunda, Lunda, Luchazi, essentially. With the sulfurous past of wars in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Zambezi district largely increased its populations. Newcomers joined their ethnic groups leading to exponential migration figures of Chokwe and

Ovimbundu coming essentially from Angola. Altogether, first settlers and later migrants have rebuilt a unity commemorative of their ethnic groups' origins before their departure from Nkalayi their original mythical location in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. J. Vansina (1966a), Vellut (2006) and Papstein (1989) document the up cited populations. They document their respective history as reported through oral traditions confronted with the first colonial sources, their migration to three different colonial territories including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and Zambia, and the birth of tribalism among these people. All the same, the rainbow presence recreated from their original cultural and linguistic groups has culminated in a common cultural celebration, the Likumbi Lya Mize, that tracks back to their origins.

All the above mentioned ethnic groups have commuted under the umbrella of "Luvale." They recognize their far origin in Chinyama, a name closely associated with the origin of the Lunda Empire at first. Later, it was linked to one of its first secessions that Muhunga (1962), Kayembe (2015a), and here above mentioned Vellut (2006) differently elucidate about Lunda-Chokwe kingdom migrations in different directions within a wide central African region. The Luvale cultural umbrella that attracts people from around Zambia and far around the world was particularly visible during my recent fieldwork in the Zambezi district in August 2015.

The Likumbi Lya Mize, as the festival is named, is an annual masquerade. It became UNESCO world heritage since 2005, annually celebrated in the Northwestern Province of Zambia, precisely in Zambezi District by the Vaka Chinyama "Cha Mukwamayi communities including Luvale, Chokwe Mbunda, who live in the Northwestern and Western provinces" (Safaris, 2015 ). It takes place all over the last week of August and gathers people from around the world including tourists, scholars, and especially apart from locals different Luvale diasporas within and outside the country. They all congregate to celebrate their most commemorated traditions. The Luvale (Luvale, Chokwe, Lunda, and Mbunda) put on the top of their ancestral values: Mukunda, death and resurrection, and the communion between the dead and the living. They look at them as a sign of the perpetual presence of the dead beside the living, or rather the living and the dead managing together the past, the present, and the future. The event is scheduled immediately after the end of youths' seclusion months in the forest for the Mukanda rite and circumcision, and other practices supposed to lead them successfully from childhood to adulthood through social challenges. The readers of Van Gennep (1960) certainly find detailed and appropriate

explanations of such rites of passage<sup>57</sup>. As they look forward to their adulthood, maturity and social insertion at higher levels of responsibility, the youth is taken into the bush where the young people live for long apprentice months. This long initiation sojourn far from their homes is called Mukanda<sup>58</sup>. Their apprenticeship turns essentially around life secrets. They learn survival techniques within an environment submitted to the threats of drastic natural conditions. Floods, desertification, famine, and diseases are among the topics they treat. They study the main historical, metaphysico-religious traditions of their people, the ability to find out medicinal plants to use for health issues, for some of the initiates the ability to deal with evil forces through divinatory practices. It is during that time that they undergo painful circumcision operation. They develop their capacity to face silently pain. This capacity to keep silent despite suffering serves as a symbol of their physical and mental maturity that should permit them to face any social difficulty and to hold as absolute secret anything that has to do with male initiation, except among the initiates<sup>59</sup>.

The Luvale elders I had the chance to interview look at the Likumbi Lya Mize as an opportunity to celebrate their far origins, their powers that have permitted them to resist over centuries as a community fighting for its survival. They also look at it as a justification of their influential growing identities over a bigger and bigger territory over years. Finally, above all they think about it as the celebration of their peaceful coexistence that has allowed the Luvale and their close neighbors to forget about their differences and rather maximize their common interests and

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<sup>57</sup> The word “Mize” deserves our attention. All along our research, we easily came to the same conclusion like so many people we met that it is a reference to ancestors. However, we also found that the royal court of King Ndungu is referred to as “Mize”. Still, we thought that could be an extension of the first reference we had regarding ancestors. All these understandings have developed over time and have led many people to forget what the concept as such means. It is in a discussion with a team of Luvale journalists from Lusaka radios and televisions that we came to realize these changes over time and had the opportunity to go back to the source. The first meaning of the word “Mize” could be translated in English with the word “shrub” and refers to the newly blossoming plants at the beginning of a new season. In the Zambezi area like in many other parts of the subregion, the cold season dries up plants that come back to full life again with the presences of shrubs. Plants’ return to life coincides with the end of the long harvest season. During these days, the king used to invite his people for celebrations of thanksgiving to ancestors. People spent many days over different kinds of celebration. Much beer was brewed and food cooked to feed visitors and let everybody know that ancestors were remembered and the next year offered to their attention. Presented in this way, we can see how-the word “Mize” got in an evolution over time and how it participated in what came to be the Likumbi Lya Mize as known today.

<sup>58</sup> Our readers will certainly appreciate reading Davis (1992) who gives another rite of passage linked to birth. In fact, in considers birth itself as a rite of passage in the United States of America.

<sup>59</sup> Both previous chapters offered our readers an opportunity to get as much information as possible regarding the male initiation “Mukanda” and social expectations that characterize it.

cultural values to become a strong force respected today within Zambia, and more and more known all over the world. That is why the Likumbi Lya Mize is a commemoration of their weaknesses and their powers, their achievements, and their outlooks to the world immediately around them and far around the world as Chinyama's sons and daughters.

All oral sources consulted, and the official masters of ceremony (for the Likumbi Lya Mize 2015) interviewed concur on one thing: The Likumbi Lya Mize originated from Angola exactly like the Luvale people themselves. It reached its highest celebrations in Zambezi, Zambia. As far as Luvale people are concerned, all interviewees, as well as the official representatives include in the Luvale group: Chokwe, Lunda, Ovimbundu, Luchazi, and Mbunda as repeatedly presented at the 2015 Likumbi Lya Mize gathering, especially at the finale held at Mize royal arena. Apart from the lengthy preparations that include the initiation camp activities and especially the night preceding their coming out, the Likumbi Lya Mize as such counts three important days. The procession and dances mainly take the first day at Chilende plain on Zambezi eastern bank. The second day is spent on Zambezi western bank and includes essentially dances from cultural groups that have come to attend the event even though here and there the Makishi also participate. Contrary to any expectation, I witnessed during the second day, as the Makishi were mixing with the public, some went to a mining company stand. They dance "I love you Dory" as the company agents were promoting the end of domestic violence. The music and the song were mainly provided to the public attention on the stand, and to get them realize they need to pay attention to harmony that should prevail in the couple. It was not meant at all for the masquerade as such. The Makishi interacted with the agents, danced and took some pamphlets. The third important day takes place at the far western end, i.e., at the royal court called Mize. The word "Mize" means ancestor, King, ancestral spirit, and Likumbi Lya Mize stands for "The day of ancestors."

For these official representatives, the Likumbi Lya Mize did not only come from Angola as such. But it also brought exceptional ancestors whose memories are venerated and regarded as the source of the Makishi, or the living spirits of the ancestors of the number of ethnic groups that have come together as one under the name Luvale. The ritual reached Zambezi, Zambia, in 1953. It is since then presented to the public in the last week of August in the presence of local, national, and international dignitaries and visitors interested in different cultural aspects. As a

masquerade, the ceremony is meant to mark the end of the Mukanda period. It is the time of the boys becoming of age are initiated into adulthood. Through a drastic education, they include rituals to ancestors, and a wide knowledge of their history, social life skills necessary in all conditions, the continuation of relationships with ancestors, and practices related to community survival, well-being protection, healing, and empowerment to face all possible human and natural oppositions. It is indeed the time during which the young people learn about daily socio-religious practices that connect them to ancestors and offer the reference for their social status (O'Dea, 1966; L. V. Thomas, 1997).

The male initiation is also meant to mark the fighting character of ancestors who have been able to force their way out of severe times and confirm their existence out of complicated situations relying on different survival techniques and patterns adapted to circumstances all along the years. The spears that some masks have in hands stand for the memory of ancestors' long march as fighters conquering physical spaces, and getting in interaction with other people. When compared with fighters, masks have a general leader in the name of Kayipu who has personal guards named Kapalu. The total configuration of the masks gives the impression that soldiers of all ranks are present and have clear job descriptions.

*Figure 33 Kayipu, Kapalu, Katotola*



We shot the above three pictures (right top and two bottom) at the Likumbi Lya Mize 2015 and the right top at the Likumbi Lya Mize 2016. The Kayipu mask comes on the top of the hierarchy of the mask society and is highly respected because he sits on the thrones. He is highly respected. He has guards like the Katotola on the bottom right picture. Whenever the Katotola can afford it, he socializes with people and mainly with girls like in the bottom right picture.

Source: F.Kaputu Pictures, Zambezi, 2015-16,

The Luvale community symbol represents ancestors' survival fighting characteristic: a spear painted red and white. The red color stands for their blood sacrifices, death regarding human sacrifices through fights, and other animal sacrifices offered to God. The white color stands for the unfailing ancestors' blessings all along ages. Both the spear and the colors are retaken in the Luvale national anthem that pays tribute to ancestors and fighters whose sacrifices and community sense made possible their community survival throughout times. They also offered the main patterns permitting accommodation to new environments here represented by the Zambezi river. Here the Luvale have finally rebuilt the initial configuration sending as far back into time as to the primordial and archetypal ancestors whose memories are often mentioned in songs: Chinyama and Mwatha Yavwo<sup>60</sup>.

The highest moment of the entire ceremony is doubtlessly when the Makishi come in the presence of King Ndungu at Royal Mize arena. It is the climax moment for the exceptional and highly ritualistic, ceremonial, mysterious, magical, religious, fiction-like, theatrical, nebulous, fastidious, and mimetic Mukanda exit from the ancestral graveyard, glamorous and sensational dances and communion between the public and the Makishi, fast economic and trade actions among the public from different places congregated in one piece of land and in one area filled with drums, dust, sand, water, canoes, sun rise, sun set, music, and masks of different sizes and behaviors (an existential window on the entanglement of common an "uncommon" reality). Despite their fear-inspiring presentations and sizes, disordered attitudes, and out of world phantom-like behaviors, suddenly they completely cool down like dead. Suddenly, the Makishi fall silent and kneel down. In complete submission, and visibly with much humility they pay respect to the King, His Royal Highness Ndungu. At the same time, with his royal staff waving up and down in their direction, the King seems to take for him the spiritual forces the Makishi had until then. These very short minutes also denote how through the submission gesture, on the one hand, and the waving royal staff on the other, the king accepts that the Makishi hand in the embodied spirits. Ipso facto, the king also frees the Makishi from the spiritual burden they had carried from the graveyard three nights earlier.

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<sup>60</sup> Many songs, also tales and legends participate in the oral history that send as far back as to the beginning of the Lunda-Chokwe Empire. The last day of the Likumbi Lya Mize offers an opportunity to go over a long tree of royal power turning around the names of Lweji and Ilunga Chibinda. Lweji's brothers are credited with the leadership of the Chokwe and the Luvale.



Also, despite his silence, the sovereign calls for the end of the long procession and likely the end of 2015 (also 2016) Likumbi Lya Mize Festival through waving staff that sends blessings to the discharged Makishi and the entire community. Henceforth, only the king, the only representative of ancestors, will continue taking the important protection responsibility of the Luvale community through his communications with the other world. Even though some Makishi still continue extra curricular performances in attention attracting activities, such as dancing on the tops of poles or emptying a glass of alcohol without drinking from it, they are given permission to rejoin their masters, alumni Makishi, visitors, and the ordinary local people.

This crescendo moment also shows through the Makishi that the newly initiated young people are ready to continue the fighting tradition of their ancestors<sup>61</sup>. It is worth mentioning that the initiates' age has changed over time. More and more today, the "Tundanji" or young initiates are very young contrary to the past when they were supposed to move from the initiation camp into active life. Today, the young boys go back to their families and continue their life like most normal children despite the lessons they have learned. They attend the initiation so young so that they can have the chance to pursue their studies without any serious interruption. It is, in fact, a call to all Luvale people through the newly initiated community members to remain ready to give their lives for the wellbeing of their people, and for the memories and the continuation of their traditions and respect for the first parents recognized through memories and creation myths as their founders (Segal, 1998). Thus, the king is at the center of the entire ceremony and is to be seen all along the manifestation even when he was not visible at all. In fact, the entire procession from the ancestral graveyard located at the eastern end of the district on the eastern bank of the Zambezi was the starting point of the long journey to the royal palace Mize on the western Zambezi bank to the Mize royal palace. King Ndungu is visible to the public only once a year at the finale of the Likumbi Lya Mize<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> It is worth mentioning that the initiates' age has changed much over time. More and more today, the "Tundanji" or young initiates are very young contrary to the past when they were supposed to move from the initiation camp into active life. Today, the young boys go back to their families and continue their life like most normal children despite the lessons they have learned. They attend the initiation so young to have the chance to pursue their studies without any serious interruption.

<sup>62</sup> The Makishi's entrance or let us say arrival in the "Mize" or the royal court is spectacular. They move from the western Chilende, beach, where dances have been organized for a long day late in the evening. They walk with much discipline in a long queue with the "Chijikaji" is at their head of long queue. She leads the procession. The

After the ritual here above ends, different gifts are given to king Ndungu who symbolizes the presence of ancestral forces. The most important gift is but self gift to the king, i.e., an opportunity of personal reinsertion in Luvale long traditions. Also, the first masks, as pointed out here above, kneel down to give back the spirits they had taken from the cemetery. In the same vein, the Nyantundanji, the initiates' mothers, and by extension the Luvale female community, also come to give their gift to the king. Ferguson (2006:89-100) would discuss these women's social role either as a part of the civil society in recent times or within the primordial social attachments reflecting social traditions. Thus, these women come along with "Vanyali" young virgin girls who have gone through their first menstruations and have been trained to make sure that the Luvale people survive. These virgin girls are the gift the Nyatundanji give the king, an opportunity for the Luvale people to survive over times from one generation to the next. Both these images, the masks presenting respect to the king while silently kneeling down after a long tumultuous procession full of tests, on the one hand, and virgins with bodies painted in female initiation white color drawings, a symbol of their readiness to ensure progeny to the kingdom, on the other, will help us get deeper into gender situations, and decipher lenses through which men and women have constructed and reconstructed respective considerations over generations.

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"Chijikaji" mask represents an old woman. Here and there, the masks known for their disturbance or dealing with public discipline like Kapalu and Katotola masks make sure that all other masks remain in the queue and observe much discipline. When they reach the official entrance to the "Mize" court, they are stopped and they keep quiet. They are all surprised as a gun is suddenly shot. They run in all directions leading to the palace whereas they day has become darker. That is the end of day!

*Figure 34 Nyali at Likumbi Lya Mize 2014 observing the 2015 Nyali*



The girls were among the “Nyali” of the previous year. They have come to attend the Likumbi Lya Mize and witness how this year “Nyali” perform and can face a so big crowd without forgetting their role. They know every gesture the “Nyali” should perform and comment all details. In the long past, these girls would be married immediately after last year’s Likumbi Lya Mize. Things have changed now. They are with their parents, continue their life as children while attending school.

**Source: F.Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2015 )**

### **VII.3 Theoretical Framework, Methodology, and Data Collection**

#### **VII.3.1 Hermeneutico-exegesis of the Likumbi Lya Mize procession, Fretz's ambiguities, and Appadurai's Global Dimensions**

A use of combined tools with on the one hand hermeneutico-exegesis, Rachel I. Fretz's analysis of Chokwe ambiguous storytelling techniques, and anthropological insights, on the other, will build an excellent theoretical frame that will assist in deciphering the Likumbi Lya Mize procession as a contribution to the understanding of gender among the Luvale (Northrup, 1979). It goes without saying that hermeneutico-exegesis should mainly be considered as a support from scholars who with Paul Ricœur, essentially, have worked on the construction of meaning (Rodrigues, 2016).

According to Dosse (2008), when after reading Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, Ricœur engages in a productive philosophy, he mainly takes concern with hermeneutics' "meaning and interpretation." Thus, Garagalza (2008) insists on "the study of the methodological principles of interpretation especially concerning particular texts such the ones from the Bible." He also calls that study a science that guides towards the right or often the approximate meaning from a given author's text. As such, the concept hermeneutics is very close to exegesis that the same Garagalza considers as an "exposition, explanation especially with critical interpretation."

Finding a meaning does not seem easy at all, for as Boven (2006) put it, universalism and contextualism may be at odds as they may give the impression never to be reconciled. The meaning searcher may be left with no choice but to leave both as they may then be used only "to explore imagination." In fact, one step further Stambaugh (1986) intrigues even more the meaning creator as the rational itself may be a trap, offering a biased situation. With a thought to the Likumbi Lya Mize, one could say the accounts that give the impression of being so rational may be trapped whereas the meaning may be hiding elsewhere.

In this vein, Itao (2010, Dec.) goes another step further and recalls Ricœur's consideration of man as a linguist insofar as using language and words he manifests himself and makes himself alive as well as everything that is around him, thus contending "man is no more but language." For, even

when the human being has to understand the symbols he gets in a structure of meanings with a primordial comprehension that is likely to be substituted by a secondary meaning through the gateway offered by the first one. Citing Ricœur, Itao (2010, Dec.:4) explains “Interpretation... is the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning.” Strong of this definition of symbol interpretation, Itao (2010, Dec.:4-5) purports that no single interpretation can claim to have the only right meaning or the only right explanation for two polarities may constantly continue challenges and suspicion.

Garagalza (2008:1) pursuing the same idea adds that the quest for meaning cannot get exhausted or contained. Most of the time, a meaning leads to another, for quite often it is not real, but symbolic. Also, again about the above, Garagalza (2008:2) believes that the meaning is intransitive and is anthropological as interpretation and meaning give the foundation of society through the triad built of being, language and meaning. This triad also finds its foundation in Van Hoot (2004) who considers human agency and “being” under two different concepts “sameness” and “ipseity.” The first one stands for “the identity that is given to us by our socio-historical context. Minimally it is our identity as it appears on our passports, but more fully it is the sum of all the social formative influences upon us.” This first denotes everything received from society or rather collected from it and that may be on the passport and may concur with how people perceive an individual. Ipseity, on the contrary, is “dialectic is the ineliminable subjectivity that was described above as the creative initiative and intervention in the world which is inherent in action.” I can look at it as a personal signature that does not disappear and follows the person in his actions, and in his interpretations and easily stands for personal identity that plays on subjectivity.

To end this helpful attempt aiming at understanding why there is a possibility of getting another interpretation from the Likumbi Lya Mize as a pure male fabric through hermeneutics, Dowling (2011:3) points out “how to do things with words.” A careful reader would find there one of many exegetical readings given to the Gospel of Saint John in the Bible “In the beginning was the word...”, for it is the word that identifies and thus gives life. However, Dowling (2011:4-5) insists on the mimetic character of the word often leaving unsolved issues, a puzzle as to play a “prefiguration role” and giving a “prenarrative story.”

We believe this quick survey of hermeneutics and exegesis could not have a better ending. It led us to a point we can consider that everything observed all along the Likumbi Lya Mize as a prefiguration and a prenarrative story. With that in mind, we have now the obligation to give the narrative a constructed acceptable meaning. The following interpretation will leave free spaces for other meanings through an acceptable, productive debate. To get to other meanings that would lead us to understand gender identities among the Luvale, Chokwe, Mbunda... We would like to suggest following Rachel I. Fretz's strategies.

It is often argued that African storytelling is self-evident as the narrative goes straight to amplification of a Lafontaine-like style that stresses the main lines, and the lessons to be reminded (Bahimba, 2002). Such an assumption can easily be documented about children's stories and simple narratives. Well-trained storytellers are rightly trained to move through weaving structures that put ambiguities as a freely chosen technique on the first level of their work, purposefully chosen in order to require much effort from the audience that gets in interminable discussions as they come across several feasible and possible interpretations.

Fretz (1987) found such complexities and ambiguities in Chokwe narrative techniques and luckily was able to connect them with gender presentations and discussions. She discovered that the narrator plays not only with storytelling but mainly with cultural symbols that may be bound by gender boundaries. In the example she chose, the narrator can lead to an excellent ending of a story wherein the female protagonist goes against traditions in dangerous terrains only reserved to men through Mukanda initiation and masks. All the same, she braves interdictions in order to get living children. By accident instead of getting an edible rat out of the land, she unearths a mask essentially linked to men's initiation (completely exclusive of women) (Northrup, 1979).

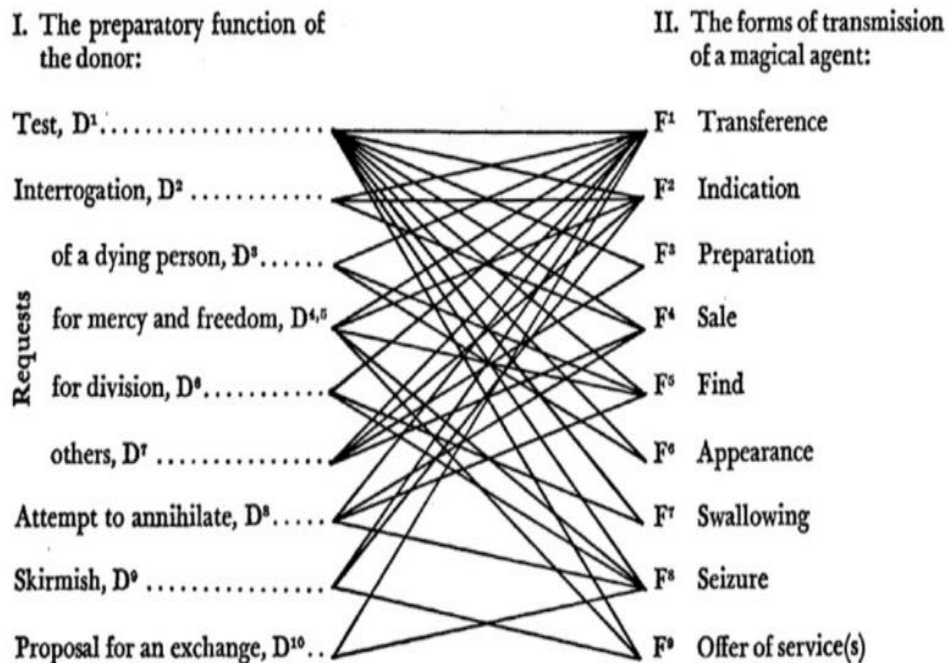
The big lesson that Fretz (1987:234) shares with her readers turns around the fact that ambiguities, intentional or not, can be deciphered and may lead to deconstruction as a technique that finally leads to find out details that may otherwise be completely neglected. The second lesson that the reader may draw has to do with images (J. Derrida, 1969, July). African narratives mostly turn around images that play a role of puzzles and riddles in their evolution towards the denouement. It is a succession of riddles and puzzles which makes us think of the Lusona

Luchazi-Chokwe sand drawing games. It was more than just mathematics since the player had to master many details and concentrate seriously to reach acceptable results (Kubik, 2006)<sup>63</sup>.

The third interesting detail that Fretz (1987:234) points out regards women’s silence about open spaces. It is so important to underline the adjective “public” insofar as it denotes the level at which their voices may not be openly permitted, yet without excluding that they had other perspectives to let their voices be heard and to get things pushed in the ways of their choices. Thus, storytelling sessions where women are permitted to interact with men change into an opportunity for them to tell stories of their creation. They use a succession of images and adjust them in a kind of successive puzzling images and riddles that finally end in a close situation justifying women’s capacity and courage to innovate for their wellbeing.

Rachel I Fretz’s narrative theorization follows a long tradition of mythical analysis by established literary scholars including Joseph Campbell, Vladimir Propp, Daniel P. Kunene, and Claude Bremond. We consider Fretz’s analysis because it suits our attempt, as we argued earlier, to attain interdisciplinary and intercultural linkages and to avoid ethnographic particularism and cultural essentialism.

*Figure 35 Narrative Theorization: Propp, Campbell, Bremon*



<sup>63</sup> It is Only q

disappeared.

Source: African Literature Course slide, Ghent University, 2013 F. Kaputu

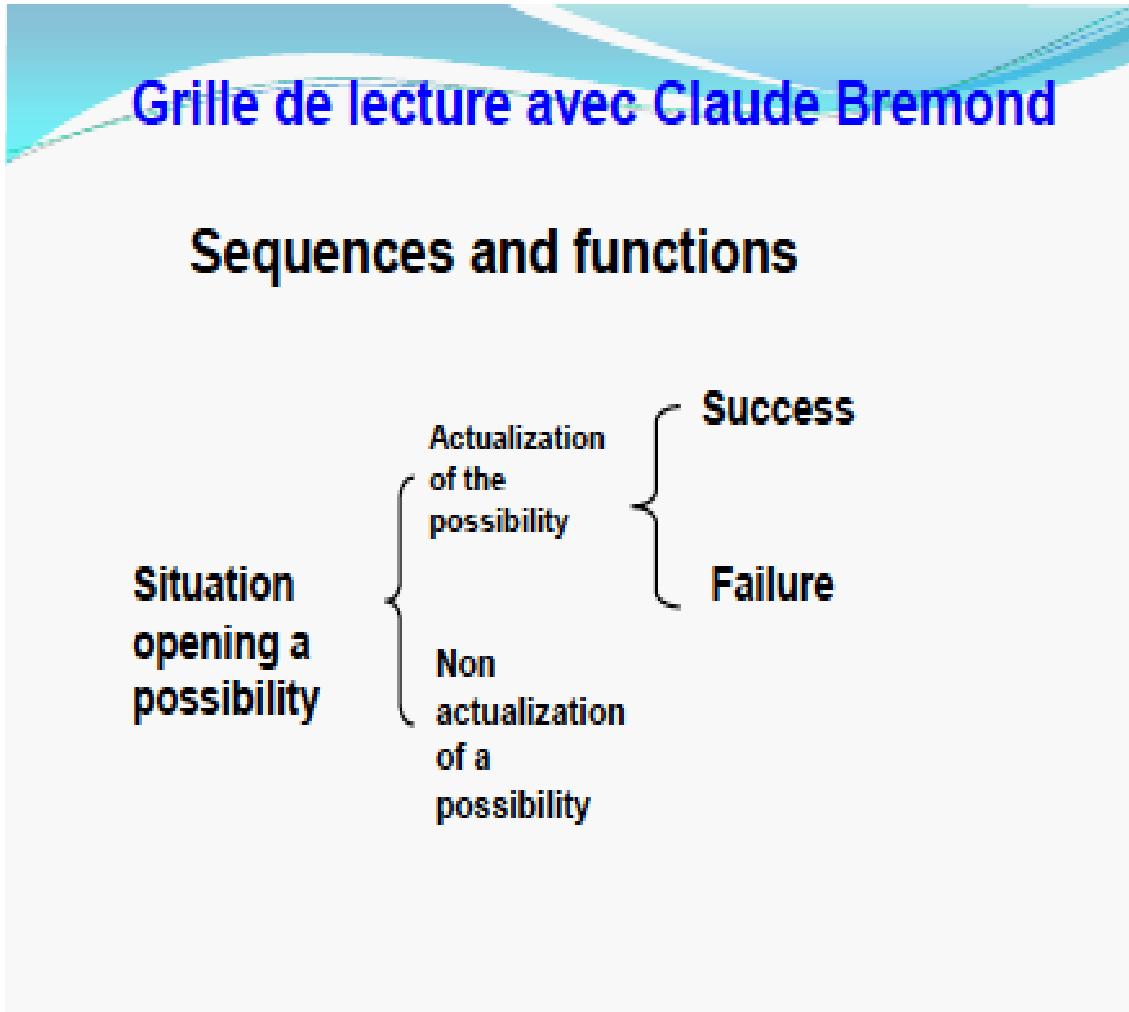
*Figure 36 Joseph Campbell (2004): key for understanding journey motifs in a narrative*



Source: Campbell, 2004:227



*Figure 37 Claude Bremond's Sequences and Functions*



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Claude Bremond's Presentation: African Literature Course Slide, Ghent University, 2013, F.Kaputu

These scholars look at the story through the capacity of the central character to retire for training (or for meeting with supernatural beings who provide him/her different with training sessions); this training changes him completely into a new being capable of facing new challenges and

<sup>64</sup> The above is a slide taken from a class of Literature that I have taught in many academic institutions around the world. It summarizes the sequences that construct a narrative and makes of it an entire story, or a failed one that is forced to stop somewhere.

bringing back peace and harmony to his homeland. Claude Bremond, for instance, looks at narratives regarding a succession of sequences that depends on the response given to key questions in order to pass to the following sequences. Their presentation makes sense and leads to a better understanding of the capacity the narrator must have to push the story in such a way that deciphered riddles and puzzles lead straight to new meanings and to the revelations of dimensions that otherwise would be neglected. That is exactly the theory that Fretz (1987) updates in her research about Chokwe's storytelling techniques essentially based on ambiguities. Whoever we use among the above scholars for considering a narrative in one way or another, the final finding shows how cultural symbols and ambiguities come one after another in a labyrinth-like process encompassing riddles and puzzles to finally lead to an unexpected interpretation or discovery.

Appadurai (1996; 2013) offers an additional but necessary tool that will facilitate the understanding of Zambezi women through their business and imagination activities linking their remote place to the global space. Imagination stands for the capacity to lead actions in a way that brings solutions to individuals and their community through new mental spaces and commodities that could not be thought about earlier (Appadurai, 2013; Millis, 1959). Thus, this exercise reorganizes social spaces and opens psychological understanding when visitors come and go, stay for long periods, or permanently, and bring with them material and immaterial commodities shared or exchanged through different possibilities. Through their activities, these women change the social rupture separating them from men by negotiating space to accommodate a new kinship understanding, and for showing their capacity to adapt their cultural background to a quickly moving world around them (indeed an excellent inclusion of the driving force of imagination in the lines of Appadurai, 2013).

Ethnicity that once was a major heuristic component in daily community life has slowly lost its priority etiquette as the concept moves into other fields, the so-called ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, mediascaples, and technoscaples (Appadurai, 1996:33). Another environment is a fruit of imagination (Appadurai, 1996:6-7). First, the Luvale as the majority ethnic group in the area opens itself to neighbors and includes them in the same concept of Luvale as long as they celebrate the same ancestors and recognize that the Luvale never disappear; they live forever beyond their possible physical death. Secondly, they stop the fights they had in the past and offer their submission to the government in recognizing its authority. They also offer their traditional

submission to their king, Ndungu. Thirdly, they manage to keep their doors open to their cousins from the neighboring countries: Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Thus, if the government, by any chance, thought of “Numerus Clausus” in giving a district to the Luvale, it could not predict the openness to their “cousins.” In that way, the Luvale have found a trick to maintain steady demographic growth. For, cousins are all brothers and sisters, and members of the same family. Fourthly, with the understanding of kinship here above pointed out, both neighboring countries (Angola and Zambia) offer them family members. They extend kinship and open a negotiation space that touches on the theory of global dimensions and explains why Zambezi is an open space to newcomers, tourists, and the imagination and its avatars (Appadurai, 2013:9-60; 1996, 5-9).

### **VII.3.2 Feminism and Gender in Africa**

Gadzekpo (2011) and Wood (2010) in their articles point out that old gendered ghosts continue haunting not only media, but also social justice, and daily cultural activities. In their respective studies of feminism and gender in Africa, Soetan (2010) and Nzegwu (2001) rebuke researches that tackle important questions in the light of western theories and blindly apply them to African countries, consequently reaching appalling conclusions while forgetting that these countries are different. It is understood that either these theories’ differences or the duration of the attention paid to gender challenges should justify any kind of excuse or justification for African developing countries to reserve a bad treatment to women if any. I stand by the hypothesis here above raised and counting much on the contribution of local people to get appropriate interpretations of social activities such as the Likumbi Lya Mize. In this vein, Bork (2011) advises scholars to be careful from just relying on what is perceived from gestures and actions, as observations may lead to misrepresentations and over exaggerations.

According to Liking (1998) and Callimore (2001), in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, particularly since Simone de Beauvoir, women have increasingly participated in all public spheres, and feminist writings have become commonplace. Even in the once strongly patriarchal Japan, opportunities for women have grown, and feminist ideas have taken root. But, in Africa, most women do not consider situations regarding their rights, advantages or disadvantages as such in comparison to men’s often mentioned superiority.

Callimore (2001) captures feminist realities in Africa and questions the ability of Sub-Saharan women to denounce abuses in a patriarchal African society without risking the continued existence of that society. Her argument has sparked debate in the literature of African women in both Anglophone and Francophone countries. Of course, one cannot assess perspectives on African women without considering African conditions. In many places, African women are socialized to be silent about all issues related to their lives, especially its intimate aspects. They would be at risk whenever they dare to do or say anything that threatens men's hegemony and power. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2006) illustrates this through the case of Rachael. She is secluded in an isolated castle and forced to kneel down and ask for mercy from her husband, the monarch. Her sin: questioning him about his sexual relationships with girls as young as their daughters and sons. Rachel I. Fretz (1994) offers an alternative for the understanding of Gender in many places in Africa, and certainly among Chokwe women through puzzling narratives turning around ambiguous mask-figures that finally lead to women's retribution through matriarchy and exclusive possession of children. Otherwise put, despite interpretations that may show male superiority, the Chokwe women social situation as such needs a deeper interpretation as far as gender is concerned.

In Francophone Africa, when Bâ (1981) suggested that women should put their destiny in their hands through writing, she neglected the predicament faced by all women who wish to raise political and social issues but are taught to be silent. Her argument that women can gain confidence through writing epistolary genre is not persuasive. Bâ (1985), Kempen (2001), and Azodo (2003) go in the same direction as even later analyses of Bâ's novels and committed conferences do not seem to offer better chances to women's writings. It is believed that such writings would only provoke men's anger, adding even more to women's burdens. Bâ finally has to face the limits imposed by women's silence (Callimore, 2001:2). Women are quite often afraid of openly speaking out about the atrocities they suffer for fear of being marginalized even further completely misunderstood if they are in a society that has always been functioning in a given way. Surprisingly, in her novels, Bâ reserves minor and insignificant roles to her female characters.

Mariama Bâ is considered a "Beauvoirian" by some critics. She is thought to advocate very different gender roles in Africa, ones that would be unacceptable in many countries. On the other hand, many African feminists argue that Bâ's version of feminism is equivocal and a danger to

the future of African society. Agacinski (1998:59) calls it “the logic of the second sex,” which she defines as a denial of sexual identity.

One can understand why female African scholars distance themselves from Western trends in feminism and gender studies. It is quite difficult for them to find the right words to express themselves and dialogue with their male partners, who often misunderstand them and accuse them of undermining African traditions. Many African men continue to view women’s issues as distractions from more important issues: politics, economics, post colonialism, dictatorships, imperialism, and so on. For most men, women’s “plight” if seen as so is not a problem in Africa, and feminism is simply off the mark. They consider it more philosophical than practical. They also see feminist initiatives as a threat to their dominion and privileges. African women who delve into feminism do so at risk to their social lives and careers.

The writer Amina Sow Fall goes so far as to reject the use of the term “feminism”; she claims to be writing simply as a human being. But men have been quite vigilant about attacking her. They argue that she belongs to the same group of reactionary women who seek their independence. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:229) put forward the concept “Stiwanism,” which stands for Social Transformation Including Women in Africa. She asserts that whenever African women question the social order, men perceive it as an attack on their parochial world or an attempt to uproot social institutions. She compares Stiwanism with the red cloth the matador uses to tease the bull. Of course, after being teased, the bull is finally stabbed. Perhaps Ogundipe-Leslie hopes to be able to achieve an analogous result—the end of male hegemony. However, she does not discuss the process of transformation.

Other female writers follow the example of Aidoo (1998:155-172), who also rejects the concept of feminism for an “African Household Policy.” In many places, such ideas are regarded as very dangerous, perhaps applicable to the elite from big cities but not to village women. Buchi Emecheta counterposes “feminism” to “Feminism.” The latter applies to the western world, the former to African women. She stresses that the world of an African woman revolves around motherhood, giving life, and the lives of other women. This approach dovetails with a concept put forward by Walker (1983:xii)—womanism—which pertains to black feminism as opposed to the feminism often associated with whites. Buchi is among the writers who insist on Africa’s

difference with the West; she thus rejects any comparison of women's situations in the two regions and finds no need to uphold women's rights through laws.

Liking (1998) has taken another approach. She defines "Misovire" as a situation where a woman is unable to find a desirable and admirable man. According to Liking (1998), and many would agree with her, men are often interested in women only to satisfy their sexual appetites. She invokes the concept "polyphallic," which refers to men having sex with many partners just for lust and erotic pleasure. She argues that most men married to more than one wife are pursuing their selfish interests and unconcerned with marital life as such. She also questions any tradition that gives men permission to have as many wives as they would like. Liking would like to see a better channel of communication between the sexes. She wishes men would explore what women are capable of and how they could work together on their relationships. She advocates new types of relationships in Africa and a new way of expression between the sexes. She invites African men to participate in this transformation.

Liking's argument is similar to that of Westlund (2005, Sept.:4) in her article "Love and the Sharing of Ends." Westlund considers how to combine union and autonomy in relationships. She emphasizes the practical benefits of marital and other unions of companions. Such unions permit both self-identification and cooperative work: "What is common to all is this: your well-being is tied up with that of someone (or something) you love." And "when something bad happens to one you love...something bad also happens to you... The people you love are included inside your boundaries; their well-being is your own." Westlund argues that women and men become "one" together, share all life conditions, and should view their lives as facing the same challenges. It is a pious effort, but the proof of the pudding will be in the results. Contrary to Westlund, who writes from a Eurocentric perspective, Liking does not state clearly how African men and women from different cultural backgrounds can come together and overcome the past. Nor does she point out the benefits of a new social order that views man-woman relationships differently.

Taking yet another approach, Calixthe Beyala puts forward the concept "Feminitude," which is quite different from the western feminism essentially associated with Simone de Beauvoir's rejection of maternity. It insists on womanhood, work, and freedom, but rejects any kind of negritude, i.e., pride in physical and cultural aspects of African heritage. Also, it advocates writing by women that expresses openly their hidden sufferings. Not surprisingly, she has been

accused of wanting to reveal matters that have been kept hidden by traditions and tacit protocols throughout generations. But in spite of her efforts, her view, like that of Werewere Liking, ultimately does not seem to differ all that much from those of most African men. And she too fails to offer a description of how life would look based on her new vision. Her message turns out to be empty since it cannot be used to achieve any change. It is more literature per se than a prescription for transforming African communities.

Simola (1999) writes about Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, a Nigerian activist who spoke in many parts of the world. She even led women in expelling white commissioners from her village when they were not respecting local customs. But while Ransome-Kuti embodied African women's aspirations, she still endorsed submission to men according to social norms—African women would stand up to fight foreigners while nonetheless respecting their husbands. The status quo in African society would thus be preserved.

In her article "Gender Equality in a Dual-Sex System: The Case of Onitsha," Nzegwu (2001) disagrees with Simone de Beauvoir's theory completely. She argues that the concept of gender equality is not applicable in Africa, particularly in Onitsha, the Igbo land in Nigeria. She contends that men and women have different tasks, but that none of these tasks are more important than others. In her view, there are two different social structures, men's and women's, each organized according to a clear hierarchy and different functions. These two structures are complementary. She criticizes the idea that man's superiority is incongruent with any traditional organization and avoids any comparison with the West. Nzegwu believes that gender issues do not allow one to understand African traditions.

With independence and technological progress in communications—through mobile phones, the internet, long-distance learning, CD-ROMS, faxes, and improved roads and railways—different parts of the world increasingly have the same customs and African women are not left out in the global march and perspectives. As Nyamnjoh (2000:2) writes, "A global village will have global customs... We have witnessed the McDonaldization of societies." The world is slowly becoming one. Despite its many disparities still visible in many sectors and so striking through parts of the world, many cultural facts and ideas circulate at a high speed from one corner of the world to another. African women from all places have, though often in their own ways, joined the global aspirations to be visible on the fighting fronts that aspire to see the coming of a new era of justice

and communion, and a better understanding and collaboration between men and women. They cannot withdraw from the planetary space, for this global village has different command centers and visages. For Lafay (1997:43-44), Nyamnjoh (2000:1), and Appadurai (1986; 2013), the planetary space operates as a market in which different commodities—including commercial ones, but mainly philosophical, ethical, religious, ideological, and cultural facts—are exchanged. Appadurai (1996:17) notices that:

compression of time and space and (in the latter's words) "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are highly shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa, a process of accelerated flows of capital, consumer goods, people, and products of culture and knowledge (especially in the form of electronic audiovisual images). It is, however, our belief that whatever the goods, the process of exchange, and the destination choice, all over the world transit through a capitalist culture and western ideology leads people either to accept their fate or to fight for reaching a given level for...the growth of the information superhighway has revitalized debate on international flows of news, information and cultural products. While some view it as rapidly forwarding the globalization process, others sympathetic to the predicament of those financially and psychologically incapable of achieving these sophisticated technologies, see their development as fostering media and cultural imperialism.

It is more and more evident that there is not any community that chooses to be isolated from the rest of the world. Despite geographical separations and distances, what happens in one place around the world is easily redistributed to the world. Linguistic behavior, clothing habits, and musical distractions are quickly expanding, covering vast areas and people, changing their culture, adapting them to new environments through various strategies that Appadurai has enumerated, presented, and explained (Appadurai, 1996).

From the colonial days, economic indices were criteria in the classification of countries, and incursions and wars were launched mainly to foster international trade. Europe had already started developing into a large market. After World War II, Europe was built on Sub-Saharan African wealth, especially from minerals (Hailey, 1945:1325). As Europe developed economically, African nations fell into debt. Africans needed to find strategies to look differently at their history as well as at their destiny. Women could not be indifferent at all and keep things



going in whatever way. They had the moral duty to connect with men, even if the same men in many cases condemned them to silence. Gender options had to be visited at least for harmonization with the evolution.

Already in their times, Achebe (1958) and Ekwesi (1961), both from the Igbo land, share strong hints about gender issues. They leave no doubt about women's conditions there. Polygamy is not questioned at all, and man's authority is absolute. Okonkwo, the protagonist of *Things Fall Apart*, beats his wives at will and sacrifices Ikemefuna, the child they are adopting, without considering his wives' sentiments. In *Jagua Nana*, Nana maintains the household while prostituting herself to find means to live in the city. Her husband makes a profit from her prostitution, but as soon as he can do without her, he forgets about her.

The bottom line is this: anything approaching feminism is still attacked in many places in Africa, and women's initiatives are often rejected. But despite diversity in their customs, traditions and rituals, African women can work together to forge new relationships with men and suggest ways that they can contribute to the challenges faced by their postcolonial and post-dictatorial societies. Indeed, as Westlund (2005, Sept.) argued, points of the agreement must be found between men and women. They are both interested in the evolution of their continent and the world. And if feminists can emphasize women's benefits to their households, communities, countries, and indeed the entire subcontinent, they may become more acceptable to many men. We need a new vision of relationships between men and women. It is urgent to pay attention to these relationships because they will shape Africa's evolution substantially. With some attention to the main axes the Likumbi Lya Mize presents, it is possible to find out that some regions in Africa have gender resources that have not been enough studied. These studies could lead to new patterns susceptible to lead to a better understanding of role distribution between men and woman, and for the construction of a better society. The association of hermeneutics, Fretz's theory, and Appadurai's global dimensions can open the reader's eye to the fact that there are things that happen without any advertisement. Cultural facts up and down around the world and negotiate changes in the social fabric.

#### **VII.4 Story Interpretation and Keys to Understanding Gender Balance in the Chokweland**

African scholars here above-mentioned and writing about Gender in Africa are but a sample. Many others could be mentioned elsewhere and certainly in Zambia. However, the originality of

this thesis is to go in the other direction that is less observed and less regarded as an important resource for the construction of a balanced gender for a better future. Through a re-reading of Likumbi Lya Mize at the light of Fretz (1987) based on storytelling and ambiguities, associated with hermeneutics and global dimensions, the following paragraphs will investigate Luvale/Chokwe women's gender techniques in a male structured environment. First, it is interesting to find out the main role and significance of the king in Luvale society.

#### **VII.4.1 The King's central Position in the Likumbi Lya Mize and the Luvale society**

The central position of the king is understood better when the royal herald comes on the scene. His partition includes white clay, chalk or powder that he traces on his body essentially in a ritual that includes the entire left hand, and arm, followed by the left hand and arm, before including his face and chest. The herald does this while kneeling down at about five meters from the king (who is sitting down beside the queen). Then, the herald blows on the clay that goes all around and stands for blessing distributed to nature all around and to the present public, men, women, and children. The herald then moves to the center of the arena chanting praises for the king while still kneeling down, slowly moving towards the king. He starts a chorus with the public enthusiastically responding with clamors, drumming, yells, and bellows to praise the king. As the Herald pushes forward on his knees, he reaches a crescendo when his praises depict King Ndungu within a long heroic family tree going as far as to the first ancestors: Ilunga Chibinda, Lweji, Mwanta Yava, and the organizer of the Luvale, Chinyama.

Like Chinyama, King Ndungu has the destiny of the Luvale in his hands. Concerning the Makishi and the spirits handed in, Mbiti (1990) would rather represent the king as a dead-alive (or alive-dead). As a royal character, the king is alive and at the same time he is a living representative of the dead ancestors with whom he shares life secrets. The king is also the aspiration of all Luvale for whom death is only a passage to another life, or otherwise put a continuation of their life, for life does not stop with death, but rather continues. The very celebration of the day embodies resurrection and life continuation. None can kill Luvale forever; they strongly believe in life everlasting. The king represents endless life and is the source of different powers distributed to the community. Thus, the entire community men, women, children, and the Makishi pay tribute to the king. They join in the praises addressed to the king for the eternity the Luvale get through

him. Death is celebrated as an opportunity that gives the Luvale access to the everlasting life. And the Makishi stand for the proof of the eternal life.

All here above-mentioned details taken together, i.e., a high consideration paid to the Makishi presentation and work all along the procession (without necessarily taking into account the Mukanda training done far from the public), Makishi's capacities to defeat common fears and to use physical strength in many cases, the king himself as a social institution. He is invisible all along the year except for the Likumbi Lya Mize finale for his representative role of ancestors, all necessarily leads to revealing male social superiority, if not at least a male predominant celebration. The above could also justify to the eyes of many a biased gendered society paying exclusive attention to men. The observer could easily be in a place where gender is essentially a male-dominanted field. In fact, the very fact of offering "Nyali" to the king might easily pass for the most slave-like action, by which the war submitted victim accepts to bear a body mark testifying an exclusive bond with a fortune decider master. However, several pertinent questions are permitted to find out if the above is the best interpretation given to the event about male domination. There are certainly other interpretations that can be reached with the help of the autochthons' participation in the hermeneutics or exegesis. Besides, research conducted elsewhere could also be of much assistance in this case. However, our reader should not forget that we may have here a very specific case that calls for critical attention before reaching any conclusion. All the same, a quick look at what is said of African feminism and gender may reveal helpful, and may also play the role of a bridge that will lead to both Zambezi banks in Zambia.

#### **VII.4.2 A New Reading of the Entire Event**

With the above in mind, we can count the main images that accumulate all along the Likumbi Lya Mize procession and if possible translate them in terms of a narrative. The first main image turns around the Mukanda exit from the ancestral graveyard. It looks like a fixed picture with on the one hand threatening masks, and on the other distant observers somehow in the absence of local women. The second important questionable attraction is rather a moment when women who were invisible so far are almost like bees gluing to the Likishi, Chizaluke, as he is searching for foodstuff and other objects in the sand while gathered women keep singing praises to encourage him. The third big image calling our attention happens on the third stop in the procession, Sakashivi, a Likishi looking smaller than Kayipu and carrying a club surprises the public as with

a brisk and sudden hit it can crash down a calabash full of water. Sakashivi answers to the request of the public, essentially women, to bring them water for their need, washing, and drinking. As soon as this victory is noticed, young women who are around engage in dances with the mask and even exchange a few words before the Likishi joins the process again. Later on, Mupala, a very similar mask but only bigger in shape and more violent, smashes a bigger calabash at the entrance of the District Commissioner's office. The clamor is bigger than ever, and it is followed by the singing of the Luvale anthem.

Henceforth, the procession goes on smoother as the public comes easily to the masks. And the masks also feel somehow accepted as they progress to the "Chilende," the plain on the Zambezi eastern bank. There, they retire to their Mukanda camp whereas the public prepares a big circle for dances, at the same time they look for food sold all around. Quick food selling points are installed all around the big circle. Everybody is on wait until the Makishi return from their initiation camp. One can imagine that they also went to catch back some energy because the long procession was particularly tiresome to them. But commonly, the spirits they are do not need food. On their return, they engage in dances by group of categories of masks and demonstrate their particularities. One specific dance attracted much attention as a mask played the lover of a woman and even demonstrated specific capacities to engage in intercourse.

On the second and the third day, Makishi rather freely come along with the public as they partake in dances and continue collecting gifts. On the last day, two striking images mark the end of the Likumbi Lya Mize season. First, two Mwana Pwo Masks demonstrate their magic capacity in making alcohol disappear from a full glass to the amazement of the public. Afterward, they also mark a major point when one of the two goes up on a pole and dances from the top without any fear. Beside these fearsome and extraordinary images, the Nyakandanji present respect to the king first in bringing to his attention young virgin girls who have just come out of their initiation.

The main images can produce a very short story. Scholars have developed the idea that a succession of images, if placed in a logical order, leads to a narrative. Kibbey (2005:197) clearly purports, "What linear narrative requires is an indexical succession of images... that each image points to the next one in line with irrevocable certainty." Duarte (2014) seems even to hammer with much strength on the same nail as he insists that images organize the narrative and build up the comprehension that finally circulates in the audience or among readers. It is within these

strong statements that I have taken the freedom to use my narrator's inspiration to draw up the successive images and construct the following pedagogical story. I would also cite Fretz (1987) who knows exactly about this technique that gathers people around fire in the evening and keeps stories rolling from one narrator to another with images used to produce and clarify ambiguities. Here is my story:

Once upon a time early at dawn, coming out of a graveyard, masked individuals were looking for their mothers, their sisters, and their fiancées. Unfortunately, because of their strange outfits none of the female parents came close to them. As time went on, masks became anxious, tired, furious, while still loudly claiming that they needed their female parents.

Finally, some wise women advised others not just to leave masks, but rather to find out what exactly they were through tests at first, then through giving training that would reveal their real nature. They listed some tests that would bring up masks from baby-like situations to a time when they are grown-up adults easily communicating with the public around them and with gods. At the same time, these women chose specific moments when masks would be taught as their main contributions to society.

Thus went the day, and slowly masked revealed to be human beings except that they were not bathed at their birth. Water was brought; they were washed and revealed their true nature through dances and choreographies. From this day, these women understood that they could find back their children lost in the wildness or those who were taken from them for an endless male initiation.

This offers an opportunity to look at all important images and moments of the event within narrative revealing skills and the main moments weaved in different directions as interactions go on. However, first of all, it is interesting to understand with Haring (1999) that oral literature turns essentially around "mimesis" for verbal communications of images whose succession and weaving in ordinary language permit to decipher, define alterity, and possibly manages distances (Grimes 2014; 2006; 1962). Also, according to Rosenberg (1987:79), contrary to literate societies that suffer from changing their traditions, oral traditions as they move in time, oppose image deciphering with different audiences and narrators, and develop new meanings. All the same, the conversations based on these images and built all along oral traditions produce literary discourses similar to literature productions, both reflecting ordinary conversations (Rosenberg, 1987:79). If both literary productions involve communication with the audience, then storytelling ensures the transmission of cultural items from one group of members to others while inserting the very

transmission within an anthropological sum of meanings. The above story is likely to lead to understanding how cultural objects are offered to community members and the meaning that are thus constructed.

Earlier this thesis mentioned some scholars whose theories permit an easy analysis and understanding of narratives. These theories seemed particularly relevant about oral traditions and cultures whose main transmission mode borrows most of its strategies in the narrator's capacity to raise the audience curiosity and, at the same time, to impose it the complex duty of deciphering images from their multifaceted weaving. These scholars including particularly Propp (1968), Kunene (1985), Campbell (2004), Bremond (1966). Other names as Levi-Strauss (1955), Levi-Strauss (1960), Greimas (1963), Dundes and (1962) add analyses that go in the sense of narrative restructuration based on the main communication images that reveal the main actors and the interactions that reveal meaning linking language to material culture. Fretz (1987) offers a theory that goes along these scholars' quests and may be structured in the following points to reveal different perspectives regarding gender. In other words, the exercise that follows will up to a given level go hand in hand with what Haring (1999) views through Derrida's deconstruction as a general "displacement of the system that opposes informants to investigators and text to context" in order for our reader to get a gender deciphering of the Likumbi Lya Mize event.

#### **VII.4.3 Contextualization: Initial Problematic Situation**

The story above also shows a specific situation where the Makishi seem to be completely bewildered, if not lost in an environment that looks hostile to them. Their initiation masters are seriously preoccupied with controlling order as if anything challenging could happen at any minute. The few onlookers present keep their distance and avoid as much as possible a direct contact with the masks. Moreover, there is a military Landcruiser with armed soldiers carefully pointing their guns towards the onlookers. It is not fiction. There was effectively a military Landcruiser with armed soldiers. The situation seemed strange as nothing seemed to predict any violence. Masks become more nervous, and those wearing an animal skin around their waists start drumming on it whereas many others can hardly stand in one position. Their feet show their nervousness as they keep moving on though still standing in the same position.

Women can be seen nowhere even though their voices can be heard in a close distance. The Makishi are attracted by these voices, but cannot say a word or do not know how to put it, or

again they think their masters who kept them for long months in the bush still want to prevent them from seeing their family members, especially their mothers, sisters and fiancées. At the same time, it is curious for all of them as they notice that those who were supposed to welcome them are not around. When women think the Makishi have perceived them, they run away while doing all their best to avoid looking at the Makishi. This is an unbearable situation to the Makishi who wish to get rid of their masks and enjoy family life once again.

It is within this nervousness and uncertainty that they finally see a group of women closely apparently as nervous as the masks. For, they cannot tell if these masks are their children at all, or if they are just human beings and not zombies or phantoms that may have left the graveyard. There are indeed many stories among Luvale, Chokwe, Lunda, Mbunda, Luchazi, Minungu about spirits moving out of a graveyard or wandering around villages in search, especially of a woman. Fretz (1987) gives an illustration of such story found in a text. A mask she had inadvertently moved out of its hidden place in the ground takes a woman away. The mask followed her everywhere, and even the strongest men from the village could not stop the mask from getting its victim. These stories that are partially believed to be based on fiction are all the same taken so seriously especially in places where the Chokwe believe in witchcraft operating in the same way. The story moves to a level where both sides would like to meet, but also both sides openly believe there is something strange, and the atmosphere is too much tense. The bravest of the Makishi decides to move towards the singing woman. In fact, this Likishi's name only translates that he is not as brave as that: Chizaluke means the crazy one. It is obvious that a crazy person goes to the women who do not seem to recognize the masks and are somehow unwilling to meet them. As a crazy one, Chizaluke also easily forgets about the Makishi's principles to be respectful on that day. They are supposed to keep their distance and look down to men who have not attended an initiation like theirs. Against any Likishi power's expectation, Chizaluke is seen silently crawling and digging in the sand with his hands and discovering foodstuffs and other interesting items. He doesn't keep any with him. He is moving all towards his back, and somebody is taking them. As he keeps moving, Chizaluke's craziness leaves the place to another image. It is rather a child with no experience of the world who does not even know his food, but who like a young wild animal (or a baby) enjoys moving around in the mud, dirt, or here in Zambezi in the sand.

As soon as the women around finally recognize in Chizaluke an infant their songs go louder as they celebrate a birth and look forward to fulfilling their mother's role in uprissing the crawling baby. A step further in the Luvale wisdom, the women's joy may be misinterpreted for they seem to marginalize the training the boys received from their male masters, their fathers. They are not given as much value since the training brought back unrecognizable, individuals to them. None of the women can at all socialize with these masks as they lack singled out faces and are crazy-like acting. Simple observation from mothers concludes that the education they give is the best to raise crazy beings like Chizaluke to the status of a social human being. The women's attitude can lead to open conflict with men if they suspected how women consider the Mukanda with some suspicion and decide instead to decide for addtionnal training component toput in the curriculum.

That is why the singing women moderate their joy and engage in parallel training that give masks a better social image. Fretz (1987) would not look at these women as heroines who through ambiguities and social image weaving reversing roles are taking leadership even though men at the Likumbi Lya Mize and Mukanda masters would pretend otherwise. The women thus design a clear curriculum that takes into account the main procession images counted earlier in this text. They, in effect, decide to change masks into social beings.

For the same reason, whatever storytelling interpretation narrative scheme is followed, the initial quest depends much on the hero's capacity to positively respond to a challenge for a possible continuation of the story. Thus, for instance, Bremond (1966) speaks about sequences. Here the first sequence is successful and the second story that may be unknown from the majority of men can continue. Chizaluke has successfully shown his will to learn from women while putting aside what he had learned from many months spent in the bush. They can go ahead with a specific plan to give back a human face to the Makishi and socialize them. Chizaluke is ready to go through the first trial and show up if he is eventually able to heal from his craziness and become a boy listening to his mother. And we could easily talk about his mothers. The Luvale moral code looks at all women as his mothers before eventually decoding them in different categories.

#### **VII.4.4 Training through learning steps: Makishi (re)socialization**

Once the first trial passed, Chizaluke is watched to find out if he can lead his life as a baby and forget about his "craziness." He indeed keeps crawling digging up things from the sand and finding his joy in the crawling that he would continue as long as the women have cradlesongs



repeating the same words essentially. They praise the beauty of their baby who can crawl and already to dig out of the sand so many things. They then lullaby Chizanuke, and happily continue their songs as the baby has an agglutinate character that federates all mothers who see in Chizanuke their son or daughter, once a baby.

Henceforth, these women become more visible and excited in the procession, and their songs dominate. Soon they set the second main trial aiming at finding out if their baby has grown and has some community sense, i.e., if he can be able to do one of the first things a child is asked: to fetch water for her parents and siblings. The scene is prepared ahead of the arrival of the Makishi. Young women and girls are all over the place singing songs that challenge the male mask to show he has some strength. However, it is not about merely showing male power as such, but rather about converting it to social use and community benefit.

One of the issues faced in many Luvale-Chokwe villages regards water since villages are not built right on the riverbanks. They are generally built far from the bank on an open place that does not have many huge trees. Consequently, for all domestic uses, water is to be fetched from the river and brought to the village in enough quantity. This work is usually given to women and girls, even though from time to time young boys (especially uncircumcised ones) also help. With dignity and a club in hand, Sakashivi moves slowly towards a calabash placed in a far end of a place surrounded by many people. Suddenly, Sakashivi smashes the calabash to the big amazement of the public that goes in the interminable clamor, laughter as young women and girls move closely by, teasing Sakashivi. The procession can once again continue. Many who have already been told about the Likumbi Lya Mize procession successive stops rush to the next one to secure a good place from which they will be able to see clearly the next trial given to the Makishi. It is obvious that the Makishi's activities are now attracting the public.

The next trial emplacement is located at the entrance of the District Commissioner Office<sup>65</sup>. This time, the selected Likishi is Mupala. The choice itself indicates how the Makishi are growing.

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<sup>65</sup> I would like to draw the reader's attention on this step. It is a quite important time during which the Luvale reformulates their social protocol with the government. They have freely chosen to live in Zambia and to be under the public institutions. They also take this opportunity to remind the government that the Luvale have always fought all along years for their protection against nature and dangerous communities. In that way, they have been able survive. That reminder to the government is tricky since it could also be interpreted as a show of their capacity to take their destiny into their hands when they need to do so. Otherwise understood, they could also disengage from the Republic and go their own direction.

The Mupala represents an aggressive character and is commonly moving around with a machete. His external aspect is shaped so as to inspire fear, and thus facilitate his protective role at the Mukanda initiation camp. Such aggressive characters “often feature anthropomorphic facial features that are exaggerated to display bulging foreheads and cheeks and large mouths” (Jordan, 2006:26).

With such a look, Mupala compared to Chizanuke easily looks bigger and a kind of giant. In fact, as the procession goes on the careful observer can easily notice that the first mask could easily stand for a child whereas Mupala rather looks like a grown up boy whose physical strength can eventually be used for solving social issues and could even be used when the community is facing danger. The once small mask has grown, strengthened even though his socialization is not yet as good as that. He is violent, and the public has to be very careful as his aggressiveness is so much obvious even though he does not use it towards the public.

A bigger calabash is placed near the national flag a short distance from the District Commissioner Office. With much violence, Mupala moves straight on the calabash, smashes it, and repeatedly goes on the small parts of the calabash to make sure that they are reduced into dust. Water sprinkles on the assistance that is in the near circle, and produces a double effect as his immediate neighbors feel much fear, and the other public goes on clapping hands and clamoring as the trial was successful. Immediately after this success, in the presence of many women who have joined the procession now, the Luvale anthem is sung praising the ancestral power, and the fighters’ spears. The Luvale have fought their way out and have thanks to their fighting skills been able to move ahead. The women who are singing are particularly proud of their son’s achievements that have shown his physical power benefits to their society. Another trial or test was proven successful, and the procession could go ahead.

The one major station remaining ahead for the day is the Chilende or the plain by the eastern Zambezi plain. No major incident is noted between the District Commissioner office and the plain. Once reached the plain, the public is obviously exhausted as the procession was long and under an ardent August sun. The Makishi, tired or not, retire and go to their Mukanda camp. Meanwhile the public recuperates some strength with food and drinks that are sold all around. After one hour or so, the Makishi return slowly from their camp. At the same time, drummers and professional singers have launched meaningful traditional songs for which the public speaker

calls on given identified masks to move in the circle and demonstrate their dancing capacities. First a few people from the public, then more and more move to the center and dance in a kind of competition with the masks. However, the most noticed of all are the Nyatundanji, who dance of joy as their children and the masks have been successfully growing, slowly becoming men.

In fact, their dances here recall symbols that built up both earlier stations. As a reminder, in the second trial Shikashivi successfully brought up as the third trial by Mupala both turned around breaking a calabash full of water. Both trials came earlier in the procession in the preparation for the Chilende plain dances on more than one level. First, the trial was not simply about a show of strength, but symbolically it was showing manhood coming up. The calabash is a symbol of femininity or womanhood in Luvale culture, by breaking it the mask showed a male capacity, potency, to make of a girl a woman. However, the second time that the calabash is smashed, the symbol somehow reaches out to community responsibility that may meet physical power and endurance such as in wartime. Both meanings are presented to the District Commissioner as an identity feature of the Luvale/Chokwe.



**©RMCA Collections:** MUPALA mask, Lwena/Luvale from Zambia, Lenga Navo region / collected by B. Wastiau in 1997

Figure 38 Mupala

*Figure 39 Chizaluke Masks*



**©RMCA collections:**

Two Chizaluke Masks: Left hand, Lwena from Zambia collected by B. Wastiau (1997)

Right hand: from Dilolo region, DR Congo, by R. Olbrechts before 1955

As Mupala showed signs of manhood and particularly the capacity to bring needed water to the community, the next step turns around settling down a family for the successive images showed that the process has grown far from the Chizakula baby. As a matter of fact, the Mupala is a full-

size man ready to play given social roles even though as the Luvale commonly put it “man's training goes on all along his life, but the girl quickly learns from her mother as she is always beside her.” The Chilende offers additional opportunities for the socialization of masks. Apart from the fact that all masks successively come to the center for exhibiting their dancing capacities, they thus permit the assistance to identify different masks they may have heard about in other circumstances and particularly around storytelling, or again from those who attended initiations. Even though initiates do not have permission to talk about their initiation to non-initiated people, they can however, here and there eventually mention masks' names without betraying their group secrets. Thus, Chikunza, the fertility land mask, Chihongo the wealth spirit, Chizaluke the crazy one, Kashinakaji the oldwoman, Katoyo the foreigner, Utenu the angry ancestor and Mbwesu the protective ancestor, Ngulu the pig, Katotola<sup>66</sup> the ambiguous, Kalulu the hare show up to the public and exhibit dances that show their specific costumes and their different physical presentations. Through their dances, they depict characters and identities as they also call for attention on their specific features. In fact, they undergo different invention processes and steps as Strother (1998) documents of Chokwe's neighbors, Pende.

However, two main other dances are characteristic of this step and show how the maturity is reached. A phallic mask also dances but in a kind of wedding celebration that leads a dance celebrating sexual intercourse. The mask has phallus-like stuff at the level of the groin and moves on top of a lying down woman. He continues dancing for a while and in endless exuberance. Nobody can miss that scene; it does not need any interpretation at all. Consequently, when later on, a Mwana Pwo, young woman mask comes for dancing and is without a doubt pregnant, a connection can be made with the previous scene: the celebration was indeed about a wedding, that has logically led to a pregnant mask.

As the day comes to its end, the masks slowly retire and cross the river using canoes for the Zambezi western bank where plans are set for the next day. Dances will extend to people coming from different regions as young girls, and trained boys will dance. Masks will only show up for a few minutes from time to time. This step looks like a continuation of the wedding; the public now

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<sup>66</sup> It is certainly interesting to read Volper (2012) that describes a similar mask in the Luba communities, Katotola. It fills similar responsibilities in the initiation camp, especially at the times of the Mukanda. It has also other similarities that can be counted from physical presentation to using batons for playing music in rhythmically hitting the worn animal skin, or again using them to threaten the public.

also celebrates through dances, food, and beverages. There is not any specific scene that can call for specific attention apart from masks that illustrate themselves in initiatives bringing them closer and closer to people. In the same vein, some even leave the main place on the river bank where dances are celebrated and get involved in other activities that are organized along the Likumbi Lya Mize as the day slowly draws to its end.

Finally, the last step takes place at the Mize court, the royal palace. Here, the Makishi's growth continues, and the pregnancy is supposed to lead to a birth, another event that is usually largely celebrated. There is a large gathering that turns around dances and commemoration celebrations, and particularly the welcome of the king and other dignitaries of the country among whom the President of Zambia. Here, women are more active than ever. They run in all directions for welcoming visitors. When the official part starts, the masks are called to have a short procession that leads them in front of the King and other leaders. They present themselves to the king and in a simple ritual they are relieved from the spirits they carried all the long way from the cemetery on the eastern bank of the Zambezi to the royal palace on the western bank. A church formula would say "Missa est." The ceremony is somehow ended, and they can go back to their daily life. At the same time, two Mwana Pwo excel in climbing on poles and showing their equilibrium with nature as despite their dances they do not fall at all. Curiously enough, this scene is quickly followed by the spectacular scene that shows the Nyantundanji bringing young virgin initiated girls to the king. It is obviously a specific scene that marks the beginning of the future, or again a starting point in the process or the starting of a new cycle that can only be with young blood, and in fact with new beings.



*Figure 40 Mwana Pwo, Nyatundanji, Chikajikaji, and Chindele*



On the left hand, Mwana Pwo masks are clothed in different colors and display especially the use of textile industry recuperation material. Mask costumes were essentially made with material drawn from nature and mainly from trees. However, a country such as Zambia has strictly forbidden cutting trees for cultural purposes or for any other purpose that could endanger nature and the trees. On the right hand, on the front are the Nyatundanji. One has a small calabash that has an energy drink. The Nyatundanji seem to be ready to embark the masks in a quick training mission. In the background, the masks include at their head "Chikajikaji", an old woman. This picture taken from the Likumbi Lya Mize August,2016 has surprised the masks waiting to continue the procession. Normally "Chikajikaji" behaves as an old woman. Here the physical presentation betrays the young male hidden behind the mask.

Source: F.Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)



#### **VII.4.5 Resolutions and Female Recognition and Leadership**

The above section has paraphrased the short narrative given earlier building the story lived by women, and meant to be their contribution to the Likumbi Lya Mize. Most of the time, visitors are fascinated by the tale related to the Mukanda as a male initiation under the guidance of male masters. The entire narrative seems to be a male story completely constructed by men and for men. They are trained to become leaders of their world that necessitates physical strength and in many ways patriarchal ambitions and social order.

However, such a presentation forgets about the Luvale/Chokwe society that is rather matriarchal, i.e., in many aspects turning around the maternal image. Fretz (1987) gives an account that is very important and indicative of how Chokwe society works, on the one hand, and how ambiguities work to engage conversations and lead to a social construction that reflects gender participation, on the other. Argumentation power tends to show how the one believed to be weak may, in fact, be the master and leader of a situation. Ambiguous power reveals the trickster story power where weakness may hide strong power, and where silence may mean much. Still visible leaders may be the ones who are led.

The Likumbi Lya Mize gives a strong example where Luvale/Chokwe women, mainly the so called, Nyatundanji, through the use of mimesis and artistic ambiguity challenge the Mukanda initiation (Grimes 2014; 2006; 1962). Through symbolic gestures and participation, they transform it in a male/female initiation, a total initiation for social harmony and integration in an environment women have an important say. For it is not only a question of physical strength, but a question of socialization within the world where women as well as men are important. The big lesson was given to men all along the parallel short but relevant training topped on the male initiation Mukanda has to do with gender equilibrium, procreation, and family construction within a society that values the past, cares about the present, and plans for a better future.

Thus, the challenge of looking at the Likumbi Lya Mize from gender perspectives and through Fretz's approach is quite relevant. The reader can discover that beyond the official celebrated, the local women have successfully inserted another agenda that can be regarded as a top-up initiation. It puts women at the center of the Likumbi Lya Mize and makes of them the best planners of the future that they ensure not only with progeny but also with many income

productive activities. Along the Likumbi Lya Mize procession, these women have revealed their knowledge, skills, and training capacities.

Finally, women have changed the entire event in an important business opportunity where men especially spend much money for women. Money is in circulation, and many families at the grassroots level participate in different kinds of business with clothing, food, hostelling coming on top, followed by beverages, music, books ... to the point that even diamond dealers coming from as far as Angola also get customers. Through Likumbi Lya Mize business structures and activities, Luvale women are empowered with their own transnational and global connections. At the same time, their gender balance understanding grows better and better as their social participation proves to be more and more important. Still, they need other partners local and international, to reinforce local skills in a way that reinforces not only women's economic participation, but promote new strategies for financial improvements through neglected or underexploited sectors such as tourism, tourist art, and import-export foodstuff. Innovations could also come in sectors that can use sand and clay as an artistic raw material. Finally, partners could consider innovations in the fields of domestic fuel and water so that women might have more time for productive activities. Better plans, in truth, could still be studied for opportunities that will put Zambezi men and women together for common benefit projects that sharpen their mutual considerations.

### **VII.5 Local Luvale Women within Globalization**

Appadurai (2013:9-60; 1996, 5-9) above has pointed out about cultural facts, and global dimensions give much support to this section that could otherwise look for extra curriculum. Along with Ferguson (2006) and Piot (1999), Appadurai leads the readers to understand that gender evolution as presented in this text goes through a global dimension where cultural facts and commodities bring change to Zambezi and leave imaginations at work. With independence and technological progress in communications—through mobile phones, the internet, long-distance learning, CD-ROMS, faxes, and improved roads and railways—different parts of the world increasingly have the same customs. As Nyamnjoh (2000:2) writes, “A global village will have global customs.” And as given business models persist and reach out to the world, McDonalization (Ritzer, 1992) has also reached Zambezi. Fast food and consumption, prepaid hotels, and different selling-buying services have reached Zambezi under the main leadership of

women. Such business activities have become a largely accepted transaction mode that shows up especially during such big events as the Likumbi Lya Mize: the world is slowly becoming one, despite its many disparities.

However, seen from Zambezi this global village has different command centers and visages. For Lafay (1997:43-44), it operates as a market where different goods—including commercial ones, but mainly philosophical, ethical, religious, ideological, and social ones—are exchanged, adapted, and followed. Nyamnjoh (2000:1) and A. Giddens (1990:63-78) notice the compression of time and space as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are highly shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.” Zambezi, thanks essentially to women’s work partakes in a global process of accelerated flows of capital, consumer goods, people, and products of culture and knowledge. In this vein, Appadurai (1996) contends that “the growth of the information superhighway has revitalized debate on international flows of news, information, and cultural products.” Globalization affects differently world parts. Thanks to the Likumbi Lya Mize, globalization has its particularities that are so visible during the festival as media, scholars, business, international companies, and NGOs draw to this place world attention, and reversely share with the world what is being produced locally from what was once labeled primitive material culture. Through their activities via ethnoscaping, mediascaping, technoscaping, mediascaping, and technoscaping, Zambezi women assume their leadership (Appadurai, 1996:33).

Also, local women single out a specificity that their business deploy and that should normally inspire their country at large. Their country economy like many African economies suffers much from being exclusively oriented to a primary sector that has stuck with the same kind of productions for years without bringing much change to the grassroots inside the country. Zambezi women behave as though they were familiar with economic suggestions by scholars such as Elson (1998), Fick (2002), Gilbert (1996), A. A. Gordon (1996), Hansen (2004), (Herskovits, 1962). These women also view new economies regarding services bought and sold, creativity, and money circulation. They look at the informal as a source of inspiration of trades targeting women in their innovation capacities, and in their sharing burden abilities that can largely impact productions and the circulation of goods. African economies remain based in the primary sector, revolving around farming and extracting minerals from the ground for export. Unfortunately, this singled out primary sector often undergoes structural crises, and takes blows

from international recessions and international mineral markets depending on world trade center and Wall Street virtual economists. Consequently, given the nature of the African economies, important sectors such as education, health care, gender participation, and social security look like a luxury and are not adequately covered in national budgets. Also, just like many other African countries, Zambia also lacks a powerful currency and the power to build a market of its own.

Despite a good example that the Zambezi women show in boosting the local economy and getting visibility through globalization networks ending up and/or moving through Zambezi, Zambian women, generally speaking, continue to be negatively stereotyped. They are often depicted as given to leisure around their home. In daily life, they are sometimes portrayed as brainless, as reflected in the saying, "She is but a woman." When given a chance to progress with their studies, women are regarded as insubordinate agitators. Quite often especially inside the country, they are left out as education preference goes to their brothers even though objectives and detailed criteria would advise a better choice with the girl. Globalization is still an empty concept for many Zambezi women as its benefits have yet to empower them with full recognition through visible socio-economic changes as they continue fulfilling gendered roles decided upon a long time ago.

Fortunately for them, ambiguity storytelling techniques has proved largely paying and have permitted them to be a social force that cannot be overlooked. At the same time, it is particularly sad that quite often these women, psychologically traumatized, do not have the ability to view themselves except through the prism of a parochial and phallogocentric society that neglects female participation in the construction of new social order despite the fact that their society was primarily a matriarchal society.

Zambezi (and certainly Zambia, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) needs to move forward and solve its numerous problems regarding gender communications, avoid the only communication possibility being ambiguities and storytelling strategies. NGOs should stress, in particular, the importance of an adapted education (i.e., one that prepares people to assume complete family responsibilities and to participate in the macroeconomy). A special effort should be made to extend adapted schools from cities to villages. Of the 100 billion uneducated children in the world today, half are in Sub-Saharan Africa (Haddad, 2003:110).

Despite the financial flow from international NGOs often very active in cities and absent in remote rural areas largely exposed to social instability or a lack of adequate roads, Zambezi faces its issues and easily lacks leaders who could maximize the business that women have expanded for the last years. Even though, when considered as NGOs or simply churches of different denominations well established in Zambia, they do not take full advantage of women's expertise to enhance the country economy. Tandon (1992) and Uphoff (1995) already mulled over NGOs operating in many sectors in developing countries and questioned their civil society contribution in so far as they often operate in a new sector. Civil society is usually viewed as a broad concept that encompasses NGOs, political groups, trade unions, community organizations, churches, and the like (Persson, 2003). In this vein, they could cross lines and pay much more attention to women, their capacity to innovate and to challenge poverty.

For, NGOs as well as churches are expected to help people lead better lives, or even encourage them to assume their responsibilities. On the contrary, they seem to approve of poverty and close their eyes to the economic problems of their parishioners, and to initiatives going around while endlessly repeating that God is a punisher and a giver of rewards, thus passing by possibilities. Many churches ignore the notion of “homoeconomicus”, i.e., that all human progress necessarily takes place through economic aspects of life for which Zambezi women have shown much control. Although churches have made useful efforts here and there, they have fallen drastically short of what is needed for a better future. With better opportunities, women will lead Zambia to a better future.

If with the assistance of the NGOs in presence, and the education system women could upgrade their social participation, and productive aspects, they would assist in leading their country on three main axes. Population growth and family control can be easily addressed. With better income, people will have a better control of birth, and life expectancy could benefit from better female education. And the entire country would get in a better economic situation, as the GNP will sensibly increase (Lafay, 1997). Health education is quite important, especially when considered at the light of birth control, newborn life expectancy, and general economic changes that a country may need. Even if the Chokwe populations had special strategies of “Numerus Clausus” and their desire to increase their ranks with new soldiers, children and women, things have to be considered differently in a world submitted to other filters for its development. The Chokwe women, and the Zambezi women have given enough proofs, need to adapt to the new

environment. As men's partners, they think rightly about domestic issues and survival in both urban and rural environments. With their entrepreneurial spirits, they will certainly be more and more able to help men to face different challenges that link their life to borderless through adjusted and readjusted communication spaces (Appadurai, 1996; 1983; 2013; Anderson, B., 1991; Cheah, P., Robbins, B., Collective, S.T., 1998). Zambezi women have somehow found an axis of intervention turning around their interpretation of whatever comes to their society at large in order to digest it and suggest the best ways for their communities. On the other hand, the population growth rates of African countries have increased as their GNPs have either declined or stagnated. One can reasonably infer that the lack of birth control in African countries is a serious impediment to their economic development. The Chokwe women need question the best ways to go forward, and to keep reinforcing collaboration with their partners, husbands, for the wellbeing of their families, especially as researchers predict that by 2025 the African population will have almost doubled (Adnan Haddad: 111).

The second axis is buying power. Developing countries have very low buying power. The world of the mighty dollar remains out of their reach. Only a minority of people in Africa have access to a life comparable to that in the West. These affluent Africans are proud of their western education, and they are often ignorant of conditions in their countries (Nyamnjoh, 2000:6). With assistance, Chokwe women can consider choices in such a way that they meet their community interests and avoid mistakes from other places in the region. For instance, to show the world their richness, Congolese with Kinshasa license plates will drive their limousines on the streets of Brussels, and the super-rich of the Congolese bourgeoisie will fly over the city on their holidays (Nyamnjoh, 2000:12). These wealthy Africans go so far as to buy the designer rights to certain clothes to make them the exclusive dress of their wives. Their lifestyle is worlds apart from that of the common citizens of their country. Consequently, they pursue patriarchy through wealth possession as a bait for women to nonsense, and waste of time that could be used to readjust their gender understanding updated to modern African aspirations and glocal challenges (Mendis, 2007).

The Chokwe women could also be quite helpful for the third axis of comparison, i.e., the production of goods and services. The situation of the developing countries is alarming, if not desperate (Lafay, 1997). With the assistance of everybody, it is possible to think about the transfer of technologies from the past, adapt them to modern times in order to remain as efficient

as possible with regard to nowadays challenges. The Zambezi women have proved that it is possible to bring on the market new commodities that would attract “customers” from all over the world. They are selling to the world their local cultural facts (and products). At the same time, they update and bring much attraction to the Likumbi Lya Mize.

Despite such positive actions as the ones that the Zambezi women are able to achieve, like many other women, they continue to be negatively stereotyped. They are often depicted as given to leisure around the home. In common general talks, they are sometimes portrayed as brainless (“She is but a woman.”) When given a chance to progress with their studies, however, women are regarded as insubordinate agitators. In Sub-Saharan Africa, more women choose to live alone, in which case they are often considered prostitutes or social degenerates, immoral beings who sleep their way to the top. When they happen to occupy a high position in a political sphere or in civil administration, they are treated as incompetent and irrational (Arday-Schandorf, 2005; *Women and Law in Southern Africa et al.*, 2012; Bourke-Martignoni, 2012).

In common discourse and daily life, Africans are bombarded with mythical and archetypal images of women that originate as far back as the Bible and the “Illo Tempore.” As a matter of fact, churches perpetuate images given in the first section of the Bible, Genesis. Eve is presented as born out of a man’s rib or created to keep man’s company. Some men claim that women cannot mean anything without men. Among the Luba Kasai, when a man physically beats a woman, she is not supposed to react, even to protect herself, because if her hand touches the man, their marriage may end unless heavy penalties are paid.

It is obvious that African women do not currently easily take part in globalization. Of course, their involvement would mean questioning all of the African past. And there is still much to be done as far as access to education is concerned. More and more, Sub-Saharan women are receiving a primary education, but the world increasingly needs people with a tertiary education and the expertise it produces. Based on the experience of the Zambezi women at the Likumbi Lya Mize procession and celebration, there is an opportunity to build from this new experience that shows how women can participate in the general growth. Pierson (2013), Phillips and Steiner (1999), and Macmillan (2001) demonstrate how cultural material, cultural facts, and commodities circulate around the world from one group to another and in different directions. The Zambezi

women have found their place within the new system, and are the forerunners in the way to progress, and to a better future.

## **VII.6. Chapter Seven: Concluding Remarks**

With the assistance of hermeneutics and Appadurai's global dimension, Fretz (1987) has led our reader in the study of ambiguity as a strategy in Chokwe storytelling. Their technical framework helped us carry out the most important part of this chapter within the view of a well-organized international festival and a UNESCO world heritage, the Likumbi Lya Mize. The same strategy has brought our readers' attention to active women empowering a male festival. These last minute training highlights stress the necessity of gender balance and socialization, as well as women's social roles in future businesses where global cultural facts and dimensions associate them in a new vision of the world. In Zambezi like in many other places around the world, African women have been officially living on the margins for ages. However, women's communication competencies have often turned situations to their advantage (Fretz, 1987).

In fact, Nzegwu (2001) elaborates about pre-colonial societies where successful gender roles were clearly divided. Men and women had different social duties transmitted from generation to generation their community all along history as testified through the Likumbi Lya Mize especially through its invisible male training part, the Mukanda (mostly hidden to the public). The economy was based on simple exchange, and supply and demand determined people's circulation from one area to another. It was an elementary form of economic life which had the advantage of maintaining harmony, cooperation, and equilibrium in many societies for generations. But things have changed, and Zambezi women have mostly understood the primordial role reserved to the economy, even if they agree social identity norms should be maintained and updated to gender balance.

In the environment where ambiguity is adopted as a communication style to avoid challenging opinions, and mainly questioning male talk authority, the government has the responsibility to reinforce education and make sure all children attend school. From what those who attended the 2015 Likumbi Lya Mize festival heard from the local MP speech addressed to the President of Zambia, the government has failed in such efforts, and has not even been able to facilitate communications between eastern and western Zambezi banks either for education or for business exchanges in the absence of a bridge. Of all the political speeches heard, none pointed out the



importance of the businesses and networks that women had built so far as a possible starting point for an economically healthy district, and why not province and country. In fact, Appadurai's global dimensions as an anthropological theory draw the world attention to the fact that there is no barrier that can work and stop the dynamic cultural facts and commodities that reach out to everybody: Zambezi women are in that dynamic.

Zambezi women through the Likumbi Lya Mize festival demonstrate that they are capable of ensuring that their kids get a more human education focusing on social interests and their psychological development. At the same time, through all its steps, the Likumbi Lya Mize reveals female innovative capacities in many fields especially with regards to financial resources as demonstrated through both food and cloth businesses. There is another field of innovation capacity that is silenced and ignored, if not neglected. Masks used for the Likumbi Lya Mize are being innovated, new ones coming in all the time. There is much artistic creativity to be maximized. As a matter of fact, tourists can choose Zambia and Zambezi as their final destination because the country is known as a peaceful place and offers many distractions and learning opportunities. In the same vein, academic institutions should think about modules that bring international students to Zambia and Zambezi whose studies would find local sources often impossible to locate in the North.

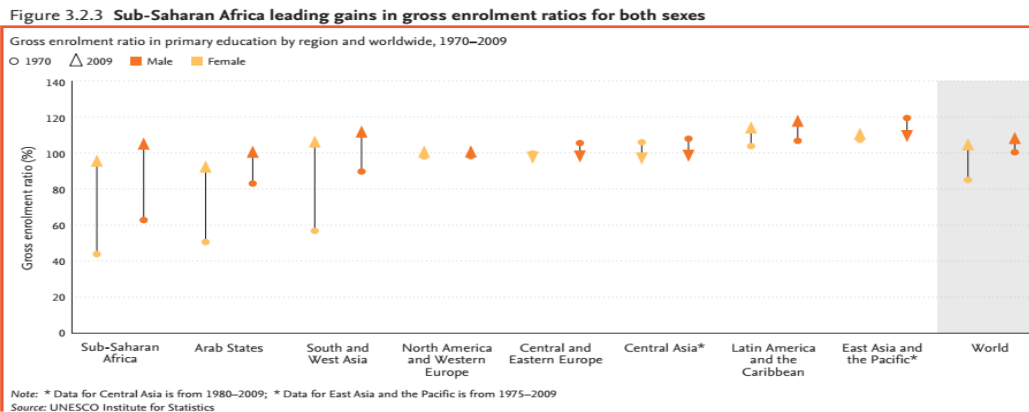
To achieve all that, much is to be done to deliver women from ambiguous communication perspectives as the only way to accommodate and be successful in their interactions with men. It is indeed important that women know that their contributions are welcome for the building of a new society easily sharing global perspectives with other parts of the world. The Likumbi Lya Mize as such is an opportunity to federate efforts and look at a future where men and women take their accepted gender differences as an opportunity to maximize social benefits and respect for every human being. Shiach (1999) and Westlund (2005, Sept.) argue in this way as they look forward to the day when men and women will avoid prism biases. They will recognize everybody's contribution for the building of a better world: children and parents, men and women, old and young, all can contribute. Ambiguity is certainly good for forcing audiences to work out meanings, but it should not be applied to social participation that needs everybody's contribution. Zambezi will gain much by looking directly at women's capacities and their possible socio-economic contributions, also promoting them at regional and national levels.

For national interest, it is important that contributions come from everybody. To repeat the African proverb, it reads, “There is a need of more than one finger to kill a flea.” Everybody’s contribution is essential for the construction of a nation. In many perspectives, African women have been living on the social margins for ages. Before colonization, places were organized according to a dual-sex system where men and women performed different tasks while aiming for harmony in daily life. Women were generally happy with their duties; tension between men and women was not particularly visible. Men used their strength to protect their community and face dangers, and transmitted from generation to generation their community history. Women used their time to raise kids, develop relationships with divinities, and create space for cultural dialog. Such roles and communities survived for centuries (Falola & Amponsah, 2012; Mazrui, A.A., Wiafe-Amoako, F., 2015; Njoh, A. J., 2006). The economy was based on simple exchange, and supply and demand determined people’s circulation from one area to another. It was an elementary form of economic life that had the advantage of maintaining harmony, cooperation, and equilibrium in many societies for generations. Men and women had communications within shared channels and spaces based on social conventions of these days. However, the more the world has become a global village, the more communication changes; it takes on new orientations and commodity exchanges move through new spaces/media that reach out to global spaces, within which imagination also develops and reaches out to the world for strategies and outcomes (Appadurai, 1996; 1986; 2013; Anderson, B., 1996).

The intrusion of western occupational forces threatened the African traditional harmony. The occupiers labeled men the breadwinners in their households. In this vein, Srigley (2010) and Konings (2012), for instance, give illustrations about women whose life dramatically changes in new socio-economic patterns that oblige them to undertake social roles within a new social fabric. Despite rare attempts to escort women in new endeavors for better social insertion and participation in household issues, men developed an attitude that led their partners to believe they were superior to women and responsible for their societal survival and leading African countries to independence. Men were continuing social images inherited from a distant past, and that, in many cases, had developed patriarchy essentially based on masculine physical strength. Women started to be forgotten and ignored. Wherever it was possible, boys were put in school, used in building works or as soldiers, but girls just transitioned from village to city life without any integration into the new environment (Ndaywel E. Nziem, 1998).

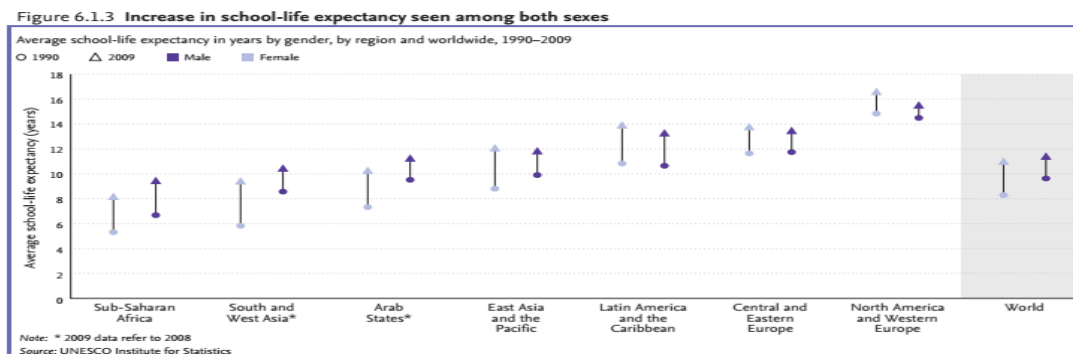
Driver (1991) and *École pratique des hautes études: Section des sciences économiques et sociales* (2007) go a step further in digging in what Sub-Saharan African women are able to do in terms of their participation in social construction through their income or other economic participation to their household, or to their society at large. Despite their successful stories here and there, it has been hard to change minds socialized by the colonizers, who have often been held up as examples to follow in postcolonial times. The colonial powers were also in many instances still attached to patriarchy in their own countries. But among the many steps to take, girls were encouraged to remain in school. As can be seen in the chart below, Africa is still far behind and is mainly characterized by dropouts and short life expectancy of girls in schools. If UNESCO gives these figures for many parts of the world, for Sub-Saharan African the pattern remains the same with girls lagging, while boys lead in all education levels because of the persistent belief that only males can lead and bring benefits to their entire society (UNESCO, 2012:36, 88).

**Figure 41 Sub-Saharan Leading Gains**



Source: UNESCO, 2012:36

**Figure 42 School Life Expectancy Increase in Sub-Saharan Africa**

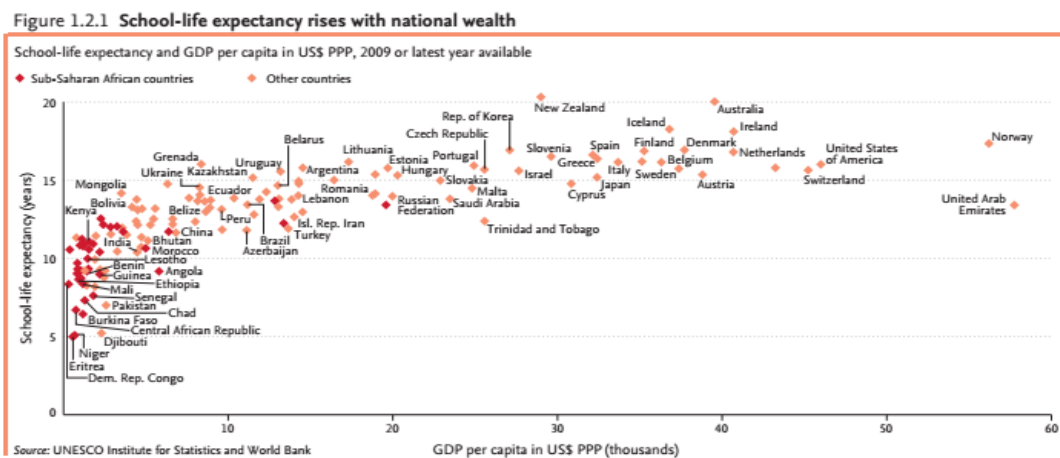


Source: UNESCO, 2012:88

On both charts, Sub-Saharan Africa comes in first position, not at all as number one in excellency, but rather for the fact that the girls here do not perform as much as others from elsewhere. They indeed lead a life submitted to restrictions quite specific to a world largely linked to traditional patriarchal norms. If the Chokwe world had still its gender norms kept alive for a long time, it had to also get used to the new education system like elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in the world. Unfortunately, the Chokwe populations were not given as many opportunities to other people around them. Collected interviews, in fact, showed that the Chokwe people also refused western education, and preferred to go their own way. Nobody had ever done anything to approach both education systems, at least in order to get the best for the population.

The Chokwe women continued life in a world that was more and more exposed to new challenges. It had therefore to face the new global institutions without necessarily sharing the secrets of the new education already present in many other places. But, at the same time, the entire Chokweland had to face government economic neglect, and the general level of poverty of their respective countries that could not permit them to pay enough attention to education (UNESCO, 2012:13). Even when the new education system was implemented, it not only brought the right solutions to the people, but the Zambezi women's example became the best way to follow to build a strong experiences and benefits to the community, and convince everybody to recognize women's aptitudes and skills for a better world.

**Figure 43 School Life Expectancy with National Wealth**



UNESCO: 2012:13

Generally speaking, education depends on the general economic level of the country. Poor countries are at the lowest level of education because education and health care are overly dependent on the country's capacity to invest in these sectors. However, other patterns should develop other possibilities that could, for instance, practically combine what modern education offers, and the practical achievements that the Zambezi women have reached. Such bland education has the advantage to lead women to understand their choices and implications in their country's development, their sharing in gender issues within global spaces communicating in different ways (Appadurai, 1996). With the lack of an appropriate blended education system, Zambezi women are not alone in their case. Many others also stick either to traditional or modern education systems without necessarily bringing answers to global expectations. A double misfortune today has led African women to a situation where they are neither exposed to traditional education nor to modern education.

Clearly, in many places around Africa and in the three countries studied, girls are not well represented by women who are in leadership positions and who may be satisfied with their positions beside men. These women are not doing enough for girls who don't even have access to education either. The environment has conditioned them to hold the same attitudes that women developed during the precolonial era, i.e., when they could freely contribute to their social life. As illustrated in the above charts, the data show that illiteracy is much more prevalent among women than men. That hardly facilitates women's integration into the post-colonial world. Illiteracy impedes the exchange of information, discussion, travel, relationships, and countless other things. Those who have access to education are simply better off. Illiteracy contributes to irrational attitudes. Educated people will frequently try to remain as rational as possible about the contraction of different diseases while the illiterate is jettisoning modern medicines and counting on the roots given by her grandmother as well as on the oracle of the witchcraft doctor. Some illiterates will even throw away modern medicines in favor of amulets and other fetishes. In fact, the Chokwe healing system as pointed out in the preceding chapter does not absolutely exclude another system that could bring any benefit to health and healing system.

Though women are more likely to be more uneducated than men in Africa, there are places where more and more girls are now going to school. Such is the case in Botswana, where more girls than boys aged fifteen to twenty-four now attend school. In Swaziland, while the difference among boys and girls is not large for the youngest age groups, it is quite substantial for those

aged fifteen to twenty-four; many more boys than girls aged fifteen to twenty-four attend school. In Kenya, on the other hand, there is clear parity in school attendance between boys and girls in this age range (UNESCO, 2012).

Illiteracy is, of course, linked to dropping out of school. Only 56 percent of those who enroll in primary school are able to complete it. The reason in many countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, and Angola, is the fees required to attend primary school. Our informants said that they could not afford these fees, especially in places where mines had been closed and where families did not have any income. In such cases, girls are usually pulled from school before boys. Many parents apparently believe that investing in girls is a waste of money since they may prefer to get married before completing their studies, or be more inclined to serve their husband than to repay their family. But education should be viewed quite differently—as a matter of guiding children and giving them the opportunity to lead a better life. It should not be seen primarily as a capital investment which has to produce a benefit, though many analysts have found that when they can afford it, educated girls and women are likely to assist their parents in their old age.

A 2002 article entitled “Gender Mainstreaming in Macroeconomic Policies and Poverty Reduction Process (PRP) in Kenya,” by Maureen Were, Jane Kiringai et al. of the Kenya Institute for Public Research and Analysis, discusses a couple of strategies which could be adopted, and certainly useful to the Chokwe world and far beyond in the three countries studied. Were (2002) criticizes the legal framework in Kenya which does not recognize women’s work or any right to property. Such laws, wherever they exist in Sub-Saharan Africa (and not all countries, of course, have the same laws), must be changed for women to be treated equally to men. Were (2002) also posits several paths of economic growth that could eventually reduce poverty and inequality, thereby improving the situations of countless women. The authors argue that governments need to consider gender issues when formulating economic policies at both the macro and sectoral levels, determining expenditure allocations, and monitoring and evaluating projects (Were, 2002:1). The Zambezi women belong to the global space and their experience instead of being silenced or completely neglected, a positive approach would move from their actual capacity to a level where their work would be clearly identified and focused on the general wellbeing.

If both Chokwe men and women participate in their countries' economic development and their work is valued equally, the economy of their land will unquestionably benefit of eventual growths. Even simple steps can yield substantive benefits. Take those possible in farming, for example. In Sub-Saharan Africa, various farming and irrigation techniques are used to increase production. In most countries, much attention is given to growing cash crops that provide quicker monetary returns: cotton, sometimes corn, sugarcane, pineapple, rice, groundnuts, bananas. In the Chokweland, such production is typically considered men's province. In the past, the Zambian governments provided financial support for it and helped men with fertilizers. But women are relegated to basic subsistence farming whose contribution to daily life remains uncounted and unseen. They spend much time toiling in the field without receiving any suggestions on how to increase their production, while also tending to their children's needs, of course, and perhaps even managing some household savings. Yet many households survive thanks to Chokwe women's work, whereas men's cash, contrary to their ancestral and past responsibility, goes to supporting their leisure habits and purchasing goods for their aura and glory. If the Chokwe women were to play greater roles in cash crop farming, or even to receive more support for subsistence farming, the economic benefits to their countries would be considerable. As Were and Kiringai point out, reducing gender-based economic inequality would increase economic growth and efficiency and improve the general welfare (Were, 2002:4).

The Zambezi women have proved how women's economical support can bring general growth to the local community, and also to the global space within which they trade and communicate for local gender benefit, and to a global visibility of women around the world. Thanks to their activity, the Likumbi Lya Mize Festival has received much visibility and has added dimensions that offer not only much more happiness, but also many more financial resources that make the ritual an opportunity to bring a couple of socio-economic improvements to their community.

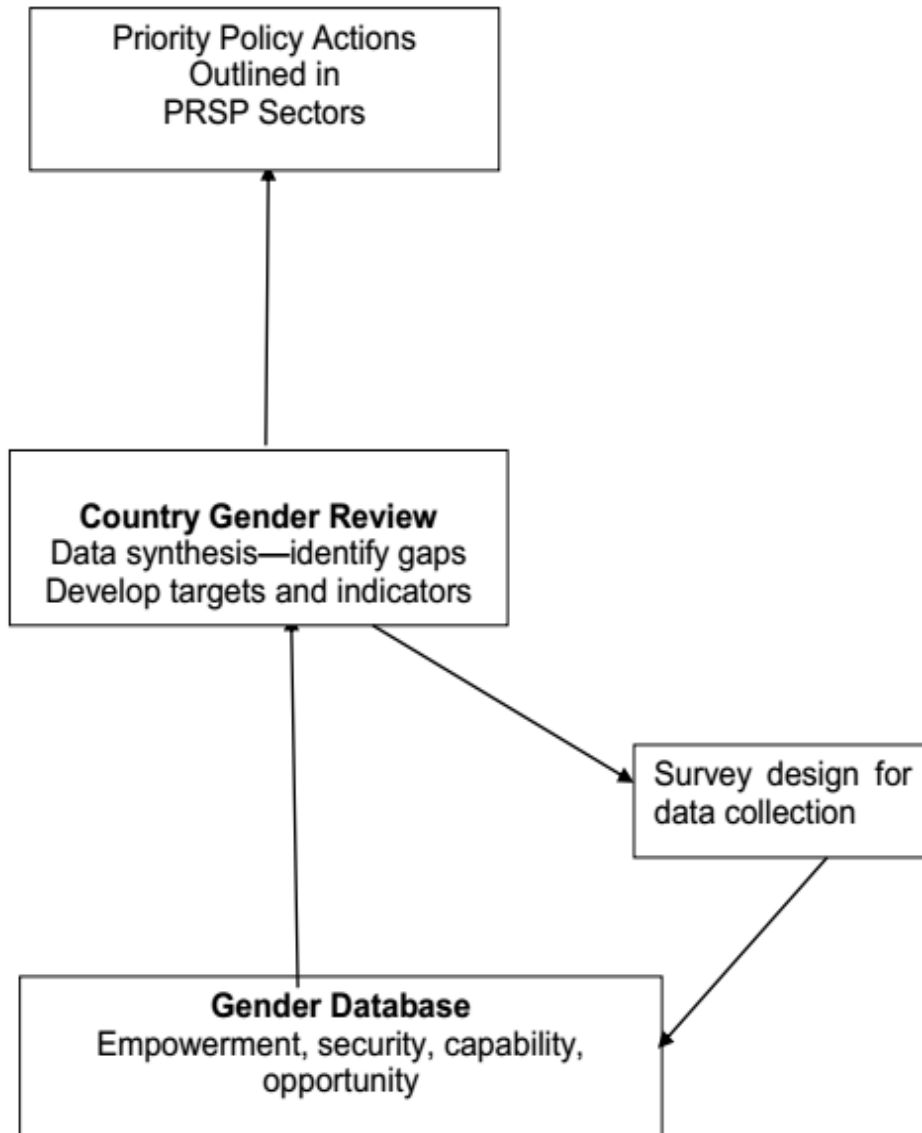
In fact, the Chokwe women have gone a step further in digging out something unexpected and worth to bring easily to their world through tourism. It is indeed an opening that shows how culture as a commodity can be sold around the world and link people through different spaces around the world. For, cultural facts have a life of their own (Appadurai, 1996; 2013; 1986; Anderson, B., 1991). The Zambezi women have shown that there are many other fields besides farming where the lack of attention to Chokwe women's work and their lowly roles hinder their countries' economies; but these roles can be changed and bring as much as possible to their

community space. A World Bank study found that educated women take better care of their children than uneducated ones. Indeed, their babies are less likely to die. Research has found that in Sub-Saharan Africa a 10 percent increase in female literacy reduced child mortality by about 10 percent (Were, 2002:16), partly because educated women are more likely to follow doctors' advice rather than resort blindly to witchcraft. Thus, investing in Chokwe girls' blended education would produce a healthier society and consequently a stronger economy. In fact, the system could be thought about as a blended one also valorizing the Chokwe past. Also, in urban cities most women are either jobless or work in underpaid sectors; many employers in better-paying sectors refuse to hire them under the rationale that they will eventually get pregnant and have to go on maternity leave. As a result, the economy suffers. This is also a situation that can be easily changed to the advantage of their society.

By the way, if gender issues were seriously considered for poverty reduction efforts, as Were (2002:26) advocates, the following framework might be used, and applied to the Zambezi and Chokwe women. The differences inherited from a distant past are not absolutely out of reach. They can be addressed in such a way that in an objective way everybody sees what kind of contribution can be expected from other partners. In doing so, the entire society would be reviewed and strong links will be kept with distant past.



*Figure 44 A Framework for Mainstreaming Gender in the PRP*



To understand this chart and apply it to the Chokwe women, one must move from its bottom to its top. The first task is for the government (NGO or Civil Society Institution) to analyze gender inequalities in economic and social participation (e.g., in farming, daily life, cash production, etc.). This first level of analysis would underscore the necessity of empowering both men and women in order to better their economies and societies. If they are given the same opportunities as boys, girls have equal chances of success. Empowering women, as pointed out above, necessarily involves a well-structured education (though not necessarily any kind of western education per se, a blended one is welcome). By giving men and women the same educational opportunities, women's self-images would improve along with their countries' economies, without predefining an economic paradigm on the feminist agenda. In the case of the Chokwe, all along the interview questionnaire, even if everything from the western world seemed to be contrary to their values, it is possible through a blended approach to maximize whatever brings added value to their society. Were (2002:16) writing about the topic underlines the following:

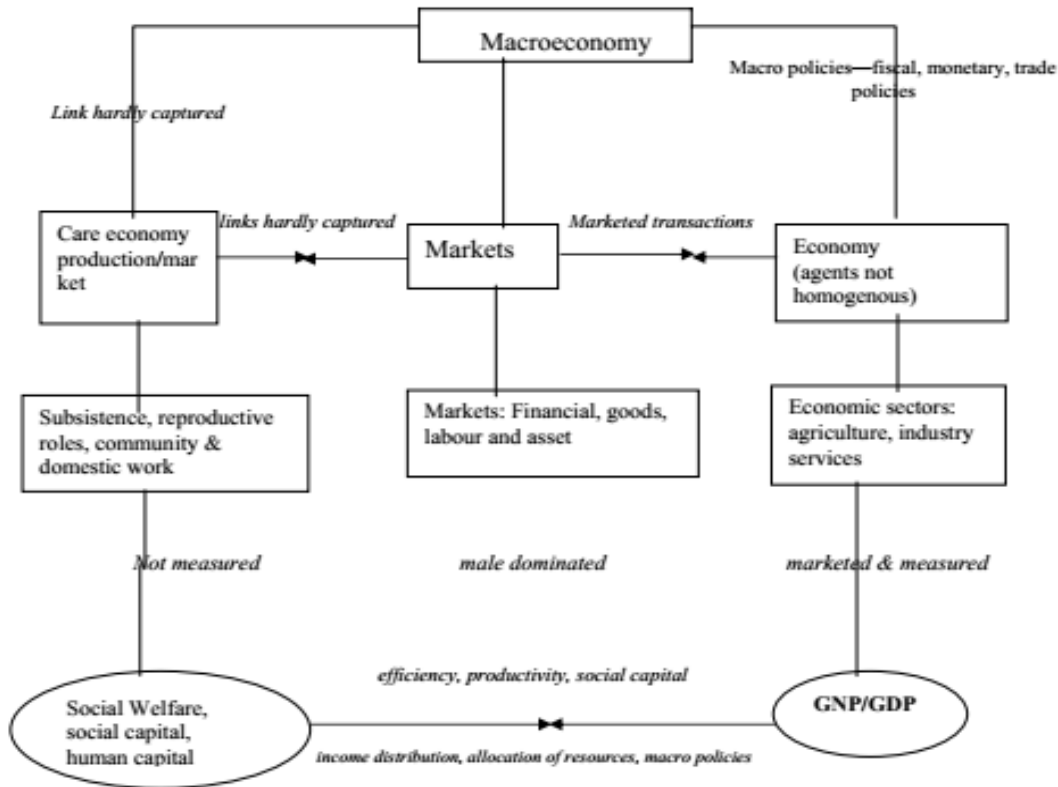
Low investment in women's education is not an efficient economic choice; gender inequality in education is bad for economic growth.... An increase of 1 percentage point in the share of adult women with secondary education increases per capita income growth by 0.3 percentage points. Under investment in girls' education cannot therefore be an efficient social outcome and a pro-growth macroeconomic policy should be tailored to reduce such a gap.

Anyway, to live and decently progress in modern African world, there is absolute need of assets, and financial means. Whoever decides to seriously think about a better economic future that the Chokwe could have, several priorities need to be imposed. To narrow the gulf between men's and women's opportunities, priorities among programs must be set, budgets allocated, and clear work timetables scheduled. International assistance could also help reduce the gulf and maximize economic output. Strategies must take into account all aspects of daily life, with the goal that everyone participates in their economy and society. Only through a process of questioning, then devising solutions, and then asking more questions can progress be achieved, especially with regard to grassroots initiatives as opposed to top-down development programs. At the Likumbi Lya Mize 2015, several young men had new ideas about the productions of new carved artifacts. Women thought about increasing their business, and new interventions in the long procession. Some also thought about associating with those who come from Zambian cities and elsewhere in order to figure out new hairstyles, and goods' circulation. All their endeavors could be combined for an excellent general and significant outcome.

After the above proposal to Kenya, which as we have pointed out, can also apply to the Chokwe, Were (2002:36) gives another chart that goes even deeper into the question of shared responsibility and government’s leadership in determining gender distribution role within a growing economy and social environment that needs indistinctly all citizens without giving the only priority to men.

The idea comes from another framework that looks at macroeconomy from the grassroots for all efforts and work performed at the lowest level of society reflecting its highest level and finally bears on the GDP. The only mistake often carried on for years consists in paying attention only to the work done by men whereas forgetting all contributions from women. The gender divide gets in things that should normally contribute to the elevation of the entire society. The Chokwe, despite their refusal of much of what is coming from the western world, can still benefit in at least seriously thinking about bringing about every contribution for the building of a better society without gender discrimination.

*Figure 45 Conceptual Framework for Mainstreaming Gender in the Macro Economy*



Gender perceived through general development, source: Were 2002:36

This figure aims to show how the subsistence economy and domestic work could be upgraded and part of an economic chain that could increase a country's GNP, or let us say the Chokweland. Once linked to modern economic strategies and techniques, domestic production could play a greater macroeconomic role. For example, financial assistance from banks combined with encouragement at home will help girls go as far as possible in their educations and ipso facto increase their contribution to the social welfare. It goes without saying a specific model of education could be projected, and it could be different from inherited education systems. By the same token, a new analysis would bridge cash and subsistence products in such a way as to bring onto the market what were once considered only subsistence products. Women would participate in growing cash crops through use of modern technologies such as driving a tractor, planting seeds, and harvesting them. Similar possibilities for domestic production exist in urban areas. Traditions, religions, and political theories should be updated and part of the new vision.

Studies have demonstrated that women's economic participation in rural and urban areas is often dependent on many factors, including whether they or men head their households. In the early 2000's, a couple of studies led by the Observatoire de Changement Urbain of the University of Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that focused essentially on Katanga Province and the city of Lubumbashi found that women have become more and more visible since the colonial period. With mining companies closing or needing less manpower, and with their departing employees lacking pensions, women have had to step in and successfully work in the informal economy. By helping women make slight changes in their work and understand economic operations, governments could enhance national production from what would otherwise remain stagnant informal endeavors. The Likumbi Lya Mize is finally an example that should continue drawing our attention in so far as it is more than a mere ordinary event. It gives a proof that tourism practiced in Africa with the contribution of everybody can produce much visible benefit for the community. Also, such benefit comes through women who have shown their capacity to challenge gender barriers in order to innovate and bring change to a society that longs about a better future and keeps its roots in the past. Coincidentally, the Zambezi women's approach seems to repeat a lesson that Bouttiaux (2013:11-15) explains about masks that keep their religious dimensions dug from a distant past, but still plunge in innovations that give them the particularity of belonging to their era, but still to me, connected to a distant past with

memories carried to the present (Mudimbe, 1993). It is high time to lead the Chokwe women from social movements exclusively based on ambiguities as communication strategies to a general approach that includes community participation for the search of wellbeing, and respect for all human beings as social builders of better days.

## CHAPTER VIII: CHOKWE IDENTITY RUPTURES AND DISJUNCTIONS THROUGH FIELD THEORY, CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND INTERSUBJECTIVE DYNAMICS

### VIII.1 Introduction

What happens when a population group accepts a country leadership but does not take at all its socio-political politics? What happens when the same scenario is observed in the same linguistic group population in the neighboring country and a third one in the third neighboring country? What happens when these concerns also engulf education systems, moral values, and sexual principles? In the three countries, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia, the Chokwe are living with other ethnic groups with which they share the same cultural environment, but at the same time they keep their own cultural specificities. Strother (1998) documents the examples of the Mpende and Songhe whose closeness to Chokwe is to be found essentially in their respective art creativities, and the use of these artifacts in different rituals. Their dances are similar, and their initiation secret societies linked to different initiations, according to the same patterns, also have much in common. And above all, these neighbors concur in the place and ultimate causal explanation that witchcraft takes in their respective societies (Geschiere, 1997). Also, the questions raised here above become important, for despite the similarities lining the Chokwe to their neighbors, they are the only ones to have developed a so big distance from political socio-political institutions.

The similarities that characterize the Chokwe living in the three different countries and yet keeping the same negative attitudes towards their respective governments refusing any compromise to share with them the minimum confidence, and considering them purely and simply as enemies of their groups can but be stunning. It easily reflects what Hage (2003) has documented for many years and identified as “Paranoid nationalism” excluding “others” from the spaces that the Chokwe have come to believe as their absolute and exclusive biotope.

In a bid to engage in research on the Chokwe, the complexity of their social situation will motivate different approaches especially when various results are expected whereas several orientations are still unexplored. Reactions will depend on the field of interest of the researcher. Political scholars will question the relationship between the political leadership and the grassroots. Economists will endeavor in the directions of national resources distribution.

Philosophers will pay attention to epistemological interpretations. Sociologists will study social actors, interests, interactions, and general view of their society. Anthropologists will go deeper into the social phenomena, and explain cultural facts both in their construction and communication spaces, and social structures. Also, interdisciplinarity, as presented in the introductory chapter and applied all long this dissertation, would offer the best option for a study of the Chokwe exposed to their particular socio-political situations that have lasted for several decades, and have resulted in their distancing from the main cultural paths of their time, and their strong wish to construct their independence, put in question all contacts with neighbors. Their specific cultural paths would also explain their strong opposition to urbanization based on western culture as evil and killing their natural being, the Uchokwe.

Based on recent interviews conducted in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia, this chapter questions the relations between the Chokwe and their respective political leadership. Also, this chapter will pay attention to the Chokwe's education systems, and cultural values in an attempt to understand their socio-political split and its continuation over half a century. It also aims at giving a voice to social groups often forgotten on the social margins of entire countries for lack of communication and understanding of socio-political problems. A combination of Bourdieu's Field Theory, Appadurai's cultural fact exchanges, and Stroecken's subjectivo-intersubjective anthropological dynamics offers the best possibilities to tackle this chapter ambitions. In fact, using theories helps in getting contributions from three different perspectives for a better comprehension of the situation. A quick evaluation through the three theories will certainly merit understanding the reality as closely as possible (Bourdieu, 1977).

This chapter seeks to better understand the challenges that the Chokwe communities all marginalized in the three countries face, and how they have been able to transform their isolation in opportunities, especially in cultural opportunities. The commodization of their cultural facts built bridges between them and the entire world through different modern communication and distribution media (Appadurai, 1996; 2013). According to Appadurai (1996, 2013), cultural facts communicate with an incredible speed through different channels and quickly reach different points of the globe without necessarily getting into traditionally expected ways. These channels have put the human aspect at the center of the world progress, with a large array of choices. At the same time, many world-wide self-imposed cultural facts lead specific kinds of wars with

victories and defeats within blurring environments mixing with an extraordinary speed ingredients that would otherwise belong to very distant and different worlds. With the assistance of the three theories above mentioned will help to view the experience that the Chokwe culture undergoes while definitely putting into question the concept primitive as often historically presented. Today, the once called primitive and differently qualified cultural facts share the same world spaces and are optimally exposed in the same ways to the global public equally willing to penetrate different cultural secrets.

In the scope of this research on Chokwe identities approached from their material culture, we posed twenty different questions to a total of two hundred and fifty Chokwe, urban and rural, in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in Zambia. This chapter focuses on ten questions dealing with urban and rural Chokwe's split and indifference from their respective country political institutions, education and health care systems, sexual education, gender divide, body agency, and cultural symbols. The interviews gave self-speaking stunt results. The Chokwe wherever they are, do not at all agree with their respective countries' socio-political orientations of the last half century. They do not recognize any benefit from the socio-political institutions so far developed in their respective countries. From their responses, it is obvious they look at education as established today as uselessly opposing people over unclear objectives. In these conditions, this kind of education has not filled its primary role of bringing knowledge, skills, and social solutions wherever the Chokwe are present. These political institutions have rather served to feed big cities with loafers, and many people lost between urban unreached ideals, and the everlasting fear to lead a useless and desperate life under unidentified spells, otherwise known as witchcraft. They still believe much jealousy blocks their urban insertion and progress. At the same time, they recognize their weakness in an urban system they do not master, and that often rejects them for their lack of the special extra curricula skills and interest dynamics that construct/reconstruct urban social groups and dynamics. These urban multidirectional (and often corrupt) underlying forces also put the lost intellectuals at odds with the fundamental values that the Chokwe system taught them in their early age.

If, by any chance, the bewildered intellectuals, lost between the Chokwe traditions and the urban attractions, end up being restrained in their respective villages, they become worse than a cancer. They spend their time drinking alcohol and dreaming about their high social status, and their



temporary suffering linked to misunderstanding and lack of knowledge from their family. Victimization is at the center of their discourses which, by the way, have the only visible merit of updating and continuing stronger and stronger beliefs in witchcraft. Contrary to the past, despite apparent changes and modern education progress so much appraised in some cities, the results in villages are rather catastrophic with regard to social and leadership constructions that could dramatically divert from traditions. Witchcraft seems to have been revisited and updated to the new environment, urbanized locations, where individual success and failure, group neglect within a country or even in a region are often linked to witchcraft results. Most people believe witchcraft influences their life especially in bringing misfortune to those who do their best to positively change their life. An individual or a group of individuals perceive their life social quality through the impact of witchcraft powers condemning them to suffering, or in a few cases to force their benefit from other they would use a bit like slaves (Geschiere, 1997; 1980; 1991; 1996).

Also, the Chokwe, who live in cities, have access to hospitals, and are covered by medical assistance from their respective companies, but they also develop a particular interest in medicinal plants. Herbs, seeds, roots, and tree barks are used for healing different diseases for which the Chokwe do not rely on modern medicine. The previous chapter detailed the Chokwe understanding of the Chokwe healing capacities both in the past and today, as healers participate in the preoccupation of their times, innovate their practices, but at the same time feel the obligation to stay linked to a background line that still justify them as Chokwe. Traditional healers have found their influence quickly growing in urban settlers as an excellent opportunity for a fast growing business (Yamba, 1997; Aguilera, 1998; Arnfred, 2004). With their mobile phones, traditional healers are regularly called for interventions even in hospitals when Chokwe families – they are not the only ones – notice that either they will not have a physician in time, or they will not get any result at all. Finally, even their sexual life is exposed to the same questions, and to the same conclusions: modern medicine does not offer enough community training, responsibility, and guarantee. In the past, sexual education was primarily given in the sense of respect for ancestors, leadership, and responsibility towards women, children, neighbors, and progeny. Apart from the fact that the Chokwe put a long distance between their local traditions and the new education brought to the Chokweland through colonization, they have chosen to particularly develop their curing and healing systems.

This chapter raises questions concerning socio-political ruptures and disjunctions between the Chokwe communities and political institutions. This section seeks to find answers to the distinct oppositions to official country institutions that have persisted for half a century since the independence time for the three countries. The text also intends to find out why, despite promises from their President, the Zambezi Luvale/Chokwe population did not seem enthusiastic at all. The general impression was that they counted much more on their “imagination,” a concept that Appadurai (1996) develops. Finally, this chapter reveals strategies that the Chokwe, located in three different countries, have developed to get a share of the global space, and participate in its benefits. The conclusions reached will, hopefully, open space for further discussions, and will include other interesting topics.

### **VIII.3 Fact Sheets: Chokwe Short History, Mobility, and Freedom from Country Governments**

Historical data, oral and written sources, locate the Chokwe in a multi-ethnic territory in a vast region of the northwestern Angola. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, they are also present in large areas that cover Western Kasai, and Southern Bandundu with the biggest group located in Southwestern Katanga. Finally, increasingly the Chokwe chose to live in Zambia mainly in the Northwestern province (Wastiau, 2006:7; Kayembe, S.M.T., 2015; Ndua Solol, 2015; Ndaywel E Nziem, 2015; De Saint Moulin, 2015). Historical, oral sources locate them in the Lunda Empire from which they seceded and migrated to the places here above mentioned (Ndaywel E. Nziem, 1998; White, 1959). The experiences like the ones the witchdoctors, “Tahi,” display in the preceding chapter, offer another possibility to go back in time and discover the sources of the Chokwe beliefs, and the world that they claim to be theirs. The “Tahi” are at the same time healers and health organizers, and memories keepers otherwise also the memory locations in time that Mudimbe calls, *Memorae Loci* (Mudimbe, 1993). In following their healing practices and their big amount of oral narratives, ritualistic practices, mention of spirits that are summoned for extraordinary consultations looking for spiritual reasons that may lead to diseases, it is also possible to track down ancestral healing traditions and their development in time.

Their memories still keep fresh and strong links with the first royal Lunda power effective at first under Chibinda Ilunga's Royal Court, and later under Mwanta Yawvo (J. Vansina, 2004:1-2, 10). Otherwise, the Chokwe were mainly heard about from the time they met with Portuguese late in

the fifteenth century when these Europeans had decided to move from the Angolan Atlantic coast in the upper hills of the country in 1489 (Shillington, 2013:128). J. C. Miller (1999, Feb.) documents how, in the years, the Chokwe are very active and present all along slave routes. They link partnerships with the powers of the time whose interests cover both slave trade and land occupation. The Chokwe facilitated their work in the transportation of slaves, and in their deals with local chieftains, deals that slowly led to their power' presence and occupation of expanding territories. The Chokwe are particularly visible during the time when famine forced different population movements (Miller, 1988). They are among the first to have received newly adapted and resistant crops from America. Food acquisition and even consumption new habits gave the Chokwe a new dimension of power that strengthened their military capacity, and differentiated them from their neighbors, often reduced to fighting with rudimentary and insignificant ancient weapons. The Chokwe won victories over such weakly organized and poorly equipped armies whenever there was a military confrontation. They moved within vast areas, and almost without heavy fights they occupied new lands, and strategically, quickly, inserted women and children, at first, in their society in order to play on their population growth as a force that permitted them to occupy more land, and impose their power and social organizations on their neighbors. They took as many prisoners as possible, and quickly converted them in new Chokwe with particularly the rights to fight for new lands and new people to insert in the Chokwe spaces, and imagination (Millis, 1959). They did not leave much choice to the war captives; they had to join and serve the Chokwe whereas their females were used for the birth of more children included straight among the Chokwe through various initiation rituals.

Despite the few sources here above mentioned, much remains unknown about the Chokwe, Kayembe (2015a:10-39) points out, Chokwe history is misrepresented. Chokwe's participation in local life and transnational transactions is underestimated wherever they are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, Angola, or elsewhere. Like Kayembe, several of our hosts during fieldworks Chokwe believe revisiting Chokwe's past could lead to a better understanding of their history. They all also support that without any consideration of the Chokwe as people actively invested in a long history, their past glory cannot be clearly replaced in its contexts, participation in demographic history movement, and its relations with different colonial powers. Thanks to their skills, the Chokwe achieved much for the interest of their linguistic group and neighbors. They became strong and were able to occupy, and govern a culturally rich region with

many post-Berlin countries. Their propagation over those states met only one strong resistance (from the colonial forces) that finally pushed them into three main different directions: Angola, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Their early occupation of large lands over different territories, and the quick inclusion of many neighbors as Chokwe, as well as the population growth through marriages with newly included women put in question certain anthropometric data. Contrary to the Chokwe physical profile that Lima (1971:39) gives of them as of a pygmoid type, their mixture with different neighbors cannot have conserved the same type. They are of different physical profiles that have contributed to their military powers whose fire force was generally feared except by the colonial coalition. The force in question that finally put an end to their resistance and expansion came from a strong-armed coalition force from the three top colonial powers in presence: British, Portuguese, and Belgian (Vellut, 2006).

Despite their forced immigration to different countries under the above-mentioned three colonial powers, the Chokwe have continued for many years to preserve their cultural unity. They have maintained several kinds of cooperation and assistance on the basis of cultural similarities for whoever was in need of shelter. Musumba, the capital of the Chokwe-Lunda empire and the seat of the Mwant Yav, has remained central a connection location for the Chokwe, the Lunda and their close allies. During their succession ceremonies, they cover long distances either to attend in the name of their remembrances and social functions filled, or they go to organize the succession. During our fieldwork in Tshikapa, the king of the Chokwe, Mwene Mwa Tshisenge, during his visit led the ceremony that confirmed the leadership position of about fifty leaders, and did not recognize some of them for power usurpation. Such big movements do not go only towards Musumba or Tshikapa within the borders of the same country. They also overlap borders. Big groups also move from one place to another wherever such kinds of ceremonies take place. When they have to move from one country to another, their movements happen without any problem. They do not go through immigration procedures, but are always to go and reach the location without any problem. With the same easiness that the Chokwe move from one place to another for succession ceremonies, the “Taki” or witchdoctors also easily move from one place to another. Both examples of Papa Muteba and Mr. Kamboyi have shown how their experience included their passage through different Chokwe countries, and their health and healing strategies benefitted from their displacements from one country to another. Apart from these specific people including leaders and witchdoctors, these displacements also included ordinary people.

They also moved from one place to another, from one country to the next. In these days, the ordinary people essentially move to get different survival strategies specially through smuggling the most necessary food items from one country to another. That mobility still continues under new forms connected the three countries (Angola, DR Congo and Zambia) for several needs and under different circumstances to seek for assistance from their traditional relatives.

Tshikapa, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, young people revealed that they have at the same time Congolese and Angolan identity cards. In Zambezi Zambia, several Angolan young people attended the annual cultural masquerade, the Likumbi Lya Mize held in the last week of August. They had also participated in the Mukanda initiation that lasts a few months even though they did not have an official visa to get in the country, and stay for that long duration. They had come to live with their relatives. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, some of our interviewees confirmed easily and Incognito moving to either Angola or Zambia; either for family visits or different untaxed businesses. In these conditions, even though the lands where the Chokwe live do not accept binationalism or trinationalism, we have met, especially among the young Chokwe, binationals closing their eyes to their country laws, and proudly saying they often cross borders to go to their brothers and sisters in the neighboring country. Their talks clearly consider and look at the other countries as their family land; they do not need any official permission to have access to their relatives in the neighboring countries. Even though the preceding presentation is not the official one at all, we have here in the words of the concerned people the building of their own territory, the Chokweland getting in three different countries. In this vein, Angolan and Congolese refugees fleeing from war in their respective countries crossed borders to Zambia without any traumatic effect. They went to their family land and did not worry at all, as we heard from young people met in Tshikapa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the road traders interviewed in Chavuma, Zambia. The UNHR did not easily organize the repatriation of these refugees as many were already living in various places they considered as their family properties where they had perfectly the right to live. The situation was even more difficult in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where the Chokwe Angolan refugees had several generations of children. They attended different levels of the education offered in that country and inserted every social level. The local Angolan Consul had to negotiate with many of them in order to get them accept boarding trucks that would lead them to Angola. Many had

simply chosen to remain in their host country that they knew better instead of going back to Angola, despite the public opinion presenting Angola as a prosperous country.

Already before the accession of these countries to their independences, attempts were made to unite the Chokwe either within countries or across borders. Muhunga (1962) and Ndua Solol (2015) explain how, in 1956, Ambroise Muhunga founded the *Association des Tshokwe du Congo, de l'Angola et de la Rhodésie* (ATCAR). With a strongly motivated purpose to see the Chokwe united wherever they were, work for shared interests, and benefit from the experience of the neighboring countries, ATCAR's ambition seemed useful. More focused was the "Ukwashi wa Chokwe" that John Kajila launched in 1956 in North-Rhodesia. Martin James III (2011:34) identified its uniqueness in its ambition to stick to a social dimension. This association focused more on the assistance to Chokwe refugees in Zambia<sup>67</sup>. They had fled from independence war violence in Angola, and later on, many still came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo also exposed to violence. They also notably found resources in Chokwe artifacts that turn around "Makishi" and ancestral spirits and the Mukanda ritual. In their retreat to Zambia, they had the opportunity to continue reinforcing their cultural assets through the same kind of exposure to rituals, and lengthy ascetic training sessions.

#### **VIII.4 Chokwe inland Movements**

Within their land, the ordinary Chokwe have at least one annual event that permits them to move indistinctly in different directions. They go to the reserved place where a male initiation, Mukanda, is held. All big villages that have a traditional chief can in fact organize one, provided they can gather a big enough cohort of young boys who will attend the male initiation. Generally speaking, initiation masters and masks are unknown to most of the public and operate in the absolute secrecy of the male initiation. The initiates follow an education curriculum that prepares them, among many things, for a public exit on the last day of the training. The most important part of the training addressed to the initiates concerns inured life attitudes the trainees further develop for the rest of their life. Thus, the initiation is a character mold and an identity mold

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<sup>67</sup> In the interview, Dr. Sakaimbo gave us on August 31, he had good memories of these days when the Chokwe of the three countries here studied were united under programs that gave the necessary assistance to those among the Chokwe who were in need.

after which the individual becomes a unique personality, and a unique member of the community, each coexisting with the other without any exclusion, for they need each other for protection and resistance against external forces.

It is during rituals that the youth has access to much training in their social activities, and has to learn to fill community expectations. In seclusion for many months for attending a substantial training, the Chokwe youth improved their physical conditions. They also accumulated knowledge about ethnic history, and useful daily skills. They reviewed their people's history, international relations with close neighbors, and international visitors from around the world. They studied negotiations, and war strategies for the conquest of new territories and people. Finally, they carefully experienced medicinal plants, ancestral religion, divination techniques, and magic. At this point, the young male Chokwe initiates were ready to return home. They knew life secrets necessary to lead to success in wars, peace times, increase labor with men and women conquered. The defeated men, from other ethnic groups, were essentially used for community work. Captured women took care of the youth at first. Finally, they gave their contribution regarding the children they birthed for the continuation and empowerment of the Chokwe in the area where they lived.

In recent years, the Chokwe have increasingly migrated to Zambia for several reasons. That country has not gone through any war from its independence. Besides, one of its ends in the Northwestern province is at the intersection of the three closest countries, i.e. with Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with their borders overlapping. Many people have family relationships in one, in two, or in the three countries. They count on the support of these family members for their social insertion in the new environment for a long stay, or for regular short visits.

Throughout these years, the Chokwe have continued to develop their traditions and culture. It is thanks to their particular cultural facts that they have survived and have developed a broad cooperation umbrella that has kept them united over time. For whatever reasons, already colonial powers, and, later on, successive postcolonial governments have not invested much in the Chokwe hinterland that overlaps the three country borders. Consequently, the postcolonial era has not seen much happen in the hinterland regarding modern development, education, and

gender participation. The area continued to rely on the same traditional techniques. Their rituals and social institutions continued in time through a dynamic exchange with neighbors and visitors. The hinterland is somehow out of reach of the three countries' socio-political actions

Chokwe have also participated in some kind of forced labor migration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For getting an idea about what has been happening in the field mainly in the big overlapping territory where the Chokwe live, in the scope of Central African Research Themes, Ross (2013) held an important conference, though still unpublished, on the title "From Muskets to Nokias: Towards a History of Consumption, Migration, and Power in Central Africa 1500-1973." Among so many papers presented, the following ones showed how labor migration has a big issue that has finally moved forth and back from their land to labor centers. Scholars demonstrated among many things that the patterns developed turned around temporary migrations for getting income from new labors and their return to their land. Iva's text, entitled "Proletarianisation or path to prosperity? Patterns of labour migration from Mwinilunga District, 1930's-1970's," is an excellent illustration of how the Mwinilunga work seekers regularly traveled to the Congo prosperous mining sites and would work on short term contract that permitted them to accumulate some income, and be able to revert back to their traditional positions and life without much change. Their income could serve for paying taxes or a radio, but they will be happy to return to their roots and ritual practices. If Eva Pesa's text puts a particular stress on men's labor, Donatien Dibwe Dia Mwembu's "La migration des femmes des travailleurs africains à destination des camps de l'Union Minière du Haut-Katanga industriel (1910-1960)" added a special dimension to the debate, women also migrated mainly to follow their husbands. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the mining companies had even organized to marry from different villages women for their workers. That was also at the origin of the construction of these workers' camps. In this way, the workers somehow forced to stay longer in the urban centers. The mining companies also took care of workers' needs in terms of health, education, transportation, and housing. The mining companies made great efforts to convince their workers to stay in the urban centers. They were still given the possibility of going back to their villages at least once a year for their annual leave, and the company took responsibility to cover all fees, and pay a thirteenth month. Within the same country, Jeffrey Hoover linked these migrations to the presence of churches and especially the Methodist Church in the Katanga Province. Through the presence of the church in different places, men and women went forth and back in migrations.



Jeffrey Hoover's text: *"Big Men," Wealth in People, and Religious Change Methodism in the Rural Katanga Copperbelt Hinterland* concerned particularly the Chokwe. Within the Copperbelt, two more interesting texts describe such migrations due to job and benefits.

Temporary displacements prevailed as people maintained strong links to their villages. Enid Guene's text: *Copper's Corollaries: Trade and Labour Migration in the Copperbelt (1910-1940)*, also looked at people's movements for labor reason and for benefits in the years when villages were exposed to different dangers of famine, and new diseases. These trends of displacements have continued to this date. The migrations are now internal and sometimes go towards the Chokwe areas where mining activities are also opening. Thus, in Zambia, two concepts are continuing a tradition, Copperbelt and new Copperbelt. Felix U. Kaputu's text, my participation to the conference, turned around the following topic: "Zambian Cooperbelt Mining Boom New Frontiers' Background: Solwezi Women, HIV-AIDS, and Faith 2000-2013." It shows how for work reasons more and more people who had migrated to the urban cities are now moving to new places that have opened mines. The companies do not have the same challenges like in the past, but they face new challenges regarding social integration, and the integration of their workers within an environment where unemployment figures are high. In fact, such migration movements concerned many other parts of the region going as far south as South Africa. Jan-Bart Gewald's text: "Wenela, Katima Mulilo a Zone of Transit in Barotseland: The Development of a Holding," and Webby Kalakiti's "The Mambwe Labour Migrants: A Tentative Discussion of their History 1900-1960 Zone for Migrants on the Extreme Frontier of the South African Empire" widely cover such movement in the big area going from Zambia to South Africa where some Chokwe are met here and there. They are also moving from one place to another in search of their survival. With time, these families that have been moving from one place to another have led scholars to raise different questions. In this vein, Robert Ross' text: "The Politics of African Household Budget Studies in Southern Africa" highlights a field generally related to such migrations family budgets. It was a rough exercise to introduce in ancient habits that were based on community life essentially linked to season productions a life turning around salaries, but still keeping a strong connection with the Chokwe traditions. All in all, their migration had their specific purposes and still show how the people were much attached to their lands and customs they did not want to leave at any cost.

Still a final text that raised our interest in that conference has to do with witchcraft. Friday Mufuzi's "The Practice of Witchcraft and Changing Pattern of its Paraphernalia in the Light of Western Technologically Produced Goods as Presented by Livingstone Museum, 1930s -1973" digs fully into one of the topics treated in this dissertation. The long experience that the scholar has collected describes how the paraphernalia that are used in witchcraft have been upgraded throughout time. This text is so interesting in so far as it permits to see how witchcraft is not a concept of the past. It joins Geschiere (1997) whose analysis of witchcraft in Cameroun demonstrates that practices related to magic and witchcraft have continued throughout years. Despite changes observed here and there, and what could be called modern progress, magic and witchcraft are present. In the case of the Chokwe, they have escorted them in all circumstances and represent a strong link to their distant past. Wherever they went, the Chokwe brought with them their beliefs, especially their fears related to witchcraft and its impact on their work and fame. Recently, in the fieldwork we conducted in Tshikapa town, we met Chokwe who still have their necks a necklace supporting a minaturized Chikunza mask supposed to protect them, bring them fertility, and luck. They told us they needed protection for their movements over the Angolan border even though they have parents in the other country. In fact, going through the border can be hazardeous despite the fact that they have both countries' identity documents. Many of them, either betrayed by jealous neighbors or not, fell on Angola immigration agents and lost most of their resources, especially diamond smuggled from inside Angola even though they had paid for it.

### **VIII.5 Understanding the Chokwe Strong Relations to their Past**

Before embarking on an attempt to understand how the Chokwe relate to their historical past and how they consider their relations with their respective governments, two stories taken from our fieldwork first meeting will illustrate how the Chokwe collective memory is attached to the past and to their land. Here are two stories from two Chokwe thinking about their relations to the lands, to people, to an area they do not hesitate to call their country. The first story was recorded in November 2015 while Freddy was driving us to an appointment with a famous Chokwe healer from Ruashi (Zambia Quarter), a municipality of the city of Lubumbashi. In his words, he belongs to Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia, though quite clearly, only in the lands where the Chokwe live. He can move from one place to the other without any

visa. Also, he has family members in all these places. Listening to his words easily make think about Hage (2003) and lengthily explained concept “Paranoid Nationalism.” Freddy is convinced that the Chokwe have their own land, that they do not need in fact the administrations that have neglected them for many years. Here is Freddy’s narrative:

*My name is Freddy Chihiluka. I am a driver at the University. During the entire year, I am completely busy driving in all directions within the country, and sometimes outside as for example when I am supposed to go all the way to Tanzania, all through that country up to Dar Es Salaam Port for taking cars imported from Japan or Dubai. I miss Kasaji all the time and the telephone that we use so much does not fill up that gap, I mean that proximity we had back home. This big city of Lubumbashi even if I now know it perfectly is still a foreign place for me. Kasaji small rural town on the railway to Angola is my home. I am a foreigner here.*

*Can you imagine that whenever I am home, I am in fact in three different homes? From home, I always go to Sandoa to my uncle, Mwene Mwa Tshisenge. In his court, I spend time with wise men and learn much about the distant past. There are particularly seven of his closest Ministers who know much about the past and who can teach you just within a few days who the Chokwe really are. One of these advisors always takes me on long trip to Angola. It is so curious all Chokwe I know consider Angola as their Mother Land. At the same time, however, they all consider that their capital city is Sandoa and their main king, my uncle, Mwene Mwa Tshisenge. That seems so incredibly bizarre, but the elders explain everything through a story that links the Chokwe to the mythic time well before the first Mwant Yav.*

*As you know the Lunda are our cousins! We protected them for many years. They have their own throne but we are the ones who accept the new Mwant Yav and enthrone him. They often forget that kind of relation and simply consider that they are superior to us. They know they cannot be. In the past if we wanted we could even take from them the land they pretend to be their sanctuary and stronghold because we are the only ones to have always been known as soldiers, fighters, and warriors. They are only good at telling stories and nothing else. They can change things and put their generations in interesting positions. However, they well know they could not do anything without us. We are conquerors of all time.*

*You should come with us when we go to Angola. You can see how on our way to Angola and back from there I stop being a driver. We take different means of transportation until we come the closest possible to the Angolan border. We are welcome in the village next to the border. We spend as much time as possible celebrating the reunion. it is as if the border community does not want us to go on the other side. Finally, when they let us go they make sure they have already contacted people on the other side of the border and that they are there waiting for us. Whatever decisions the Angolan government takes to protect the border does not have any effect on us, we go as far as we want and we do not need any paper. the family members come to welcome us. Our names are already on the village list over there, and many of us have what they call over there “Billette,” i.e., their Identification Cards. Do not ask me how we get them! However, let me tell you of two possibilities with some pictures that are not as clear as that whenever there is an opportunity some of our brothers take these IDs for us. or again if we know that we could go through a dangerous zone they borrow for us the IDs to use. The most important security consists*

*in being with our siblings from the other side. Then, we spend as much time as we want there. Anyway, Luanda is not our preoccupation. I could even say, we don't know it. We do not ignore it, but it has always been far from the local preoccupations. We have our virtual capital in the meetings we hold in different places where we meet whenever there is an annual event.*

*You cannot imagine how many of us travel for different annual reasons. For instance, when an important person passes away we are able to keep the body for many days until the family members from the other countries arrive. Our ancestors had skills about body conservation and could thus keep for a long-time kings who had died before they could announce to the public. They could not announce such a death before they were sure they were in control of every detail and nobody could take that opportunity to engage the community in war other kind of violence. But we had also to wait for relatives who come from very far. As you probably know we are on the move for territory conquest, for game hunting, for long trade routes, and for our protection. When I speak with my grandparents, you know, colonization, did not mean much for us because we were on the move and powerful. The colonials had to count on us for their land occupation operations to succeed. They were our friends. We treated like partners and shared power even if they took more than we did. They could not be as powerful as they were without us. Every time they needed us we were there. Take for instance the railway work, many communities refused to associated with the colonials. We did and contributed largely to the building of this long railway. It is the same thing for the mining sector that needs many heavy woods in those days. We are specialists in timber treatment and we had the necessary tools. We were hired for this kind of works in the first mines.*

*With time, they noticed we did not agree with them on many topics regarding human rights and the treatments they reserved to people who were resisting them. By nature, the Chokwe are like that. They may agree with you on many things and they may seem to agree with somebody on everything, but as soon as they notice that the primary principles are not respected, they will disagree and go their way. Generally speaking, things like corruption did not mean any possibility to the Chokwe. They preferred to work their way to success even if that would also mean losing many friends on the way. Our best friends betrayed us. The Europeans with whom we worked and colonized these lands betrayed us more than once. First, they forced us to move to the three countries Angola, Congo and Zambia in order to go in the three states born from the Berlin conference. Secondly, they forgot about us as they engaged in the construction of modern facilities, I mean schools, roads, and even the mining as such. They preferred to go towards the people they thought to be easily manipulated to avoid any kind of confusion and contradiction in the evolution. Thirdly, even in the postcolonial times, they preferred to treat with other people rather than with us. Thus, we only owe much to missionaries. They are the only ones who tried to come closer to our people, to understand their traditions and somehow get us in the modern traditions. It is clear it was not easy for them. But at least, they knew if they could convince us about important things and if we could observe and test them, we agreed without hesitation and shared their knowledge and skills.*

*You could still ask us why we go to Angola and Zambia, why the others come to us, and why finally we all go more to Zambia than in the two other countries. From Congo we go to Angola because it is so close to us. Our ancestors used to go there, and we go there all the time. The idea of borders does not work with us because it comes a bit like telling not visit brothers and sisters of the same family. When we meet, as long as we can speak Chokwe, we are done. That is our*

*border and our ID papers. The other considerations we do not know them. It is sad we have been quite often in the past accused of rebellion and revolt against our country. That treatment reinforced our cohesion. The rebellion that attacked the Congo in the late 1070's came from Angola. It had many of our brothers and sisters who had gone to Angola after the failure of secession in Katanga. Nothing special was done to integrate the "Gendarmes Katangais" in their country. When they came back the country was under the dictatorship of president Mobutu. They had served in Angola in whatever side in order to help the country access to its independence and had noticed that their country was suffering much. When they arrived, they were welcome for sure, but they had another mission. They needed to topple President Mobutu who did not do anything at all to have them back in their country. They did not either accept the dictatorship that was going on. What happened then was surprising all the same. The same people who had forced our past generations to move to three different countries (Angola, DR Congo, and Zambia) also sent their well-equipped soldiers to fight the Chokwe with Morocco playing the more visible role. You know with all the above you can guess how we have always been close with Angola. And it is the place where there is the second king of the Chokwe, Mwatha Ndungu. From wherever they come, the Chokwe feel home there, and do not suffer any discrimination.*

*As for Zambia, you need to remember that country has always been peaceful throughout years since its independence. Even if we can accuse its successive governments of similar neglect of the Chokwe populations, as we notice the same kind of absence of the first necessities, we cannot accuse these Zambian governments of bringing violence particularly to that area. It has always been peaceful. Even more, when president Mobutu decided to take revenge on the Chokwe, calling them rebels, accusing them of the first secession of the 60's and of different attacks to the country, whoever went to Zambia, I mean to the North-Western Province where large Chokwe communities are, were in peace. It is this peaceful climate that also prevailed when Chokwe refugees came from Angola and found a haven in Zambia. Despite different controls that the successive Zambian governments had on the people who had come, they could not keep them far from their brothers and sisters. Soon many among the refugees had become Zambians, and when time came for them to go back home many chose to stay in Zambia and had already Zambian ID. It is in remembrance of the time they had spent in these two other countries, i.e., the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia that the Angolans today cannot, and will never wish to have any kind of border or barrier with the people who were so kind with them when they were in trouble. Their ancestral and blood relations are more important than anything that could be imagined. You know, we have rather blood frontiers that have automatically given us a land where to live, and the pride to be the Chokwe nation. We are the Chokwe nation!*

*I do not know how you will consider it. For me, Freddy, and for many people like me, we have our country that had taken portions of lands from the three countries. When I move from one portion to the next, I do not need any guide, and migration police, and border of any kind. Our ancestors already suffered so much because of borders, we are just fed up and wish to live our brotherhood and sisterhood without having to undergo other pressure from whoever takes a title, but has never concretely think about us. We buy and sell, share goods, and ideas, and we connected through different means, some of them quite old, but still quite efficient.*

*I do not know much about the other Chokwe who live in two other provinces of the Congo, in Kasai and Bandundu, because I have never travelled in these directions. However, what I can testify about as a Chokwe is that if I meet with them we will immediately agree and recognize our*

*brotherhood, celebrate our ancestors, and dream about the time we could easily take our destiny, in our hands. It is something we were taught during the time we spent in the Mukanda initiation. We were taught to recognize our bothers, welcome them, and treat them with as much dignity as possible. They will also be very proud to meet a brother they have never met before. We will celebrate our ancestors and will spend time discussing today issues and their impact on the development of the “Uchokwe.” We may have slight differences in our languages due to distances separating our locations, but the essential training received in our initiations will keep us together and thinking in similar ways.*

*I am happy your research is on my people! I hope you will help people understand our customs, that they will continue to respect us and our social life habits. I also hope the politicians of these three countries will understand that there are things they need to do together for the Chokweland in order to get the Chokwe believe in the countries they belong to, and which they should defend at any cost. It is so unfortunate to find out that education has not seriously taken that way of finding facilities that could connect people around a so big area, and construct foundation for a better future. Now that we have developed different survival strategies, it is their interest; I mean the interest of different governments to find bridges that could connect them with the Chokwe and also make them feel part of their country even though they do not leave their ancestral habits.*

The first narrative describes an emotional sense of belonging to a national land that we have called with Hage (2003), Paranoid Nationalism. It is a result of a confrontation between personal strong beliefs and the reality officially recognized though law, but not necessarily matching local beliefs and daily life connections. Despite the presence of respective governments in these countries, the local inhabitants believe the land territory belongs to the Chokwe and nothing can bring any kind of change to it without the concerned people. The belief is so strongly seeded in the minds of the Chokwe spread into the three countries that they look at their respective governments as colonials to get rid of for their wellbeing and to be efficient. Another common feeling based on their recognition of weakness to face government institutions can be observed in their observation as foreign, or just imposters to keep at safe distance. The concept, nation, i.e., Chokwe nation, seems much more emotional than practical.

The second story is rather about Chokwe movements in and out of three respective countries: Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia. This narrative offers a more practical approach to the Chokweland; a territory can eventually organize different activities of its own and live independently from governmental and political officially recognized institutions. Here is the narrative:

*My name is Kasongo Chijika. I am forty years old and have been traveling much around the Chokweland. Everywhere I go, I feel home and have plans to launch different activities in the three countries. You know we could discuss about how that land could become a specific country. However, I think I am happy to see it the way it is. It is connected to three different countries and has a strong people who has been able to overcome the Berlin conferences and lead its own way though in imposed limits and contacts.*

*As you can see I speak many African languages, and Portuguese, French and English. These three languages are the official administrative languages of the three bordering countries where Chokwe live. Quite often, I am asked where I am from. It is so difficult; I probably do not know anything about that. I belong to the three places. They are my home especially around all that big area that goes in the Southeastern Congo, Northeastern Angola and Northwestern Zambia. That is my homeland. That is where my identities belong. It goes without saying that whenever I am in a part of that land I hear people being addressed differently calling them as Congolese, Angolans, or again Zambians, and they are the same people. Personally, I am rather all that together. Presented in that way, you will easily understand why I keep moving from one place to another within my homeland.*

*Why do I go to Zambia? By the way, I am not the only one going there. There are so many people going there. I have an advantage over them as I go first to my siblings whenever there is a need. I then take also that opportunity to get in different kinds of trades. There are so many things that the Congo needs and that cannot be found anywhere around. Let us take, for instance, foodstuffs, and mainly corn flour which makes the most important food. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a big market for different products from Zambia. We have been in that business for many years. We buy from Zambia and sell in the Congo. Corn flour, smoked, fresh fish, goats, cows, sugar, and several kinds of vegetables. We also add other material like construction wood, and cement. There are also many other mechanical spare parts from foreign countries that we can easily import from Zambia. We have been in that business for years now and we know exactly when and where to import things from Zambia. Because of the official business, most of our importations have to go through the official offices and through the official borders. But still, once on the other side of the border, my treatment is far different from the ones reserved to other businessmen and women who go there especially if I go to the Northwestern province. It is really going home, everything I do is a bit like in family. Our discussions try as much as possible to look at family interests without any slight idea that would go in the sense of taking advantage from the situation, or neglecting what others count on so much. It is all about a big web of relations and common interests that have permitted us to do much in the last many years.*

*Let me confess that it is only when the business reached such a big volume that we, on both sides of the border, decided to go through the customs. Otherwise, until recently we operated without going through the borders. You can call that smuggling, but we will never use the same concept. The reason why we cannot call it with another name is that the rules are fixed, but do not take into account what the people on both border sides think about themselves. In fact, there are not other markets they could address to. It is by exchanging through the border that they connect with their siblings and that they are able to get their life better than it could otherwise be. Clearly presented, I would like to point out that the governments on both sides have never thought seriously about these people and how they could engage in any kind of business that would*

*permit them to survive at all. As you have probably noticed, both sides of the borders are particularly poor, and seem to have been abandoned for many years.*

*Apart from foodstuffs, there are many other items that are needed on both sides of the border and for which people cannot afford traveling just on the other side of the border as they cannot afford going through immigration requirements. However, above any obligation the people think they have been tricked in something they cannot understand. They have always been together and have always shared their preoccupations, then suddenly they have to face obligations that separate them instead of bringing them closer and closer. They justify in that way why they have developed their own techniques to reach out at their siblings and, eventually, have with them different kinds of business. The work we thus do help much to fill in the gaps that the governments on both borders have not been able to fill up all along the last years. I am well known for that work and the Chokwe from both sides look at me like their ambassador and facilitator.*

*I go to Angola at least once a month for buying petroleum products. I do not go alone but always with a big team of people. We have agreed to go through the recognized and official borders for about fifty percent of the goods purchased whereas the remaining goes through some exceptional places where there has never been any kind of barrier. I think you understand that there is a common pattern everywhere that puts together the official and the unofficial, and they go together, the regular and the irregular participate in the spaces that the Chokwe have been sharing for many years together. However, it goes without saying that the official spaces are not counted as such on purpose. The Chokwe have never considered them or counted them as a part of their life. They seem to have been forced on them. In addition, you know there are vehicles going to the distant borders, but there is not any structure as garage or filling station that could encourage these vehicles to go so far. My business on that side of our world helps finally to connect my brothers and sisters living there with the world, and to get the chance to get in some kind of business with people arriving from cities. As you probably know, for many years the railway was not active, I mean at all functional. It was the only means that was bringing to people goods from the developed world. With the interruption of trains, the people were forced to lead a very difficult life without much hope for their families. They could not easily get the basic needs such as salt, oil, first health care, and they were somehow excluded from a world they did not choose as such. However, that long absence did not help in approaching the local Chokwe to the central power. They once again felt rejected and rather naturally went back to their source of survival, their communion with other Chokwe from the other countries.*

*In the absence of health care possibilities, the Chokwe have intensified their efforts to rebuild their health and healing systems on their traditions based on plants and rituals. The Chokwe long traditions are based on medicinal plants that were always delivered in a specific environment. They could be delivered without the association of another ceremony just in following the prescription that the herbalist healer would give. The main ingredients used were based on leaves of trees, their barks, and roots. They were often dried up, pounded and conserved in usable quantities and dosages were counted in terms of concoctions measured with either with a small gourd, or with appropriate goblets of these days. The dosages were prescribed for the morning, noon, and the evening for a well counted number of days. After this first dosage, a visit is taken to the healer in order to find out if the first medicinal plants served had reached the expected healing effects. If some progress was noticed, the healer could decrease the quantity of*



*the medicine or the number the patient is supposed to take the concoction. Otherwise, other strategies are seriously considered especially if the conditions have instead become much more complicated.*

*Once it is well noted that the medicinal plants have not reached their aim, the healer may advise that somebody else be seen, or that he moves to another level of treatment that includes divination, as the same healer may also be a "Tahi," i.e., a diviner. If that is the case, the healer will ask the family to get ready the needed ingredients for the sacrifice, and the specific consultations that take a long time, and that finally reveal different secrets linked to ancestors. It is often believed that the fact of not following ancestors' recommendations lead to different kinds of punishment that include individuals' illnesses that are but a signal, or a reminder to follow the ancestors' recommendations. Thus, for instance, somebody may fall sick because the parents have not followed the recommendation to give a precise name to the person. Such a situation happens quite often when the parents have entered a new religion that does not leave a clear space to ancestors, or when it is just considered as a bad thing to mention ancestors, or something satanic to deal with them. Certain forms of Christianity exclude any idea about possible connections with the dead considered as phantoms that do not bring anything new to the living community.*

*If it is proved that the sick person is under the influence of ancestors in one way or another, a special consultation is prepared. Drummers play their most appropriate instruments first for calling the public that would like to attend, and then for the ceremony per se for calling the spirits. At this level the sounds of drums come along with the songs. These melodies are led in such a way that the ill person gets in trance along with the healer. It is during these mediumistic moments that the ancestral spirits visit either only the healer or both the healer and the patient. It is generally speaking that the patient is possessed by the ancestral spirits. The spirits come with messages that turn essentially around the reason why the patient was punished. In many cases, the patient is simply a victim of the fact parents who were supposed to take the right decisions did at all, neglected, or thought they did not have anything to do with ancestors. In some cases, it may also happen that the ill patient has been bewitched by some family member essentially for jealousy, or just because of some kind of greed.*

*After the drumming ceremony is over, the patient is permitted to go back home, but not before taking some concoctions whose objective is essentially to help the patient smoothly go to a better health. These health treatment options have become popular. They have shown their proofs wherever the Chokwe are. Consequently, more and more people from big city look for the Chokwe healers. Also, there is a new phenomenon that sees the Chokwe healers travel individually for a new career in the city. As they cannot afford housing in the big cities as such, they are often found not far from the big cities, in the periphery, in the slums randomly constructed. In these locations, the traditional healers face the same issues they treat back home and concerning recurrent diseases due to mosquitoes, lack of hygiene, beliefs in magic and witchcraft. The healers bring solutions that the local communities accept. The same local communities publicized their work to the urban settlers who join for questions mostly regarding witchcraft and magic. Whenever the urban settlers face questions related to jobless situations, diseases that modern doctors cannot treat, of which the treatment is not yet found in the medical world. They then visit the healers and follow different treatments that are advised. As the urban settlers have more resources, they pay more for the services they receive from the healers. A*

*silent competition among these healers becomes so visible that urban settlers have many choices, and go to the ones who are supposed to be the best of the city. With the competition, there are new dynamics that develop. For instance, the healers easily learn from other health and healing traditions. In that way, even though the long traditions are generally respected, a careful observer will notice that traditions move in a kind of blurry environment that easily borrows and creates new lines of treatment.*

*One of the last things I have observed in villages I visit all around the vast Chokweland, it is a business that has grown exponentially during the last years because of a high demand from cities especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Honey is transported in big gallons from distant villages. It gets to cities through different ways and its largely bought. Medical doctors have informed people all around about the honey many medicinal virtues. The Chokwe knew honey for its medicinal effects and also used it firstly as a delicacy they could easily afford by collecting it from the forest and the woods that have always been not far from their villages. They also used it for making alcohol, and finally for treating different ailments. They also know its different varieties depending on its locations and flowers from which bees collect pollen grains of pines or other plants.*

*However, nowadays honey has been largely promoted in cities. First, it is presented as an alternative to sugar. Many people believe that contrary to the industrial sugar, sugar cane, honey cannot provoke diabetics. It is also mixed in many concoctions in order to avoid a bitter taste. Many other people buy honey for different politicians whose life is exposed to daily dangers, and mainly to poison. Most politicians have somewhere in their bags honey, it is known as a remedy fighting all poison effects. Automatically, the honey price has gone up quite quickly, and despite everything the demand has kept growing all the time. The Chokwe honey is traveling to far distant lands within the three countries here above mentioned. Henceforth, the Chokwe invest much in the production of honey, and take good care of their beehives, and make them as much productive as possible. With the new honey commercial development, the Chokwe have increased their traveling possibilities through the lands that other Chokwe inhabit to look for honey. On foot, or by bicycle, they go around with twenty liter gallons that they fill from people they know and get the needed honey for their market. They are also able to stock enough honey so that selling it becomes an operation that goes on throughout the year, does not, like in the past, only stick to a yearly operation that takes a few months. Once again, through selling honey they have proved that once the Chokwe engage in something they go as far as they can. At the same time, selling honey becomes another channel of the Chokwe culture as they bring with them their traditions, and the value attached to their ancestors.*

Both narratives here above reproduced have something in common: official borders can be of no use and somehow nonexistent to local people. Apart from the fact that they are likely to represent what many Chokwe think in one way or another, they reveal that there is a land that they look at as their home overlapping three state borders. Both narratives give us an opportunity to tackle theoretical presentations of imposed borders with a case. In order to understand how borders may be of no use, let us start with, K.E.I. Smith, Leavy, P. (2008:181) and lead the reader to the

Mexican-United States border and displays information that reveals how the border was inexistent before the year 1846 when a war of aggression opposed both countries. From 1848 to 1915, the border was open. However, the police took the responsibility to close it and control it. As consequence, colonization, nationalism, and citizenship are much affected by this evolution. The border affected nationalism construction. Identity and nationalism construction appeared as the major players in hybridity at macro and micro levels. Whereas the macro level of hybridity seems to be linked to border protection, nationalism, and citizenship, the micro hybridity phenomenon level rather considers group identity construction and reconstruction over time through a continuing process. This narrative over the United States and Mexico border and sending the reader to the early 1800 quite well illustrates the narratives that Freddy and Chijika account for the Chokwe whose stories are also much related to border impositions, on the one hand, and people's capacity to pursue intensive contacts without any consideration of the imposed frontiers. In the same vein, P. Bourdieu (1985) and Brit (2000) undertake the same question of group identity construction over space occupation and communication that happen following a process that includes social symbolic representations and economic power. A. Gupta, Ferguson, J. (1997(a)) and A. Gupta and Ferguson (1997(b)) pursue the idea of group, identity and nationalism constructions that goes over boundaries. Groups of people may have a vision of their life together and the understanding of shared interests and wellbeing.

The interviews were conducted in the three African countries here above-mentioned where the Chokwe live, two hundred and fifty men and women, aged from twenty-four to sixty years were interviewed for a snowball cycling sample. The first to come were happy to get for us more clients. The answers collected will be analyzed in the last chapter of this dissertation. However, a few of them were selected and are interpreted and understood through the theory that stands for the title of this chapter. It includes Bourdieu's social field theory, Appadurai's global cultural dimensions, and Stroeken's Subjectivo-Intersubjective Anthropological Dynamics. With these theories, my purpose is to contrast the Chokwe's social expectations with the government polities. The chapter will also seek to understand how the Chokwe have survived in accepting a given submission to the central governments, but with much independence and focus on their socio-political traditions. Ipso facto, this chapter will give our readers an opportunity to move within the spaces that the Chokwe occupy and fill with different cultural facts that have been able to go through various local and global, and glocal channels or a blending system that the Chokwe

use for the reinforcement of their past skills (Khondker, 2004). It is also through those channels that their cultural facts reinforce their capacity to get their visible status around the world (Appadurai, 2013; 1986; 1996).

With the suggested theories, it would be interesting to find out the kind of capital (social, cultural) the Chokwe had in the distant past and how it is altered over years. It is also good to learn how men and women participate in identities, social construction, and political innovations. The following text will mostly turn around the central concepts that Bourdieu's field theory, Appadurai's global cultural dimension, and Stroeken's subjectivo-intersubjective anthropological dynamics suggest for such a study. Anthropologists' views respectively from Appadurai (1996; 2013); Ferguson (2006), Piot (1999), Geschiere (1980; 1991; 1996; 1997), and Stroeken (2006; 2008; 2010; 2011; 2012) will offer wider possibilities for a study of the Chokwe. All these theories are about how people strive to build their social communities and to keep their social values move from one generation to the next. This text will essentially revolve around major points related to leadership and political institutions, art, education, rituals, religion and witchcraft, traditions and medicinal plants, and gender divide and body agency. With this general orientation, the narrative will make sure to take into account the important information sources collected through the interviews.

The Chokwe can indeed talk about their life and their different encounters with visitors or with cultural ideas (and imaginations) coming from elsewhere. They can also think about different components of their socio-cultural life. In the same vein, they can also differently give their comments about their culture as such, and about the leaders who make everything possible, especially in keeping them in close relations with their ancestors, secrets contributing to life enhancement, and community wellbeing. If the Chokwe leadership can be studied through their social organization as such, there are other possibilities to access it. Art presentation, masks and their use in masquerades offer large metaphorical possibilities to understand how the Chokwe society functions (Firth, 1981). All presentation possibilities taken together, commoditization seems the concept that reflects the most what happens in many societies, and in the Chokwe society. Cultural facts indeed have the capacity to lead a life of their own and to reflect the evolution of their society (Appadurai, 2013; 1986; 1996). It is indeed through commoditization

that cultural material, artifacts, and the rituals that go with them move through local and global spaces as erstwhile pointed out.

It is also important to consider that we did not at all intend to get statistics as such, not even to study them for this work rather goes in the direction of qualitative research analysis. However, we only needed to get and comprehend general orientations. We did not expect such a turnover from the three different countries, with a total sample of 250 respondents. There was indeed an obvious danger that the local people would like at us either as representatives of their respective governments looking down at them, or like new “Katoyo” masks, i.e., a new kind of invader who does not understand anything about the realities of the Chokweland.

**Figure 46 Total Interview Chart**

Country		M	F	T
1	D.R. Congo	50	17	67
2.	Zambia	50	45	95
4	Angola	46	42	88
T		146	104	250
%		58.4%	41.6%	100%

Total of interviewed people, source: F.Kaputu

The turnover to answer interview questions was extraordinary and self-eloquent through clear answers and shared identities going back to their far origins. Two hundred and fifty is the total number of people surveyed in the three countries. Scores varied from 86% to 99.65% of opinions against respective country political institutions. Thus, 99.65% of the interviewees believe that Chokwe traditional chieftaincy is relevant and could better lead these people to their well-being. In the same vein, 88.8% believe that Chokwe traditional political institutions would be better for leadership. It is about the same score 86% that looks at current political institutions as leading these countries to failures. A negative credit also goes to modern institutions by allocating 94% as credit given to Chokwe traditional education. 94% of the sampled population still firmly

believe in witchcraft, and 95.6% in the use of medicine plants for their health care rather than modern medicine. The situation can be presented and understood in opposition pairs between the Chokwe traditions, and current conditions.

### **VIII.6 Question Formulations to probe Chokwe social life**

The above section points at details concerning how people can talk about their daily life, and their relations with their leadership. All revolved around two poignant testimonies that are based on on daily emotional life, on the one hand, and on the pragmatist experience, on the other. Through their presentation and judgment of social relations and social productions, it is possible to find out different connections that link human communities to their social productions and to the evaluations given to various treatments and understanding. With a general view of a fraction of the population, the main questions that they raise on their daily life, the researcher in any discipline is able to reach a level that permits to stretch meanings and values from a minimal sample to a wider consideration of an entire nation (Walliman, 2005). In fact, many methods can be used in order to get to a good understanding of social phenomena and their implications on people's lives. In social sciences, interviews serve the purpose of getting deeper in what people know, and the explanations they give to what the visitor may observe. If the dialogue that is engaged between the researcher and the local inhabitant goes through ethical norms, respect for the interviewee, and the right tactics that engage in speech and communication without any fear, the researcher is likely to progressively build and network of knowledge that will definitely construct a body on different topics. When research in social sciences goes through observable details, Dépelteau (2013) suggests that several variables may be mobilized in a set that permit a more accurate view what is going. However, it is not the isolation of variables that are viewed independently that is important as such. It is rather the possible interpretation that the scholar will be able to manage that will give originality and self-made value to the research. In other words, it is as if the scholar has two different sets of research. At first, the researcher leads the interviews through advised methods and collect different data that respond to the main questions of the research. These data are decoded, placed in the context of the questionnaire administration. They may lead to the need to raise a few more questions to get a clear narrative through the collected answers. Once that step is reached, the researcher needs to interpret the data through other techniques to finally reach a level that permits the production of an explanatory narrative. In this

case, on the basis of a selection of questions that were used for the interview, the researcher tries first to put the questions in a coherent order that facilitates a clear view of concerns. However, to get deeper and deeper in the data, the researcher will need appropriate tools that are keen to get in such environment where people, material culture, traditions, and different socio-political lines come together for the constructions of different agencies communicating in various ways and at relatively different social agency levels and means (de Bruijn, van Dijk, & Gewald, 2007). The three scholars here above selected for theoretical construction and presentation will certainly be quite helpful to get a better understanding of the Chokwe isolation and self-management for the last half century in a territory covering the three neighboring countries where they are, as well as their evolution through diverse attempts to bring together concepts such as appropriation, nationalism, hybridity, identity, and homeland (K. E. I. Smith, Leavy, P., 2008:181; Gupta and Ferguson, 1997).

For a better understanding of the Chokwe issues, the approach adopted here regards questions in pairs. The first pair concerns political institutions. By political institutions, we mean primarily the government and its different branches of the executive, the parliament, and local level offices that get along people's daily issues. A simple observation of the above data reveals the “no” is given to any belief in national political institutions. This “no” does not get any balance from a few “yes” answers. Chokwe traditional systems turn primarily around the king's image. The king is given almost the same consideration given to God the Creator and the ancestors. Most interviewees instead develop the belief that traditional chiefs would better deal with modern institutions while paying much respect to local traditions. It seems indeed quite strange that people would deny after so many years any support from their political establishments in a modern world where communications with the outside and the very life of local agencies and communities support national democratic institutions. A denial of these systems could easily stand for a refusal to belong to the same space or the same state. It is hard to figure out that such big groups of people choose to be the outcast from their country institutions. It is obvious that there are reasons to be found for a coherent explanation.

The second pair concerns education and leads the readers to understand that the sampled population truly believes in the traditional Chokwe education. At the same time, modern education outcome is still taken with much doubt, if not entirely neglected. It is as if it has not

given enough proofs all along years. The Chokwe are dissatisfied with that education and do not show any hurry to buy it as it does not offer an opening for their development strategies.

In the same vein, the following pair gives another opposition pair between traditional Royal Kings and current leaders. This pair does not have a solid basis, and could not, on the contrary, like in many other countries find an understanding space. In the Chokwe space, the interpenetration space does not seem to exist at all. This absence raises our curiosity and calls for a deeper investigation and attention. On the last day of the Likumbi Lya Mize Masquerade held in the northwestern Zambia in the final week of August, 2015, I witnessed something quite strange and peculiar to this place. After a seclusion of many months in a bush male initiation camp, the young initiates spend last night in an ancestral cemetery on the eastern bank of Zambezi river. They all put on masks and are believed to embody ancestors' spirits that empower them for exceptionally demanding dances, acrobatics, choreographies, and magico-religious exercises. Their exit goes through a long procession, and in three highly festive days that end at the royal palace, Mize, on the western bank of the Zambezi river.

The traditional king shows up to the public only on that day of the year. As the central figure of the entire mythology and religion of the Chokwe seen at large including the Luvale, the Luchazi, the Mbunda, and other close people, His Royal Highness Chief Ndungu lived secluded during the whole year, invisible to all people. His closest advisors have always been the only ones who can see him and exchange with him on different issues regarding the Chokweland and its people's interests. His administration looks like one of the most important tools that does not necessarily need his presence in order to get the best performance. It is based on fundamental confidence, and one strong relations that go as far back as to the ancestors. The administration has among many responsibilities to filter contacts with the outside world, and especially with foreign personnel and states. Also, the administration subdivides itself in different sectors related to home and foreign affairs, land occupation and different permissions to occupants local and foreign, art and religion, ancestors and rituals. This administration has a ministry in charge of sweeping the royal court. It deals with cleaning the entire royal place. However, more than that, its symbolic role is connecting the distant past with novelties that respect the ancestral heritage, and clarify their place as in a long evolution. Such an evolution has the merit of not abandoning the past, and of an insertion in the present and the future with landmarks that coherently lead back to the



distant past through successive memory traces mapping out to the origins (Mudimbe, 1993). The other ministers also play as much as possible that same essential bridging actively participatory influence keeping innovations as minimum as possible, and only in their contribution to the visibility of ancestors' Vital Force. At the center of all these ministries is to be found His Royal Highness who stands for the knot connecting the living community and the ancestors. It is as if everything that reaches the social community, i.e., people, animals, and natures has the blessing of the king, the ancestors' representative. The reason is that the king is at the center of everybody's attention. In the same way, when the king shows up for everybody at the Mize, the royal court, he stands for the revelation of ancestors to the living community. In fact, the masquerade ends at this crescendo moment, quickly followed with the fall of the entire masquerade narrative. Despite the end of the masquerade and with it the entire annual event that precedes a new cyclic seclusion of His Royal Highness that mystifies his social position, the king keeps the highest social position that constructs the Uchokwe, i.e., being Chokwe and having a specific world vision.

However, contrary to the Chokwe king here above praised and aligned with the same ancestors in the wellbeing of the entire creation, there was, at the Likumbi Lya Mize annual festival and masquerade, an exceptional guest in the person of the President of Zambia, Edgar Lungu. During the time he was present, he was but a human being among other mortals. The public did not pay much attention to the presence of the president. In fact, the public identified the president not only with the current government and many other governments of the past. All successive Zambian governments have never done anything specific by promising any development to the Chokwe, the Luvale and their affiliates for the last fifty years. President Lungu seemed to understand how the common people looked at him. He perceived their distance, and restricted his intervention to the main protocol. During the entire event contrary to what happens in other African countries, there was not at all any particular attention paid to the President. In fact, after his speech, the President seemed to be quite much in a hurry. He likely had another appointment in the capital city, Lusaka. The president left quite quickly and did not seem to have any reason to stay longer. It was surprising to notice that even when, in his speech, he gave grand promises, the public did not seem to be impressed and interested. The president's speech showed much respect for the king. He invited the assistants to remember the first country's motto: "One Zambia, one nation!" that had permitted to get the main basis of the country construction. Reminding the

distant past could be perceived as a way to call upon the Luvale that they did not yet get in the nation as such. And if that hypothesis can be supposed it necessarily leads to questions raised in order to find out the main reason of such a seizure or a lack of integration. The president's speech itself gives details that explain the distance that a group of people may have taken from the entire nation. The president promised to build schools and bridges for the local people<sup>68</sup>. He also pointed out that the government could still decide to have the language of the neighbors imposed in elementary school. The three points taken together (schools, bridges, and education language) showed how the government did not take seriously its responsibility from the beginning and how it developed in any hazardous way. Such a retrospective consideration would explain the cat-mouse situation that characterized not only the relation between the government and the local people, but also between the Chokwe and their respective countries. The Chokwe congregated in Zambia altogether project the image of their common "enemy" on President Lungu who represents in the absolute way the metaphorical representation of any power opposed to grassroots people like the Chokwe. For all these reasons, the public rather reacted with much enthusiasm when their local MP took the floor and formulated reserves against a government language school program for elementary education. The government was about to suggest that the Luvale language be replaced with another language. An absolute refusal was given through the MP. It was like an open war declaration to the Luvale people.

Finally, a fourth pair, when we look at the cultural questions, once again the answers received do not call for any negotiation. The past is chosen and preferred rather than the present time and its government. Sexual relations also undergo the same constant refusal and rejection pattern that shows a complete dissatisfaction with modern times and a preference for what was constructed for many centuries. The Chokwe believe in the kind of man-woman relations they have always had, and that have permitted them to survive for long generations. The Chokwe interviewed are also disappointed by the entire evolution that their world has taken. In the past, they had institutions that prepared men and women to their next steps in various social life challenges. As described in the previous chapter, initiation rituals were systematically organized in such a way

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<sup>68</sup> On our last visit to Zambezi, the President had not yet respected any of his promises. There was no bridge on the Zambezi, and the promised schools were not visible at all. Also, following the election results that clearly showed the Northwestern population did not elect him, he did not show for 2016 Likumbi Lya Mize. This is more proof clearly showing that some people are not taken seriously.

that the young boys who attended were completely transformed to completely reinsert themselves into their society as new beings on whom their entire society could count. They were trained to become “men,” i.e., they were trained to take responsibilities regarding the construction of their society, and the defense of their people against all dangers that could come from the outside. They are also trained for a sense of sacrifice towards their society to which they are supposed to give their entire life. And to consider themselves as the tools through which the ancestors communicate with their world.

The training is the best way through which traditions accumulated through many generations have a chance to be perpetuated. At the same time, through the training, novelties are filtered, recalibrated, and adapted to the present needs and the continuation of the communion with ancestors. From ancestors, they learned many things that they had to scrupulously consider their obligation to perpetuate the Chokwe presence in the world through their offspring. They were taught how to go through successful marriages with much respect for their wives. Thus, they learned that women were very important their life as it is only thanks to them that they could respect their obligation to perpetuate the Chokwe presence in the world. Consequently, through their circumcision they were taught to engage in safe sex, and to look at sex as a means of offspring rather than as an end to pleasure. Even though the pleasure aspect is not excluded from their marital life, the context in which sexual life is put leads the Chokwe to respectful gender considerations. Furthermore, women appear to share the same spaces equally with men for the wellbeing of their population. In fact, through their time in the initiation camp, the Chokwe kids commodify their culture, giving it a life in a duration of time, and ready themselves to eventually associate new commodities with the past (Appadurai, 2013; 1986; 1996).

In fact, the Likumbi Lya Mize festival remains an experience that serves learning how the Chokwe material culture has been able to transform commodities into global styles. First, the Likumbi Lya Mize ritual has become a very big annual event instead of decreasing with time. It congratulates young people from different places in Zambia and from the three countries that this research covers. Secondly, a simple look at their costumes suffices to show that they have progressed with time. Jordan (2006) demonstrates that the masks have followed their time mainly in the use of material that is available to them. Instead of using large quantities of trees as they did in the distant past, their costumes have adopted synthetic materials produced in the industry

today for the production of most of their costumes. In addition, the time spent in the Mukanda camp is also used to make use of recuperation material. Thus, for instance, instead of absolutely digging roots that produce colors they use bitume left by their roads to get the black color, or again they pick up plastic bags that they burn in order to get the same black color and adhesives for different material. For ropes, in the past they had to cut different kinds of trees and transform them. They have now chosen to respect the government order requesting that trees be absolutely respected and untouched for whatever reason. They collect synthetic used raffia bags. They knot them in a style similar to the one used in their old masks and reach the same effect. In the same vein, instead of using wooden whistles, they nowadays use a specific kind of synthetic whistles that scout boys and girls use for the production of needed sounds. Also, instead of using necessarily the Kaolin powder that is more reserved for some private ceremonies, for the very public and well-attended Likumbi Lya Mize, they use industrial powder for the same effects.

In these innovations that adapt to modern times, but still reach back to long time traditions, our careful observation notices four more things. From the beginning of the procession, the Mukanda masters are not alone to keep order. Whereas their attention is fully on the initiates all along the procession, there is a military convoy whose attention rather goes to the entire manifestation. The military convoy seems to be there for making sure that nothing wrong happens not only all long the procession, but also for all the days that the manifestation lasts. They are a visible symbol of the new power and leadership of the country that stays as much as possible on the margins of the event. They are quite visible at the ponte where they are in charge of getting people ferries as they help them to reach the western Zambezi bank<sup>69</sup>. Elsewhere, like at the Mize Court, they are only visible when the president arrives and goes. Another feature worth attracting attention can be seen in the place and the role the representative of the Luvale traditions plays all along the procession. He is the carrier of the Luvale glave that represents all traditions, but particularly the war history that permitted them to occupy different lands, and to stay where they are today. In the previous times, the ancestral sword carrier was transported on a Chipoyi. Today, he is transported on an open 4x4 Toyota truck that goes in front of the procession and manages its speed at the

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<sup>69</sup> The Likumbi Lya Mize 2016 Season did not have the same kind of military force to keep the security. The cultural event was in fact sacrificed and neglected in many ways because of the controversy that opposed the president of the country and a powerful opponent loved by the Zambezi people. They had voted for him and did not give their vote to the president.

pace of the pedestrians. As soon as the procession reaches the Chilende plains and breaks into a big circle that leaves space for the dances, another innovation that will henceforth be present at all gatherings is to be seen in the use of the micro and loudspeakers connected to drums and to speakers. Voices employ modern technologies to reach as far out as possible and incite the gathering people to be as crazy as possible in their dances with different masks. The masks know they are photographed/filmed, and they take all these opportunities to ask for coins that they collect for ending their last meeting in one of the Mukanda camps with happiness. When the visitors reach the Mize Royal compound, they are surprised to find many spacious shelters constructed with natural material and supposed to be burned after the festival. They are there for the accommodation of the people during their stay for the Likumbi Lya Mize. However, contrary to the distant past, there are spaces reserved for sales of second hand clothes. Many eateries are also located at every corner and serve local and imported food twenty-four hours. Along these eateries come spontaneous pubs that serve traditional and modern alcohols to anybody in need. They are places where people gather to talk about what is happening, and also to recuperate their forces for the event is quite exhaustive.

Before leaving this section, it is important to point out how the initiates also collaborate in bringing about innovations through their imagination (Appadurai, 2013; 1996). Their creativity has much power that could be thought about in the distant past. In the last session that we attended, the initiates particularly showed their capacities through a couple of new pieces that included a mask whose headdress design was the PDF or the Presidential political party that their imagination described as drowning, i.e, in losing both popularity, and also leading people to perdition. In a sense the leadership does not bring development to the countryside. This observation joins many other accumulated since the Independence Day regarding how the Chokweland generally speaking has been neglected even though some other observers could still see that the artistic observation that led to the creation of the drowning canoe may have a large impact on the entire country. For, the entire country can also complain about how the current government is not efficient enough to meet the country people's expectations in many fields regarding the general wellbeing reflected in daily needs, education quality, and national revenue distribution. Only a few people have some kind of satisfaction. A second particularity of their creativity that has nothing to do with the past could be found in another headdress that, for the first time, represented circumcision with a male sex protected by a condom. Such an artifact was

never produced before especially in that mixture of wood material and condom in a kind of public message for safe sex. Thus, the initiates' imagination goes even far beyond what health care agents had never thought about at any time. They never before thought to publicly educate people about safe sex in initiation, circumcision, and safe sex with the use of condoms.

**Figure 47 Young artists and creativity over the Chokweland**



Young artists at the Likumbi Lya Mize are full of creativity. At the 2015 Likumbi Lya Mize, they came with a new mask calling for protected sex to avoid HIV-AIDS. Yet, in the Chokwe/Luvale traditions, nudity is to be avoided under any form. Also after only a few meters in the procession, the elders made sure this new mask was returned to the Mukanda Initiation Camp.

**Source: F.Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi 2015)**

Young women were surprised to see that mask, and they talked about what they had seen and how it should apply to their intimate/sexual life with their partners. Even if the elders at a given point decided that mask should be withdrawn from the procession and from the sight of the public, the message had all the same been received, and was in many ways successful. The Zambezi people had learned that sexual life must be protected in order to avoid sexually

transmittable diseases. They also learned that their traditions do not have to necessarily be linked only to the distant past, finding resources in new cultural and technological evolutions.

Finally, of all the innovations, one will never pointed out sufficiently: Zambezi women have updated the event to their taste and for their visibility. They have taken control of the entire exit days of the Mukanda ritual otherwise what is known as the Likumbi Lya Mize Festival (Segal, 1998). They are in charge of most details regarding the event, which in the distant past did not have anything to do with women. The ladies have particularly developed the business component that did even not exist in the distant past. The Likumbi Lya Mize has become a complete community event that opens several communication spaces locally and globally, in a true glocal event. Locally, women have upgraded their social roles. Openly they have become social organizers. They project their daily life within a vision that includes local preoccupations regarding their participation in home income. Thanks to their financial participation their household income is better and they can have a better life while still respecting their ancestral traditions that want them to be respectful to their husbands, remain the first educators of their families, and associate with their husbands for the decisions that bring them a better life. Globally, the Zambezi women have joined spaces where women progressively convert their identities as to match the evolution of the world, and to fit in new gender discourses that have changed women's social status and participation along the last century. Zambezi women thus bring their contribution to a global space, and tackle their particularities – and especially cultural innovations – through different cultural communication spaces (Appadurai, 1996:30-38). Through their dynamics, imagination and creativity capacities, elaborated in their connections with their local and global relations through an increasing network, the Zambezi women have succeeded in their endeavor to stay within the long traditions that are theirs, but also to select from worldwide-offered innovations that bring satisfaction to gender issues and to their community.

In the light of the answers given to the interview questions reported in the Appendix, several issues cannot be avoided, they turn primarily around the Chokwe's capacity over the last fifty years to live within state institutions, and completely deny their possible relevancy. Maybe the Zambezi women capacities here above described also correspond to the general pattern that has permitted the Chokwe to resist and survive over so long a period independently from their

respective countries. Above all, the pattern may not be so simple; a general marginalization has characterized the Chokwe from their countries. At the same time, different survival strategies must have been developed throughout many years. Clearly stated, all these preoccupations may be summarized and presented in three main questions:

1. How is it possible that a group of people belonging to their country for many years still utterly refuses its administration and rather dreams about the time when they were under the direct responsibility of their traditional King even if the King himself is a subject of the new government?
2. What are the strategies these people have developed to survive and that have resisted for so long?
3. Are there possibilities that could permit possible interactions between Chokwe social visions and modern development strategies?

The earlier mentioned threefold theory should help us to understand the above three questions in the scope of cultural dimensions. In fact, the three questions suggest different ways through which our reader can slowly be led to understand cultural facts that make the Chokwe world and characterize the Chokweland. It is also this understanding that should prevail in the recognition of the social capital they develop and have been transmitting from one generation to another. Finally, the answers to these questions will certainly assist in the comprehension of the kind of relations that they Chokwe have developed with their respective governments.

### **VIII.7. A Glimpse at Interpretation Theories for Rupture Understanding**

In the coming subsection, the text suggests different ways in the Chokwe stay linked to long their ancestral long traditions over. It is all about strategies that have permitted them to carry throughout years their ancestral heritage as a capital transmitted from generation to the next. However, inherited capital transmission from one generation to another does not go through a static society. The Chokwe has always been very active and dynamic. Whenever it believed that neighbors' culture had the necessary assets to upgrade the Chokwe's sense of wellbeing, they quickly adopted them and adapted them to their environment, thus quickly changing them in



Chokwe cultural features. To understand the evolution, adaptation, and adoption process, the text uses a couple of theories.

### **VIII.7.1 Bourdieu's Essentials**

M. a. M. Hilgers, E. (2015) defines Field Theory as an adequate tool for the explanation of the social world for it reflects power activities and relations within the same space. Cassirer (1923:92) claims that a field is not composed of pieces but rather reveals a totality of (invisible) lines of force. It is the same idea about force lines that Ghins (1990:17-27) and Faucheux (1959:6) pursue. They put much stress on a relational space-time that considers individuals within relations outcoming from force distribution, behavior construction, and through indivisible dynamics between a totality and elements in presence (Passeron, 2003:41). Individuals build relations within the space where they live and share a rich cultural background that empowers them in different ways.

Parlett (1991) attests about the main principles that build up the heart of field theory through its organization, contemporaneity, singularity, changing process, and relevance. Bourdieu's social field theory, although autonomous, turns mainly around anthropology and social studies, puts particular stress on personal relations, choices, decisions, decision-making and selections within a space that reflects their power activities and relationships. He looks differently at the economy and avoids as much as possible any potential trap from the economic understanding that reduces everything to multidimensional social fields of production and consumption. He also breaks from objectivism whose intellectualism leads to ignorance of traditional symbols and representations. Lewin (1935:41) and Lewin (1949:280-281) suggest that Bourdieu gives much more attention to senses, symbolic goods, and domination that lead to the building of classes with particular individuals in concrete situations.

In his research, Bourdieu studies how power is distributed, and how legitimacy comes about and permits power continuation. He is particularly concerned that the dominated accept their conditions and justify power structuration that favors one group rather than the other, or everybody. In fact, dominated people accept their conditions; and at the same time help each other. According to their social accumulation impact, P.A.W. Bourdieu, L.J.D. (1992:108-109)

describe at least four different kinds of capital. Bonnewitz (2002:43-44) concurs with the above and elaborates more detailed examples regarding the four various types of capital whose volume depends on the social agent's position within space and capacity to amass capital and structure it. First of all, as economic capital, it counts on productions, lands, and companies, different works and revenues, and various other goods. A second consideration pays attention to cultural capital that turns mainly around cultural, intellectual qualifications as a result of education systems and cultural possessions. The third kind of capital is social and is built around personal relations and the networks that social agents can achieve as much as possible through individual capacities concerning activities that facilitate meetings and conversations in interpersonal and intrapersonal contacts and contexts. The fourth type of capital turns around rituals that reveal a sense of honor, recognition and decides on social behavior codes.

Space through which the social agents operate is called a field (Bonnewitz, 2002:48). The latter presents itself as a market where customers have different goods. The more they get, the better they feel. At the same time, Bourdieu compares the field with a game field where players are in competition. The more they accumulate the capital, the more important they are. The more they score, the more they are important to the eyes of the public, and their scores lead to the victory of the team (Bonnewitz, 2002:48-49). Capital possession permits acquiring social responsibilities and leadership positions for capital is both an end and a means (M. A. M. Hilgers, E., 2015:261). In fact, power relations determine how a field works, and how conservation strategies are developed (Bonnewitz, 2002:49).

Bonnewitz (2002:56) and M. A. M. Hilgers, E. (2015:262-263) suggest different social reproductions strategies. The first one goes through biological investment strategies that put stress on fecundity and somehow permits a control of the progeny for capitals and investments to move smoothly from one generation to the next. At the same time, this strategy allows an ascension and biological property. Succession plans allow the material transmission to the next generation with as less loss as possible. In the same vein, educational policies make sure that the offspring goes through a given school that permits the continuation of the same values while ensuring leadership in the field and the space that is occupied.

Bourdiesians present the social agent as a Homo Sociologicus understood through his Habitus that has a conception, articulation, and coherence of its own. Social actors go through mediation

between individuals and groups to make sure that their social production can continue. It is also through such transactions that socialization takes place for it is through the Habitus that social agents reproduce and get personal dispositions for interiorization, and exteriorization (Bonnewitz, 2002:62). To understand what goes on within space, Bourdieu uses two concepts. Ethos relates to mind values whereas hexis turns around body interiorized values. The Habitus becomes a social filter for the evaluation of everything that goes on in the field where early pedagogical actions have an impact that lasts for a very long time (Bonnewitz, 2002:61, 63). P. Bourdieu (1984) gives details on distinctions, and suggests ways that a group could move ahead and organize its different groups on the basis of evaluation and selection criteria.

The heuristic value of this approach: every field is an actual product that gets in an environment that permits its development. Thus, in traditional societies, production and exchange are primarily social activities through pre-capitalist activities. The Habitus is a factor that explains the logical functioning of the community. The homogeneity of the Habitus within the same group lies at the basis of social life. In other words, the Chokwe lived in homogegeous land constructed on the basis of the same cultural capital heritage transmitted from generation to generation. They had social systems, reflected into initiations and other social rituals, that permitted the passage from one age to another, and offered possibilities keep relations within the same social groups. They had also social strategies that permitted them to be connected with neighbors, and whenever possible to insert useful social values of their neighbors in the Chokwe's dynamic evolution.

### **VIII.7.2 Appadurai's Theory: Global Dimensions: Ethnoscape, Mediascape, Technoscape, Financescape, Ideoscapes**

From my reading of Appadurai's books and articles, many theories could be drawn from the analysis of the anthropological material. The theory we are presenting is based on the scholar's presentation of culture within mobility in a global space. I would like to point already out that even though most of the material and references used for the theory are based on Appadurai's scholarship, I will be here and there adding other names such as Ferguson, Piot, Geschiere, and Comaroff insofar as they bring a contribution to the main ideas.

Appadurai's significant contribution turns around his perception of the world today as a space that is not and cannot at all be isolated. It is in so quick motion in different ways that nobody can pretend to stop some of its features from wherever place. Ethnoscape, Mediascape, Technoscape,

Financescape, Ideoscapes reveal these fluid spaces where culture shakes borders and travels very quickly from one location to the next. If in the distant past, values and reliability were firstly based on kinship and some blood relations, spaces have opened to people moving in all directions. Several times in the research area, we came across village women speaking about their “mulunda,” a close friend, cousin they can reach once in a while through a phone call and who are either in the urban cities or elsewhere around the world. Ethnoscape summarizes an opening to humankind movements around the world. More and more, people physically go far into the world and reach points that were once considered too far or out of reach for any human civilization. What could have looked primitive at a given time in history has completely changed in objects of curiosity, research, and exchanges with other people, and slowly leading to new relationships based on mutual recognition (Appadurai, 1996).

However, the most obvious link between peoples all around the world is ensured through an international social agent of its power and capacity: media. Media are first of all of different kinds. They go from music, its production tools, written media, oral media, that permit images and sound to circulate so quickly around the world. At the same time that a soccer match takes place on a particular continent, images reach the most remote place in the world. The phenomenon becomes remarkable when it is about music. Without mentioning legendary names such as Michael Jackson, recently, it was surprising to notice how Park Jae-Sang, K-Popstar from South Korea’s music piece “Gangnam” reached to different corners of the world and was sung in places where a single Korean word is not known. It is surprising as well to find out from the villages we often visit for fieldwork that so many young people mention names, and know much about world stars.

As technoscapes, technologies are concerned, there is much surprise to find out especially about computer sciences. Technologies have been able to achieve their miracles in so far as they look so different but at the same time so much alike. Thanks to technologies, things that were once considered as belonging only to a given category of people (especially from developed countries) have now reached other parts of the world. Technologies also suddenly go back to the way villages fish, hunt, make hair and suggest ecological new routes. Situations are more complex as money comes even from never known before sources.

These important transactions combining masses of human movements in all directions, media in their multiple dimensions reach out to different corners of the world. Technologies of different kinds respond to the needs of people all over the world. Finances get to people in many various conditions. All these fluid spaces bring with them sets of ideas. That is what Appadurai has called ideoscapes that redefine the world and open to new kinds of imaginations. Appadurai defines “imagination” as the point where unpredictably persons and ideas meet the force of commoditization, contextualization, thus changing the concept into a projection of the collective as the fuel for individual and community actions. This imagination dynamic leads to the view of the human being as the primary agency making global cultural facts and sharing spaces with the world (Appadurai, 1996:4-7).

Finally, commoditization takes a central place in social life organization. Imagination associates itself with commoditization and the combination permits the possibility that ideas, cultural and artistic productions get the capacity of their won to travel around the world. It is in that way that Appadurai’s space related scholarly concepts here above mentioned, i.e., ethnoscapas, mediascapas, technoscapas, financescapas, and ideoscapes get in a long process that permit them to stand firmly on their feet, re-create their environments and to reach out to their world for different exchanges that include near and far neighbors into dynamics that break distances, often reducing them to the closest possible, zero (Appadurai, 1996:33). Regarded as here presented, Appadurai’s concepts here mentioned, and his theory as explained here above, offer possibilities to understand different dynamics that have led the Chokwe in various directions. The Chokwe culture has never been blocked or confined in the same area. On the contrary, that culture has kept dynamic contacts with neighbors and has even been able to associate with European cultures that organized exchanges with European cultures that came to the African continent through the lands that the Chokwe have always occupied. Thanks to Appadurai’s here above depicted concepts, the above discussion has helped to understand the global linkages of the Chokwe (Geertz, 1966; 1977).

### **VIII.7.3 Stroeken’s Intersubjective Anthropology**

Appadurai’s ideas here above-given point to the individual and the community as social agents (Nadel, 1951). That is precisely the point where Stroeken gets in my analysis and offers supports

to the above. His main ideas come principally from the reading of two articles: “Believed Belief, Science/Religion versus Sukuma Magic,” and “Stalking the Stalker: a Chwezi initiation into spirit possession and experiential structure.” The choice of Stroeken is important because of the fairly close affinity and nearness between the region of his studies in Tanzania, and the Chokwe’s area in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Zambia. His experience brings richness to the understanding of ruptures and disjunctures, concepts borrowed from Appadurai (1996:3, 33).

Stroeken’s work is based on perspectival individuals (Sukuma), with their own experiential frames, acting as members of a community. He strives to demonstrate their “process of individuation” as they spend their time split between the need to reach personal characteristic identities and at the same time sharing collective experiences due to their belonging in the Sukuma community even in an “alien” place. We also liked reading details he gives on initiation as candidates were at the same time very different, but also members of the same cohort. It is about a binary system opposing subjective individual and intersubjective community members. Individuals need to consider the fact that they are at the same time unique personalities, and community members with personal and community identities.

The divination exercise detailed in “Belief believed” is outstanding in so far as the diviner despite his large working equipment is but an assistant. He talks, suggests many things, talks psalmodizes, and may get in a trance. It is, however, the responsibility of the individual to choose his understanding and making of it his life reality. The divination process takes another tour from the time the client makes of the diviner’s words his leitmotif. Henceforth, the client is able to construct with “imagination” (Appadurai, 1996:4-7). He is free to keep a disjunctive capacity at the same time observe a pluralism of suggestions for possible verification, but still hold a line that justifies his hybridity as individual versus/and community social agent (Bhabha, 2012; Huddari, D.: 2008, Rohman, V.: 2010, Plavoet, 1995). It is about “Differance” in the sense of wandering away moving from the central line looking at other suggestions and details, still keeping in mind a personal sacrifice. Stroeken (2008, Spring:151) calls it along with Sukuma “Shingilo”; personal sacrifice, a symbol of getting in opening space for dialogue, and imagination construction through a process of internalization for an optimal personal externalization bringing about commonality, and individual capacities. The dynamic that links the individual to the community seems to get another pattern in the Chokwe social structures. The individual serves the

community and does his/her best to meet personal specificities in the service. The individual constructs a personal image through one's capacity to go beyond egotistic aims. It is out of that dynamic that the individuals also find enough strength to reach out to other people who reinforce personal capacities through different meetings, and the sharing of spaces.

The combination of the above three scholars' contributions will help for the understanding of Chokwe identity ruptures, and disjunctures and their impact on the construction of collective imagination that calls for "the property of collectives" that functions for the enhancement of new ethnicity (Appadurai, 1996:8). It is important to understand that concepts such as fields, Habitus, Capital symbols, and intergenerational homo sociologicus, global dimension, and subjectivo-intersubjectivity may be valued with the assistance of the above scholars' theories made one within the scope of the analysis of cultural and anthropological facts. The final purpose remains to get answers to the questions raised earlier concerning the disjunctures and ruptures noted in the vision that Chokwe have of their official institutions. Briefly considered, the theory applied here takes into account human, cultural, ethnic capitals within the Chokwe world with a particular stress on cultural facts' management, and personal and collective implications. This theory represents a combination of the main ideas collected from the three scholars.

### **VIII.8. Application to Chokwe identity Ruptures and Disjunctures**

This section attempts to go through very practical instances of Chokwe cultural facts in order to show how identity ruptures and disjunctures are possible and happen in Chokwe communities. The Likumbi Lya Mize Festival stands as an excellent time during which scholars can observe many social changes and their implication on political orientations. Both men and women participate in a dynamic that has carried their ancestors for many centuries and that brought from time to time big social changes.

#### **VIII.1 Leadership and Political Institutions**

A look at the Likumbi Lya Mize (masquerade) as performed in the last week of August in Zambezi, Zambia, offers insights that will be quite useful for the understanding leadership in the Chokwe past, today, and possibly in the future. It also, fortunately, provides us with opportunities to look at social institutions. The Habitus, described primarily as an environment where from the early childhood men and women are educated to fill their respective responsibilities in society,

applies quite well to Chokwe institutions. The Likumbi Lya Mize offers a full picture of the main lines that boys follow to accumulate capital for social leadership.

Also, initiations are the schools of the past time. The Likumbi Lya Mize is the ending step of a long initiation that took away young boys in the forest for leading them to become men. It could be considered as the graduation day whose activities take on different days, officially a total of three days, but practically about ten days. During these days, many things are done all around Zambezi District. From as far as possible from within the country, and from far abroad arrive big and small groups all interested in the Likumbi Lya Mize, and ready to spend money and energy to attend all events. Generally speaking, the visitors from abroad have their reservations to different hotels. There are not many hotels and they are quickly filled. Church accommodations are also quickly fill with journalists coming from different parts of Zambia. Many people also rent their houses to visitors who will use them quite often for more than ten days. The outskirts of the district is also full of visitors who cannot afford the payment fixed in rural small town that is suddenly indexed for everything on the same level of prices like in the capital city, Lusaka. The direct consequence of this comes out like a large competition. The longer a visitor would like to rent a space, and the more expensive he/she is to pay, the more the customer is welcome, and left free to feel completely home. These long days and preparations clearly show how significant the event is. The competition of prices also shows how in Zambezi culture has a financial value. For, everybody who comes during these days has the intention to buy a bit of the culture. The visitors choose means that permit them to have access to the culture without going through intermediaries. In fact, prices have been increasing through years as the culture opens to the world. And from the year 2006, the Likumbi Lya Mize is recognized as world heritage of the UNESCO, its value is enhanced and more and more people pay to be able to live the last day of a long ritual. As a matter of fact, the Likumbi Lya Mize is only the outset of iceberg. Its hidden parts should be found and understood from chapter six of this dissertation that offers details on the initiation from which the Likumbi Lya Mize originates. It is indeed the outcome of the Mukanda male initiation, and describes what happens when the young men leave their initiation camp. What goes on in the Mukanda male initiation is not evermentioned during this festival. It is a complete silence. Only some researchers, through a very difficult research, find out about it since none of the initiates is supposed to talk at all.



All oral sources and written ones such as Mvone-Ndong (2014a; 2014), Lima (1971) concur with their description of the male initiation and the seclusion time that boys spend in the forest. They are primarily secluded to empower them with leadership capacities. Apart from learning their cultural traditions and history, they learn war strategies for the protection of their people. They also learn different skills needed to get them out of any unexpected difficulties. The most important skills focus on their capacity to communicate with ancestors, to work for the wellbeing of their community through right decisions. Their apprenticeship includes physical exercises that aim at making of them physical and brave men fit for all works in their villages. Above all, they are prepared to eventually turn into soldiers for the protection of their land under the authority of their king. They learn about different military strategies that include their engagement with foreign forces that could collaborate with them in military operations. Apart from the physical training, they are also led to much patience in their daily life and communications with their community members. This patience exercise is mainly offered through the knotting work. They indeed learn how to make ropes, so important in the Chokwe's daily life. They are needed for many works including the transportation of heavy loads from the forest to their home. Ropes are also largely used in construction works. The Chokwe are known for building beautiful and lasting houses with natural material. Their patience is also called upon knotting masks. It is a work that requires much patience, and the skills needed take a long time to be mastered. During the learning process, the initiates among whom many have to be graded among the best for acrobatic and physical exercises get in this apprenticeship with much hesitation, and sometimes mocked by their masters until they find their way, and reach a routine level that could eventually lead to the production of personal designs and achievements. Concerning their training, the elders point out patience as a secret that permits to get in relation with ancestors and the capacity to get the leadership necessary to lead at different levels their people. They often end being counted among the wise people of the village supposed to listen to and judge different disputes where the accused may have various behaviors, and many use disrespectful words. Thanks to their training, the initiates are prepared to fit into a social life including religious, community, sacred, and profane matters.

By going through the training and competitions with other initiates, male candidates accumulate capital to move them from childhood to adulthood. Their physical and mental responsibilities

become more and more visible. The more the capital load, the more leadership capacities are offered, and the more they get distinctions from the majority of the other people. Despite the suggested growth and accumulated capital and responsibility, the male Chokwe leadership finds its reproduction and identification strategies in ancestors, and the king. Young leaders move around and collect assets (capitals) while swinging in binary oppositions combined object-subject, subject-object, commodity-subject, subject-commodity (Appadurai, 2013; 1996; Piot, 1999). The young leaders have the necessary capital to offer different services around them. They are also able and open to get any useful asset from the outside and include it in their social capital. These different commodities including mainly the human body as the main agency, mental capacity to take the right decision, and the power paraphernalia lead subjects straight in their socio-political organization. The above combinations shed light on capital accumulation, and power struggle within a field and a given Habitus as social agents' reproducing strategies get stimulated and sharpened. The cultural capital plays an important role. Its continuation throughout time ensures much more success and translates in succession possibilities as individuals become corporate strategists, and ethnic group symbolic capital organizers (P. Bourdieu, 1976, Fév.;1964; 1992; Bonnewitz, P., 2002; Hilgers, M. 2006, 2011, 2015). The intertwined roles that individuals and the community respectively fill and a personal sense of responsibility, sacrifice, humility and gratitude to ancestors and the entire community remind us of Stroeken's concept of "Shingila" here above-mentioned (Stroeken, 2008, Spring:151). It is all about the relations that determine the social contract aspects for individuals' admission in the group, and for the group opening to individuals.

The continuous evolution here above depicted does not seem obvious in modern times. Things as presented today and backed by successive governments do not offer definite possibilities for moving from one generation to the next. If the school institution is considered as the main mold for younger generations, it does not only present clear lines to follow. It also looks like a strong split from the first education that families are responsible of. Thus, the educated people quite often seem to be lost in a desert from where they cannot efficiently communicate with their families and friends. They are left to spend their life isolated in their country, also making their capital accumulation often useless to their milieu. They are completely lost despite their modern intellectual capital that does not fit in the social life of their communities. Their frustration quite often reaches dramatic levels that bring up adversity around beliefs believed, and especially

around witchcraft that is supposed to block intellectuals, making them unable of any initiative to take care of their own life. Opposed to this kind of intellectuals lost between their traditions and the will to prosper in the modern African environment, the preceding section has given two exceptional examples from the traditional world. Papa Muteba and Mr. Kamboyi are the best examples met during our fieldworks. First of all, both these men are largely involved in the three countries. They are connected to the three countries through different channels of their past. They have accumulated their skills and knowledge from these countries. Their knowledge of plants come from these countries. In the same way, their knowledge is built on the basis of what they have accumulated from the three countries. However, they have also been able to thrust their progress in modern spaces at the crossroad of several possibilities, in glocalization with spaces overlapping local and global ones getting into interactions. In the same way, they are able to move from one country to another, from one village to another, one space to another, their displacements become a metaphor translating their capacity to reach out to the world from wherever they are, and their strength to move the local into the global space. From time to time, the global space also lends opportunities, and cultural communities to the locals through different exchanges including mainly cultural opportunities (Khondker, 2004).

The last day of the Likumbi Lya Mize gives us a possibility to reconsider the kind of leadership scramble that persists. King Ndungu is the last to arrive at the arena where the event end is celebrated. On that day, the King's authority is celebrated more than the president's. On the protocol, the Zambian president is but a guest. Also, traditions that have been celebrated all along the event prevail over any other cultural feature even though globalization and its avatars seem to have invited themselves in all social sectors (Piot, 1999; Ferguson, 2006). The fact that the president's speech promises to build schools and a bridge that are supposed to offer more possibilities for eastern and western Zambezi river inhabitants is, unfortunately, by itself proof that the post-independence era has in many instances failed in its promises. Independence promises have failed to bring quick changes and welfare to all citizens. President Lungu's presentation to the final day of the Likumbi Lya Mize was rather totally chaotic, and it did not meet the Zambezi people's expectations. Apart from repeating the well-known motto related to the country foundations and the ever popular first President Kaunda, President Lungu failed to catch the attention of the public as his discourse was quickly redundant, and repetitive of empty and disrespected promises. Also, the conditions in which he finally left the meeting seem to shed

light on President Lungu's government failure and incapacity to fill political promises. On another level, the President has confirmed how intellectuals often fail to reach their aims. Modern intellectual ways have only offered possibilities to a few people to go national and global. A quickly changing world has still shadows covering large parts of Africa (Ferguson, 2006) for some western education system incapacity or refusal to merge with cultural symbols, anthropological and symbolic capitals, is still a significant barrier for facilitating penetration or overlapping from different fields and Habitus (Bonnwitz, 2002: 50). In many places, the opposition between the traditional and modern worlds is still striking much as the past is often presented as unable to cope with the present. In the same vein, there are in urban or rural areas a few individual Chokwe, who try to find a balance between tradition and modernity in existential fields. At the same time, they may still seem to be on the margins of African modern society. The Likumbi Lya Mize Festival is an exceptional event that permits that the old traditions and modernities share the same spaces with the same respect given to the distant past, the present, possible projections. The masks seen in the procession seem to be completely outdated as they are the witnesses of a distant past. However, at the same time, they are in many ways different from those of long ago. Their costumes are a result of different fabrics; the public they face is glocal, including people at both local and global levels. Still they fill the same functions in many ways, and are happy to move slowly towards new orientations, and spaces shared with the world.

Contrary to what could be called a general chaos, a few exceptions come all the same, for example. From informal economies and in updated rituals. Thus, social behavior changes can be noticed in informal economies where women surprise by their capacity to innovate and get in the global space while leaving many of their countrymen lost and without any clear compass. Once again, the Likumbi Lya Mize offers two instances that can serve to illustrate the current statements. Zambezi women actively participate in the ritual from one end to another even though the protocol per se does not openly share spaces with women. They have changed it to a set of activities that finally makes their participation as important as to change in a necessary and essential complement of the entire ceremony, and its financial aspects, thing neglected in the distant past. In the long traditions, no space was left as such for women in the Likumbi Lya Mize. They had a minor role that stopped to their presence at the moment they welcomed their children, the young men who left them long ago and came back to them changed in many aspects. However, with time women have reviewed their participation making of it the most interesting

contribution going all along the procession, and ending at the Mize Court. Here like elsewhere else, they show that they are finally the main engine that has permitted the ritual experience to go throughout years as they provide society with young women, new born, and new entertainment partitions. Apart from these roles that cannot be discussed, they have also achieved much in the transformation of the entire experience into a highly productive environment not only of business, but also of human relations that construct networks all around the world with different starting points in Zambezi District.

### **VIII.8.2 Art, Rituals, Religion, and Witchcraft**

In his first books, J. Vansina (1966a; 1985; 1999; 2004) weaves a vast scholarship on African kingdoms, their inhabitants, and relations with neighbors while paying much respect to their cultural heritage, and enriching them with interesting new input. As new conquerors, they develop trade routes, leaderships, customs, local relations, and art in ways that keep their originality, and empower them to prevail over neighbors. Of the most common features that come several times in Vansina's scholarship, much has to do with art and religion. On African artistry, J. Vansina (1999:1-2) has merit for clarification of the concepts Art in Africa that insinuates the following: Africa is a big continent with different cultural and artistic zones even though the need for formal expression and metaphorical communications is equally felt everywhere. The interviews I conducted confirm Vansina's statements regarding the Chokwe cultural zone and its survival over time, through self-feeding, and exchanges with neighbors.

Indeed, it is also J. Vansina (1999:6, 7, 14, 106) who underlines the "Oikoumene and the regional arts of Africa" that offer pages that introduce the reader to zone cultural particularities related to people and their dynamic cultural evolution concerning different social facts. The scholar's research particularly stresses his findings that cover the Lunda/Chokwe empire from the seventeenth century. His attention goes to Chokwe initiation, to artifacts, and precisely to masks that are present in initiation rituals. Other scholars, (Holý & Darbois, 1967; Kauenhoven, R., 1981; Neyt, 1981; Thompson, 1974) also pinpoint the fact that the African artifacts they have studied are rather cultural commodities that include not only the concerned artists but also and mainly the entire society. With Vansina, they all concur on one major discovery that artistry is part of daily life and extends mostly in material culture. In many areas, every functional object is

a result of artistic group work. When the sculptor is concerned, he works with other artists. His work comes in the last position of long chain for his work production depends on other participants' projections, and fundamental skills like in modern chain work. He may need to add just a detail that reveal to be quite important for the understanding and the very nature of the artefact (Strother, 1998).

Chokwe art and its integration in personal and community life become an opportunity to accumulate individual and community capital for personal and community survival. This art participates much in capital accumulation through its interventions with the human body, and contribution to well-being, symbol constructions, and conservation. Adande (2001-2002) when considering different dynamics involved in the production and the consumption of African art does not hesitate to rebuke any idea concerning any "primitive" art. He quickly points out how foreigners from different origins and power used their imagination to use in various ways African art. He insists on the globalization of art that traveled quite quickly to different corners of the world. Ideological Discourses that put particular stress on the divide between the western as good, and the African as primitive came later but failed to stop African art in its endeavors. For, African art has always had a global extension potential, and nothing could change anything about its inherent dynamics (Adande, 2001-2002:63). Bastin (1984, Aug.-a) has mainly studied ritual masks of the Chokwe and comes to the same conclusion as Jordàn (1993;1998; 2005), describing them within a religion present in all social sectors. Chokwe art production context, conservation, and dynamic changes and exchanges reflect socio-political organizations and daily social life that have resisted and survived for many generations without necessarily the input from a "modern" government.

Chokwe artistry does not make an exception to what has been observed in many places around Africa with regard to art participation in social construction. Cordwell, Schwarz, and (1979:228) evokes the idea while writing about Efe/Gedele masquerade. In his comparison about the Egungun and Efe/Gedele, they find exactly like in the Yoruba a stunning display of cloth and colors. All children are clothed during the masquerade for the main reason that the cloth does not only add adornment, but stands essentially for a language. It speaks for itself and builds a community. Through different symbols the clothing culture communicates and constructs a society. Thus, if the masquerade is, by itself, seen as an art, it is contributing to the building of its

society; even more visibly the artifacts collected such as clothes here above pointed out achieve the process that the masquerade launches or rather ends since the masquerade comes in the last position after the community has worked on the selection, the assemblage, the definite presentation of every single item that will be taken into account. By the way, nothing is chosen at random. Everything is rather part of a general vision projected in the masquerade. Going a step further, Fraser (1974) questions the works of art in a bid to find out what they serve to, and the place they fill in their communities. He comes out with the conclusion that is reflected in the title of his book, i.e., *African Art as philosophy*. For this scholar, the African works of art display a philosophy, the African philosophy. The artifacts stand for a narrative that raises questions, finds answers, but only to find out that the answers also change into questions that necessitate another answer. In the first meetings of a class entitled “Main Thought Trends” in 1980, a brilliant African philosopher, our then Professor Kinyongo Jeki, defined philosophy in these very characteristics based on the passage from question to answer, answer to question indefinitely.

In the same ideas, however, Steiner (1994) calls attention of the readers to the fact that the above mentioned cases do not happen always and everywhere in the same way. He gives the case of Muslims in Côte d’Ivoire as compared to the other people from the same country. Whereas other people keep much distance with artifacts especially with masks, they believe in reincarnating given spirits and participating in the social order construction. Muslims, by their religion, do not have anything to do with representations. The works of art do not mean anything to them. They are happy to handle them as middlemen and get buyers. They sell them with pleasure to whoever wishes to get them. Something will never do easily as they will consider what the consequences could be to them, their families, and their communities at large. Finally, it is also through art presentation that individuals get clear ideas about what they represent in their society. In fact, in the Chokwe masquerades that display masks, different masks get in the “Mimesis” reproduction not only with reference to a distant past turning around ancestors, but also to the social order as it is, and anyway as it should be. That social order materializes their society in its daily activities with a particular stress on the social hierarchy, thus justified in its inheritance from the creation of the world, and from the first ancestors. A detail worth mention, the social order thus represented should not be searched only in big events, artistic displays, J. Vansina (1999; 2004) purports how every kitchen utensil and agricultural tools, for instance, depicts social life essential gender presentation with a particular stress put on figurines representing women in the large array of

activities. These presentations, as such, stand also for a denial of the generalization about how men dominate women. The Chokwe have another pattern that shows how they praise them and look at them in their primary role of giving life to new Chokwe, and to the entire society. Women have, as presented in the preceding chapter, developed different strategies to move to the center of their society, and to determine meaningful assets that everybody has to follow for the building of their society, and the reinforcement of social wellbeing. They are also the ones who facilitate the most interesting cultural spaces that attract admirers from around the world, as they open cultural spaces to the entire world. They add interesting dimensions to rituals that were only reserved to men, such as the Mukanda coming before the Likumbi Lya Mize.

### **VIII.8.3 Traditions, Medicinal Plants**

The Chokwe medicinal world is also submitted to the same criticism that goes through personal and collective contrast before heading to individual understanding. Stroeken (2006; 2008; 2012), apart from divination and personal medical capacity for healing, explains describes a particular process and engagement in a kind of agreement between the individual and the concoction that is chosen and selected as healing medication. There is a personal dialogue and engagement between the individual and the medication or the healing system, contrary to systems developed elsewhere. Modern pharmaceutical sciences now have become a question of quick consultation resulting in a silent prescription. It has become a business that hardly leads to the construction of personal and community relation. The personal capital regarding reliance in the medicinal work is broken and results in an awkward situation in cities where Chokwe live even though they are quite well educated. They prefer to be treated like they are in their villages and use the same medicinal plants they rely on to leave an open space to the magico-religious dimension.

Mvone-Ndong (2014a:20-28) elaborates on the situation that has urgently moved traditional medicines from a clandestine situation turning to complete visibility. Modern medical practices are not often present in all places exposed to such quick death. Mvone-Ndong (2014a:20-28) underlines the family characteristics of traditional medicines that go exactly in the way Stroeken (2006; 2008; 2012) describes collective participation and individual assessment through a personal trajectory that goes together with a community consideration. Mvone-Ndong (2014b) even goes further in rationality as modern and traditional medicines could find much common space for their work if something could be done about that. We could pretend from the



comparison of the village and urban situations that because of different Habitus environments, the kind of capital would increase through submission at various learning processes, and to successfully assume healers' inclusions in medical treatment. The Chokwe choose to get medicinal plants they have known for ages to heal their different diseases instead of relying on expensive hospital and contingent treatments.

The urban environment offered another possibility and presented another reality, as well as another opportunity for increasing capital. However, the Chokwe who are in cities have failed to increase their urban capital through medicinal arrangements. Consequently, they decided to go back to their traditions in villages. As distances to the village are difficult to cover every day, traditional healers have found an opportunity to come to the city and to offer services. Despite the attraction that modern development presents, the "imagination" and "collective" nostalgia lead Chokwe to a construction of life that counts on what the city cannot offer. The lack of equilibrium and responses to real daily problems pushes them to look for answers for their ailments.

#### **VIII.8.4 Sex, Gender Divide, Body Agency**

The above analysis also applies to this point. In the Chokwe traditions, similar to what Stroeken (2006; 2008; 2012) explains concerning initiation among the Sukuma, it also applies to the Chokwe. Sexual life was understood as part of family construction within the community. In Bourdieu's terms, the capital was acquired during the initiation named "Mukanda" that focused young people on their responsibility as leaders. Their bodies were the agency for creativity, creation and for increasing Chokwe: "Numerus Clausus" was among the most important issues that could show the power of a community. When a community had many members, it was believed to be powerful.

Contrary to the images that many Chokwe women may illustrate today especially in the urban environment, they were once at the center of the entire Chokwe philosophy. They were adored for their capacity to permit men to have offspring and enjoy family life. During the entire time they spend at the Mukanda male initiation, most of the training is around their responsibility towards ancestors to make sure the Chokwe perpetuate their presence. Our readers have to remember that in the Chokwe traditions, mythology, and religion, the Chokwe considered that

they were the only ones that God had created. Their neighbors and foreigners were not counted in their vision of the world.

Male Chokwe were grateful that women made it possible for them to have families and honor in a society that did not look at childless people with respect. Thanks to women, married people could have children and could also get social functions only reserved to married and parents. Marriage and offspring were among the obligations that the leaders had to fill. During their training, their masters also made sure that the initiates understood how sex was not to be seen as toy for pleasure. It was included in the vision of their participation in the continuation of creation in filling the world with new Chokwe through women's agency or bodies that participate in the creation work.

Culture was at the center of any peregrination that included a collective journey and a personal choice allowing the community to adapt to evolution with support. If modern and westernized institutions took into consideration Chokwe's traditions for the construction of African development strategies in the postcolonial era, then Chokwe populations throughout the countries mentioned here would have further consideration for political and government institutions. The main issue lies at the junction of personal and community interests for whatever social field considered.

### **VIII.9 Chapter Eight Conclusive Remarks**

This chapter is about Chokwe from Angola, the Democratic of Congo, and Zambia, their relations with their respective country political institutions, and different aspects of their cultural facts in a global context. From the beginning, it decided to scale and explain the apparent ruptures and disjunctures they have from political institutions for half a century now. For, it is obvious from interviews that no effort is made to connect traditional and modern worlds, the individual and the community. The situation displays an environment where the traditional world of the chief of lands has not changed much, except for the lands that do no longer depend on the traditional chief, but rather on the good will of country authorities. There is also much to do with unequal distribution as the world around traditional chiefs does not have any way to turn to for resources. The traditional world is treated as the "other" de facto that most urban settlers would avoid to look for survival in the urban center unprepared to deal with traditional values. They

thus end up on the outskirts of the African cities where they can eventually fill up the same duties of the past, bringing satisfaction to beliefs in magic and witchcraft to get a strict minimum based on the consultation and the visitors' will to offer a sacrifice when their life is in danger. Life is thought about and organized for a few people who have adhered to the new education, and who, unfortunately like for many others from the rural area who accept that endeavor, are completely lost between their traditions and the wish to complete an urban profile. With no work, no means to have a decent life, their beliefs are very quickly back to the same tensions around magic and witchcraft. The best way to analyze these discrepancies imposed through a combination of three theories of Bourdieu, Appadurai, and Stroeken, presented as one.

This association of the above theories shed light on the fact that the capital accumulation faced differences in urban and rural practices. Despite these differences, it is not impossible to get bridges that can facilitate communications and, eventually suggest new accumulation ways with much consideration for personal and community interests. Young African generations can acquire resources from their traditions and their modern education. The above possibilities are the weakest points that both colonial and postcolonial powers have failed to follow. They have neglected the Chokwe space and have not given it enough facilities for sharing global cultural areas. The text has also demonstrated that with good will it is possible that the new kinds of capital accumulation include individual and community dimensions of the well-being of urban and village settlers between African traditions and modernity. In the same vein, practices related to religion, witchcraft, magic that have forced and updated their ways in modern Africa, the Chokwe always find their way out as in their long rich past (Geschiere, 1997). In the apparent neglect and oblivion of their successive and respective governments, the Chokwe have reinforced and updated their virtual traditional and legendary state. Also, they have developed different capital accumulation strategies, cultural fact presentations, personal commitments, at the local community, national, and global levels, thus meeting the perspectives of the threefold theory here above formulated. By the same token, in their ways, they have been able to get valid and powerful Chokwe institutions that actually identify the Chokwe land.

Bourdieu's field theory can be used in both urban and rural environments. Appadurai's global dimension theory has shown that even without the forced implication of the "modern" world or government, the Chokwe can always connect with the global space. As proof, from their meeting

with Portuguese in the fifteen century, they have found different ways to get from their neighbors and visitors whatever is a necessary addition to their socio-political institutions. Their respective governments, Angolan, Congolese, and Zambian, should pay more attention to the Chokwe groups, and engage in productive dialogues and reforms that would avoid leaving a significant population portion on the margins. Their cultural facts productions are a great local and global contribution, if not commodities (Appadurai, 2013; 1996; Ferguson, J., 2006; Geschier, P., 1997; Piot, C., 1999). What they produce locally becomes a product open to the world, and globally accessible through different media. Stroeken's contribution shed light on understanding local commitments, and social construction dynamics that governments should consider in any effort to collaborate to local changes, social welfare, and global visibility. In fact, the three theories insist on the fact that personal and individual salvation is almost impossible when the human being is called to move within a human community without which life becomes meaningless.

The capital whatever its form is accumulated in a bid to promote a group and give it access to an expected wellbeing. Families and initiation institutions have been working for generations to achieve this human wellbeing. Changes that led to the postcolonial era should also lead to the same vision of community wellbeing. When Stroeken (2008, Spring; 2006; 2010) considers Sukuma individuals, it is essentially through their quest for personal-community achievements; individuals look at their achievements insofar as they find their place in the community around them and justify their relations with social institutions. It is this dynamic that leads to the production and creation of specific culture that develops along time, and has opportunities to insert novelties and adapt to new social orders.

## CHAPTER NINE: AMPLIFICATION: RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE, INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS IN LIGHT OF THE DISSERTATION

### IX.1 Introduction, Making the Point: Looking Back and Including Amplifiers

The concept “amplification”, the first to come in the title of this chapter is a purposeful choice for additional audio-visual, empiric details that shed more light on anthropological characteristics of the Chokwe in their identity construction varieties, duration, and differences. The concept “amplification” is present in many fields. In journalism, its presence often reveals a particular social phenomenon whose disproportionate importance and prevalence attract the attention of all media, and their first coverage choice for many days. At the same time it covers new experiences. In Rhetoric, amplification easily appeals to the ethos and pathos of the audience as the orator's performance is measured in its capacity to reach out to the public or fully get in the traditions and innovate. In social sciences and psychology, amplification is easily found in “Supernatural” interventions either through the human medium or the use of different artifacts that lead to extraordinary findings (Sloane, 2006). In literary genres, it is worth mentioning how amplification has reached a global dimension. Lunjwire (2002), in a dissertation turning around African oral traditions and the Fables by the French writer Jean de La Fontaine (1647-1695), underlines how amplification is the main literary strategy that permits communication. It also stands for the mnemotechnical strategy that ensures the perennity of the genre and the piece of oral traditions moving from one generation to the next. The same concept “amplification” becomes useful and visible in the social meaningful interactions (SMI) that may be perceived all through the interlocking learning systems developing individual and collective personalities in initiation catalyst activities. The young people are exposed to activities that intertwine Society, Culture, and Personality (SCP). These young people can thus internalize the culture of a society into their personality. They can consequently develop a distinctive individual personality adjusted to their society as they go through Social Meaningful Interactions, and construct a network of contacts and communications (Fredericks, M. et al, 2012: 13-14). Amplification is also present in Giddens (2007) and through concepts such as appropriation (faithful, ironic, dual) and structuration that demonstrate how action and structure or power, in the one hand, in their interaction with space and time, in the other, lead to the selection and choice of new behaviors, creativity, and the growth of a dynamic society. In this scope, this chapter will pinpoint a dynamic structuration

through a section of some new Chokwe masks whose motivation and social implications should be perceived through identity construction strategies and cultural expansion (Appadurai, 2013; Giddens, 2007; Anderson, 1991).

Concerning the same concept amplification, with regard to anthropology and social sciences, Cole and Griffin (1980: 346-350) observe that the introduction of disciplines closely related to mathematics, physics, rhetoric, and cultural facts can be measured. People can be seen growing in the internalizing process as actions, symbol conservation and creation demonstrate much maturity and effective growth from previous levels. Also, the measurement capacity gives place to implication possibilities for quantitative and qualitative studies. In this perspective, this chapter comes at a point where new social daily details will help our readers better understand the Chokwe and their long and persistent efforts to keep their connections to their cultural backbone, their evolution all along centuries, and their capacity to keep adding special strategies in the building construction of their dynamic identities.

Chapter nine comes after a long journey that has made the eight preceding chapters possible explaining different identity construction strategies the Chokwe use. However, despite coming after the previous chapters whose contents led to the conclusion and understanding of different Chokwe challenges and questions, they have led to much more curiosity regarding the respondent population that has taken on enormous responsibility by speaking in the name of the Chokwe. That is why as the dissertation moves slowly to its end, this chapter chooses to use a specific strategy. Instead of focusing on literature at first as the basis of the chapter, this one goes straight to the population of respondents selected among the Chokwe to, once again, hear from them what they think of all the information collected on them, and presented in the eight earlier chapters.

Through questions, they were asked to provide a few words regarding the issues raised in the preceding chapters. With their assistance, there is hope to understand certain details better, while presenting problems and challenges with a given order through a coherent organization. Our readers should be careful because this shift is not about moving from one approach to another, from qualitative to quantitative approaches, but rather a quest for additional details that are likely to shed more light on the body of information earlier collected and structured, here above referred to as amplification. By essence, we are not in one way or another after qualitative research options as such. We are after any opportunity that will lead us to a better understanding of the

Chokwe identity construction through their Material Culture and Body Agency. With the above note; our readers are invited to realize that the main questions have been so far raised and answered in specific ways. Additional details from sources as a few selected people are a big asset for concluding our quest. Also, in the light of “Memoing and Iterative” researcher’s activities, one more step is added to check the status of the replies collected earlier and, once again, testify of their level of veracity, or let us rather say accuracy as the quest continues (Bernard, 2006:510).

Before embarking on the different aspects related to identity, growth and management questions, this chapter will, first of all, underline how the Chokwe alterity and self, identity and construction, body and agency have been so far revealed. The beginning of the chapter takes the liberty to move a step ahead and attempt a confrontation of these ideas with theories borrowed from Ricoeur, Derrida, Foucault, Descombes, and de Certeau. All will be done in order to grasp the ways in which the Chokwe operate their ultimate identity construction, personal and individual confirmations within an environment submitted to different aleatory events and forces, courses of history, leadership orientations, personal choices, successes and failures vis-à-vis the group (community) or the individual in various transactions that occur in the process of being.

At the end of this chapter, our readers will have a clear view and understanding of the Chokwe’s social, existential questions, and the cohesion that has united them all around the virtual nation. Our readers shall be able to make a clear difference between the countries’ national statements and what is happening to minorities such as the Chokwe. Their relations with their governments have not contributed much to their socio-political development and aspirations. The questionnaire (presented in the annexes) covers a set of interests that include twenty questions and are addressed to men and women from the sample of respondents from the three countries concerned. The interview annex gives more details on respective respondents. Men and women participated and gave their different opinions over questions that concern their socio-political life and have pushed in one way or another their social organizations (Firth, 1981). Their responses and comments enrich the discourse developed along the dissertation and particularly concerning options that have been taken concerning general cultural organizations over the years (Annex 1 and Annex 2).

## **IX.2 The Chokwe Capacity of Being: Self as Another, Individual and Community Member, Identity Construction Challenges**

### **IX.2.1 From Meaningful to Meaningless Language Structures or Foucault's Alterity and Madness**

V. Descombes (1991, 1992), De Certeau (1990), through some of their ideas and discussions reviewed in the first chapter, give the readers an opportunity to look back at everything that has been pointed out regarding the Chokwe from the beginning of this dissertation. Thus, thanks to this literature, we can borrow explaining concepts that may assist us to understand how the Chokwe look at individuals, how the individual Chokwe think they are to themselves and their communities. In this way, we can better comprehend the collected responses and most attitudes observed all around the fieldwork conducted in the three different countries, i.e., Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia.

The first question worth to be raised regards the capacity the Chokwe has to be specific through a particular "self." Descombes calls on Paul Ricoeur to solve that kind of question. V. Descombes (1991:5-8) follows Ricoeur through Phenomenology slowly leaving conscious Cartesianism for hermeneutics. In fact, Derrida (1978:31-63) is entirely about the same preoccupations. Descombes suggests the possibility of looking at the human being as a character, an agent, or a subject of interpretation. Such a consideration aims at finding an opposition between the "Cogito" and "Anti Cogito" within the same character. It is otherwise what should be looked at as the "philosophy of the subject." Through Phenomenology, we are also likely to raise the question regarding what the Chokwe means when s/he says "I," what is, in fact, the process that leads to the discovery of the individual as a meaningful unit, a person with a special meaning where there could be many other meanings. Levi-Strauss (1973:48) seems to suggest the best way to find out what the "I" and the "Self" may mean. They are best known by avoiding their exposure to illusions that could seem to suggest a straight way from "self" to "self." For, there is a long way from the inside to the outside world, from simple thoughts to what must be considered as the true self built by a rich input from several contributors making possible a single identity different from others, yet with spaces (bridges) permitting communications at various levels.

Whereas Descartes would suggest through the "Cogito, ergo sum" a straight line from the thinker to the result of the process or the quest of a consistent result especially when dealing with



philosophical determinants in the construction of the being, or in being a human being. Levi-Strauss (1973:48) here above-mentioned rather suggests a total and radical objectivation of an ethnologist in the fieldwork. In a similar vein, V. Descombes (1991:12-13) suggests the same (in) direct way and its advantages. According to Levi-Strauss, the ethnologist's work depends on the researcher's capacity to overcome several physical questions, tensions, and incomprehension. Bernard (2006:510) would rather look at such process aiming at putting oneself completely in question as data are collected, or rather all along the process that includes the right time to take decisions to cover different aspects of the research; that is what he puts under the concepts "Memoing and Iterative activities". V. Descombes (1991:14) goes as far as talking about a process that leads an individual to treat oneself as "another" for much objectivity avoiding any personal complaisance. In other words, that process includes the study of intentions for human actions are *intentional*. As events find an ontological direction, much confusion results, with aims blurring where objective reason and feelings of unknown sources overlap without any clear explanation. In fact, the individuation and individualization go hand in hand in order to finally produce individuals who fit in their society and stand as independent people, while still belonging to the same big group.

De Certeau (1990) seems to look at the process here above understood as "Memoing and Iterative activities" through the lenses of ordinary language. He looks at that as a process of individuation or again as a process of individualization as the lengthy questioning and studying evolution where questions and answers lead to more questions and more answers as the individual, finally, gets more personal knowledge and skills that determine personal facets. Ritual-like language concerns structures that can be interpreted in many ways for the construction and the reconstruction of ideas, or leading to social institutions (Derrida, 1978:4). Concerning structures, Derrida (1978:5) adds "But within structure, there is not only form, relation, and configuration. There are also interdependency and totality which are always concrete... for the structural perspective is interrogative and totalitarian." Quick changes that may be operated within a structure through language and the use of words may be at the origin of several meanings. First of all, especially when considering the written language, "the signifier can empty itself" (J. Derrida, 1978: XII). The above would mean that when the structure empties itself, it has an opportunity to refill itself.

It is through these quick language changes and at their observation that Foucault rejects the language of reason. As such, it is a language of order and discipline which cannot be perceived in the dynamic of the structures; for, fixed systems, objectivity, rationality, body language strict order are not particularly important and visible throughout the use and the evolution of human language oral or written (J. Derrida, 1978:34). M. Foucault (1961: X-XI) gives preference to a psychiatric language. He calls it a madness monolog essentially turning around silence that seems to have no frontier. Foucault refers to a situation that does not put a speaker and an interlocutor in any particular position, but which leads to “the calcinated roots of meaning... for madness is, therefore, the archaeology of silence” (J. Derrida, 1978:34-35).

A direct reference to the Chokwe needs to start from Foucault’s last lines, statements that we shall combine with the first reference to ritual as language. When considered both as ritual and language, the Likumbi Lya Mize may be seen in another light, and the entire history of the rituals (including the history of the Chokwe) may be located within new structures. The masks of different dimensions, names, and social functions, drums and their noise, the huge number of people at the Likumbi Lya Mize and taking care to stay as far as possible from the masks... Everything seems to testify of madness, disorder, incomprehension as all is upside down. When structures are not stable and are changing so quickly, there is an urgent need to get a person in the position of stabilizing the mad structures and fill them with meaning, or with meanings adapted to the situation and social expectations<sup>70</sup>.

The Likumbi Lya Mize Masquerade depicts a situation that clearly starts from chaos. When the Likumbi Lya Mize Zambian Masquerade moves in the small town of Zambezi, the public discovers about one hundred masks of different sizes, and costumes. They are distant, hesitant as they look like bogy extraterrestrial beings terrifying everybody. The public follows them from a given distance while trying to find out the Supernatural in its various forms or disguised people. The masks undertake “divine” dances and show their physical strength. When the procession reaches Zambezi eastern bank plains, the “Chilende,” the masks are ready to share “divine” dances with the captivated public. Their dances reveal the meaning of their social attributions. At

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<sup>70</sup> Stroeken’s theory constructed around the Tanzanian Sukuma is all about the life of the structure that is obviously important as the individual becomes a part of the structure whose comprehension includes his own comprehension and participation in daily life.

the same time, they interpret human characters, stress the evil to avoid, and the right ways to follow for a better social construction.

Through the ritual devoted to the Creator and the earliest ancestors, the Likumbi Lya Mize Masquerade gives three reasonable interpretations of the Supernatural and its transfers to the Chokwe/Luvale leadership through local spirituality, gender lenses, and glocal scholarship. The masquerade's exaggerated masculinity revealed through powerful demonstrations, and dreadful scenes could hide messages that need a decipherment of the Spiritual as locally celebrated. Moreover, global perspectives will depict the Zambezi male and female experiences differently.

The masquerade came at the end of the Mukanda initiation rite that secludes itself in the wild bush (or forest) with young boys for a couple of months. This rite of passage is presented as an exclusively male thing. It is the pride of manhood exhibited through the long procession, dances, choreographic shows, and an imposing appearance in the royal arena in the presence of the Luvale King, Ndungu, the President of Zambia, Edgar Lungu, and other distinguished guests<sup>71</sup>. However, these standard interpretations were obviously inadequate with the emerging undergoing dynamic. The masks were rather standing for the Supernatural and the Divine annually visiting the humans. Also, as argued all along chapter seven of this dissertation, Zambezi women have subsumed the ritual and have explicitly transformed it into the scope of religious ritual, gender re/construction, and global event.

All during the Likumbi Lya Mize ritual, mimesis is at the center of the celebration based mostly on the commemoration of the past and its reproduction for people's survival (M. Eliade, 2005; 1963; 1996; 2004; Turner, E., 1992). The entire event looks like a public theater from African oral traditions annually presented in a commemorative season (I. Okpewho, ed., 1990:80-97; 1993, 253-290; Ngandu, K.P., 1984:15-34). Mudimbe (1993) rightly looks at this kind of artifacts as "memoriae Loci" as they display the Supernatural and the Divine in people's distant past timeless interactions and memories. Global thought waves and trends intertwine with Africa, and the Zambezi precisely as an entanglement of active global actors indistinctly interact as Appadurai (1996), Piot (1999), and Ferguson (2006) would certainly put it.

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<sup>71</sup> As pointed out earlier, the president attended the 2015 Likumbi Lya Mize Festival where he gave them some important promises. However, he did not show up in 2016 and he was represented by administrator at the local provincial level.

### **IX.2.2 The Material and the Immaterial in Chokwe Masks perceived through Bourdieu's Capitals**

This section of the chapter intends to understand how the non-material part comes into account in the creativity and the social use of the masks that have been mentioned in this research. The same question could also be addressed to other artifacts found in the Chokwe traditions. However, since most of our attention has gone towards masks, we will consider how the connection happens and how the impact may be substantial.

Lemonnier (2013) offers an opportunity to understand how the immaterial interferes with the material and vice versa. At the same time, Lemonnier (2013) suggests enough general considerations and background that may serve as a theoretical support for understanding the fabrication process of the Chokwe materiality. Lemonnier offers two alternatives in the understanding of the immaterial and material influences on the community productivity processes and considerations, all contributing to the presentation and understanding of material culture. Through the use of rudimentary and straightforward techniques, objects, or the uses of the human body in certain ways, are linked into history and make up traditions that permit a social group to perpetuate cultural values, social communities, identities, and historical and philosophical visions.

The first alternative involves production modes and the physical instruments that create a production environment where social connections are built around these production modes and perpetuated in time. Work organizations, cooperation among the workers, build up connection lines that prevail and guide relations among people concerning their respective responsibility and capacity in the production (Godelier, 1984:167-220). To justify the strength and the power that come out of such relations and longtime connections, Lemonnier (2013:16 C) suggests that much attention should be paid to the extra work relations, for there is more than work and machines, it is about human relations and harmony. A look at knowledge, skills, their contribution to the distribution and the building of specific sets make specificities, i.e. they give the opportunities to differentiate human relations and their social impacts. Godelier (1984:151) comes to the conclusion that there are social dynamics that explain social relations and productions.

The second alternative discusses how the material culture per se has a wide influence on the social life. Godelier (1984:104) speaks about nature domestication. The ideas that are distributed

as here above mentioned lead to social organization, i.e., to the ways in which the social community forges its different links with the material worlds from which daily life is set. Production modes reflect the immaterial involvements and motivations that motivate actors in various ways. In this vein, Lemonnier (2013) largely making use of Godelier (1984) and Durkheim (1968) pinpoint many significant symbols that fill such relations. Human communities draw from immaterial fibers and their treatment the needed strength that sets up their cultural presentations and their perpetuation throughout time. Also, the authors here above-mentioned look at individuals' social vision that considers their community as preceding them in every social organization. The Material Culture, thus, reflects their society and sounds like a projection of everything that happens in that society and whose long tradition precedes individuals (Tcherkézoff, 2013, Dec.). In a similar context, Knappett (2005) has brought in the academia an important concept "affordance." It describes a kind of social "network" that sums up the only social, question, and philosophical possibilities that an individual can figure out. Both Le Roux (2012) and Océanistes (2013, Oct.) think about artifacts for the opportunities they offer to reconstruct a society, its symbols, rituals, hierarchy, social classes. It is the same idea that Molle (2013) emphasizes while insisting on the technology typology and its connection that reveals different aspects of their society. Specific branches of a society engage in exchanges with material taken from nature and figure out their society composition and hierarchy. Finally, it is also the same material culture, through artifacts, that Maranda (2013, Nov.) sees the possibilities to understand funerary and other social rituals participating in the building and understanding of social life in a part of the world.

The Chokwe society can indeed be viewed also through its artifacts. That is what all this dissertation is about. However, the above paragraphs have brought a new interest regarding the interrelation between material and immaterial impacts on society. In fact, that information is not as strange as that to us. It sounds familiar with every detail presented in chapter eight of the present dissertation. Bourdieu's theories sum up social organizations in the human capacity to select needed skills, socialize them, promote them from one generation to another, and make them the main, if not the unique, reference for social hierarchy, leadership, and identity construction. Thus, the concept "field" stands for the environment that serves as a mold for the creation, the accumulation and the distribution of "capitals" according to given pre-established rules. According to their accumulation capacity, and the transfer power of different capitals to

newly born and integrated social agents, it is possible to find out the same characteristic social patterns. They reflect significant groups and their survival systems over years.

Together, they find their strategies to remain connected and alive when they are on the top of the hierarchy. Alternatively, they struggle together to get strategies that could permit them to compete, challenge others, and eventually take over the leadership. In keeping a strong link with their distant past, they develop their social capital and the capacity to empower their youth from one generation to another with much respect for social hierarchies and constructions.

### **IX.2.3 Bricolage**

It is for the above reasons that we think that the Chokwe existential life deserves to be approached from a philosophical perspective in order to get a general understanding that can be applied to all time and places before any consideration of personal cases. J. Derrida (1978) assisted by other scholars gives us a couple of opportunities for a better comprehension of the Chokwe as an ethnic group with its values anchored within social structures. It is in this scope that this section will provide our readers with some tools or strategies to get a survey of the details collected so far on the Chokwe through the interviews.

First of all, J. Derrida (1978:5) reminds our readers that a ritual is a language. In this vein, all Chokwe rituals can thus be considered as languages or let us better put it as different narratives. We could, eventually, get in their analysis in order to understand what each of these narrative carries as a message. We could then, also have an intertextual study that could help us comprehend what is not said and could be located in internarrative spaces and could produce meta-narratives. That is not presently the case.

Concerning languages, the quick view of the Likumbi Lya Mize here above presented makes us realize that it is all about the construction of sentences related to the language and the production of coherent flow of ideas. Levi-Strauss (1966), J. Derrida (1978:285-286) pinpoint the concept bricolage as the process that is to be followed in order to get meaning and meaningful situations. In fact, Levi-Strauss' invitation that Derrida repeats in using the concepts "bricolage and bricoleurs" is not only addressed to the critic intending to conduct research on the Chokwe. It is, in fact, the revelation of the behavior the Chokwe go through in order to grasp their social environment and their place in the social tissue.

Bricolage is about attempts that are made to get a comprehensible language and meaning to communicate. During the time they spend in the initiation camp, the young people are taken to learn different things following a personal rhythm and style. They all together learn about the Chokwe history and various details regarding their socio-political traditions, curing and healing systems. At the same time, they learn different skills that are needed in their daily life. However, it is also evident that the psychological learning process cannot be the same for everybody. Everybody has the permission to get in traditional and public training. In the same vein, everybody is exposed to several secrets related to the Chokwe traditions and social values. They are absorbed differently according to personal capacity, needs, selections, and preferences even though they are not officially declared as such. The elders affected to the training of the initiates will discover personal abilities and slowly give them personal guidance so that individuals may be able to offer their resources to their community. Thus, the Mukanda male ritual represents their lifetime when they're trained to become men and to be able to provide their society with the best possible answers to all its challenges<sup>72</sup>.

In the distant past, Chokwe society lived primarily with hunting and farming, on the one hand, and with beliefs in ancestors, healers, diviners, and resources that they could get from nature, on the other. The training had the responsibility to empower the young men with the needed skills in order to face natural forces and be able to build a society that would give place to the starting of good life and welfare for the entire country. The training also offered chances for men to demonstrate personal leadership capacities that initiation masters promoted as a necessity for the future of their community. Finally, after their training, the trainees reached a human level of personal capacity and had become active members of a cohort ready to protect each other, and offer different services to their society. However, their physical achievements need a conclusive psychological component, getting total personal insurance of doing the right thing in a way that brings peace and social development.

As men exclusively gave the training, we can wonder if community women could be of some help, or if they could find a way to get in what most men pretend to be an area exclusively reserved to males. The male initiation, Mukanda, can be viewed through the following chart. The

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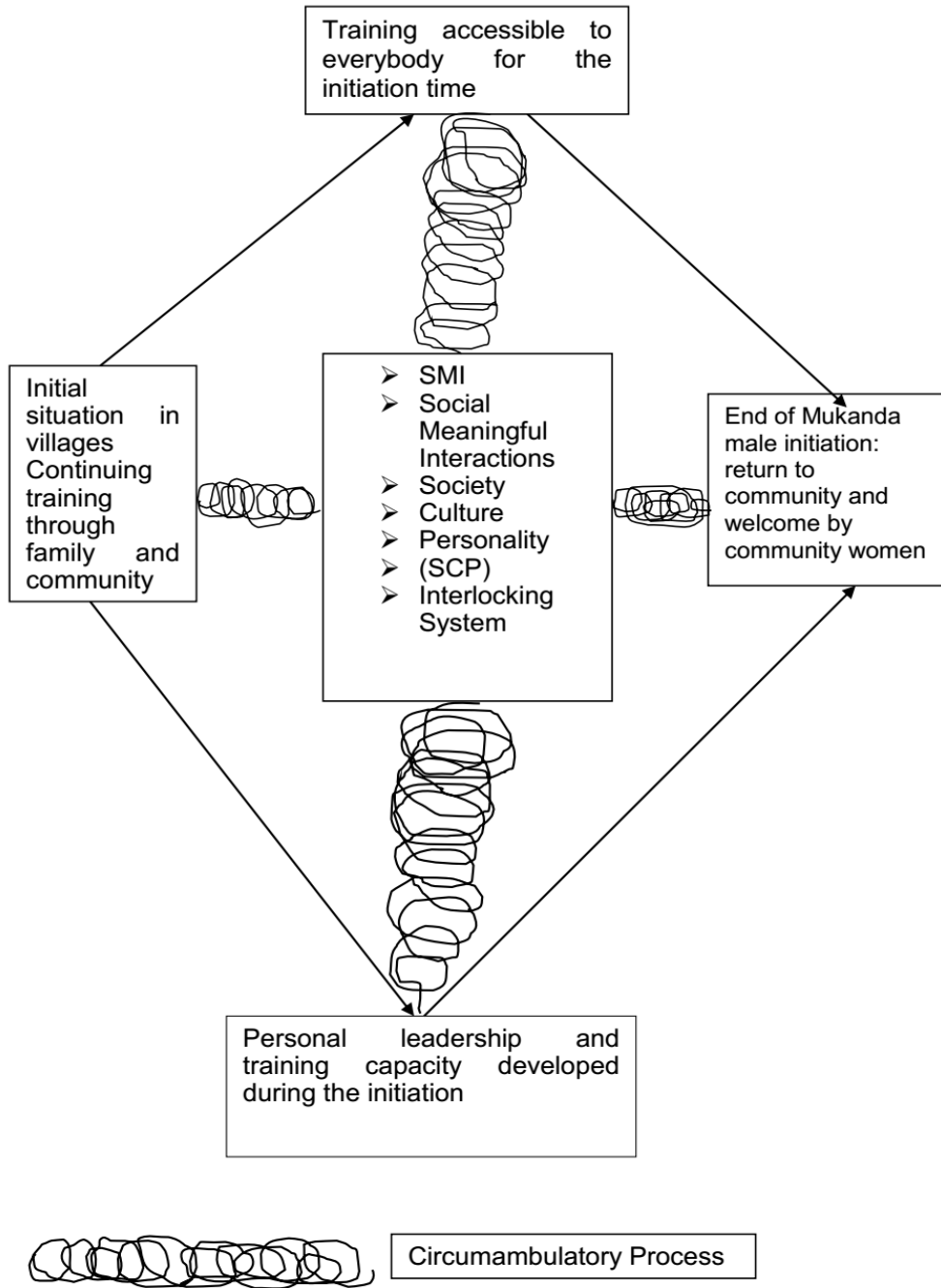
<sup>72</sup> A cohort of young people of the same age attend the same training.

young boys are taken from their village to spend time in seclusion, in the bush or forest, where the initiation camp is located. Far from curious eyes, they have the time to face their weaknesses and change them into opportunities for assisting their community in different ways. As the chart suggests, the community is present at all levels. At the same time, personal capacity to withdraw from the process at any of its levels, though very slim, still shows how the individual is involved and engaged in a mutual compromise with the community and its local and world vision. The underlined circumambulatory process of individuation and individualization testifies to traditions that lead the social fabric at different levels with a particular stress on past traditions.



Figure 48 Mukanda Initiation Purposes

Figure 1 Mukanda Initiation Purposes



A chart about Mukanda Initiation explanation, source: F.Kaputu

The above chart summarizes the Chokwe male life up to the time the training is completed. Life in the village was spent mainly besides their mothers. They are the ones who give birth to both boys and girls, they take care of all their children during their life first years. The Chokwe mothers, like in many other places in Africa, are also credited with giving the first education regarding community social life especially the respect due to adults. They are raised to look at all people around their village as mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, and grandparents even though they do not belong to the same biological families. The training in the initiation camp particularly offers young people different skills needed for the construction and the preservation of age-old Chokwe traditions whatever novelties might come to their communities (Lima, 1971).

As bricoleurs, the Chokwe initiates have each of them achieved and managed their personal meaning of Chokwe life and have tried their best to undertake what they believe will permit them to give services to their society and be a part of it. However as pointed out in the preceding sentences, they think their training offers them the best opportunities to give back to their society. As young as they are, the opportunities they have received may even have made them boastful, proud and forgetful about the first lesson of humility they had received from their mothers in their respective villages. They could be planning to go back to their villages with an idea of superiority and to use the potential they have received during their training as the important instruments to conquer power, move quickly in the social hierarchy and submit whoever could offer any resistance. However, the component regarding a structural meaning, the equilibrium of the social structure may not be enough based on what they claim. For the brash boys, there is a human dimension missing regarding especially the royal, procreation, gender, religious aspects, and social cohesion whose meanings should necessarily be in the structure in order to reach a level of equilibrium and social meanings as such.

It is this level of hesitation and the responsibility of embodying ancestral spirits that would make the masks uncertain about their movements and contacts with the public. For, they should normally be jubilant to join back their families, and to be publicly celebrated. On the contrary, they look like aliens from another planet or unidentified flying objects that have ended in Zambezi, and that have attracted people from around the world watching them without any suggestion as such.

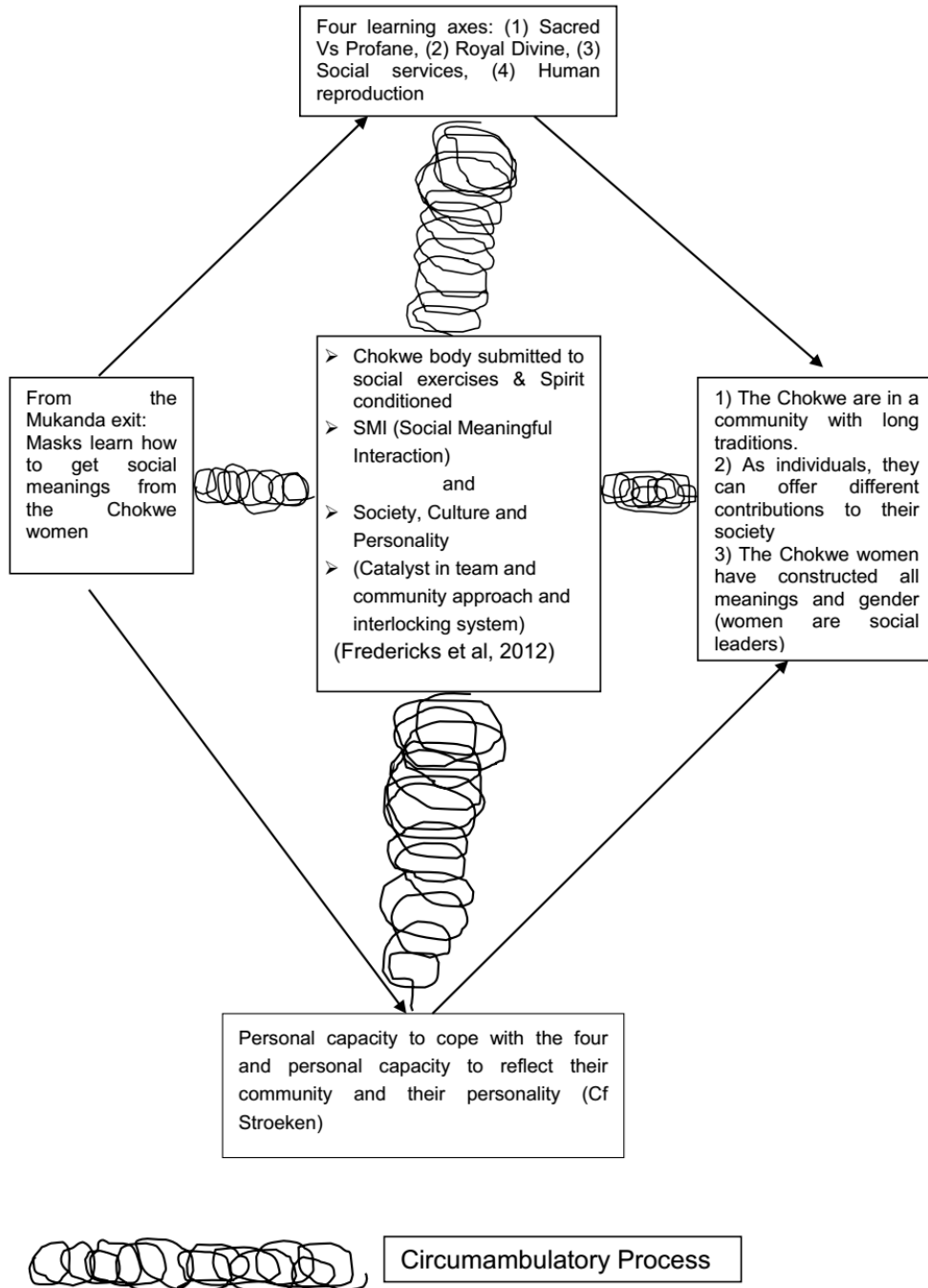
Fortunately, from all the observers, local women are more interested in the aliens and wish to make of them competent members of their community. These women escort the masks (Makishi) all along the procession, dances, and finally assist them when they hand back all mysterious forces to the King in order to take off their masks and become just normal human beings. In fact, the structuralist question is more important than can be believed. Segy (1976:3, 7, 28, 52) informs our readers of long traditions about masks. First of all, masks play a significant role in oral traditions including myths, legends and other oral genres where animal and human faces participate in the fantastic, either as fiction or as parts of religious rituals. Whatever their role, they lead the masked to get in another character and to fill social functions attributed to that character based on archetypes and in following given social patterns. It is not excluded that the masks get in the transcendental representation especially in standing for the embodiment of an ancestral spirit or a spirit known for its assistance to humans, or again as a guardian spirit or a deified ancestor. For all these social functions and needs, the Chokwe artifacts display a variety of physical characteristics that influence human aesthetic understanding and divine descriptions responding to local social expectations (Shakarov & Senatorova, 2015).

The above paragraph taken together depicts the social importance that the masks have in their society, and, ipso facto, the social mask that the masked people may egotistically construct. They think to represent much in their society and to live in a blurring space where their social functions would change their daily personality. They could easily behave as dictators towards their countrymen. Fortunately, the Chokwe women are there and help them to get the social meanings structured in the sense of leading everybody to a better society within the Chokwe commonwealth. Thus, the biggest social role that the Likumbi Lya Mize shows up to the public turns around how the Chokwe women are the “meaning” constructors. They are the ones who insert the masks in their social roles, and who, above all, permit everybody to understand their society, and to look at it into four different directions. First of all, the transcendental direction leads the Chokwe women to put a clear barrier between the Sacred, the Divine that the mask may represent and the Profane that builds up the essential of their society while insisting on the intermediary social functions that the masks represent (M. Eliade, 1963b). Secondly, the Chokwe women help the masks develop a comprehension that the king is the only representative of the Sacred and the only one who possesses the supernatural forces needed in their society. Also, the masks, through ritual, give all the powers to the king that they got during their initiation time.

Thirdly, all along the procession, the Chokwe women teach the masks how to change into humans and serve their community in satisfying its different needs. Fourthly, when the “Nyatundanji” or the initiates’ mothers offer virgins to the king, they mean a real continuation of the Chokwe as people and culture is to be found in their capacity to reproduce and become numerously important. It is the same belief the Chokwe have always respected. It is so important to look at the Chokwe male (and also female) initiations as opportunities through which the human bodies go through different ascetic exercises in order to reach new capacities and gain new skills needed for the survival of their society.

*Figure 49 Mukanda Initiation, Chokwe Body, Sacred, Profane, Divine, Human, and Female Community Leadership*

**Mukanda Initiation, Chokwe Body, Sacred, Profane, Divine, Human, and Female Community Leadership**



A chart about body treatment through Mukanda initiation, source: F.Kaputu

The entire Chokwe initiation time thus revolves around the meanings the Chokwe women have constructed for their community and that reflect the achievements realized not only during the training but also during all their life steps. The social structures are valorized according to the orientations the Chokwe women select and accept as a part of their society. The king, the masked men, the other inhabitants, and even visitors learn from them how the Chokwe society works, and how social meanings are constructed and accepted.

The next part and the main section of this chapter nine will try to confirm the general considerations here above summarized, first through going quickly through a few new masks , and then through a few selection responses regarding Chokwe cultural facts. It will then give a general consideration of questions asked through interviews. After the survey of the details collected through interviews, the dissertation will then move to chapter ten for general conclusions subdivided into sections reflecting the main achievements reached throughout the dissertation.

### **IX.3 New Chokwe Masks: Material and Identity Construction Innovations, and Success**

The eight preceding chapters Chokwe masks in their different social traditional implications. Our readers are likely to believe these masks are the only ones that have persisted for ages and are likely to continue forever. However, apart from the changes brought to the masks in terms of the use of new material, new ones completely different come about and bring new messages and responsibilities to the Chokwe.

The change in the use of new material is a result of the scarcity of traditional resources due to a strong government interdiction to cutting trees especially in Zambia. People have decided to move to alternative sources often based on recuperations that give surprising results and bring about an admirable large chromatic scale. The mask here after is an excellent example of such changes and evolution all along time.

*Figure 50 Mask Costume Innovation*



A dancing mask taking a short rest on the sand on Zambezi bank: admire the rich colors of the knitted costume. The traditional mask is still on the head top. The material used comes from second hand cheap pullovers bought from Zambezi market and carefully knitted at the Mukanda Initiation Camp in the same style rope knots were made in the distant past.

**Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)**

### **IX.3.1. Chiwigi Mask (Wig)**

Jordan (2006: 36, 60) describes a special new mask during these days, he calls it “Chiwigi”. It depicts a woman whose head is covered with a lot of hair that is obviously artificial. At the same time, Jordan compares Chiwigi masks with Mwana Pwo mask, more natural, present at royal events beside Chihongo Mask, the rich male mask symbol of wealth and prosperity. Mwana Pwo shows the continuation of traditions and has a highly-respected status. Beside the royals, Mwana Pwo seems to be a member of a high social class whose members can communicate with the royals and discuss about socio-political events and stability. Chiwigi mask looks like Mwana Pwo except that they cannot share the same social class. She is but a fabrication and an imitation that does not seem to have enough capacity to reach the beauty level and the social implications that Mwana Pwo stands for.

Chiwigi, whose name is a derivation of the English “wig”, starts with a prefix “Chi” that sends the name in a large group of things. The mask intends to attract people’s attention on wigs that women put on. They alter their natural beauty that Mwana Pwo celebrates through its clean features, well positioned and sharpened teeth, and a few scarifications revealing female maturity reached through initiations and community life.

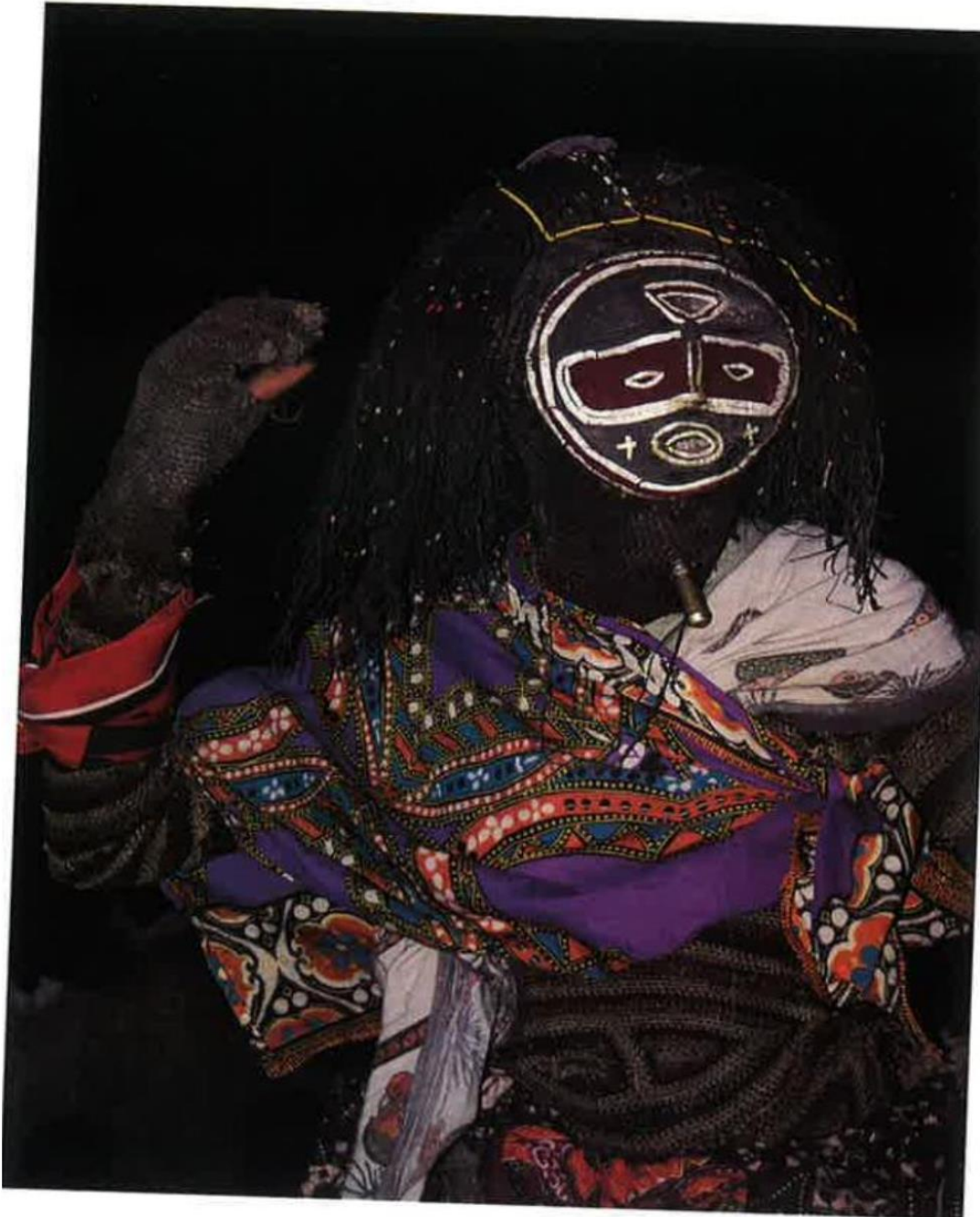
The opposition that Jordan points out in putting side by side a long tradition through the presence of Mwana Pwo and Chiwigi the newly fabricated reveals how Chokwe artistry progresses through their space and time. It assumes its past and accepts a few novelties either through straight integration or for showing how they disturb the social order and communications with ancestors. Giddens (2007) documents such acquisition process and calls it “ironic appropriation” that turns around using a rule or resource in a way that thwarts its original purpose. Many women could believe that the acquisition of a wig contributes to enhancing their beauty and appreciation by the public. The mask makers, on the contrary, mock such move the use of wigs as inappropriate for those who would like to remain naturally beautiful and as simple as Mwana Pwo.

However, apart from mocking the use of wigs, Jordan (2006) also recognizes how Chokwe artistry takes inspiration from social events and temporary evolutions. An example of this kind of inspiration is largely present in the pictures that Jordan collected. We have also collected many pictures that show differences from the Chokwe past but have succeeded in the continuation of



the same cultural traditions, questioning them, or accepting novelties. In the coming pages, we will give some rare masks that we observed at both 2015 and 2016 Likumbi Lya Mize festivals.

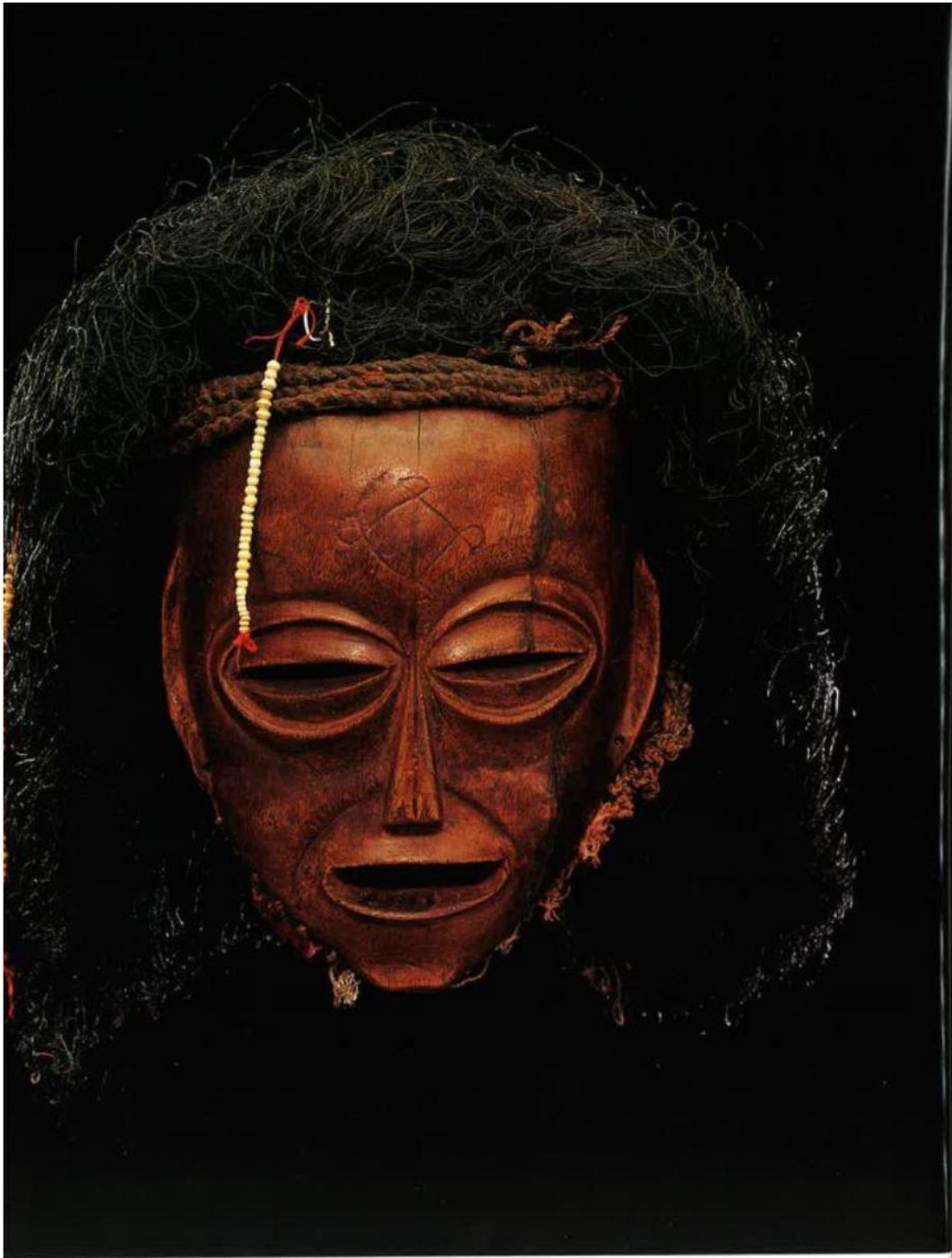
*Figure 51 Chiwigi Makishi*



Jordan (2006:60) presents a Chiwigi that resembles much Mwana Pwo except for the long straight hair believe to have come from a wig that was bought. To make sure that every spectator sees that this mask is an innovation, it is completely clothed in industrial made wrappers. The whistle and the face cover remind of distant tradition. The message addressed to the spectators seems obvious and turns around what women choose to transform their natural beauty.

**Source: Jordan, 2006:60**

*Figure 52 Chiwigi Mask*



Jordan (2006: 36) gives a Mwana Pwo Mask made from the same concept based on the use of artificial hair taken from a wig. Despite its innovative quality, the straight hair does not bring any major change to original Mwana Pwo. The mask itself misses the freshness of the masks that were used with the use of natural resources. Most interesting for us, the Chiwigi Mask is at the origin of many other artistic innovations. We have taken a few.

**Source: Jordan, 2006:36**



*Figure 53 Chiwigi: Wigs on Zambezi Women's Heads*



Chiwigi Masks are carved to give a message to women like these ones. They have put on wigs that cover their heads and their natural hair. Wigs are made with artificial or human hair. In Zambezi, a general rumor circulating for many years looks at wigs as made from dead people's hair.

**Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)**

### IX.3.2. Radio Mask

*Figure 54 Radio Mask Back*



Rario Mask: a radio is the head cover that the mask carries. Its back design shows two integrated loudspeakers. The back design also show many squares on the same loud speakers, our respondents speak about interconnected parts of the world.

Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)





Front of the radio: with music recorder and player

*Figure 55 Radio Mask Front*

Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)

*Figure 56 Aerial Mask (Antena)*



**Radio Aerial Mask: sound and image transmission**  
**Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)**

*Figure 57 Loudspeaker and Micro Mask*



**Loudspeakers and Micro Mask**

**Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)**



*Figure 58 Aerial, Radio, Loudspeakers and Micro Masks in the Procession*



Aerial, Radio, loudspeakers, and Micro

**Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)**

The complete body of the mask is presented in fibers revealing a long tradition of natural material used to get mask costumes. However, the top of the mask, the head cover, is an ordinary radio, easily affordable. Village people could easily get such radio and use it around fire, on their farms, in their houses, and even on the roads.

If everybody knows that the radio is one of the first technologies that was able to communicate with different parts of the world, most of our respondents in Zambezi, add a different dimension. As a matter of fact, witches are also believed to communicate with people who are quite far around the world. Also, the radio becomes like a witchcraft modernization or witchcraft modernized in so far as it shows how spirits can communicate and cover long distances even though its sounds can be heard only by initiated people. The front side shows radio parts, and seems to draw much more attention on the music part, thus insisting on the radio capacity to



bring about music, an opportunity to bring people together for joy without necessarily waiting for drum beaters. Radio stands for a shortcut to community celebration in a short time. It also keeps company to those who could, for work reason, be alone on their field or elsewhere.

The back of the radio has a specific design that shows the world represented by a circle. It is split into small parts that the mask assistants interpret as world subdivision that are connected, or again as a worldwide network. Also, in the same way the Zambezi respondents recognize that radio communications can go through a network that covers the world, they also recognize that witchcraft and African invisible powers can cover the entire world and communicate through initiates.

The last thing we observed in the procession has to do with the neighbors to Radio Mask. Both masks around Radio Mask clearly remind modern times. The first one is an aerial that the viewer could expect to be on the radio or a television set. It is another mask that insists on the capacity to get messages and therefore give a clear allusion not only to a radio but also to television. Also, apart from radio communications, the masks have endorsed television images that may also travel from one place to another and connect the most remote parts of the world. Appadurai (1998, 2013) and Giddens (2007) would point out how changes happen to this part of the world and how particularly sharing with the world is at the center of cultural propagation. The same resources and skills that prevail in the creation of cultural facts, modify them, change them through structuration as people are looking forward to their future while keeping strong roots in a distant long past. On the other side, the radio is surrounded by another mask representing long ears that remind the hare so present in local oral traditions. However, contrary to Kalulu or Hare masks, this one has two loud speakers that suggest powerful communication sounds reaching out to long ears. On their top is a design of a microphone. The design suggests that the microphone can be used for the production of local communications that can also reach distant places.

A combination of these three masks, i.e., radio, aerial, and loud speakers build up a strong set of communications. The first one from left suggests the reception of oral and visual messages that connect the world and move from any part, known cities and remote villages. The second, in the center, the radio, reproduces oral messages coming from far. At the same time, it leaves the choice to people to select the source of messages, play chosen prerecorded music local or from far around the world. The third set gives the possibility to share the received news and messages with more people through loudspeakers. This last set leaves to the users the possibility to share

their own communications. At the Likumbi Lya Mize, loudspeakers, microphones, and music are largely used to produce music and for communications that reach the public.

### **IX.3.3. Tawa Mask (Tower)**

***Figure 59 Tawa Mask***



**Tawa Mask (Tower): for Mobile telephone communications**

**Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)**

Continuing the theme exploited through the radio presentation and its communication capacity, Tower Mask brings closer to the public another communication set that makes telephone calls possible with far remote areas. Thanks to telephones, the most remote areas around the world can be reached. All parts of the world seem to share the same space and are now close within reachable distances. Also, if the radio mainly serves for sending messages to the remote areas and sharing news coming from a given center, Tawa Mask brings an innovation breaking completely with a past based on receiving orders and social orientation. It suggests participation in a dynamic world, thus confirming the dynamic life of social facts that have the capacity to move around the world (Appadurai, 1998, 2013).

Telephone companies have found a big business in Africa. Many African areas have not moved following the sequence known elsewhere in the world. Telephone lines were known at first before moving to mobiles. These first telephones are also known to be quite cheap. Even though mobile phones are quite expensive and hardly accessible for many pockets, they are a communication solution that links many people all around the world. They have given a chance to oral traditions and communications to continue.

Remote villages, once completely isolated from the world, can now communicate with the entire world. More and more the same telephones are also used for other purposes for making sure local needs are addressed in time. More and more, mobile phones are used for sending money. Thanks to them family members and friends can use applications for sending money.

Telephone towers are installed within certain distances in the country. They are an innovation wherever they are. They are a technological innovation that seems to disturb the Zambian nature, but that at the same time links remote areas to the entire world. The Towa Masks have forced their way into the Chokwe traditions in so far as they contribute to the communication capacity for which different communities try to find as much as possible useful spaces. Thanks to mobile telephones, communication streams cover every space and villages are no longer isolated. The remote areas have the possibility to share social life with people from around the world.

These telephones are an additional proof demonstrating that the Chokwe can adapt to time and spaces for the structuration of their social visions inherited from a long past. Ancestors rely on the living community members to make the necessary changes and remain the same Chokwe.

New masks like the Tawa remain a symbol of the Chokwe's evolution throughout time and space (Giddens, 1984).

#### IX.3.4. Wato Mask (Boat)

*Figure 60 Wato Mask*



Wato Mask (Boat): occasional mask made to address President Lungu. The artists send a message: the presidential political party is like a drowning boat leading Zambia to political, economic and social crisis.

**Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)**

Most new masks are linked to western world technologies and make sure their secrets and skills are locally distributed, mastered and shared with the entire world. However, Wato mask is a specific mask designed for a specific opportunity linked to the arrival of President Lungu to the Likumbi Lya Mize. It is a message addressed to the President's political party.

Placed on the head of the bearer, there is a small boat whose position shows that it is drowning in the waters. The Wato Mask could be called a seasonal mask that carries a punctual message addressed to the local public within the district but also to the entire country and far beyond to the world. Wato Mask was produced in 2015. In these days, Zambian politics were largely opposing the urban and the rural populations. The urban world seems to have the entire attention of the presidential political party. A year later, we had the opportunity to understand better what these artists' message meant.

On Saturday, August 13, 2016, when we reached the airport of Lusaka, otherwise known as Kenneth Kaunda international airport, we had come to meet the local fundraisers of the Likumbi Lya Mize based in the capital of Zambia in order to find out how their work was done for the sixtieth Likumbi Lya Mize anniversary. Contrary to the atmosphere usually observed at the airport, on that day everything was abnormally calm. The reason of that tranquility was due to the general expectation of the presidential election results. The members of the political party on power, the Patriotic Front (PF), had clearly meant they would not accept a defeat. Those of the opposition had meant the same thing. They believed their candidate deserved, that time more than ever before, taking the leadership of the country. The opposition candidate Hakainde Hichikema, known as HH, was undertaking a fifth attempt in the presidential elections. A rich businessman, he had concluded alliances with grassroots' community leaders for the conquest of the Zambian North-Western Province (and elsewhere) with speeches raising cultural responsibility for all groups' participation in the building of a nation. He pointed out that it was time the forgotten people had their share of the independence benefits, and engaged with others in the conquests of national and global spaces by attracting world attention on their capacity to share cultural and socio-political development sources.

Most people in the North-Western province believe that the elections results were rigged in order to force country populations to remain in the same socio-political conditions challenging them since the independence time. However, urban settlers also claim in their majority that they had voted for the current president for reasons of stability and the continuation of his development

politics for the interest of the country. Unless the President decides to apply such development politics now, in many ways Zambezi has not benefitted at all. Our description of the Likumbi Lya Mize pointed out that 2015 presidential promises concerning the building of a large bridge on the Zambezi River, as well as schools inside the district, have never had a starting point. The elections became an opportunity that the Zambezi populations took to express how they could not vote for a president who did respect promises publicly made.

The results of these elections in favor of president Lungu (and hateful comments heard here and there) justify the findings of this dissertation throughout chapters that we had already written. First of all, we have repeatedly pointed out how the North-Western Province has been in many ways neglected. the Chokwe and the Luvale populations have still a lot to worry about and seem to be far back from other groups from the country. The situation also confirms how last year at the Likumbi Lya Mize, President Lungu's speech was not applauded and his promises were unable to attract any attention as pointed out in the dissertation. In fact, the president has never respected his promises; none of them has never started or shown any sign to start in the near future. Secondly, the dissertation is proving something we did not so far consider seriously. The population of the urban provinces do not pay attention as such to the North-Western and Southern provinces, let us say to rural provinces. Massive urban migrations observed in African countries are a result of a lack of interest from both public institutions and the urban populations. In fact, rural provinces are in many ways considered as remote areas that do not know or understand developmental challenges.

It is, however, our academic duty to balance statements mentioned above that come from both camps concerned with the elections results. If through some results we have been able to demonstrate how H.H. had succeeded to get the most votes in some provinces, we cannot rely on these results to announce that he was the winner and the elections were rigged. Apart from the case of the Eastern province, H.H. only seems to have been the candidate of rural provinces and their populations. As a matter of fact, a simple look at urban provinces shows that President Lungu was its main candidate, as may be seen in both Lusaka and the Copperbelt provinces.

**IX.3.5. Helikopta Mask (Helicopter)***Figure 61 Helikopta Mask***Helikopta Mask: Transportation and Communication**

Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)

A dynamic Kabompo artists working in a team including Chokwe, Luchazi and Luvale carved the Helicopter Mask. When asked where they got their inspiration from, they mentioned that they had the opportunity to watch a film entitled “Commando” with one main actor, Chuck Norris. They admired his capacity to assist people and bring change to places exposed to violence and suffering. The public gave different explanations about the helicopter. For many, it is the fruit of the genius of local artist. They also pointed out how the spirits were happy to use such objects for communication and linking different parts of the world. In fact, many others believed that witches from the distant past were also using flying aircrafts such as the helicopter for moving at night to reach the places where their rescue or fighting operations were scheduled.

Finally, other people in the public mentioned other masks whose inspirations came from contacts with the world, especially the ones related to scientific evolution: computer and whale masks. The mask called “Komputa” shows that the Chokwe youth is no longer isolated and is open to the world in order to share skills and knowledge. If the Chokweland was neglected and did not have access to western education, today the artists are showing how younger generations can join the world and exchange knowledge and skills for the building of a better world. The whale mask is an inspiration from the Bible and reproduces a biblical story. It shows how these artists can draw their inspiration from all possible sources.



**IX.3.6. Condom Mask***Figure 62 Makutu Mask*

Makutu Mask: Male genitals, sex protection with a condom

Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2015)

*Figure 63 Makutu Mask Front***Makutu Mask: front**

**Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2015)**

This mask was shown shortly to the public at the 2015 Likumbi Lya Mize Festival. It is the representation of male genitals in large dimensions. Its presence stands for a disrespect for taboos inherited from ancestors that forbid a complete show of genitals. Moreover, in the local traditions women are not supposed to look at men's genitals even when they are married and share the same bed. In fact, during the procession, we heard several women speaking up in big surprise: "So that that is how male genitals are," in a mixture of mockery and sincerity. Some were running from the mask as it was indeed violent and could be seen representing male violence in communities,

or Gender Based Violence seemed to have its effect in the procession. The mask was particularly violent towards women.

Unfortunately, elders decided that this mask had to disappear from the procession. We wanted to know more about its genesis and the reasons of its presence in that particular session. We negotiated a short visit to the Mukanda Mask, and discovered the following. It was made in Kabompo District and was a response to awareness messages from health institutions. Local people were indeed informed that recent medical findings showed a big difference in HIV-AIDS expansions in areas where circumcision was practiced in comparison to areas where it was not practiced. As the Chokwe, Luvale, Lunda, Minungu, Luchazi and other close people in the region practiced circumcision, they started living reluctantly paying no attention to conditions that could lead to contracting HIV-AIDS.

The artist thought he had to do something about the situation and found that the best way would be to combine the Mukanda Initiation achievements with the possibilities that are offered to people to have safe and protected sex. The big dimensions were chosen to make sure that everybody could see and understand the message.

Unfortunately, the artists and the Mukanda camp leaders did not consult the local ethnic and political authorities. For local authorities, the artifact was against moral conduct and should be removed. We had pictures and an interview with the artists, we also met the representatives of some mining companies operating in the region and whose representatives attended the Likumbi Lya Mize. We made some promotions for the mask and asked them to find ways in which they could use it or at least its pictures during their awareness campaigns against HIV-AIDS propagation.

In fact, the Zambezi people had already done much progress concerning the mixture of new techniques along traditions as far as circumcision is concerned. They have indeed stopped using traditional knives in the circumcision operations. On the contrary, they were inviting a recognized and trained nurse who had also undergone the Mukanda initiation to join them when the circumcision time has arrived. He would use his scissors and alcohol to operate, and he would leave some medicine they could use in case of any danger especially when wounds could be infected.

Condom Mask stands for a spirit that invites married and unmarried people to protect themselves so that to avoid death from HIV-AIDS. It is indeed well known that ancestors recommend the living people to take care of their life and avoid any stupid behavior that could lead to the death of one person of some community members. Life protection also needs to be adapted to space and time. Social structure, power, on the one hand, and space and time on the other, participate in the structuration that brings change to the social situations and people's behaviors (Giddens, 1984). This time things did not go in the easiest way for the artists and social leaders did not communicate enough. The achievement can still be considered in the light of the quick message spread through those who were able to see mask. The work will continue in a mouth-ear style like in the old days and the information will be shared: sex needs to be protected to avoid HIV-AIDS propagation and danger to communities. Like in a snowball process, the news will go around and people will know that unprotected sex could lead to death. They will also raise questions regarding the circumstances in which such propagation happens and could be avoided. They will then learn about the behaviors that they needed to have all along their life and the tests they would have to undertake before engaging in marriage or in another kind of partnership.

However, we should not be naïve. The same artifact may end in many places being just a derision object for different beliefs are developed. In places where men consider that they are the only ones to decide about sexual life conditions, they will not easily let anybody put into question their social habits. They will prefer to keep their leadership and status quo. Also, health care structures should find ways to include such artifact in the awareness campaign. If, however, their initiatives seem to go against local traditions by publicly referring to male nudity. Finding the right *modus vivendi* may finally lead to a situation that sends the phallus artifact back to the hidden place that the Mukanda initiation camp stands for. There, the initiation masters obeying local authorities will destroy the mask.



**IX.3.7. Giant Ostrich and Lion Masks from Kabompo***Figure 64 Giant Ostrich Mask*

Giant Ostrich Mask: a big wild bird dancing with the public  
Kabompo artists taking inspiration from the world

**Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)**

*Figure 65 Ostrich and Lion Masks resting*



Ostrich and Lion Masks waiting for a next the next dance

**Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)**





Ntambo Mask (Lion Mask): by Kabompo Artists

**Source: F. Kaputu Pictures (Zambezi, August 2016)**

The artists from Kabompo are more and more known for their specific contributions to the Likumbi Lya Mize. Every year they share with the large group attending the festival original artifacts that attract much attention and raise many questions regarding the quality of their work and their capacity to communicate.

They had worked from recuperated material and had used plants for getting colors. The structure is made from dead wood that had to leave a large hollow space where two men could stand up, or occasionally sit on African stools during their performances. The outside surface for both the ostrich and the lion was covered with painted raffia bags. The colors suggested ostrich's feathers or again the lion's skin in its soil like color. They then worked on details regarding the mouths adapted to the nature of these beasts.

In the African traditions, it was known that certain relationships could be developed between human beings and animals. That is why some animals were domesticated. Some of them were eventually used as food. There was a specific relationship that was supposed to exist between royals and the lion. Some kings were called lions. They considered that they played the same leadership role within their communities. That is why their paraphernalia had attributes and designs representing the lion.

In both representations and choices of these animals, the artists are obviously exposed to the western world film productions or other Disney Productions known for their natural size representations. It is a big success that proves the local capacity to connect with the global space as could be interpreted through Appadurai's theories. The success is all about materiality achievement through artifacts perceived as an opportunity that connect people among them over a source of dispute, joy, observation, entertainment, or other meditation.

Both the Lion and the Ostrich artifacts were produced for leading the public in different community dances. Also, the artists had to train those who had to be under the masks. They had to coordinate their steps for walking and running. They had also to coordinate their steps for dancing for the amazement of the public. They did a great job for they were on the Mize court school football field. The Lion and the Ostrich's performances were given at a moment where the public had the choice to attend other activities organized at the same time. The attendance continued getting bigger and bigger. The artists were able to combine a variety of dances whereas drums were beating and the artifacts engaged everybody in the community participation. The past, the present and the future were put together through the artists' capacity to develop their imagination, connect the world, and give the chance to all people to participate aesthetic creation.

Of the seven masks explained here above, it is possible to find out how the artists continue to keep the same social role they had in the distant past. During Mukanda Initiation, the initiates



were led to bring to their community sources of inspiration that could remind them about ancestors or God. Apart from divine sources and motivations, they were also supposed to bring about artifacts that could facilitate human communications and joy. Also, some of the masks were produced so that they could facilitate singing and dancing during events of different nature such rituals, harvests, mourning, burial that were usually performed with some kind of body movements. Most of these rituals were turning around mimetic scenes commemorating ancestors and were considered as inherited from the first cultural founders. The artifacts here above show that the artist have expanded their sources of inspiration to the world and exchange information with the world. They are no longer isolated. Appadurai (1996, 2013), and Giddens (2007) offer our readers the opportunity to perceive through these new Chokwe masks how cultural facts negotiate growth, change, novelty, and intercommunity exchanges around the word. Culture is at the center of possibilities for the construction of the future while breaking psychological barriers of the past, and bringing about new possibilities.

#### **IX.4. Interviews A Few Words from Local Field “Experts” on Different Themes: Recorded Interviews and Interpretations**

It goes without saying that we will be unable to reproduce all recorded interviews. We decided to reproduce for this research a few coming from the main respondents representing village leadership or shared opinions. We had received earlier reports on these interviewees through our field assistants. However, to critically balance their contribution we also listened to other people and later, on in discussion groups, we projected these interviews on a large screen borrowed from Kansanshi Mining PL and debated them in the evenings. We had thus balanced views and had clear ideas about our selections. Our readers should also understand that we could not project some of the videos recorded with the promise to keep secret all words. Such is the case of the interview here after on female initiation.

##### **IX.4.1 On Witchcraft and Artifacts: Mr. Kachongo, Zambezi**

*My name is Kachongo! Last year, we already talked and dealt with many issues regarding our culture. I am the one maybe the first to you who openly admitted that I am a witch. In fact, let me start where we ended last year, then I will come to this question. I admitted being a witch and I assume the full understanding of the concept: right or wrong depending on the perspective of which you consider it. In fact, during our ancestors’ time, all elders of our respective village were witches. The use of the word meant they knew different life secrets that they could not share*

*with youngsters, foreigners, women, and the people who did not freely come in their night meetings, or again those who were weak and could not face the supernatural and the extraordinary through magic practices. In order to facilitate communications and entertainments, these night meetings and encounters also operated with tools of precision that, unfortunately, you today also count among Chokwe/Luvale artifacts. For our ancestors, they were not artifacts they were the necessary tools that permitted them to get into connection with certain powers. For witchcraft is about getting powers and using them to connect or attack people who could be in normal lifetime stronger than we are. They knew how to use these strategies to get powers and use them to stop strong winds, change the weather, and quite often bring about novelties. Fortunately for us, there are still a few people who believe in that kind of witchcraft that in fact has the same name as medicine “Wanga.” It is all about making things to happen in circumstances where they are not at all expected. I am among those who can get things to happen. I am among those who can still go deep in their dreams and understand the messages they carry and react accordingly in order to avoid that unfortunate events happen to our people. Last year, I pointed out that I could help bring back to life those who are killed when it is not yet their right moment to pass away. I negotiate with the witches so that they can be released. I also negotiate that the witches leave free our visitors and do not provoke useless conflicts in going towards places that are not under our control. You seemed to pay much more attention to the fact that I also accepted certain deaths for the good of the community. When somebody is but the source of evil and that s/he cannot help the community in one way or another but in bringing much trouble, false accusations, lack of respect for the elders, ancestors, and the foundations of our culture, there is not any place for that kind of individuals in our society. I agree and accept that that one be given the opportunity to face straight ancestors who will control him and keep him in the other world. That is the kind of witchcraft in which I am involved, and in which I am going to get involved in the future as long as our ancestors give me a chance to survive.*

*Now, concerning your question on the kind of new masks you observe in the procession, I would like to point out how we come to that. By the way, I am a “Tshilombola,” i.e., a guardian of the initiation camp, Mukanda. I have been in that profession for many years; I think about 22 years now. I have seen many things come and go. My knowledge comes from the elders who had accepted me at the initiation camp. They found that I had the capacities to continue the work because I was strong and already knew so many things I had learned from my grandfather who was also a “Tshilombola.” So, the initiation camp confirmed what my grandfather was already doing with me. That is exactly the way in which those of my profession have been recruited for years. The offer is public, but the selection often goes through that kind of pre-selection linked to family relations and known capacities of history. The others could also be selected if they could be exceptional. What happens, when they join the initiation camp, they enjoy their presence there and the general lessons they get, but they do not have any precise target and purpose as they may not have the same privilege like those who have parents operating in the sector. I enjoyed my privilege and used it a lot to get fully into the profession. After the seclusion I had gone through, I continued learning a lot from my grandfather and his friends for two consecutive years. Then, I started escorting them into initiation camps and was taught just to watch without doing anything. They would take me aside to explain the importance of all moment in the learning process. Becoming a “Tshilombola” is not easy. It includes being ready for many things. We are not only the guardians of the initiation camp. We are there for doing anything. We are their nurses, diviners, and teachers of all practical things that go on in our daily life. The initiates need to distinguish all plants that are around our houses so that they can choose the ones that can help*

*them. While in the forest, they should be able to choose the good mushrooms and avoid the poisonous ones. They should know all the plants that should boost their masculinity and sexuality so that they remain as young and vigorous as possible all along their life. That would also include the plants that increase their potential to get as many children as possible.*

*As teachers, we also teach them to use their brain and think about the best ways to face different social issues. We teach them to have much respect for their elders and especially for the royal leaders who are the pillars of our society. Like our students, they learn how also to be creative. That is why they are led to the making of masks. Making costumes is the most difficult lesson they learn. It requires a lot of patience and repetition of making knots one after another according to their masters' pieces of advice. The exercise in itself demands that they forget about their personal ambitions and learn how to work as a group for the production of artifacts that include pieces and work done by each of them.*

*During creative art exercises, we notice their originalities, and we encourage their creativity. We show their friends the best pieces. They discuss their ideas about the process of production of a piece. We apply the same considerations to songs and music. For beating drums even though observed from the outside, many people believe we have been beating drums in the same ways for centuries. There so many varieties that have come with time. We try to find out what is good to keep if it can easily be connected to what was done so far. In the same way, we look at dance steps, and we can thus progress in time and also keep a firm contact with our past.*

*We also organize competitions about their originalities as they present different pieces. We just ask them to discuss with us what they have thought about and what applies to our society today. In the recent years, we have started noticing that the initiates and the Makishi do not look so far for their inspirations. They open eyes on their modern society, and they quickly find what they need to convince us and get the best possible grades. In this respect, Kabompo district initiates seem particularly well inspired. Last year, they produced the condomonized mask that you like a lot. This year, 2016, they have particularly produced two important pieces that reflect a well-organized team work. Their ostrich and lion masks participate in dances and are highly appreciated. To understand exactly what happens during their training, we have to keep in mind that they are initiated to be in contact with spirits, welcome them and channel them for the benefit of the community. The outfit they put on is essentially turning around the costume that changes their personality. The mask or head depends on the choice that goes together with the kind of spirit they embody.*

*As mask makers, they are supposed to communicate with the king and the royal leadership in order to make sure that the king is informed about novelties and the impact they could have on the Chokweland. More and more, the young initiates bring in the initiation camp ideas about new technologies. During the time they spend in the initiation camp, they talk about these new technologies and how they are used. Thus, computers, telephone tours and planes are mentioned, and they are considered as the new magic of the white man. During the time of wars in Angola especially when the Cubans were around, new discourses were developed in the initiation camp. After their daily training, when chatting around the fireplace, the young people talk about the magic of given weapons and their destructive capacities. In this way, the elders, mainly the "Tshilombola" initiation masters question them more and more on these technological novelties and try to find out what could inspire the Chokwe.*

*For most leaders, the new technologies could be looked at in the same way the “Katoyo” mask is considered. Officially, the “Katoyo” represents laughter and mockery that the Chokwe can have on the white men. The mask represents them as failed characters for the white men indeed failed to get in the soul of the Chokwe and understand what they are, how they are builders of their communities, and how they construct their identities throughout years.*

*However, while the public is laughing at the “Katoyo,” the wise elders study different strategies to get for them the powers that the “Katoyo” have even though they are of a different kind, from what the Chokwe usually have and use. Also, the new technologies that get more and more in the masks are that call for us to look for ways to use the powers that these instruments hide. On that point as in many others, the Chokwe women have done better than we have been able to do. Whereas we are spending time fabricating these new kinds of masks and use them for the general laughter, the Chokwe women are already collaborating with those who use these new technologies in the organization of the Likumbi Lya Mize. The Chokwe women’s pictures are taken and posted on the websites, and they show their dances and the artifacts they can make. The Chokwe women communicate and exchange with the world that uses computers, and keep connections from this end especially with their phones. However, it also happens sometimes that we mock novelties such as wigs. We call them the hair of the deceased because we believe that women’s hair as represented on Mwana Pwo mask is beautiful and proof that the Chokwe women should avoid as much as possible that kind of hair. To make sure the message is well distributed, a mask carries it, and the traditions are clearly respected.*

*The masks that link us to the past can also be taken for our connection to the future while staying in contact with the main backbone that illustrates the future of the Chokwe. We can learn from others, and we have always learned from our neighbors in order to build a better tomorrow. When we consider our traditions, they are full of the borrowings that have finally become ours. Also in our ways, we can learn from new technologies that are developed in the North.*

*In my quality of mask organizer, let me take the initiative to summarize for you the graveyard experience you attended last night. First of all, the organizers identify the place and clean it as much as possible. It is not a big problem since it is always the same place. We encircle it with powerful ingredients, powders and incantations to avoid that revolted spirits run away and torment people in the village. You were not aware of this introduction. Now the parts you attended are about a general call to the secret society of people who put on masks. They come on the side where we are. I recite the praises to our ancestors. These are exactly the same praises the herald recites at the end of the Likumbi Lya Mize. The spirits praised arrive with a wind that may shake trees. They are not visible as such. However, as you noticed their impact on the initiates is great, they are shaken and many need to be blocked with as much power as possible otherwise they would run in the wildness on the nature, and could even suddenly become crazy. Some of these masks are well trained people and have been working with us for many years. They know spirit they embody and also understand the best way to welcome such spirits. We pass them over to our Assistants who take care of cooling them down and make sure they are safe and in good contact with the spirit we called. We need to have an eye on them, continue calling for their protection for they could even attack us until they know they depend much on us for their safety and for guiding them towards our communities. The meeting body-spirit is not all. The presence of such a big number of spirits fills us also with different spiritual emotions. Despite the fear of*

*the night and many challenges regarding the looking after the spirits, we must remain strong until the morning.*

*In the morning then, we again go through incantations and line up all masks for the procession. When finally, masks kneel down in a sign of submission to the king and the spirits go to him, we feel relieved. Everything ends there. The night is quite long. Welcoming spirits is an important experience for the survival of our traditions.*

#### **IX.4.1.1 A Short Analysis of Mr. Kachongo's Interview**

The above few interview words are from Mr. Kachongo, our field expert from Zambezi. They give his explanation about witchcraft and artifacts. As an expert initiation master, his words give a comprehensive summary of the Chokwe's understanding of witchcraft and its place in their life. He also recognizes how masks like the "Katoyo" need to be approached from different perspectives in order to understand their contribution within the Chokwe's socio-cultural evolution and capacity to provide their people with joyful events. The arrival of the spirits raising from the tombs is a tremendous experience. Mr. Kachongo summarizes what happens in the graveyard. However, what happens on the eve of the Likumbi Lya Mize is as much a personal experience for the masks' guides as it is for any person who might witness it. As pointed all long the text, everything turns around Social Meaningful Interactions (Fredericks, M. et al, 2012: 13-14).

##### **1. Witchcraft Long Past**

Mr. Kachongo's words have led us to understand that witchcraft has a long past and that it was always used without the fear that is perceptible today. It was seen as a set of powers that initiated people could have access to and use for solving different problems. Also, the word "Wanga" that is nowadays used more with reference to medicines for healing the human body had other important dimensions. It included the powers that people could get through different exercises that would open the human minds to have capacities that would otherwise be impossible. Magic was considered as a normal part of life that secret societies could use to solve social issues.

Secret societies were trained to use such forces to protect their populations, connect with other powerful people, share powers, and innovate practices aiming at the continuation of the features here pointed out. Witchcraft was not necessarily perceived as a negative social fact. On the

contrary, it was encouraged for the good it could bring to local communities. It is with time that, more and more, the negative aspects prevail and are condemned. However, its positive aspects still exist.

## **2. Death Transition**

According to Mr. Kachongo, death when planned through witchcraft does not happen suddenly and once for all. On the contrary, it has a transition time left for quick discussion about the dead man, woman, or child, to judge the case. Life can be pay back with goods or with a simple recognition of the wrong the dead did. If that happens, it is possible that the one who passed away can come back to life. Death is essentially presented as a punishment given to wrongdoers who have, in one way or another, betrayed their community.

Mr. Kachongo has played the above-mentioned intermediary role for many years. He has saved lives. However, he has had also to recognize that nothing could not be done when the dead was a bad human being whose presence brought more evil than good to the community. Mr. Kachongo also admitted playing the role of sending people to death, otherwise what should be called witchcraft. That is why we consider him as a witch who accepts using witchcraft. His words depict witchcraft as a social phenomenon that can be mastered through learning skills and that can be used to punish bad individuals within the community.

## **3. Tshilombola and Initiator**

As Tshilombola (Initiation master), Mr. Katshongo leads the initiation in the Mukanda camp. During the time the initiates spend with him and other masters, they are led to learn their people's history, beliefs, and social ways regarding community defense, health systems, use of magic powers. However, the approaches used in the initiation do not stick or focus on the only past. The past, the present and the future are brought together with the hope to continue a construction started in the distant past and meant to keep living for long future.

Mr. Kachongo and his colleagues push as much as possible as the youth to find inspiration in modern times and integrate their findings in what builds up Chokwe identities, and communication spaces with other people. The initiates are also led to deeply select things that should be considered absolute secrets that they can only share with those who attended Mukanda

Initiation Camp. However, art is considered as an inspiration from the divine and ancestors and used to bring joy and solution to society, or both sometimes. Also, the example of the Katoyo mask serves a dual purpose. It brings joy to the public that can laugh at the vision of the mask mocking the colonizer. The colonizer is presented as an outsider lacking civilization. At the same time, the initiates and their masters look otherwise at this mask. It is a source of question and inspiration. They discuss about the power that the colonizers had and permitted them to travel so far from their land and occupy the Chokweland. Gerschiere (1980, 1996, 1998) document most details that Mr. Kachongo has given this interview and underlines how witchcraft has progressed in many years and has adapted to time and space.

#### **IX.4.2 On Chokwe Female initiations, Ule and Tshikumbi: Mrs. Alice Kayimbo from Zambezi**

*You have had many details about men's initiation. It is normal you are a man. It is so difficult for us women to talk about all details. However, I am your sister-in-law from the marriage that one of your brothers had contracted many years ago now. Your brother passed away; his wife also died years after. We are still linked through the daughter they had. So, in that quality of your sister-in-law, I will speak as much as possible. However, you must first promise me never to use this material in our villages because everybody will try to find out who informed you and they will easily know that I have betrayed secrets. You can use what I am giving you for writing and exchange in University places because, I know, the world needs to know that we are culturally rich. We are well trained women. The knowledge we have is an accumulation of practices that have gone on for many generations over centuries.*

*The Chokwe girl's formal initiation called "Tshikumbi" or "Ukule" is perceived as the transition step to adult life. It is important to keep in mind that contrary to the boys who go in age cohort; the Chokwe girl's initiation is quite often individual. The reason for this style is linked to its nature as such for the initiation is given to girls who undergo, for the first time, their first menstruations. At that point, the words "Hakula, hakwata Tshikumbi, she has her first menstruation, she has grown up." The Chokwe do not practice any excision. They wait for this time to give a formal training that is, in fact, a continuation of many other details that the girl has already learned from her mother, aunts, and grandma. Remember that among the Chokwe populations, the concept family is inclusive, and the girl may end having many mothers, aunts, and grandmas. I am not talking about polygamy. We are not as such partisans of polygamy with only a few exceptions for the king, and here and there some people who may have inherited of their late brother's wife. It is also a very rare phenomenon. Normally, in most of our places, we have the style one man, one woman.*

*Notice that the young initiate is also called "Kandanji," the name that is also given to the young initiates of the other sex. As soon as the first menstruation visibility, the girl is instructed to inform her mother or another female adult of the family who is around. The information is quickly brought to the local wise woman called "Tshikolokolo" She is also called with reference to boys "Nganga-mukanda" as she is supposed to lead the entire initiation process. The wise*

woman takes care of the young lady and teaches her how to take care of the blood. After that hygienic initiation, the wise woman now joined by other women from the village takes the young initiate outside of the village until when they reach a meeting space under a big tree. The choice of the tree is linked to its symbolic representation. When it is a "Musala," the choice mainly considers the nature of the tree. It is big and has red sap that stands for blood. The second tree "Kafulafula" is also a massive tree with many branches and leaves. However, it easily dries, and ants eat it. It symbolizes the capacity that the Chokwe have to grow as a population even when death is recognized. Through new births, they will always outnumber deaths and will continue to occupy lands.

As soon the crowd becomes significant with the arrival of several women from the village, the "Tshikolokolo" takes off all clothes from the initiate body leaving her only with a small cloth around her sex. Fire is made, and the women dance around it while singing obscene song alluding to sex. Meanwhile, the "Tshikolokolo" uses different plants to massage the body of the initiate who keeps completely silent all the time and does not look straight in the eyes of whoever comes close to her. After rubbing her entire body, the "Tshikolokolo" leaves alone the initiate and asks the women to send close to the fireplace the youngest village girl of about three years. Her clothes are completely taken off, and she is laid on her belly. On her "innocent" back, the "Tshikolokolo" puts beans on her back. The initiate is asked to swallow them using her tongue to take them from the back of the kid girl. The swallowing of beans marks the top of the initiation that shows that she has "swallowed" her childhood and is ready to engage now in adulthood. All initiated women attending this ceremony, except the mother of the initiate, her grandma, and the "Tshikolokolo" are then invited for the "kuhuna Phemba" ritual. They rub the initiate's arms with kaolin clay for the transmission of blessing and the empowerment of the new woman. It is as if she has entered a new order where she has to respect different rules. That is why they sing, "Wakule, wakule, Kalamba wakule: she has grown up, the stranger." She is considered as a foreigner to the bigger group of women she is getting in and where she had to learn everything.

After the kaolin blessing, less peaceful, obscene scenes are observed. The women as a group have to return to the village leaving behind at the initiation fireplace the "Tshikolokolo" and the grandma. However, before their return to the village, they attack in different ways the initiate accusing of disobedience, using vulgar words; they then decide to beat her. It is however much more about verbal violence than shaking her a bit. The same women take branches, leaves of grass that make them resemble the male "Makishi." They then get in the village, and each of them has a specific mission to symbolically "attack" men with whom they have traditional cousin-like and joking relations as known in the Chokwe traditions. They then sing obscene songs describing in all details sexual scenes, intercourses. Sexual organs are described, and the pleasure expected from the intercourse is also described. One of the eldest women sings and describes how happy she is every time the penis penetrates her vagina. A taste of some pain that changes into pleasure is described while her body performs mimetic gestures reminding what goes in the bed.

At the end of the day, the women go back to their meeting place under the tree. They assist the "Tshikolokolo" in the transportation of the initiate to the hut that is on the margins of the village, and where the village women use to retire during their menstruation time. They could not do anything during this period, which is considered as a curse for the entire village. Silently, she learns how to get in a new role. She leads an ascetic life and spends almost without food.



*However, she cannot claim for anything, she cannot look at anybody, she cannot complain at all. She keeps her legs crossed on the floor, and her eyes completely lowered. She is taught different attitudes and positions she can use while in intercourse. She learns everything about sex, fertility, getting pregnant, natural birth control techniques, and many songs that help her remember her lessons. It is not rare that she is a bit beaten when she does not memorize her teachings. She also has seduction lessons that should lead her to make sure that her husband does not think at all about leaving his wife and go elsewhere. She gets lessons about trees and plants that have a magic power and can help her in different situations. She has lessons about her body treatment so that to keep as young as possible for many years. She is taught how to be the boss of her house, especially the inside of the house that is her full property. She receives ethic lessons on her personal behavior regarding other people in the village and all the Chokwe. Stealing, prostitution, immoral behaviors are reviewed and presented as the worst possible behaviors that a woman can show to the public. Finally, she learns about her rights and obligations within the household, and within the community as a whole, that is considered as her extended family.*

*One day before the end of the initiation, two important things happen. First of all, on the eve of the initiate reintegration in her community, she is led to a river for cleansing her body through a kind of baptism. In fact, during the time is secluded in the small initiation house she does not get a complete shower even though her body is regularly rubbed with various medicinal plants. The passage in the water marks her purification and her total acceptance as a new being. She is given a name that will remind her forever her passage from childhood to adulthood. That name always starts with “Mwa,” a prefix used to call somebody: “the mother of a kid.” It is worth mentioning that his baptism name does not at all last in the case of these young women for, as soon as they get their get their first born, they bear the name of their child and become “Mwa + the name of the firstborn.”*

*In those days, the Chokwe women were married quite early in age. Already around nine and ten, they had their husband. However, the girls would stay within their family and would only go from time to time to bring food to their spouse, and clean the man’s house. The man was supposed to wait to live together until their wedding was celebrated. At the end of the initiation, if the young woman were already reserved for a man, the “Tshikolokolo” would send a message to the man’s family asking to prepare for the welcome of the wife if only the man had already respected all details regarding the Chokwe marital customs. Otherwise, the initiated would go back home to her parents and wait until everything is set according to local customs.*

*When the transfer moment arrives, either immediately after the initiation or long time after, the woman is carried on the back of the women of elders. Other women also carried what was necessary for a house to function: foodstuff, meat, flour, and chickens. Her family, most of the time, cries a lot as she leaves her siblings. She is, however, given her youngest brother to escort her and help in the first days. When the women, singing the praises of the bride, arrive they ask for a symbolic payment for their transportation work. They call her a queen whose feet cannot touch the ground.*

*On the next morning, the couple has its first meal composed mainly of an entirely cooked chicken (and offered by the husband). They eat it in absolute intimacy and take care to avoid eating and breaking bones. Eating that chicken represents some symbols related to the children they will have. The meal was a ritual marking the couple union and their readiness to receive as many*

children as possible. This meal is finally the knotting symbol that links the husband to his wife under a personal contract to be together under any circumstance and bring up their offspring under their customary conditions.

Apart from the “Ukule” or the “Tshikumbi” later in their life, the Chokwe women undergo another initiation that turns around women’s maturity and responsibility. Similar to the male initiation called “Mungonge,” this initiation is called “Tshiwila.” Only women who underwent the “Ukule” initiation, married, widows attend this initiation. The initiation does not last long. It can take place within one day. Women who participated in the “Ukule” initiation are tired of the way in which their elders “Ngalami” mock them. The elderly women consider that younger women cannot behave properly with men. They easily accept to be used in one-way or another by men and cannot resist them. The elderly women invite them to undergo the “Tshiwila” in order to reach the needed maturity that will permit them to resist men rightly and play their social role as the equal of men.

With these ideas, they go straight to the woman who is supposed to initiate the women “Nambanza.” Later at night, the initiates are led to the initiation place known as the “Zemba” or sacred land<sup>73</sup>. Their elders welcome them with violence. They beat them; push them in different directions in the darkness. They torture them all along the night. At the center of the initiation camp, the initiates are asked to dig a deep, wide hole. A male who attended the “Mungonge” male initiation gets in the pit. Meanwhile, the initiates are taken to a river for a shower after the night mistreatment and torture. When they are back to the initiation camp, they are called one after another, the male in the pit offers to each of the initiate food stuck to stick. As soon as the initiate takes the food the male in the hole, violently draws the woman and shakes her as she howls with pain.

Meanwhile, the elders, other women, question the initiate about her entire life. She is given an opportunity to confess all her weaknesses and deny what she had had never done or will never do. The questions went in the sense of the following ones:

- Have you have been to bed with another man?
- Will you ever go to bed with another man?
- Have you ever stolen anything value?
- Will you ever steal from your people?
- Will you always respect your husband?
- Will you always be able to tell the truth?
- Will you stand firm in front of men and defend your rights?
- Have you have betrayed other women?
- Will you always defend your children?
- Will you look at all children in your village like your own?
- Have you ever betrayed any secret?
- Will you always respect elders?
- Do you tell lies to your people?

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<sup>73</sup> Arnold (2001) presents a similar understanding of the sacred within spaces that may be classified in sacred and profane in the same way Mircea Eliade documented both concepts, sacred and profane. However, the most important difference should be found here in the use of landscapes related to the sacred in a kind of subdivision.

- *Swear that you will never share the secrets of this initiation with those who have never undergone it?*

*After that shaky moment, elderly women come in with and address the initiates with pieces of advice. Everything is said in the way of letting these women understand that they should never betray other women. They belong to the same group and are like in opposition to men. These women are supposed to show as much courage as men, and consider that they are leaders of their society at the same title like men. When it is felt that they have received the pieces of advice they need for their entire life, the initiates are introduced to the “Mbongo” supposed to be a spirit resuscitated from the dead and who dances for the public. The “Mbongo” explains why a “Mungonge” initiate attends the “Tshiwila.” He exposes the initiates to male violence in order to help them reach a very high level of resistance. With the support of the “Mbongo,” the initiates attend one last lesson on the Chokwe wisdom usually conserved in its oral genres.*

*The initiates once again swear to remain faithful to their traditions, and they pledge their courage for the sake of the Chokwe traditions and future. They go back home well trained to fill their social role and keep a behavior that forces respect on them. Men cannot treat them in a disrespectful way because they know their rights. They also know how to fill their obligation within their society. The combination of their training practices makes the Chokwe women specially trained beings ready to face different challenges present in their community. Gender issues are confronted differently in this society because the Chokwe women are trained to work with the ladies and to participate in the construction of their society while defending other women and never letting any dictatorship put an end to their dream. Their husbands, children, siblings, and the entire community count a lot for them, and they stand for a social participation that openly shows them as social partners whose strategies and effort coherently come in addition to what men do for the construction of a better world.*

#### **IX.4.2.1 A Short Analysis of Mrs. Alice Kayimbo’s Interview**

##### **1. Structural Presentation**

It is important to keep in mind from the starting point that female initiation does not follow the same structural presentation the male initiation Mukanda takes. It is not organized for large cohorts or let us say even in the idea of a class or a large group. It is rather fixed and organized for individuals when their time comes. It is not however excluded that this initiation time arrives for more than one individual if the same conditions are met for all the concerned. The main condition to be fulfilled and known by everybody in the community is the girl’s first menstruation. It is at that time that the entire ceremony is organized and it only lasts for a few days during which the girl is moved out of the village. When the initiation ends when the first menstruation comes to an end. Then, the girl is led back to the village.

## **2. Tshikumbi or Ukule**

It is in fact the second concept “Ukule” that is most used. It has the root of the verb “kukula” which means to grow. The entire ceremony is about the celebration of adulthood a bit like the majority that is celebrated in the western world with permissions and actions that could be accepted before. The first concept, on the contrary, has a prefix that makes a clear allusion to the class of things “Tshi”. It represents how the little thing or girl has grown and has her first menstruation. We could say, “The little thing has changed into a woman and has her first menstruation”. The main message focuses on the change that is physically operated in the individual and that has to meet a psychological balance.

As strange as it may be, the girl is surprised by the change that happens in her life. She can easily associate the blood flow with a quick death after what she has often observed when chickens and goats are slaughtered. She needs a psychological assistance during this first time so that to know how to behave in the following times. In addition, she has to keep in mind that her ethnic group has its ways of treating girls without forcing changes to their sex. It is rather presented as an important and useful part of the body that contributes to the continuation of the human kind in the world. As such, it has to be kept clean all the time and welcoming to the husband.

## **3. Kandandji to Tshikolokolo’s School**

Once identified, the girl is placed under the guidance of the village wise woman who can be her grandma, an aunt or another old person she addresses as grandma according to African village relations. It is about a relation that she can absolutely rely on as a novice and an initiate taken for training.

Apart from the physical training, the initiate, Kandandji, also learns about symbols to be present in her life. Her initiation takes place under a big tree whose symbolism is quite important. It reflects the fact that the Chokwe cannot imagine life alone. They live in big communities. Women bring children to these communities. During their initiation, the initiates learn to consider all children from their communities as sons and daughters of the same family who deserve assistance. Married women have to help them and treat them as their own.

Tshikolokolo or the wise women has the obligation to inform the Kandandji, the initiate, about all life secrets. The most significant secrets the initiate learns turn around her responsibility in the house as she has to make of it a welcoming place in the line of ancestral traditions.

#### 4. Fire and Initiation

In the 'Chokwe traditions like in many other traditions in Sub-Saharan Africa, fire and fire place are meaningful at several levels. They symbolize life in so far as they permit the community to have food. Most of food is cooked there. Also, the fireplace in the Chota or the gathering place where men meet, eat, discuss, and plan the future of the entire community. However, if men's fire can die, women always manage to keep some fire in the ashes. In that way, whenever they need to make fire for cooking or for boiling other medicinal concoctions, they can quickly get what they need. It is through this understanding that fireplace becomes the symbol representing women and their reproductive capacities.

As a symbol of life, it is around that fire that the most meaningful parts of the initiation take place. Here, she listens to obscene dances that teach her to know the use of her different body parts. She learns to internalize that most her life turns around suffering because fire can also burn. To link theory and practice, the initiate spends most her time sitting down with crisscrossed legs. At the same time, all women who come in the small hut built for the initiation can address the initiate in any way they want and they can disturb her without any reserve. They have even the permission to shake her and eventually beat her. The initiate is also kept thirsty and hungry so that she can feel how suffering reduces the human being and how women are exposed to suffering all along their life.

By swallowing beans placed on the back of a little girl, the initiate engages herself to respect her traditions, play her role as a woman, have the capacity to face suffering, stand up to give life, and welcome everybody.

It is after being exposed to every verbal violence and showing that she can overcome every suffering that she is ready to get to the next step of her life. However, to mark the transition and the success over suffering, the initiate is led to the river for a bath that can be considered as baptism. After the water ritual, the initiate is given a name for remembering the event. She will keep that name until the day she gets a child for she will be called "the mother of: "Mwa...".

The last step of the initiation turns around blessing "Kuhuna Phemba". The Tshikolokolo and then all women from the village use white Kaolin to paint with the initiate body in different spots. Once done, they help her to go back to the village where celebrations take place.

All in all, the female initiation called Tshikumbi or Ukule has a couple of dimensions that make it specific. It turns around the psychological situation that the initiate faces. The community takes care of the girl who is traumatized by the fact that she has, for the first time, to face her menstruation. Village women who underwent the same experience take care of the initiate and teach her how to become a Chokwe woman. Apart from the psychological dimension that is crucially significant, the initiate learns how to take care of her body, and the entire household as a body she has to keep alive and support whenever necessary.

Water and fire symbols are a part of the main lessons that are learned. They both stand for life source, but they may also be a source of death and trouble. Through a baptismal ritual, the initiate officially reaches maturity and she becomes a woman ready to get married. However, all along the initiation, the girl learns that suffering will always be wherever she goes. It is her responsibility to face it and give it a meaning.

In fact, this training changes the little girl into a woman who is able to look differently at people and things. Even though her responsibility over her household puts her in a position to accept suffering and assume it, the Chokwe woman learns that she can face her suffering and beyond it manage her time and situation in such a way as to bring new meanings to her personal life and to her community. A close understanding of this short explanation fits in chapter seven that explain how the Chokwe women assume their social responsibilities and slowly get in the leadership. Kunene (1985) would summarize women initiation in the three steps that include the coming of the right time, isolation from the village from getting the necessary changes, and the social re-insertion once empowered.

The dissertation herein has often expanded much on the Mukanda, male initiation. Here, though, we have had an opportunity to value how women were prepared for their social responsibilities. Symbols are important in the female initiation. For instance, the arrival of the first menstruations marks a turning point in the growth and accountability of Chokwe women. Nyatundanji C.M. met us in Zambezi and was interviewed on August 27, 2016, 58 old and mother of seven, 3 men and 4 women described why women's initiation is quite different from men's, "Women learn a lot beside their mother. Every single day is a time of learning many things related to social life. When comes the time of their initiation which, by the way, is individual, they have already accumulated much knowledge. They also learn how to support men's initiation by making sure

they have enough food that a very old village woman brings to the initiates. In old times, the girls had to spend the same time as men in initiation camps for their initiation. However, today that time has been shortened as much as possible since girls also need to go in school. Girls stayed in “Litu,” their initiation place, for many months and learned many things concerning social life. They also had a graduation when they had completed their time. Today, everything is shortened. However, we have found that we can still combine many things from our traditions and include them in the new education curriculum. It is possible and the outcome will be important for the future of new generations.”

#### **IX.4.3. What the Chokwe men say about Chokwe women: by Simeon Kaleji, Journalist**

*Mwatha, you asked me to talk about women and the way we look at them. The Chokwe women are extraordinary. We owe them a lot. They have always been at the center of our social life and have coordinated everything from getting us children and making us understand everything. Whatever they wish, they are our queens they get it and in that way lead our society.*

*For us, the Chokwe women are more than just these creatures that are loved for their beauty and possible sexual interactions. They have proved all along years – I mean all long centuries – how they are brilliant and have helped us, men, to move in the best ways we have chosen for the development and advancement of our people. They are at the roots of our powers, traditions, magic, witchcraft and whatever you can imagine. Take the example of this Likumbi Lya Mize. We are celebrating its 60 years. However, our women are the ones who worked it to this level through their imagination and creativity.*

*So often, people ask us if we fight our women and if we have various kinds of domestic violence. You know that certainly happens in some couples. However, generally speaking, we are the most respectful of women. We consider them as sacred as our mothers. That is why even our intimate life is not often shown in public except when masks perform. They are our leaders in whatever aspects of intimacy you would consider. In fact, through their initiation, especially, the Ukule, they are taught to take care of their household and “domesticate” their husbands in making sure that men are officially obeyed and understood in all opportunities. They are taught to know and master men’s weakest points regarding their hunger, sexual desires, authority and leadership, control of resources, and social events. They are taught to give men the impression that they have right in their hands everything and women included. However, the truth is that their initiation wanted them to give that impression whereas the reality is otherwise. Men’s weakest points even though we know them, we have never been able to control them so that to avoid the Chokwe women’s control. Chokwe women always surprise positively men with food, nice words, and solutions to daily problems. When we cannot realize there is still food, they come with the most wonderful recipe that we eat with much love and in such a way that we cannot ask any question to find out their secrets.*

*In our traditions, we spend much time working either to get games or to get harvests. They also participate in farming land and getting a few delicacies we love. However, there are long months that are so difficult to go through as they are between two seasons. They would still find food to give to our shared eating-place, and some secrets reserved for the husband and offered while we*

*are alone in the house. They also provide us with beverages prepared to boost our energies quickly so that to keep talking as much as possible, and eventually they would end in our arms for extended night hours. The same beverages also permit us to wake up full of energy and look positively at the coming day. In many families, the husband ends calling his wife "mom" like his children because that is the first role she plays for everybody. Moreover, as such, we cannot betray her.*

*Concerning our authority, generally speaking, the Chokwe women never oppose their husbands publicly. They give the perfect impression of following the man without any discussion. However, once again, this is just for the public interest and for the purpose of keeping a public image that wants that man be leaders and never be contradicted. Otherwise, when we get in the intimate space, they come closer to our ears and speak up with many historical, social, and religious references that make us see things differently. Moreover, even then, they do not engage openly in a discussion that could push us to raise our voices. On the contrary, they will just tell a story about what happened in a given place, how men and women behaved and what the results on their communities were, the eventual success they got because they worked in following given formulae. In this way, there is another metaphor that takes places in the household. In the same way, they serve to boost beverages they also serve boosting words and behaviors that permit us to face all situations.*

*Their responsibility shows up, in fact, in a very visible way. For instance, the Chokwe are not involved in polygamy. It is so difficult to find a Chokwe who has decided to take a second wife. Does it mean it cannot happen at all? If somebody takes a second wife several social pressures will be raised and people would like to know why the first woman felt to keep her husband, and what exactly the man would need for a second wife. For, both men and women are trained to stick to their partner and to give him or her what is required to keep our life as good as possible.*

*Quite often when, a couple does not get children, everything is done to treat both the husband and the wife so that they can get to a solution. Quarrels may eventually oppose families, and they would be necessarily looking for children. The woman may then be released to go on her road or she may be the one who suggests that her husband tries elsewhere with another woman. Still if in that case, nothing happens, the wife would keep that secret, i.e. her husband cannot make pregnant a woman. They will do their best to find the family a few children from brothers, sisters and cousins and they will raise them as their children and will lead them to their respective marriages. With years, everybody in the community will be convinced the kids belong to the couple and will look at them as such. It is so important indeed to have a family. It is considered as the only obvious way through which a man shows his masculinity to the world, and also having children in house stands for social success. It is, in fact, in getting children that a man gives a proof of respecting one of the lessons received in the male initiation camp, Mukanda. The young people are advised to use their sexuality for getting as many children as possible. Also, because of this recommendation, the Chokwe males are not visibly involved in prostitution. Just a parenthesis, when you add to the respect of that advice the fact that the Chokwe are circumcised, at the highest level of HIV-AIDS, the Chokweland had one of the lowest expansion rates in the sub-region.*

*You know when you look at the behaviors accepted and encouraged among the Chokwe, and especially when you consider how men and women are linked, how they vow to love each other and stay linked to their traditional leader, the king, it is understandable that the Chokwe choose*



*to stay on the margins of the larger countries supposed to be theirs. They are happy to move to a place and selected environment that they help in their building, conservation, and promotion. Women play a significant role in the construction of the Chokwe world. Thanks to them we can do many things and avoid many dangers. At the same time, the Chokwe women have built our world in making needed choices and giving meanings to everything that builds up the Chokwe society.*

*We have rituals that are exclusively reserved to men. However, the role the Chokwe women play in the background is so important and permits men to continue several rituals, find them meaningful. Without these women, we would be unable to keep the dynamic that the Chokwe people have shown for the last centuries (Geertz, 1966; 1977). The Chokwe society is presented as matriarchal; I hope you understand through my explanation why women are so important in our community. If nowadays there are theories that many African communities do not respect women and expose them to too much violence, that should not be thought about in our society as such. There are a few exceptions now due to exposure to urban complexities, and especially to breadwinning systems developed in cities where some Chokwe live. Some of them come back to our village with their newly accepted social visions.*

#### **IX.4.3.1 A Short Explanation of the Interview (about Chokwe Women) by Simeon Kaleji, ZNBC Journalist**

Simeon Kaleji does not need any introduction in any Zambian province. He is one of the most talented local language journalists. Working with him in the most remote villages where the world is still connected through small radios is a great pleasure. Everybody has something to tell him, and everybody wants to show him that he is known; he is the best connection they have with official institutions and the world. He airs their thoughts and skills and has managed to help their traditions survive. However, the same Simeon Kaleji shows “abnormal” respect for the Chokwe women. He adores them and speaks about a long tradition inherited from the Chokwe ancestors. The journalist thus proves how the Chokwe women are most important social pillars that make every social event and life meaningful.

From the knowledge he has collected in many years, Simon Kaleji makes a distinction between the way in which male initiates learn about women during Mukanda Initiation. Young boys are taught to have much respect for women for they are the ones who permit them to have a strong justification of their male status. The Chokwe society indeed put much stress on men as fathers. None of them can think about men without families composed of a wife and children.

However, apart from women’s reproductive and domestic roles, male initiates once back to their communities have the opportunity to discover many other important dimensions these

women stand for. They are more important than reproductive individuals and domestic workers, they offer special training to new initiates in so far as they lead them in the right directions while providing them with meaningful understanding of life.

Even though Chokwe girls cannot attend boys' initiation in the same way boys cannot attend girls, women Chokwe bring much more to complete the initiation boys get.

#### **IX.4.4 Urban Chokwe Women and Village traditions: Annie Mbaka, University student in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

*As you can see, I am young, and I was born in the city of Lubumbashi. So, there are many things I do not know about my village Tshimbalanga, a Chokwe village. I cannot even speak fluently what is considered as my mother tongue, Chokwe. I am however quite happy to define myself as Chokwe rather than anything else. My father's father, my grandfather was recruited in this village to work on the railway that was going through our village towards the Zambian border and Angola to Lobito Port. The company assisted him in getting my grandma from the village. They were thus somehow forced to live in the city even though they were every year going back to the village for at least one month whenever grandpa was on leave. They continued to keep very close relations with the community. Their house though in the city had a lot of details from the village. They brought from their village the plants they needed the most for their protection and their health. They thus lived in the town with their own hearts and behaviors as if they were still in their village. Whenever it was possible, they would send things to their community by the train. They also received small gifts from the community that made that their alimentation and lifestyle was looking as if they had never left their village.*

*It is during that time that my dad finally was born. Close in time, my father's two brothers and three sisters were born. They also received their home education as they were in their village. In fact, my dad and his brothers went back to the village for their initiation and got seriously involved in their traditional culture. They also got married to Chokwe women and encouraged them to educate their children in the Chokwe ways.*

*Even if I have grown up in the city, I can tell you that I have the fundamentals of the culture and I have seen many other young women like me grow in the same culture. Today, other girls born in the city and who have been at school quite often criticize us and tell everybody who can listen to them that urban Chokwe girls are witches. They tell everybody to be careful with the urban Chokwe girls who could cheat with their friends' boyfriends or husbands after using some kind of charm. They pretend that a simple look at a Chokwe woman is enough to get her forget about her household and go to a new partner. You probably know how everything you do in Africa and that others cannot understand well is only labeled as witchcraft. So, we are the new witches known in this city. By the way, we don't hesitate ourselves to make them believe that so that they leave us alone because we don't need their friendship. Churches, most of the time, also get on the issues. The Pentecostal Churches come in with long prayers and advise fasting to expel the evil. It is rather a matter of ignorance they do not know us, and they do not know how we are educated even if we are with them in the city.*

*First of all, we are educated to look after our bodies and avoid losing our virginity before marriage. Does everybody follow that piece of advice? I cannot confirm. Also, even if we don't have scarifications all over our bodies as you can find on Mwana Pwo mask, we have been taught all secrets related to our bodies and especially the use of our bodies in our relations with whoever chooses to get married to us. We have been taught the same wisdom our grandmothers were using in their huts to get their husbands listen to them and follow their words for the best possible results. It is because of these life secrets that more and more men who may even not be Chokwe do their best to get married to Chokwe women, although the Chokwe men do not make the search of women from other ethnic groups their priority.*

*It is so extraordinary to find out how the wisdom of our grandmothers has come all the way to us and how it is still useful. Men are in fact the same all over time; they have the same expectations from their wives and families. Fortunately for us, we spent many years learning about that wisdom. I can tell you it is quite useful. It goes without saying that we have not gone to the camp for the "Ukule" female initiation that cannot be organized here in town, but our aunts have taken time.*

#### **IX.4.4.1 Short Explanation of Annie Mbaka's Interview about Urban Chokwe Women and Village traditions**

Ms. Annie Mbaka is a fourth-year University student in International Relations at the Université de Lubumbashi. In the local subdivision of people by ethnic groups, she is a Chokwe living in the city of Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She is the third generation of her family to be in the city. Her interview informs the readers that she is still much plunged in her culture through the language, even though she cannot be fluent. She knows by heart details that characterize Chokwe women in their relations with men. As her lessons have been received from one generation to the next, and because most urban Chokwe still appreciate to their traditions, the Chokwe young women are looked at as witches. There is much to laugh about here, but also a good lesson about how traditions survive and a concept such as witchcraft grows in time.

It is so important to find out of her interview that the Chokwe even after the third generation in the city and leading urban life for many years still keep the essentials of their initiation basic concepts. Girls are taught to take care of their men and negotiate in such a way that they avoid confrontation. They taught to keep as silent as possible, listen to their partners and find the right strategies to communicate their points.

Annie Mbaka even though she does not give what is mentioned in this dissertation also shows that Chokwe women's most important communication strategy turns around ambiguity. They listen as much as possible to their husbands and find the right moment to change every situation in their favor. Many of their friends, in the name of evolution, are quick at reactions. They face men and

openly challenge them on different household issues but only in situations where they cannot agree.

Because of their capacity to negotiate with men in finding the right moments to pass their communication, many urban Chokwe girls are quite successful. Many other girls and women easily consider Chokwe women's capacities in "witchcraft". The capacity attributed to witchcraft to dominate people and even bring about death is projected on Chokwe's urban women for they don't often have the same problems other couples face in the city.

The lesson to learn from this interview turns essentially around the fact that despite urban evolution and the mixing of different ethnic traditions, the families that identify as Chokwe continue to build their specific features around women's work in their couples. It is all about strategies that several Chokwe women are able to construct in order to persuade their men to remain faithful, listen to their wives, and value different contributions they bring to their household and large families.

#### **IX.4.5 Triangular Trade: Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia, by Faustino Mutayayi in Saurimo, Angola**

*You cannot imagine how many people I see every day coming and going to both the other two countries. I do not think they carry with them much money as such, but they keep moving in all directions, selling and buying a few things, but also spending time with their "family members."*

*In the past, the trading got a surprising development when the United Nations had constructed refugee camps both in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Zambia. You cannot imagine where the goods were coming from. The same rations that were distributed in refugee camps were partially carried for sale in Angola.*

*In fact, there were two refugee camps in the other countries, one in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the other in Zambia. However, there was none in Angola. The region where the Chokwe were living in Angola suffered from many lacks. The Angolan government was not taking enough care of the Northeastern region where the Chokwe live, and that was one of the communication and transition zones of the UNITA rebellion. The government somehow punished the Chokwe for what was believed to be their support to the insurgency, even if credible sources rather presented the Chokwe as the first victims of that rebellion. Consequently, the Northeastern Angola was quite poor and deprived of vital necessities.*

*In these conditions, even though they were pushed away from their country under the violence of war, the Chokwe still thought about the family members they had left behind. They shared with them the rations they were getting from the UN Refugee Office. Thus, it was more for bringing assistance to their family members that they had decided to come back regularly to a place that was still under much violence. They had the support and the protection of their siblings. In fact,*

*the payment was meaningless. It was just a token that permitted them to get their fares ready wherever they had to get one. They had nothing significant during these difficult years. All the same, that was the beginning of the construction of a stronger business network that is going on these days.*

*Today, they have developed a network that precisely knows what is one and each of these countries. For instance, Angola has had in the recent years much petrol from offshore plants. However, the lands where the Chokwe live in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia have never had enough petrol at all<sup>74</sup>. They had therefore built a network providing both countries with gasoline and getting some money to the Chokwe in Angola. In that way, those involved in the business had all of them a financial benefit.*

*There is also much labor traffic that has continued for years. When mines were still quite active both in the Zambian and Congolese Copperbelt, the young Chokwe (though never as many as that) who needed quick cash could use their traditional network to get in the cities for a job in the mines. Most of them would stay in the city the necessary time to get enough money that would permit them to go back home and start some local business, build a bigger house, and get more significant fields of corn and cassava. It is also through such connections with the city that some of the ways used in the town for different social issues have been trying to force their way into the Chokwe traditional world.*

*Nowadays, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo provide Northeastern Angola with kitchen goods such as table oil, salt, sugar, and construction cement. They also provide the Angolans with toilet products including bath soap, washing soap, different body lotions that are more and more accepted and bought to facilitate the work of women when they have to wash clothes. That commerce also includes selling clothes the sellers easily get from either Zambia or the Democratic Republic of the Congo.*

*It is worth mentioning that the business network had its specific features. It is not often about selling in a way that would including products presented to a broad public. It is rather a selling system where the seller has a list of his personal customers. They take their orders and find the best possible goods sold in the cities of the two countries here above-mentioned. They then come back and deliver the goods. With the money, they get they buy many other products on their way back to the country they came from and provide mainly the cities with chickens, corn, and cassava that are often needed in the towns. This kind of business also includes medicine as there are here and there healthcare centers whose work is continued thanks to the medicine that is smuggled in. The private centers are quite often under the authority of nurses whose only experience is based on their number of years in such an environment.*

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<sup>74</sup> The three countries have many minerals. There is oil in the three countries. However, Angola has concentrated much on it as its primary resource. Both the other two countries have had exploration missions. The Democratic Republic of the Congo already exploits the lower part of the country, though without stressing its contribution much. Despite having serious exploration mission in 2006 and discovering oil and gas at the border Angola, Zambia, the country already has a refinery but has not managed to launch that industry. It relies essentially on imports from other countries.

*Recently, two trades linked Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the area of Dilolo, and Sandoa on the Congolese side. First, the Congolese were entering Angola for getting illegally exploited diamonds. However, the business was extended to many other Congolese rather than to the Chokwe (and Lunda) only<sup>75</sup>. Other populations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo also believed they could get a profit of the situation and got involved in the illegally exploited diamonds. The reaction of the Angolan government was intensive. Many Congolese were arrested; often they lost the goods for which they had worked hard. They were repatriated to the Congo in harsh conditions. As soon as this intense movement reached a given level, other people from the Congo stopped (officially) getting involved in the trans-border business. The Chokwe from both sides of the border have continued with different kinds of business. It was as if the Chokwe of both sides could have specific permissions and could continue to operate illegally. Many at the border could live on their trans-border business.*

*Another business that has recently flourished in the same area is linked to cattle bought in Sandoa and sold far inside Angola. Already under the colonial times, the network was an important network that connected Sandoa to the Angolan coast. In the long past, the network was essentially used as a slave trade route at first, and then as a route for general trade including different goods from Europe. The route was also followed for the distribution of new crops from America through Angola. Later on, the same route was used for the repatriation of the Congolese slaves who were either working in Angolan plantations or those who were due to be shipped to the Americas. The region of Sandoa has still a couple of farmers who have many cows. Buyers come from Angola where there is a huge market for meat. They spend long days going on foot and using the ancient long route with much chance of not going through any border administration. They reach in that way Angola where their meat is sold in many places including the capital city. The trade brings much money to the traders. At the same time, the Congolese side has again found reasons for pursuing farming in its different dimensions. The roads are in bad conditions and relatively dangerous, but the Chokwe still use them for trans-border business.*

*From Tshikapa, it is rather another kind of network that is developed with Angola. The Congolese side of the border, once a major diamond mining site, has suddenly become weak. The company is no longer operating, but only some private people whose investments go elsewhere dig here and there. Also, the city has become poor as sand fills all roads and only motorcycles have become the only transportation means used. Many young people have invested in motorbikes that they use for going to the Angolan borders. Some even succeed to go on the other side of the border. Their fast movements are essentially for buying the goods that are found in Angola: beer, bottled water, canned foodstuff. As most of them also have Angolan registration cards, they go in Angola for getting as many goods as they can, and they bring them for sale to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Money is still circulating in Tshikapa; they are thus able to make much money without paying any taxes at all. At the border, they have their shortcuts that lead them quite quickly in the Angolan villages where their relatives live. With mobile phones, they continuously communicate with their brothers and partners on the Angolan side. When*

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<sup>75</sup> Mwana Lunda had become a common name as a reference to the locality between Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The individuals living there are also addressed as Bana Lunda, the plural of Mwana Lunda, otherwise the son or daughter of Lunda. That name confirms in many ways the existence of a big group of people overlapping the frontiers separating both countries.

*necessary, the Angolan partners come to wait for them at the border, and together they move in Angolan villages. If, by any chance, they fall on the Angolan border patrols they cannot be arrested as they have Angolan registration cards and the goods quite often are taken from Angola to Congo. Finally, the same route is also used for many other issues regarding socio-ethnic problems and relations that lead the Chokwe populations on both sides of the border.*

*As you may notice, the needs have resulted in building a network thoughtfully developed and linked the three countries studied, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia, and mainly the overlapping areas where the Chokwe live and have continued their culture for extended years. The market here above depicted includes different goods such: foodstuffs, clothes, minerals, labor, and culture. Above everything, the text has shown us that the market is in fact present since the colonial times and has adapted to different needs and changes over this extended period. The future does not give at all any sign that could lead us to believe that things will soon change. The informal trade that keeps the Chokwe moving in that space covered by their same culture will continue to prevail and permit them to cover their needs.*

#### **IX.4.5.1 Short Explanation of Faustino Mutayayi's Triangular Trade: Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia, by in Saurimo, Angola**

Pastor Faustino Mutayayi is our field Assistant from Saurimo, Angola. He got our attention because of this past. He was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, started his work in the same country before moving to Zambia, and finally getting a church in Zambia. He has a full vision of the Chokweland. His congregation members host visitors from the three countries and organize their business together. They have been able to face different economic challenges all along years.

These people have had to find ways to provide each other with the strict necessary needs in moving from one country to another. All along years, they have been able to offer services and organize communication channels.

Their fraternity has led them to building informal businesses that do not go through government immigration borders and do not pay taxes due. If many among them do not know about their civic obligation towards their governments, in their defense they point out the fact that if they do not take decisions to organize their communities life would be impossible in places without roads, markets, health care centers, and good schools. Thanks to their initiatives, they have been able to survive through years.

Most interesting beyond the business aspects as such, our readers should see how cultural facts survive and make possible social life. The three countries studied in this dissertation offer an

opportunity to understand how human communities come together, unite, and face the same social challenges. Their situation easily leads to understand why the area they move is still exposed to instability and incessant troubles (Chabal, 1992). Governments' absence or lack of full responsibility in the Chokweland, on the one hand, and informal different initiatives that only aim at a minimum of community daily satisfactions, on the other, translate politics that cannot formulate long term ambitions, otherwise what could be considered as purely belly preoccupations or "politique du ventre" (Bayart, 2006).

Also, Anderson (1991) documented the dissertation with details regarding nation construction. He particularly pointed out how the same language, geographical space, beliefs, wellbeing search, survival strategies, ideological language, and mainly the same land were mentioned as the main elements included in nation construction. The text here above shows us how the Chokwe people have survived over the years and how they have been able to construct a nation in the Chokweland. In addition to their cultural conditions based especially on the shared language, their socio-economic-political conditions, same land geographical realities have, religious endeavors, they have been able to keep together despite official boundaries supposed to separate them.

### **IX.5 Understanding Interview questions regarding education, authority and leadership, spirituality, food and development<sup>76</sup>**

#### **IX.5.1 Introduction**

The Chokwe case perfectly fits within the double consideration (material/immaterial) from the scholars here above mentioned. Through their material culture, it is possible to find out how ideas influence their artistic productions, on the one hand; and how the produced material (artifacts or others) also profoundly influence their daily life and their vision of the world. We believe there is not as a better argument as listening to the Chokwe themselves. Also, that is why the interview revealed to be quite important because it sends us to a specific kind of conversation with the concerned respondents as they take different positions concerned their cultural facts and things

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<sup>76</sup> We would like our readers to understand the use of snowball sampling gets in our bricolage perspective without necessarily the idea of making of it the cornerstone of the research. It is rather purposive and a contribution for building general understanding patterns. It goes without saying that any result cannot be overgeneralized and considered as representative. The sample is not representative at all, but shows the difficulties such kind of research in isolated places and where every contact and meeting must go through different intermediary sources.



that happen in their life. Their villages are looked at as havens that represent much for them. Even though the preceding chapters demonstrated their capacity to quickly move from one place to another and conquer new lands, these quick land and population occupations seemed to have been as good as they commanded them. However, as soon as their population movements in the region were taken into hands by the colonial powers, the Chokwe stuck even more to their villages<sup>77</sup>.

Like other new industrial cities in Africa, the mining cities around the Chokweland were also in need of manpower recruited in distant villages and forced to move to close their work places. Such population movements meant in many ways self exclusion from community structures and its members' support. Going to the city meant being lost in many ways for all these village people. Social life could not be imagined without other members of the community, and especially with the hierarchy that included the royals, considered as divine representatives, religious leaders and healers. It was also about going towards lands where they could not necessarily identify different plants for curing and healing identifiable diseases. It is finally an opportunity that forces people to change their dietary habits.

### **IX.5.2 Rural versus Urban Migrations in the Chokweland and Beyond**

Kok (2006:2) reminds our readers that the concept globalization comes along with a specific understanding of mobility of people, goods, factors, and especially labor, capital and information across international borders, particularly from the end of the Second World War. Hatton (2002) points out at the power of these goods along with people, capital, and factors. They have the capacity to move their way around the world a bit like refugees despite the tight constraints of immigration policies. Year after year their movements keep growing. Appadurai (2013; 1996;

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<sup>77</sup> The President of the Mutuelle Tshokwe, Lambert Kandala, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, has associated our expertise for the preparation of a couple of papers about the Chokwe's migration, social life, and communications with their neighbors and the governments. He will broadcast these papers on Radio Okapi/Kinshasa during the month of November 2016. His research comes to the same conclusions we have reached regarding the Chokwe population migrations. Some Chokwe were forced to go to different industrial places around the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and also in Zambia, and Angola. Prince Lambert Kandala has reached similar conclusions: the Chokwe, apart from forced migrations during the colonial times, they like staying in their villages. The same pattern has continued over time. Today, more and more, the urban inhabitants are the sons and daughters of those who had undergone forced migrations. They have also inherited from their parents the love of their lands, dream about what they miss from their village, and what they could give as contribution to village people's life. Otherwise, they refuse any kind of work under unclear circumstances, choose to be their own bosses and live in villages not far from the city where they can go and sell their farm products.

1986), widely used in the preceding chapters, gave these same details about cultural facts for which the scholar goes as far as to mention birth, growth, and death circumstances that are related not only to the capacity to travel around the world, and eventually to the end of their life. Migrations could, thus, in many instances join the dynamic here above pointed out and regarding demographic movements characteristic of the Post Second World War era. International migrations are essentially concerned with labor mobility, refugee flows, and permanent migrations Kok (2006:5). Despite these movements, African refugees and migrants within Africa often end filling up spaces border states that leave them much more suffering than during the time they were home. In fact, migrations are more and more expensive as they depend much on the amount of money that can be afforded and that could permit the refugee to go as far as possible. Only highly skilled people can, finally, dream about going as far as possible to figure out permanent migration (Hatton, 2002:18).

As obviously visible in the above paragraph, Africa is not an exception to these general migration lines. It is entirely in at all levels, as it also permanently sends refugees of different kinds all around the world. However, apart from the big image covering demographic movements from one continent to another, Southern Africa has always been quite active. It is so particular with local migrations towards mining sites. They often break local policies aiming at discouraging bold migrants moving either towards South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, carrying with them several issues among which diseases (Huss-Ashmore, 1992).

In this vein, Potts (2010:14-15) underlines circular migrations already under colonialism; urban policies were developed in such a way that rural settlers would come to cities to take different jobs. In fact, Dibwe (2013, July) pays attention to other dimensions regarding these migrations. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the colonial officials encouraged their new workers to stay in the newly born cities by making sure they could have marriages. They sent their representatives to villages in order to get them wives. Moreover, once in the towns, they provided them with as many incentives as possible to see them enjoy as much as possible through paternalistic offerings including salaries, medical care, and education. The purpose, in fine, was to have them reproduce in such a way that their children would eventually work for the same companies. Kalakiti (2013, July) finds the same details in the Bembaland as more and more

people migrate towards places where jobs are offered especially during the colonial times. Finally, Peša (2013, July) pays attention to the Chokweland that interests us. Two details have attracted our attention. First of all, the pattern that is found here joins the one here above mentioned (Potts 2010:14-15). The Lunda people regularly got in circular migrations as they went to large cities essentially for getting what they needed for their village work, thus continuing the long history of local and cross-border migrations characteristic of Southern Africa. These circular migrations also included commercial farming, domestic services, road constructions, quite often with a particular gender consideration for women essentially meant to make their urban sojourn stable, and avoid much de-urbanization migration (Crush, 2005, September:1-18). The other curiosity that Peša (2013, July) puts on the table has to do with the migrants. They are essentially Lunda. This observation raises our attention as it clearly shows that the Chokwe had worked in partnerships with the colonial forces they had helped to get into the main continental lands. They eventually aided in the construction of the long railway that connects Angola to Zambia under the form of circular migrations. Otherwise, they rather preferred to stay in their lands for the reasons pointed out in early chapters. This point is so interesting because it shows that even with the people with whom they share the same culture, the Chokwe had very limited relations with the new spaces, especially with urban spaces and different works. Also, if Byerlee (1974, Winter:543-545) points out that developing countries are getting quickly urbanized with one of the highest world rates, the Chokwe were at a point either left out of circular migrations or chose to avoid what did not go with their fundamental beliefs.

If it has ever been their choice to stay out of the local dynamics related to migrations, or if it has to be seen as a strategic approach for keeping alive ancestral values, the Chokwe have made a choice that has kept them poor for many years since colonial times. It is unfortunate that the kind of wealth that reached the Chokwe under circumstances such as the Likumbi Lya Mize, which is an original and local experience now attracting the world, is not enough to catch up the time lost in isolation. The local economy is quite poor and needs other incentives to boost it. However, the respective governments of the Chokwe people should see in their existential an opportunity to challenge migration trends and have more and more people find interest in staying in the villages. The governments should join projects with the locals in order to bring them the necessary tools to make life in villages as safe as possible, and also attractive to many people who keep moving to cities.

The general tendency depicted throughout the research is that the Chokwe of a given age interviewed came to the city, to Union Miniere du Haut Katanga, or a few to the Zambian Copperbelt, or again to cities in Angola under the same pattern of forced recruitments<sup>78</sup>. They had families in towns and thus built new generations of the urban Chokwe. However, among the young Chokwe met in the city, most adults aged 30 years and more had come to the town for university studies (somehow forced also by their urban cousins who thought about ways of increasing the Chokwe's presence in the city). Many of these students do not go back to their villages, and at the same time they cannot live in big cities as they refuse to go through humiliations as it is not often easy to get a job without going through long relations. Often, only people who have different relations and are known end getting jobs. Many Chokwe young people whose urban relations have not lasted for many years cannot easily have access to the same facilities. They prefer to leave the cities and live in small villages they build not at all far from urban places. There, they go back to their village activities. They work as their own bosses and offer their products to cities. The example of most younger females interviewed in the Congo were born in the city from parents who had come many years before in the city. Those who had come many years ago had either been somehow forced to go to the city in order to offer labor as previously indicated, and they stayed, or they came for studies and were somehow compelled to stay because their education had little chance to be used in their social life back home. Still, when looking at them, they have brought many things that continue linking them to their respective villages. Zambia does not present the same pattern regarding young men and women's migration because the mining company in the Zambian Copperbelt did not recruit as such from the North-Western Province, the Zambezi District, the place where the Chokwe and the Luvale live.

The chart (Annex2.2) reflects the above paragraph with a general idea of the way in which the Chokwe from the three countries studied migrate to cities. All in all, the trend started under the colonial times with a small fraction of the male Chokwe population forced to migrate to the city to undertake work in the companies especially in the mines.

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<sup>78</sup> Like Dibwe (2013), Katikiti (2013), and Peša mentioned in this part, Reybrouck (2014) documents with major details how in the Belgian Congo workers were taken from their villages to the mining towns. Later on, the companies received permission from the political authorities to get wives for their workers from their respective villages. They did not choose as such to come to cities and live there. The company leaders needed their workers to have an urban life and to reproduce themselves in order to ensure labor continuation.

It is also important that our readers understand that the migration waves as represented in the graph also figure out what we could call close diaspora or next to home diaspora. Kizobo (2001) documents such diaspora in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Different migration waves from the same ethnic group land, or sometimes from the same traditional chieftaincy, try their best to get their home (re)built, and their home harmony (re)found. It is all about the “other” world that the city stands for. The first populations somehow forced to migrate to the cities did not feel safe especially in a place where the colonials had told them they could not venture out in the darkness or beyond given borders. They would be automatically in danger.<sup>79</sup> The “Batumbula” or the “Night catchers” would catch them and sell them to slave traders (some reports and especially the ones based on hear-says. From that time, the Chokwe living in cities started regularly meeting in their house for the celebration of their ancestors, rituals, and remembering their fellow village people. Most of them had attended the ethnic initiations, mainly the Mukanda, and knew how to organize domestic rituals. They could thus already have their celebrations in cities. The intensity of their cultural remembrances was increased at first with the possibility urban companies offered them to get married and have a family. They could also travel once a year back to their villages for an annual leave. While home, they reconnected with their relatives, participated in rituals, and eventually could bring back to town a boy or a girl to help the couple. The child taken had also a chance to attend school there. More recently, student waves coming for the university studies in cities also increased the urban Chokwe groups bringing music instruments, tunes, and stories from their respective villages.

Migration to the city also discloses other aspects of the respondents. They may be looked at through age sequences for they were not all of them of the same age. They were not either of the same sex. We could continue these sequences, mention their locations, and many other features. However, in the scope of a better understanding of Chokwe migration, there are two understandable charts in Annex 2 (A2.2.1, A2.2.2).

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<sup>79</sup> Dibwe (2013) explains how people were taken from their villages to mining cities. The colonial structures had organized how to get manpower to the mines. They agreed with local chieftains about a number of people who could move from their villages and go to the mining sites. Even though they had salaries, moving from their communities did not happen easily at all. To facilitate these workers’ social integration in the city, the mining companies also managed to get them wives from their villages. Finally, the companies invested in making sure their workers would get food, health care, and education straight in such a way the children born in cities would also be ready in time to continue taken by their parents.

When we consider the Chokwe's migration to the city as pointed earlier, each of the three countries reveals three different patterns of these waves. Each of these countries has a special subdivision in the fractions of the Chokwe who are in cities. Most of them are still those who were taken from their villages for work in the mining companies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This applies to both men and women even though the number of women less than half of men. It is in fact because men were needed for work. Women came progressively, at first the companies arranged marriages. Then, progressively, men the urban Chokwe started to go by themselves to their villages for getting married there. A lesser important fraction of this population was born in the cities. A least significant fraction still comes from the village for attending essentially university studies. Today, the companies are no longer recruiting from villages. They can get enough labor from the cities. However, from the talks we had we could find some who leave their villages for other reasons such as; a few people who think they can come to live with their family members living in cities. In some other circumstances, health reasons lead people to go towards urban centers where they stay for a while. Under such reasons, some choose to stay for good.

In Zambia, the migration pattern is very much similar concerning forced migrations, birth in the cities, and chosen migrations for education. However, the Zambian situation denotes a particularity there are more and more Chokwe coming to cities for university studies. Many among them accept to stay in cities as long as they can get a job there. Otherwise, contrary to many African young intellectuals, the Chokwe despite their university diplomas are ready to move to the country side for work, especially if these places happen to be within the Chokweland. The number of female and male Chokwe going to cities for university studies is more and more competitive, almost the same.

The example of Angola is quite different. During the colonial times, the Chokwe did not merge at all with cities. They stayed in their villages except a few who, through different ways, ended in towns. Many more are coming these days for university studies even though their number compared to students coming from other places is still quite low. Chokwe migrations to towns did not follow the same patterns like in the mining cities of Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Angola, many Chokwe stayed in their villages as they were not forced to go to towns for any reason.

### **IX.5.3 Traditions: education, beliefs, music, healers and diviners**

Through cultural activities, the Chokwe are connected with their masks which represent beliefs and especially the presence of ancestors believed to take part in all community life and to influence the human beings positively so as to reach effective results in all social issues. In fact, the mask community is in many ways seen as a duplication of the human society turning around the King, the representative of the Sacred and the Divine. Thus, masks have become the main communication way accepted in communities, on the one hand, and with different ancestors and divine forces, on the other (Jordan, 1998; 1999; 2006). However, all masks are not necessarily used for the same purposes, i.e., for linking the human to ancestors and the Sacred. Some masks are indeed used for entertainment purposes as they permit people to spend time together, and to remember in their daily life their relation to the divine. The Chokwe society is indeed characteristic of an understanding of the Sacred and the Profane coexisting in the same environment. Both the Sacred and the Profane are intimately sharing the same spaces and contributing to the building of the Chokwe society (M. Eliade, 1963b). Whatever the purpose for which any Chokwe mask was made, it participates in the education of the public, and much more with regard to the education of the youth. Masks are indeed about social insertion, and individuals finding their way and their specific social functions (Lima, 1971).

However, that proximity does not only exist in the people's understanding of their existence largely depending on the influence of their ancestors. The community is built on the principle that the ancestors determine their common destiny. That proximity has led to much care in the community, for anything done or regarded simply as a human may easily have a quick impact on the ancestors' influence, ancestors represented by the masks. The close presence of the Sacred and the Profane has given the Chokwe leaders an opportunity to organize entertainments in such a way as to provide their people with relaxing times. Thus, Chokwe people can laugh together and better know each other. As in many other social life aspects, many Chokwe are known for using communications articulated around proverbs, riddles, songs, and dances. During such entertainments, it is a common tradition Chokwe populations challenge each other through ambiguities that give place to a continuation from one story to the next with challenging questions open to the entire community (Fretz, 1987). Lima (1971), Mvone-Ndong (2014a; 2014b), Bastin (1984, Aug.-b) clearly let their readers understand how the communication style

here above described leaves Chokwe leaders with spaces for planning cultural facts in such a way that the common people don't get it given dimensions only reserved to the initiated and secret societies.

Also, ambiguity seems to be the keyword at the center of any possible attempt to penetrate the Chokwe world and its different cultural aspects and secrets. In their meeting with the colonial powers and mainly their meeting with the Portuguese, the Chokwe considered those who were then working for these expatriates as betrayers of the African cultures and the Chokwe. In this vein, the Ovimbundu living close to the Atlantic Sea coast as the most dangerous people to other Africans for taking the colonials from their ships, first as friends, and later as victim of the western violence, in a kind of boomerang pattern. They introduced them on the main lands before getting further into the lands. Wastiau (2006:18-19) documents about these relations and the ways in which Chokwe populations treat their neighbors.

Also when the Katoyo mask is presented to the public, the same boomerang quest should come into the interpretation. The Katoyo is described as white man in quite poor aspects, lost in the middle of nowhere. His physical aspect is quite poor. He is in rags and extenuated with a body that gives the impression of being exposed to the sun for many hours. His mustache is completely in disorder, half of his hair is gone, he creates the impression of not having had a shower for many months, the amount of time he had been trying to find directions to the inhabited land. That horrible presentation provokes laughter. He seems to be lost. He is ridiculed for he cannot locate his way among the Chokwe. His sunburnt skin makes him resemble a pig. It, unfortunately, happens that another mask called "Ngulu" is mocked for the gluttony, laziness, and unacceptable behaviors in society. This ambiguous presentation of the "Katoyo" ends changing the mask in an object of laughter that cannot suggest anything to the Chokwe society. Also, such a presentation also means that the white cannot even pretend to aspire to the status of manhood and masculinity, an image that the young Mukanda initiates stand for in the eyes of the public. The Katoyo looks like an impotent old man who represents little hope for the Chokwe's reproduction. He cannot represent any attraction for women. Above all, he was not with the young initiates and does not share anything in common with them, especially the initiation itself and the circumcision that comes with it. For these reasons, the Katoyo can also be laughed at as a "Chilima", uncircumcised and "uncivilized." The community cannot even give him a chance to live with



Chokwe women, for he would bring impure blood. The Katoyo cannot produce anything. He is lost in the same way he lost his masculinity both as the result of his age, and the fact that he does not know how to connect with anybody around and with ancestors. He is an outsider, so poor and stupid. None of the Chokwe beautiful women would ever look at him at all. From a critical perspective, the “Katoyo” could be a revenge product towards mistreatment they could have suffered from the Portuguese. The Chokwe have produced an artifact that responds to the tensions they were living in with the Portuguese and with other colonials as well. Viewed under that perspective, the laughter expected would be fully justified. Katoyo Mask therefore takes a central place in the Chokwe culture for it does not only represents the far “foreigner”, but is at the center of any attempt to approach the local Chokwe culture. The Chokwe cosmological understanding and its cosmopolity reflect the joint point where the Katoyo mask and the “Chilima” come together as one in the comprehension of the Chokwe people and their culture.

However, despite that presentation of the white under a mask that deserves mockery and nothing else, the critic should find another ambiguity but only to be decoded by specific leaders who can decode particular messages. They can also eventually foresee the boomerang effects. The Katoyo does not only deserve to be an object of laughter. There is more. Here is how to get it in another interpretation dimension. For, how was the white man able to come from the unknown, from the sea, and reach the Angolan coast? How is he able to conquer lands and oppose people in Africa? For the initiated, the Katoyo deserves more than laughter and he should be surprised to find that the Chokwe know all about him, and have in fact taken away all his power. This perspective goes in the line with the Boomerang effect mentioned above.

It is in this vein that, for instance, the crosses that come on the Chokwe artifacts are a proof of the recuperation of the Katoyo’s powers, for they were perceived as a powerful sign that once accompanied the Portuguese. The combination of the gun and the cross shows that the Katoyo is emptied of all powers he was boasting about around these territories and can thus be a subject of laughter. For the same reasons, the Chokwe mediums, whenever they get into a trance, also bring another contribution of European practices and common table manners. Once in trance, those who consult the experience a scene where they lead the European life eating with forks and spoons, drinking wine from a bottle. These eating scenes are considered as a part of the healing process. They show how the Portuguese secrets are completed taken, and they can no longer

compete with Chokwe leaders. In fact, the above is also a reminder of the Chokwe main social policies that turn around taking from the neighbor, friend or enemy, whatever can contribute to increasing the Chokwe's power and strong presence on the ground.

Once the white man is completely deprived of his powers, the leaders can also join in the laughter and even challenge the newcomer. The most important field where the leaders would mock the white man has to do with magic and witchcraft which the Chokwe also consider as science and matters that show how mature somebody is and can get the capacity to interact with natural and supernatural forces. Also, an informant from Zambezi, named Chovu, shared with us that in many plantations under the authority of Portuguese, testimonies concur and report that in the morning the white would complain about having been used at night as a horse, or just as labor on the plantation and that he was too tired to do anything to the laughter of the Chokwe. It was witchcraft that made them able to use their bosses at night and reverse their roles. These changes of role could in some cases go as far as magically taking the wife of the Portuguese. However, the access to their wives also happened in real life because they appreciated much the Chokwe males.

Also, the Katoyo mask becomes the representative of that white man completely emptied of any possible social contribution as he has lost control of everything, and especially of his body capacities and management. His spiritual aspects represented by the cross have been removed. He does not have any control of his body; he can be taken for work on the fields and even though he cannot see it, he is persuaded that everything happens according to the locals' statements. His household is in disorder as his wife is more connected with the Chokwe and sides with them for whatever issue. The Portuguese finds help in alcohol that makes him more useless as he loses control of his body and becomes a wretched ship on the African land. The Chokwe leaders look at the Portuguese with some suspicion for he is the official representative of the authority who has taken possession of the lands. The leaders believe they have still to negotiate with him in order to recuperate their lands and to be in the position of force. The Katoyo, despite his misery, seems to hide a particular dimension of the power that comes from the colonial administration and bosses invisible to the eyes of everybody.

To write this section, we thought not only to go through the interview results, but also to match them with a quick questionnaire on Facebook that would mainly address the Chokwe and Lunda

of the Diaspora. The quick questions on Facebook permitted us to get many details regarding the Chokwe and the Lunda and their rich culture. We received pictures that were quite expressive and that could give another research topic. The pictures are quite expressive as they are very clear about the royal authority. Just a look at the crowns that these different Kings put on show the Lunda/Chokwe wherever they have gone share the same ancestral secrets regarding royal powers and leadership on their people. However, they indeed have gone in different directions and have since then developed various approaches regarding especially regarding colonials.

*Figure 66 Mwant Yav, the Emperor of the Lunda*



Of all the pictures received from friends from around the world, both the above ones received from Ms. Kabid Mushid, a Lunda living in South Africa, seemed the most significant and marking a solid link between the Lunda and the Chokwe. The Mwant Yav's crown here above has the same motifs like in Mwene Mwa Tshisenge's. The sun is represented under the red color. The top of the crown has big and important sun rays that can also be taken for thunder rays or other protective weapons. Thus, the Emperor stand for the source of power, protection, and also in a force that can kill. On the front, the white color that stands for a remembrance of ancestors' blessing whereas all the dead of the long past including ancestors are represented through the black color. The chromatic representation makes of the Mwant Yav the owner or organizer of the rainbow viewed as the source of everything. The empress has clearly a yellowish smaller crown representing the moon, thus getting in the double symbol of the sun and the moon. This symbolism also depicts a binary system with the sun and the moon, day and night, male and female with much more power going to the male side, though without necessary any allusion to male dominance. The lion's skin also found among the Chokwe's king paraphernalia.

Source: Kabid Mushid, Lunda Empire, October 2016

Apart from similarities noticed in royal crowns, the respective governments in the three countries under our study have been trying to play the Katoyo role yet in a worse way. This means these governments have been working to replace the colonial power and playing the double agent role without anything in perspective. These governments had nothing to bring. There is no hope to take from them anything.

The postcolonial story has demonstrated that the successive governments have not brought any change to the people, nor have they bring any respect to what the Chokwe had already achieved as here above pointed out. The perspective of a useless meeting for a capitalist society cannot work at all. Also, the sacred does not have its place anywhere, and the individual is left in extreme poverty without any connection to group life; the social model of the new politicians is unacceptable and has no benefit for the group or individuals. Consequently, the new leaders are more than Vimballi, worse than Katoyo; they are agents of death at all levels and cannot be accepted. The system as such cannot be represented even under the form of a mask.

The system represents the total death of both the Sacred and the Profane, and as such can be translated only by the word chaos. Nothing good can come out of chaos. It is to be fled from, and people should get afraid of it. However, as for all process of creation, chaos could be a good time to think about creativity and the creation of a model of life. That is what the Chokwe King Mwa Tshisenge suggested in Tshikapa (chapter four). That is exactly what Chief Ndungu, though completely silent, also proposed. It can be perceived through the Herald singing his highly-acclaimed praises as opposed to the presidential speech that has no support from the public. This is what we read from the email received from Angola, reflecting the collected answers.

Here are four long quotations from four different respondents: Tshikuta, in his mid-fifties, is an artist from Tshikapa, a father of three boys and three girls, all married. Ngombe, in her early sixties, is a woman farmer from Zambezi, mother of seven children, four girls and three boys, all married. Malonga is a road and village seller, father of about ten children, six boys and four girls who should be in a couple of villages. He had children in some of the villages where he was stopping for selling different goods. Moreover, Tshiyaze, a Chavuma Zambian woman in her late thirties, known for getting in a trance, healing people and offering various services to her community, mother of two boys and one girl, she knew all masks by their names and functions and said she could communicate with them. These four respondents were asked the following question: Are these masks and other artifacts important to you? Why, anyway, do you keep them so close to your life? Do they have dimensions we cannot understand?

### IX.5.4 Tshikuta

*Oh brother, never say that again! Never raise the last part of your questions again. These are not only artifacts as you call them. Do you go to a church and destroy whatever is in there? Do people neglect what is in the Church and consider them as pure objects without any intrinsic value? These objects, as you call them, are quite important to us. I mean those we look at with a religious dimension. They have stopped being objects or just mediums. They are our ancestors and their spirits. You should spend time in an initiation camp and witness how the transfer is operated, how in fact they stop being things. The process is long and requires many skills and fit men. Every fiber is worked upon with rudimentary instruments and require a long patience. The makers finally move also from a state of pure artists as they need inspiration, patience, style from the above to conclude their work that is often done with other artists. This aspect is so important, their work used for rituals are community objects and do not depend on the skills and the only wish of one artist. They reflect an entire community and are a good example of how personal capacities and community and social motions in time can be regarded as through the fabrication of the artistic objects of art. They reflect what we are and different roles we fill in society.*

*Look at the Chokwe masks, observe them attentively and go as an observer to elders' meetings held in the "Chota," the meeting place. I am sure you will observe the following facts. They sit down in the same order like masks into a hierarchy that gives much authority and space to elders. Also, whatever the clothes they put on, they look similar to the masks with the same details. The fireplace is at the center. When their beverages are served, they drink them with much respect for the same hierarchy. Even when they have to smoke, the same hierarchy is observed. Also, when you observe the beauty of the masks, they are presented with the same material that serves for making the Chokwe house. Also, you will find a similar order in the disposition of houses even if they thatch the roof in the same way that lasts for ages. The houses are placed in a military order that protects the authorities or the leader and are in a position that can permit a quick attack. I could say more about artifacts and their influence on Chokwe life. I have not mentioned how we believe in their powers that can heal or condemn to death. I have not spoken about masks separately and their powers or their social integration as gender representatives or the tributary image of ancestors. In the past, there was an important game on the same or on a wooden chess that demanded much intelligence and power. They consisted essentially of getting an image without ever passing twice on the same line. Yes, our minds were making these images, but they were also making use the way we are today.*

The reading of the above excerpt does not leave any doubt about the place several Chokwe give to the masks and the implications they expect to see in their communities. For, more than simple artifacts, the masks play an important role. They are not only at the intersection space between the humans, on the one hand, the ancestors and gods, on the other. They do not even stand for ancestors, or gods. Some masks high in the hierarchy are what their names mean and what they offer to their society. They are indeed the ancestors who can punish and kill, but also who can reward good actions for the benefit of the community. Tempels (1947) understood these dimensions and explained them in his book, unfortunately generally misunderstood. African

scholars criticized the book because the priest was too much intrusive in a culture he could not rightly appreciate or know. Western scholars, with the church in the first position, looked at Tempels as a traitor of the “Western Civilization Mission in Africa” (Hallen, B., 2002; Bell, R.H., 2002).

Also, the interview conducted in the three countries, i.e., Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia still look with much attention at the Chokwe artifacts. Many Chokwe continue looking at these artifacts as their living ancestors still empowering them for facing different social challenges. It goes without saying that the power of new institutions, on the one hand, and the continuation of some traditional practices (especially the ones that are disrespectful to women or do not care about forgetting women), on the other, cannot facilitate any progress. The interview question (“Are the masks and other artifacts important to you?”) tried to find out the importance the Chokwe still give to their masks and to their current beliefs.

The chart (A2.2.2) clearly shows how the belief in masks and other artifacts still prevail among Chokwe populations wherever they are. However, three things are worth being noted. The first one the fact the doubt is less important among men though is not of the same level. It is less important among men in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: one man out of the fifty questioned. We must be careful about our reliability as far as what we could consider as results may not reflect a reliable size. For us, it is rather a continuation of bricolage that wants us to attempt different strategies that can lead us to thinking more about the research questions as stated at the beginning of this dissertation.

On the contrary, when it comes to women, things seem to be different. Out of seventeen women questioned in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, four have expressed their doubts about the importance of masks in their life. In Zambia, women interviewed express their doubt. This should not be considered as inferior to what happens in the Congo because the Zambian “no”, i.e. the refusal of any impact of the belief in the artifacts reaches eleven women out of twenty-seven. Beliefs in witchcraft is thus distributed in these countries and depends on local traditions. So refusal or distantiation have developed all along new religious creeds developed in these countries. We can only consider that most attitudes developed towards beliefs depend much on local trends growing out of dynamics based on what social groups organized. Men, in these countries, also

react according to their cultural traditions and different political pressure that may be regarded as gendered for it is not applied in the same way to men and women.

These disparities may be attributed to the interviewed people. However, apart from the differences that may be observed concerning women's treatments in these different countries (a topic that could deserve another treatment in a separate dissertation), Zambia is by far the country that still observes many traditions and has left them going on. On the contrary, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the people who migrated to cities for jobs and the penetration of the church inside the country have seriously decreased the number and the quality of many rituals that are quite often simplified in order to give much freedom to women. Such change can be observed especially when a husband has died. The purification and succession rituals are oversimplified today under the form of a simple blessing ritual.

### **IX.5.3 Ngombe**

*I think all of you know Mwana Pwo! It is the most beautiful mask. When you attentively look at the mask, you certainly observe a couple of things. First of all, Mwana Pwo is always between two men and is being respected as one of the most powerful masks. It is present at the most important ceremonies, among the rare masks that are going in front of the King and participates in the crowning of a new King.*

*Look at her face; it is full of scarifications that testify the female maturity. The mask has scarifications that show how a woman has gone through several initiations and rituals that have led her to a certain maturity. She has been educated to be a wife, a mother, and a full member of her society. As a woman and a wife, some of the features insist on her beauty. Her teeth have been sharpened in a bid to beautify and whiten them. The cheeks have scarifications that have been healed with special magic powders. Sometimes, the face of Mwana Pwo has at its center a cross that is said to have been borrowed from Portuguese missionaries. Finally, the face is powered with a magic colored powder that beautifies women and expels evil spirits.*

*It is thanks to that mask that we have a respected position in our society. The two masks beside Mwana Pwo stand for the illustration of how men have to take care of women. At the same time, women are the ones who put kings on their thrones and give birth to the Chokwe. We are honored as the mothers who at the center of the Chokwe world and vision of the world. We are powerful and are from time to time possessed by spirits. We can get in trance and get messages from divinities, bring solutions to social problems. Some of us can be healers and diviners. However, because we are also the guardians of our traditions, we are feared for any word that could go out of our mouths could change into a curse and condemn to strange illnesses or even death the cursed.*



*You know our story goes back to the first woman who led the Lunda. In a way, we are Lunda and also called “Ana Ruwej,” i.e., the daughters of Ruwej. She was the Lunda's queen before we, the Chokwe, decided to depart. We left but we are still connected to our origins. It is also these origins that link us to the different ethnic groups that departed from the Nkalayi in the Lundaland. We are the queens, and we have the responsibility to lead the Chokwe community in the best possible ways. In fact, we are also the ones who explain everything and make sure that the direction we choose is followed, and everything understood in the way we have selected. All magic and witchcrafts are in our hands.*

*You understand that Mwana Pwo is so important to us, and the other masks are also as important for us. All these masks bring us powers from the above and describe how our society functions and is connected at different levels. Nothing can be done in our society without us; we are at the center of everything and the channels that communicate with ancestors. Even if men are the ones who put on the masks for the physical efforts they have to face during the rituals and dances, they respect us and cannot do anything without our decision and satisfaction.*

**Figure 67 Mwana Pwo masks from Tshikapa**





Source: F.Kaputu Pictures, Tshikapa July 2015

Early in this part, Ngombe was introduced as a woman in her early sixties and a mother of seven whose personal life and the life of other Chokwe women is largely connected to the features that are seen on mask Mwana Pwo. That is the reason why I selected the above masks in order to explain the excerpt here above given. First of all, both masks reveal different features: initiation scarifications, sharpened teeth, hair locks, and also the cross that Ngombe mentioned.

It is important to point out that to underline the fact that these masks are made by men. Our readers could believe that men determine what beauty is and how women should insert in that aesthetic world. Such thought can be defended by the fact that women follow all these features and believe they are the only ones to determine their social integration. In many ways, our readers could accept that presentation. However, the readers of this dissertation, and especially its chapter seven, understand that it is not everything that is presented to the public that reflects social reality. For, thanks to many ambiguities that prevail in the Chokwe society women are in fact adored and praised in social artifacts. That is why male artists produce artifacts such as Mwana Pwo masks. Also, it is not either the respect that is shown in art production or the place that women are given in rituals that really make their social status. It is through their capacity to

change situations and draw advantages for their fate that the Chokwe women have made their way to leadership.

Also, the quotation here above sends us to the interview concerning two questions namely questions 12 and 19. Question 12: “Is the Chokwe’s body or agency at the center of any identity conception?” And question 19: “Is today’s man and woman gender divide favoring men’s superiority?” (A2.2.4, A2.2.5).

Ngombe’s presentation of Mwana Pwo also sheds light on earlier discussions regarding body agencies and gender understanding among the Chokwe. The above charts testify how the human is expected to fill the agency roles in the three countries where the Chokwe have been approached for this study. In the same vein, the division of answer regarding gender’s superiority leave much of doubt about how gender is lived among the Chokwe. Even though man’s superiority seems to prevail and be accepted in the three countries, it is also obvious that through women’s matriarchal institutions, and especially through their capacity to master and control social ambiguities that they are able to offer a leadership needed all along the Chokwe’s socio-political evolution over years.

#### **IX.5.4 Malonga**

*I have spent my entire life selling public goods on long roads circulating all along and around the Chokweland. I have seen things, many things of many kinds, many social events related linked to the masks. Wherever they pass, there strange phenomena that appear and that are likely to go on for many years. I will give you here a few examples. You will judge for yourself and draw conclusions regarding nature, capacity, and the powers that are attributed to the masks.*

*The first I came across has to do with the consequences that happen to whoever destroys masks or lacks respects for traditional deities. I was once from Luacano (Angola) on my way to villages around Dilolo. I was surprised to come across a crazy man walking naked, filthy and carrying so many things with him. Everything seemed so heavy, but he kept going ahead and repeating that he had burnt masks: “I have burnt gods, I have burnt your masks, and now they are burning me. We, the masks, we will come with fire. Much fire will burn you all. Oh, I am thirsty, give me some water. We need water to stop the fire!” He was known like that. In whatever village, he would go, he would find kids escorting him from a giving distance and eventually singing with him. He was suffering like that for many years, and no diviner, or other magicians were ever able to cure him. In fact, at the beginning of every month, I mean at the new moon, he was a bit lucid and he continuously confessed that he had killed God or gods and that he heard all the time big voices*

condemning for stupid actions, “I hear all the time like a big train coming straight on me!” As you know the region of Dilolo is characteristic of the train coming from the big city Lubumbashi, and formally there was another on the Angolan side that was going up to the Atlantic Ocean, on the Angolan coast.

I do not know how you scholars can understand that event. It is proved that man had indeed burned masks. After the Mukanda Initiation, the initiation masters had gone back to the initiation camp and they had intended to burn some of the masks on the next day. They would bury some of them near anthill for their use next year. The crazy guy called Muke who had come from the city of Kolwezi and had never undergone any Chokwe initiation. He was telling everybody that masks were only artifacts. They did not mean anything, but only objects that could be burnt. Muke also said he was surprised people believed in such primitive things and did not care about their salvation. Muke argued that Jesus had come to save everybody and that there was no use of going back to such practices. He told everybody in the village that he would give them a proof and would burn masks. As soon as the Mukanda Initiation called off, he furtively went to the initiation camp took all the masks he could find, made a big fire and burned them while singing a couple of time “Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!” As soon as the fire disappeared, he went on singing more and more loudly. He went on singing like that for the entire night without stopping. In the two first days, the village people were calling him a prophet. One of the village elders had found some space to tell everybody that the guy was a “Chizaluke” that is the name of the mask that stands for craziness. In fact, the elder meant that Muke had certainly burned that mask “Chizaluke” and a transfer was operated. He had become a “Chizaluke.” Many laughed about that allusion and pointed out the elder was jealous of Muke's achievements. He had the Christian powers and could control everything. It is only until when they noticed that nothing was changing, and Muke was becoming more and more incoherent that they, eventually, and the village opened, eyes and understood Muke had become crazy.

Do you need another proof? I was another time on my way to Ikelenge and Chafukuma in Zambia. In Ikelenge, I had some of my goods stolen. I was so shocked that I went to a diviner and asked him to consult his basket to find out who had stolen my goods that night I was drunk. The diviner showed where my goods had gone, and I was happy to find them. However, during the time I spent at the diviner's place, I found a woman who was undergoing a prolonged treatment and who could not stand up though she could still talk with much incoherence. After the Mukanda Initiation, she had gone to follow her husband in the camp. She was suspecting him of going to the camp with other women. She got in the camp and had a quarrel there with her husband. It seems that at a point she wanted him to have intercourse with her there in the camp so that she could, did she say, check if it was true he did not get anybody. The man stood firm and refused. He alleged that such behavior could not be accepted in a camp that had still “hot ashes” and in which the spirits still were.

The woman called Kalumbu because she had got in an Initiation camp that was still alive and in which spirit where still, was paralyzed. She had suffered like that for five years. The diviner, Mulongenu, was trying his best to heal her. The woman's family had already gone to many healers and diviners and did not get satisfaction. She had continued being paralyzed. This diviner, Mulongenu, had first of all prepared a forgiveness ritual. The family had offered for the sacrifice a white he-goat, a white he-rooster, and some money. She was washed with special concoctions and then the community had sung all along night. She had recuperated some force,

*but still she could not walk. The diviner told me she would walk and regain her forces, but the processes would be long because she had gone to a sacred place where spirits get into the material and the human for making the “Makishi.” She had violated the world of the spirits, the world of sacred material.*

*This is how we live with spirit and with masks. We would like to accept that they are only things that human beings have fabricated. However, what goes on these things is incredible and calls for attention and fear. Our elders have many stories like these two of people who lost their lives because they were careless with masks and spirits. Even if I have given you these stories, they are but a few. There are more that are even quite rather positive. Some women get in a trance every time the masks come to the village and have messages that predict things to come to the village, illnesses to avoid, and memorial to organize in order to prevent that some ancestors be angry. Some people come to the ending ceremony and express different feelings and emotions that reconnect them with their families through the big celebration. We have the sense of sharing the living spaces with ancestors and those who passed away, and we believe in a dynamic society and in the togetherness.*

Here above, Malonga gives an example of something that the Chokwe have inherited from a distant past and still continue in many ways. There are indeed among the Chokwe many people who are involved in selling in villages and spending much time of their life moving from one country to another. Such people are also known for having several families, i.e. women they are not officially married to but with whom they have children. Malonga is such a good example and had more than ten children found in different places.

Apart from moving from one place to another, such people are known for circulating news, good and bad, and also rumors. Here, he brings two different cultural facts regarding Chokwe traditions. First of all, the belief in the power of given masks, mainly ritual masks, can be seen in both accounts he gives about lack of respect and fear for ritual masks. Malonga’s accounts reflect Chokwe’s attitudes towards the power hidden in the masks, witchcraft, and religion. Also, Malonga’s accounts reflect the three questions of the interview: (5) Do you believe in witchcraft? (15) Does religion influence your life; and (17) Are Chokwe rituals still important? The preoccupations of these questions are reflected in the following charts (A2.2.6, A2.2.7, A2.2.8).

The three charts above, even though their other aspects will be treated later, reflect the narrative that Malonga gave us. The first chart reflects how the belief in witchcraft is still quite present in the three countries even though Zambian women, once again, make a difference in their

consideration of ancestral traditions as previously pointed out, often not in favor of women. Otherwise, the general lines indicate that the belief in witchcraft is quite high. In the same chapter, beliefs in religion and rituals are highly present in the three countries. Punishments for not respecting traditions and especially by either getting into a place reserved for divinized masks may lead either to craziness or to death as reported in Malonga's narrative. The three charts clarify Malonga's report on what he observed in his trading routes.

### **IX.5.5 Chiyaze**

*Quite often, people will tell you our society is reflected on the society of masks. That is true. However, there is something they should better clarify: it is not only our society as a concept, but our physical bodies. I would like to speak about the connection our bodies have with masks. We are nothing without these masks. They are everything for us as they stand for what we can do with our bodies and the ways in which we can intermingle with other human beings. We are but a vessel that lets several things happen, pass and be in one way or another. The vehicle is meaningless when we cannot fill it with the right contents. We are then lost or lose our mind but are necessarily useless to the eyes of our society.*

*The lessons we receive from our childhood as boys or girls are subdivided into different levels. First, we have to recognize that we are human beings and tiny ones coming on the bottom of the human hierarchy. In that way, slowly we are called to grow up under the guidance of our mothers at first before getting under the control of larger groups of the men for boys and women for the girls. All along that time, our communities teach us to build different bridges with the sacred world whose Vital Force and Energy slowly fill us and give us different responsibilities to fill within our communities. The Chokwe believe in God's creation that has put him at the center of the world with several missions to fulfill. Among these missions, I can mention the conquest of the world, domination of nature, i.e., the capacity to know whatever is nature and appropriately use it for feeding the human body, healing it whenever necessary, or combat evil with it. For the evil is present wherever we are, and the Chokwe is taught to fight the evil with whatever s/he has. The masks are there to remind of these important socio-religious and life aspects!*

*There is another thing people often avoid talking about! This has to do with our intimate parts and sex. We, the Chokwe, are trained to dominate our bodies. Like many other people, I guess, the young people especially are pushed to use their sex in different ways. However, thanks to the education and training we receive from our elders and ancestors especially during our various initiations, we understand that even though sex is likely to procure some pleasure, it is first of all meant to ensure our survival and occupation of the world through population growth and certainly through giving birth. This training means that we are careful to live our sexuality in such a way that we can show that we possess our bodies, rather our bodies possess us.*

*We have learned we women not only to keep a bit aside while we are undergoing our menstruations but to take that as an opportunity to understand that our bodies need to evacuate whatever is filthy and unhygienic in us in order to aspire to what is pure and good for our respective societies. The menstruation time is indeed seen as the time during which we purify*

*ourselves. According to our traditions, it is a time during which we expel the possible evil that may be in us so that to be ready for a new creation, birth. For, we are at the center of creation continuation and the growth of the Chokwe population. Many people interpret biasedly the time that was taken in traditions to see women out of any activity. They make a confusion with an understanding that comes from the Bible. The Chokwe are clear about that it is a question of purification ahead of a new cycle of life conception. I think you can confirm that with new studies that on the fourteenth day of their new cycle women are ready to welcome a new life. Moreover, when you look at that within the lunar calendar, that would mean that in the cycle of a new month celebrated with the coming of a new moon, we are blessed to get new children, and thus increase the Chokwe population. My purpose of saying this tries to point out that a celebration is preceded with sacrifices and also often with a retreat from the common life. The sacrifice also goes with blood, and blood of a sacrifice cannot be eaten it is defiled after its use. That is why our traditions want men and even the entire community to keep far from women undergoing their menstruations in order to let the women undergo a complete process, and for the community members to avoid the defiled blood. Our bodies have a calendar life. That time functions like an alarm that tells the concerned people that it is time to think about a new life necessary to increase the Chokwe's number in the world.*

*Maternity is celebrated through our traditions. That is why the Mwana Pwo mask is presented to the public. Besides, a mask that has an appendix standing for the male sexual organ gets on the scene to perform an intercourse dance with a woman chosen from the present public. Their dance carried out at the end of the Mukanda is, in fact, an invitation to sexual life for the purpose of procreation.*

*Our bodies celebrate everything here above mentioned through dances and choreographies that participate either in rituals or in daily manifestations that are set to bring joy to our communities, but at the same time, are also teaching our youth. Our body is the main agency that celebrates and connects us with the divine space. Our bodies convey different messages and make connections with ancestors. Even the diviners operate, they condition bodies to be in the right disposition to let the ancestral Vital Force operate.*

Chiyaze's story is significant at many levels. First of all, the capacity to get in a trance seems to be reserved only to a few trained people who can achieve a connection with spirits and let them use their bodies (Kaputu, 2010). This kind of women leads an ascetic life and spends most of their time doing their best to please the spirits that inhabit them. They behave as the vessels that the spirits use. Chiyaze also reveals that even in the distant past the Chokwe women were trained to have a complete knowledge of their bodies that included the sexual activities they had to develop for procreation, birth control, and the understanding of their central place in the Chokwe society. Chiyaze's words in their own way are a proof of the capacity women had to participate in the social organization of divine spaces in the opposition of two concepts: the Sacred and the Profane.



### **IX.6 From the excerpts to understanding research results regarding education, authority, spirituality, food, and community development**

From the four quoted testimonies extensively reported above, the Chokwe education can be understood in different dimensions. Chapter 6 already pointed out at the way the male initiation, Mukanda, is conducted, and different expectations are counted for. The young guys are trained for their insertion in their society where they are expected to play key roles and fulfill what ancestors are expected from them. Also, their training also concerns other social aspects regarding medicinal treatments and the organization of religious rituals. Everything shows the Chokwe society to be independent and growing while serving its citizens.

Also, the statements here above documented around the connection between the material and immaterial influences on the construction of the Chokwe society demonstrate how everything is placed within a useful context. Their entire society is prepared to live by itself with structures that permit it not only to survive but also to organize different communication spaces with neighbors and visitors while keeping as much as possible its authenticity and identity construction capacities. Otherwise, the Chokwe society seems to be well shielded from foreign influences and nuisances.

With the above information, it is evident that convincing such a social institution to change can not be easy at all unless a profound negotiation takes place. Such a negotiation would have to address how traditional values are preserved even though, at the same time, the Chokwe are in a larger space where they can share some new values with other people, institutions, and educational systems.

In this scope, Chokwe education (A2.2.9, A2.2.10, A2.2.11) is still regarded highly positively as the scores noted in the interview (see the charts above and annexes) testifies. Respectively, questions 3, 4, 14, and 20 show that there is not any slight doubt about the Chokwe's choices. They prefer their education system and its advantages that they do not perceive in modern times. Question 3 looks at Chokwe Education capacity to prepare for leadership in the modern environment. A total of 200 respondents from the three countries combined have answered positively and have shown their conviction that their culture offers the best conditions of leadership. We know that, despite these high figures the snowball sampling we were able to conduct does not permit us to draw overgeneralized conclusions. The orientation we have to keep



in mind regarding education has to do with the stress put on traditional ways, Chokwe traditional education is believed to prepare to leadership. It goes without saying that, within the present evolution that sees western education getting in many places and accepted by local leaders, there are a few people who hesitate about the benefit that traditional education would still give today. The attachment at the end of the dissertation gives more details regarding gender representations in answers in the discussion led with a few people. Thanks to graphs several other details regarding replies and their impact on the total responses can be seen there. We have chosen to stop bringing in the main paper all such graphs and tables for an easy reading of the text while taking the information collected in tables only the strict necessary few elements that help us find out if the interviews justify or not the argumentation developed all along the eight preceding chapters and concerning the Chokwe identity development.

Question 4 (Annex) also seen in the graphs and tables in the additional part of the dissertation reveals a “stunt” situation, though only indicative as the sample is not that representative. It concerns how the Chokwe questions the capacity of modern education in modern times and shares its different benefits. The Chokwe raise a genuine preoccupation regarding modern education and its capacity to prepare the Chokwe to face modern challenges. First of all, the shield mentioned earlier does not readily open to possibilities that could easily permit any education and cultural traditions to get easily into the Chokweland. Also, according to the information earlier recorded in preceding chapters, the relationships linking most Chokwe populations to the Portuguese have been controversial all the time. Whereas at the first, they mainly worked as porters of the Portuguese, they slowly built their growing influence in dominating other people, and put most of their neighbors under the Chokwe rule. Finally, the cohabitation with the Chokwe became impossible, and the colonialists helped by other regional powers of the time, the British and the Belgians, pushed them into three different directions towards the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia and Angola for making sure their power was considerably decreased. They had become weak and could not undertake any action that would oppose them to the powers (Vellut, 2006).

Their confrontation went on for many years and generations far beyond the time the Chokwe were pushed into the three different directions. The relationships were so bad that the Chokwe were neglected for a long time and did not have any opportunity to work together on modern

challenges and how they could be faced from the Chokweland. In fact, the Chokwe met and discussed with such as Mr. LUFUMA Kapenda (56 years old, born around Dilolo and Sandoa where he attended the Mukanda Initiation, on July 8, 2016), Municipality Burgomaster of Kikula in Likasi in the Haut-Katanga province, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was very clear about this issue in an interview we had on Skype:

*We were completely forgotten. It is only late in 1976 that the area in the Democratic of the Congo had its first few Secondary School Diplomas. The schools were of very low quality at all levels and had even been more neglected with time. Can you imagine that in 1980's that area that is as big as Belgium had only two secondary schools? Both schools were towards Sandoa. There wasn't any serious school along the railway. In the early 1990's, a group of the Chokwe of the city of Lubumbashi under the leadership of Mr. Muzombo we decided to circulate all around the Chokweland. When visited the Kuliwva Secondary School of Kasaji in 1990 it was so sad a place that had nothing to do with any school. It was dirty without books or appropriate teachers. Nothing has been done since then. When some rare missionaries could start something, they would start a small primary school. However, as soon as they would leave, the place would be completely forgotten, left to nature to recuperate its rights. The locals were not led to understand how their village institutions could benefit from the presence of the school. The local chiefs were completely left out of the education process. Do you know what? Even today, there are still many places without any school at all. When you go far enough inside the Chokweland, you can still find places where nature is still in its very primary form. People are not in contact with any disturbance linked to any kind of education at all. The governments, from the colonial times, had neglected much these places. Most of the Chokwe who are known somehow today for having achieved good levels of studies and who may be working with the governments or other national institutions did not study in the Chokwe land as such. They had gone for studies in the Luba area, the place where Ilunga Chibinda is believed to have come from in that long Lunda/Chokwe history. All the same, the Chokwe were able to achieve things of their own and by themselves, thus rather contributing to their traditional culture instead of what could be built with the coming in their territories of schools.*

This quotation makes us understand how and why many Chokwe interviewees, especially from the Democratic republic of the Congo, do not look at modern education, at all, as a possibility to prepare local people to face modern challenges. 213 out 250 respondents gave a negative answer. The position thus taken against modern education, though only indicative, shows in many ways how western education did not engage in the transformation of local wellbeing strategies with much assistance and comprehension of the local populations having to face modern (new) challenges never met before.

It is evident that there has never been any cultural dialogue that could help both cultural traditions to figure out a kind of meeting point for their current progress, and any consideration for a shared

future for facing challenges that were not known in their past. Also, the other details regarding gender participation and answers clearly show that both men and women do not rely on modern education, and they do not give it any credit for leading their space to a better future. They do not consider it as a possible means to the achievement of welfare and a commonwealth for their populations.

Unfortunately, that discredit does not only go to education concerning class organization and curriculum development which have not at all captivated the Chokwe's attention in one aspect or another. The discredit goes further and has to do with social life and acceptable behaviors. When many Chokwe compare their traditional education to sexual life with a complete absence of any kind of orientation in modern education, they were rather led to appreciate their practices that were anchored in reality. The earlier mentioned quotations indicating a sum of experiences from Tshikuta, Ngombe, Malonga and Chiyaze are an excellent illustration of the multifunctional practical preparations that were given to the young people, both men, and women. They were prepared to readily get in their society and fill different social functions. Sexual aspects were not forgotten. During their respective initiations that came early enough in their life, they were taught different practical attitudes and philosophical aspects regarding sexual life. They were led to make a clear separation between sexual pleasure as such and sex for marital and procreation purposes. Also, the entire society escorted the youth through different rituals sanctioning sexual behaviors and emphasizing personal and community expectations.

Our fieldwork Assistant, Claver Mukazo, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a University student, still remembers the beauty of the education he had received through his initiation and how it is helping him to have a different behavior from many students he has met through his university studies.

*You know, for most Chokwe (if not all), sex is imperative. During the time we spend at the Mukanda initiation, we are taught all secrets about it. We are told how to get the most pleasure out of it when it is done in the socially acceptable conditions. We are especially taught how to make sure that our women are as much satisfied as possible and for many years so that we do not have any conflict originating from the fact that we cannot assume our sexuality. To make sure our physical body can continue as long as possible throughout years until you get old. We are from time to time invited to observe sexual hygiene, maintenance, and rest. Apart from that purely pleasure related aspect, we are seriously taught to respect our bodies and to reserve them for the time we get married. This part of the education is also crucial as it does not lead us to any kind of sexual disorder as what I have seen at the University. I met people here individuals who*

*are having academic marriages. They live as couples during the entire time of their studies, get abortions, and have a life of married couples unknown by their families. They are a big temptation for me and I think for many other Chokwe. However, that is not the way in which we have been educated. They spend all opportunities they could have for getting children and when they decide to get married, they start running to healers in order to find out if their sexual life could be better. Our ancestors also had in mind the health dimensions, they wanted the young people to avoid any behavior that would bring sexual diseases, and would also weaken their bodies. They were expected to stay as strong and healthy as possible in order to lead their life in a society that was counting much on physical strength. As a matter of fact, men and women had to work hard in order to survive as individuals and as a community. That education I had in the initiation camp is quite important for me today. There are so many girls around at the University, and they are all but a significant source of temptation. I know there are also girls who have to undergo the same hell because of a massive presence of hyperexcited boys I can face the temptation, and I know how my future can be prepared and how exactly I will get involved in relations with women, for what purpose. Can I have a girlfriend? Yes, I can have one. However, my attitude with her will never be like what I am seeing. I will never behave as if I was already married. There are choices I will face differently from so many students I see falling for any girl and believe in what they call success. The Chokwe are invited not to join any kind of joke related to the field where God's hands are supposed to be present. God is the creator, participating in his work gives responsibilities to the human. The Sacred and the Profane are present all along our lives, and we are called to be careful every day and every hour of our life. I believe in the Chokwe sexual education and I am proud of it. What goes around me today is not at all important. On the contrary, it is a clear representation of what has led so many parts of Africa to suffer from HIV-AIDS. You know where I come from, we do not have as many cases of that diseases that would go as to strike attention. There are rare cases especially of people who went to live in the city and finally were affected and decided to go back home and die among their people. It is scientifically proved that circumcision that we apply has been helpful. However, the most important aspect that has kept our land as much safe as possible is quite much linked to the traditional education that has prevailed for ages.*

Claver Mukazo's comments do not leave any doubt. Modern education does not include sexual education and does not prepare either the young people or the community to looking at the implications of sexual behaviors on their social development.

Also, the results of the interviews (A2.2.12) clearly seem to support Mukazo's presentation and concern about the failure of modern education. This testimony is quite important and self-speaking as Claver Mukazo is young, and an intellectual, but above all one of the young people who could isolate from his culture and openly condemn it. The university life has disillusioned him, leading him to pay much more credit to the education he had at an early age.

Mukazo's reaction reflects the results about sexual education. 234 respondents out of 250 do not see any root of sexual education in modern education. It may be about a cultural background

that is not included in modern education so that to permit a safe transition from ancient habits to new ones in a new environment. Our reader will certainly appreciate the other details regarding gender participation, country representation and patterns. Whereas the response patterns seem to be similar and quite the same, it is worth mentioning that both Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are quite have alarmed about modern education to provide people with any sexual education in the absence of an obvious acceptance of, at least, some traditional practices. It is not at all surprising to find out that Angola is somehow leading these three countries in doubts expressed toward western education capacity. Obviously, there is nothing to say about the Chokwe consideration of the education that modern world could provide. There is no agreement point, and the rejection seems unavoidable. However, in our capacity as research and scholar, apart from the consideration here above documented on the poor size size of our sample, we know that it is possible to think differently about western education and create understanding spaces for a dreamed future of these countries..

The rejection in question is not only complete, but it also stands as a kind of challenge for the people believe lead their social life without any sort of official foreign intervention that would be forcing the country in one direction or another. In fact, when we pay attention to question regarding engaging in globalization, the Chokwe seem to say they do not need any kind of modern education for such an engagement. They have always been prepared to move ahead and deal with close and far neighbors, countrymen and foreigners from the continent and abroad. They are ready to get at their pace and conditions to get in global spaces and share their cultural wealth with the rest of the world. Question 20 trying to find out if the Chokwe society is ready to get in globalization received 213 positive answers out of 250. We have tried to understand these purposive answers better through Appadurai (2013; 1986; 1996).

Appadurai's books here above-mentioned make it clear that different connections around the world do not follow precise processes that would include that countries undergo colonization, post-colonization, or again the prevalence of a given culture on others. In this vein, Appadurai (1996) brings a significant contribution (to Bourdieu's theory) in his perception of the world today as a Space that is not and cannot at all be isolated. It is in such quick motion in different ways that nobody can pretend to stop some of its features from wherever place. Ethnoscape, Mediascape, Technoscape, Financescape, Ideoscapes reveal these fluid spaces where culture re-

shakes borders and travel very quickly from one location to the next. If in the distant past, values and reliability were firstly based on kinship and blood relations, colonized and colonialists, developed and developing countries, spaces have opened to people moving in all directions without necessarily taking into account the divide that could belong to given historical time. Also, the Chokwe can be a part of globalization and share their cultural values with the world without necessarily going through preestablished norms. Through commodities and their life, a quick dynamic takes place and engages in different movements whose waves reach out to the world without any distinction. Also, the Chokwe interviewed have understood how the world goes and have underlined how they can engage with the world. Besides, all along their history, the Chokwe have given proofs of their contacts and exchanges with different visitors, and the people they have always met in their conquest movements.

For a quick conclusion of this subsection, it is evident that Chokwe and modern education exhibit a big gap. Whereas the Chokwe train their young people for social life experience and a particular understanding of nature, modern education is more based on school curriculum. The latter does not meet the Chokwe's expectations, or at least – since villagers are well aware of schooling norms – differs from it culturally, as it cannot offer any novelty or a possibility to do better than in the past, following the criteria of innovation of that past. Besides, the colonial presence and the successive postcolonial governments have failed to implement modern education in the Chokweland. It is only as late as the 1980's and even later in Angola that schools opened doors with too many challenges and too many underqualified teachers. Claver Mukazo's excerpt above shows that the Chokwe have still so many details that they can be proud about. They have here and there the opportunity to compare their ancestral benefit with urban situations. They often come to the conclusion that when left to modern education alone, some of the Chokwe living in the city are unable to face urban challenges. They often come back home only to wait for death among family members.

### **IX.7 Beliefs, Creeds, and Religions**

We have chosen to put under the above sub-topic seven questions from the interviews: 5, 6, 10, 15, 16, 17, and 19 as written in the questionnaire.

These charts (A2.2.13, A2.2.14) are about different beliefs or religions, or expanded creeds that have motivated social life organization in one way or another. Question 5 was responded to without any doubt at all. 237 responded positively regarding their belief in witchcraft; men and women still firmly believe in witchcraft. Geschiere (1997) read and used in the preceding chapter can once again be mentioned here. The Chokwe have proved through the interview that witchcraft represents much of their traditions and social constructions. As a belief, witchcraft is considered as a sum of practices that can lead to taking the Vital Force from other people, causing death, diseases, suffering, and other social disjunctions. Also in its evolution, witchcraft just like Geschiere proves among different populations in Cameroun, has taken new dimensions. Witchcraft has reached a new discourse level through which access to different lifestyles is believed to be possible. In that way, the Chokwe's long witchcraft traditions have updated themselves to what happens in their neighbors' visions and understanding. It represents a power of the past that has succeeded to move all along times without much difference.

Also, the high score noticed in the interview, i.e. 237 out of 250 positive answers, recognizing witchcraft powers, could mean much if the sampling coverage could be more important. All the same, the situation reminds us of Mr. Kachongo met in August 2015 at the Likumbi Lya Mize. He is the first man met in our fieldwork who dared to confess that he is a witch working for the secret society Mukanda where young men undergo their first major initiation. He also confessed how he closely used to work for His Royal Highness King Ndungu from Zambezi. Most of the time, it is quite difficult to come across anybody who would confess to being a witch and explain the reasons why s/he is a witch. Kachongo is proud to talk about his experience as a witch and his different achievements. Last time we met him, he talked about twenty minutes in an interview referred to earlier. However, let us listen to a bit of his talk and focus on the part that tries to find definition with references to his experience:

*Witchcraft is nothing strange! It is a part of our culture and our long history. Our ancestors used witchcraft as a means of solving problems that ordinary people could easily understand. The core of witchcraft still turns around human life and different social services. Our ancestors needed to have an absolute control of community life as far as Vital Force increase and decrease in people are concerned. Witchcraft was not considered a negative phenomenon. On the contrary, it was a sum of highly secretive behaviors and skills that were reserved to highly secret groups working with the leaders. Among the things the witches did, we can count their capacity to liberate human community from immoral and amoral citizens who could not be corrected at all, but were there to impose different kinds of suffering to their community. Such people were killed and forgotten.*

*They would fall sick, and suddenly disappear. The witches were also able to take from other people the necessary secrets needed for the achievements of different projects. For instance, in the times of famine thanks to their witchcraft, they could bring food to their community. When the population fell sick, they could find elsewhere the necessary medicinal secrets that would be used to heal their populations. When they needed labor, they could use their enemies and get them at work all along nights and farm for them. In times of war, the witches could revert situations and attack the enemies with their weapons. It goes without saying that the concept “witchcraft” has suffered much inflation. So many people today have access to it and happy to use to kill other or impose them suffering in different ways. Witchcraft has become a way to justify attacks towards other people, or again to undertake different ways for reaching social positions. That is why we can say witchcraft has undergone inflation. Despite that inflation, it is still present and used in a variety of ways. The wicked use it for evil but our ancestral leaders would use it for bringing much more life to their community, and sometimes to demonstrate they are in control. That is why, for instance, we know here in Zambezi, that the British came impolitely to talk to our Queen at the Mize and wanted her to leave her palace mysteriously disappeared. He has never been found. The English messenger had never returned to the center he was intending to go to. A powerful whirlwind swallowed his entire expedition. The gentleman and this entire expedition went lost and have never appeared anywhere around the world. That is how you could understand witchcraft. It has several dimensions that have changed over time, and that many stick to at different times.*

Mr. Kachongo’s speech above provides us with a clear bridge to the understanding of medicinal plants as largely documented in chapter six where Mr. Tshipoya, Muteba Nswana and Kamboyi led us to the understanding of the important place plants have in medical care. The healers also made it clear for us that it was not only a question of using plants and reaching results. It was evident that in many cases apart from plants as such, there was also much expectation from the divine, i.e., from the ancestral interventions. It was clearly suggested that the intervention of ancestors added many more powers to the plant substances that made them react in the right way to push away evil spirits.

Also, when the interview has the result of 239 out of 250 for the Chokwe’s belief in plants and their medicinal principles, we cannot be surprised at all. It is one of the highest scores the interview reaches with respondents recognizing the support from plants, even though only indicative. This score justifies itself; we can still meet townspeople who swear to their life safety, longevity, and healing from any illness thanks to medicinal plants.

The dimension here related to divine intervention and magic, ritual, and religious organizations should be perceived in the other questions, i.e., 10, 15, 16, 17, and 19. Furthermore, M. Eliade (1963b; 2004; 2005; 1990; 1963a) used several times in the main part of the dissertation will help



us understand how the other questions intermingle, in fact, one involving how the Chokwe look at divine and ancestral interventions for their healing system, betterment, and Commonwealth. Question ten, in fact, sends us back to all chapters that dealt with masks and even this one. The artifacts participate in the presentation and the work of spirits through a religious process. Also, the score that question brings, i.e., 218 out of 250 answers in recognition of masks' intervention in spirituality clarifies how the Chokwe construct their religious universe. Masks stand for intermediaries or the vessels through which the ancestors communicate with the living humans. The general belief is expressed through answers that show the place masks have in the Chokwe religious life and presentation to the world. The level of these answers makes it easy to understand how the Likumbi Lya Mize, for instance, is at the center of the Luvala/Chokwe life in Zambezi.

This attachment and respect for religious facts is shown in the answers to question 15. However, that question also documents how the Chokweland is invaded by other religions that seem to serve the same purpose also turning around beliefs in hidden powers. The score reached here seems a bit lower compared to others, though still very high. Religion still influences the Chokwe's social life. Even though the answers collected amount for 188 out of 250 answers in the indicative interviews, we can still understand how the religious feelings prevail. We have to put that with another concept that goes together with religion and that comes in question 17. Indeed, if religion acceptance and recognition in somehow, rituals are still seen as important for an average of 229 respondents. If we take both, i.e., the belief in religion and high reliance in rituals, we can say that the religious feeling and acceptance is still quite high among the Chokwe.

All rituals take place in a kind of festive atmosphere, they are always performed with songs. Music and songs become important in so far as they participate in religious facts. They also lead in different sequences that play the linking role between the Profane and the Sacred. They seem to build the bridge that permits the Sacred to move towards the Profane. With the capacity that music has to lead the human towards various emotional states, songs, and music, drums are a significant part of rituals. Chokwe music is credited with 226 out of 250 demonstrates not only how it is important, but how it has also succeeded in captivating the world's attention, for this music is played around the world more and more. Appadurai's theories related to space occupation demonstrate how music from remote areas can reach out to the global spaces.

Finally, question 19 reveals, in fact, how this entire section has much to do with body activities. Either for witchcraft activities or for medicinal plants collection and cure administration, artifact fabrication, religious and ritual celebrations, all goes through successive mimetic actions that require the presence of the body as performing agency. Also, the activities of the body are credited with a high score, i.e., 218 out of 250 of respondents recognizing the importance of the body in identity formation. That score translates voices that recognize how the human body participates in the construction of identity. It is evident that the human body in the Chokwe conception participates in everyday details that makes up the Chokwe vision and its orientation towards specific goals.

### **IX.8 Power: Trust in Political Institutions, Social Divides, and Leadership**

This last section addresses interview questions 7, 8, 9, 12, 18 which reveal the relationships the Chokwe have with their political institutions, the credibility they give they give these institutions, if any at all, and how they eventually consider them as sources their misfortune. These questions also look at political institutions in their capacity to divide people, or how they cannot permit the presence and growth of socially responsible leadership. When Chokwe populations notice what their current governments suggest to them does not bring peace and wellbeing to their communities, most of them become focused on their past that seems consistent and proven itself for many years (A2.2.21, A2.2.22, A2.2.23).

They altogether oppose the Chokwe traditional socio-political organizations in comparison with what is still expected from Chokwe traditional institutions. Also, when question 7 addresses trust in modern political institutions, our reader should understand it with a background going as far as the colonial times, at least. The relation between trust, collective ritual and customary authority used to be very strong. For many Chokwe, the colonial and postcolonial times do not make much difference. For them, the postcolonial era as perceived in the Chokweland is but a continuation of what happened for long during the colonial times. It is all about government institutions that behave as though they were the owners of the country, its resources, and inhabitants. Everybody else could be considered as a conquered, if not worse a slave of the entire political apparatus. It is also about local people's traditions and development expectations through local leadership and choices in accepted rituals, and social *modus vivendi*. Choices are made in such a way that the

past builds up a strong backbone, whereas novelty brings new dimension to community wellbeing around ancestors' spirits.

The interview shows how many Chokwe do not rely at all on modern institutions (because they give much ground to political abuses). That is why 193 voices out of 250 (answers to question 7) clearly meant a lack of reliability, despite being only indicative. All around these three countries, i.e., respectively in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia, such a presentation shows a lack of enough confidence and almost an absence of dialogue. Two different worlds are decided to keep moving on their tracks without taking into account what could be the benefit of working together and sharing views regarding challenges and their treatments. We could easily blame the colonial powers for their lack of efficiency. However, such a condemnation could be biased for different reasons that would not take into account earlier developed argumentation in this chapter and previous ones. It is indeed important that most Chokwe traditional leaders start encouraging young generations to find common ground for evaluation and projects that will largely benefit the future in a borderless world.

Indeed, at the beginning of this chapter, a repetition of a consideration already paid attention to in other sections, Vellut (2006) reminded our readers something important that changed much in the social organizations of the Chokwe. They were indeed led to stay within Berlin decided borders. In fact, they were confined within these boundaries that were quite different from their ambitions and real presence on the ground or land occupation. They were led to forget about their big nation that extended within the three newly built countries. They were also reduced to rely on new governments that had nothing to do with their long traditions. It goes without saying that within such a climate and situation, it is impossible to think that things would be just rolling like water in the level river. The Chokwe felt they were betrayed by the same powers that had helped to get into the African lands; their former friends had suddenly chosen to progress without the Chokwe and to make it clear once for all that they were like all other Africans. As such they were not only confined to stick to the territories where they were sent, but also to stop any kind of ambition that would push them to the occupation of another territory. Their long history of conquests and domination of neighbors had stopped there.

It is indeed that lack of confidence in colonial and postcolonial institutions that has continued throughout times. Also, question 7 and 18 go together in the same directions as they raise interrogations on modern institutions. In the light of the above-noted considerations, we could already predict how political institutions as presented today cannot have any chance that could convince the Chokwe to give them any appreciation. We can thus predict a total rejection. The reason for that rejection is in fact reinforced through question 7 that does not show any confidence and trust in modern political institutions.

When the Chokwe are called to give their assessment on modern political institutions, their answers should be understood through a significant spectrum of considerations. Most of the attitudes should be comprehended through the continued failure of any cohesion. The three countries here studied, i.e., Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia, have not organized symposiums or other studies that have gathered around the same table politicians, academics, and the grassroots. The purpose of such a gathering would mainly aim at raising questions regarding possibilities Chokwe traditional values, modern education and development assets would have in the eventuality to work together for the same purposes, i.e., a satisfactory welfare for local people. On the contrary, everything came as an absolute imposition to everybody. The Chokwe were forced to live in a situation that required them to think and live differently. At the same time, they were continuously exposed to their long traditions that obliged them to lead a social life turning beliefs and a chosen local King. The perspective of any change could not be easily operated. In fact, even when the local king was bought and was trying to represent the new order, the entire population would not follow him or her. As a result, the society was organized in such a way that rituals and daily life challenges were looked at through traditional lenses, which the new education had completely neglected. Consequently, the divorce was complete.

It is that whole divorce attitude that explains the score noted for this question. Also, 212 out of 250 voices clearly demonstrated that political institutions as observed in the postcolonial era are but a failure to the eyes of the Chokwe for they cannot at all lead them in a sure way for their survival and the best possible welfare. As here above pointed out, the divorce is complete. In going through graphs noted at the attachments included to this dissertation, both Chokwe men, and women, concur with slight differences in their refusal of and rejection of modern political

institutions, given their incapacity to intermingle with Chokwe social institutions. That is why many Chokwe do not at all believe in any contribution that these institutions could provide for the welfare of the populations. Once again, we are sure that this is simply a speculation, that once evaluated rightly with much local insight, the future may be looked at differently.

An addendum to the above Chokwe's vision of modern political institutions further touches another central fiber of social life. Also, when the Chokwe look at gender questions, they have nothing good to say about how things are organized. Question 12 goes straight to the situation and condemns gender divide as organized in modern times and pays much more attention to men rather than to women. In fact, this position is not unique to the Chokwe

However, the Chokwe's institutions are not half expressed. On the contrary, their preferences are clearly for their traditions. Modern institutions rather favor men instead of women and do not even suggest a stable situation. In this vein, Nzegwu (2001), Kevane (2004), and Gadzekpo (2011) concur in their vision of the African woman's treatment. Her conditions are not ethically considered, and she is described as inferior to men because she cannot achieve the same results in physical production. Such a vision does not at all consider how women strive all along their life in works that do not pay financially but are the most necessary for social survival. Breadwinning systems and the works they suggest have wrong stressed that only those who can contribute with money deserve attention. This is not the Chokwe consideration that looks at women with attention and respect for their work and contribution to the social life chosen since their ancestors. The presence of this kind of contradiction has always opposed the Chokwe to the colonial and postcolonial administrations.

Logically, most interviewed Chokwe have shown through questions 8 and 9 how they would rather rely on their traditional institutions and in the organizational powers of their uncorrupted chiefs, for the chieftaincy is relevant for the constructions of new identities and their access to global development practices. In making this choice, the Chokwe want their chiefs to engage in dialogues with their populations to find the right ways for building their future. They also meant that their traditional leaders would consider their obligation to keep their communities moving in time so that to communicate rightly with their new neighbors to be more and more seen and counted far around the world. They would develop local competencies and skills in such a way that they would find enough cultural facts and other commodities to share with the world

(Appadurai, 2013). It is such a strong belief that question 8 presents a score of 224 out of 250 voices for traditional chieftaincy capacity to ensure new identities in a developing world. In the same vein, when considering traditional political institutions capacity to govern in modern times, the Chokwe do not hesitate at all to point out that these institutions can help them go ahead in time and adapt to global configurations. In fact, by 222 out of 250 voices believe that traditional institutions can lead in a real evolution for the Chokweland. When considered, both questions 8 and 9 could stand for a complete rejection of colonial and postcolonial institutions regarding whatever they could do for the Chokwe.

As pointed out earlier, we strongly believe that there could not be a total rejection of modern education system. It is present and its benefits cannot be denied. However, it is important to have clear projects and plans that would be essentially based on local implications and benefits as perceived in the long run. Most Chokwe populations have demonstrated that borrowing from neighbors is important in so far as it permits a maximization of local populations' wellbeing. Having that in mind several strategies can be found and shared with local people especially when in the light of chapter seven it is obvious that women's contribution cannot be neglected at all.

## **IX.9 Chapter Nine: Conclusive Remarks**

This chapter describing the concept "Amplification" had a major purpose from its starting point. It endeavored to find possibilities of understanding both in the light of the preceding chapters, on the one hand, and new artifacts, selected recorded interviews, and the answers collected from the interview conducted in the fieldwork, on the other. Apart from the different discussions, focus group discussions, and one-on-one contacts, interviews focused on twenty questions that repeated most of the biggest challenges raised in the dissertation. They concerned migration, education, beliefs, power and leadership, and institution capacities.

New Chokwe masks permitted to find out how young artists share inspiration from both local and global sources with other artists and their messages continue Chokwe traditions based on borrowing and insertion in their cultural heritage. The few commented selected interviews regarding witchcraft, female initiation, Chokwe men and women today permitted to have an idea about how cultural facts from a distant past continue through different strategies to reinforce

identities. Concerning migration, the interview permitted us to understand that Chokwe people do not easily choose to go to towns. They prefer to stay in their traditional environment, villages and around their traditional chiefs. Their migrations to towns came under the colonial order that needed labor for the railway and mines. Of this group, those who were under short contracts quickly went back in their home villages and were happy to be back home with a few urban goods such radios, bicycles, and oil lamps. Generally, they also brought with them salt and sugar bags, gun powder for sale. They soon engaged in small business with their village people from whom they got either cash or, quite often, their harvests of cassava and corn that were in high demands in towns. They thus also became the only links between the villages and the town. Many Chokwe who were taken and hired for long contracts stayed in towns. Their companies managed to get them wives from the villages. They were encouraged to stay and to give birth to as many children as possible so that their children could continue their fathers' work with companies. During their leave time, they had the permission to go to their village with their families. They brought goods back home, but for many years they could not convince their countrymen about the attractions cities had on them (Dibwe, 2013, July). Many years after, the urban settlers still had to negotiate with their village families for permission to bring a young man to town who would like to study there, one who might be a child of the worker getting educational advantages from their companies. Such operations were possible whenever the mining and the rail companies were rich and were able to pay their workers decently.

Concerning the topic of education, the interview replies were clear to reveal that there is a profound separation between the Chokwe world education understanding and the modern curricula used in schools. Modern schools organize its programs around diplomas as the highest achievement levels. However, students are not trained rightly in issues regarding practical life. They do not get any kind of sexual education that could be a part of Chokwe traditions. In the same way, they develop many Christian centered beliefs that seem to be contrary to traditional beliefs centered on ancestors, communities, spirits in masks, vital force, traditional chiefs and royals. Also, no objective evaluation was ever conducted to find out if the two systems could in one way or another coexist and participate in the wellbeing of the Chokwe. The future does not give any sign that shows that these systems will closely cooperate as such. Individual experiences have all the same demonstrated that much can be done in the sense of bringing both education cultures closer and closer. In this case, university student Claver Mukazo shows that getting the

basics of Chokwe culture could be of much help. Claver Mukazo's long testimony given in this chapter shows that the time spent in the initiation camp prepared him to face some challenges to which young men are exposed in towns. He points out, for instance, that he has an entirely different approach to sexual life from most of the young people of his age. He gives the impression of having much more control of his behavior than most of the students at the University. Finally, Claver Mukazo comprehends that his modern education comes in addition to what he had received from his village. Symbolically, this experience seems, to our eyes at least, to demonstrate the education line and pattern that could be implemented with the young Chokwe for a better future and their community wellbeing.

Another point of this chapter (also based on interview questions) dealt with faith and religion regarding education. The Chokwe religion and faith are developed around rituals and practices that include masks, songs, and music, individuals operating in the middle of people for leading them a bit like in shamanistic ways (Kaputu, 2010). In this vein, the use of given artifacts is of great help. Thus, given masks, such as the ones utilized in the Mukanda Initiation and the Likumbi Lya Mize, participate in the mimetic and theatrical attitudes developed during the rituals. But they are also the testimonies of ancestral presence and various spirits that participate in the building of the Chokwe world. From what could seem purely theatrical, illusion-based, and mimetic, reconstructing the distant past defines different human dimensions and social connections that, finally, determine social balance (J. Derrida, 1978).

The understanding of these human dimensions and social structures also lead to the Chokwe presentation of power. The Chokwe interviewed pointed out the weaknesses of modern institutions that cannot fit in the Chokwe traditions. They are unable to find their way in the Chokwe traditions because they have never started any serious dialogue with the Chokwe. Modern political institutions have their agenda clear perception and projects concerning the Chokweland despite so many years and opportunities that have gone by without any attempt come closer to each other. The two systems have progressed their ways without any effort to bring together what they could have in common.

The scores, otherwise taken concerning the approval of traditional institutions and royals have been without any hesitation despite their poor coverage and only indicative perception. Several Chokwe wherever they still believe in their traditional values that their traditional chiefs



represent. They have shown that traditional leaders have the right capacities to implement Chokwe's immersion in the new environment that put in presence many cultures at the same time. In fact, these scores seemed to show that the traditional leaders have enough insights to select from modern trends what could be of great use for their growth and the wellbeing of their people.

Their choices in favor of their traditional leaders demonstrate aspects of modernity. First of all, they have through their answers demonstrated how it is possible that their villages and towns celebrate life together through their ancestral memories, yet still remain faithful to a cultural backbone sending them back to a long line of their ancestors and elders despite the presence of townspeople and a few errant urban behaviors (Ferguson, 2006). Secondly, the interview replies showed that cultural facts can be distributed to people all around the world without necessarily putting any devised way between what could be considered primitive and advanced. The dynamic that develops and leads to cultural facts does not depend on the presence of chosen structures. They can find their way out to people and to the world (Appadurai, 2013; 1996; 1986). It is also within this dynamic that social groups choose to take their responsibility in gathering around the same values and convictions they have defended for years. They are ready to look at their destiny together (Anderson, 1991).

The interviews have demonstrated that apart from medicinal plants and health secrets that can still be withdrawn from the lost past of the Chokwe, they have shown that they can still draw much attention on them. In the early chapters, the interview showed it is possible to look at questions in a perspective that reveals how, in some cases, they are can go further than modern medicine to solve unsuspected health issues. In that way, this medical expertise has joined other commodities' life artifacts and other cultural resources that can change into sale objects, objects of value that represent financial values they can get on the market to participate in world exchanges (Appadurai, 1996; 2013).

Finally, this chapter has been able to demonstrate a couple of things documented earlier in the chapter through essentially "Memoing and Iterative" researcher's activities, (Bernard, 2006:510). Early, dealing with each chapter as a big theme was successful in the accumulation of study topics on the Chokwe. The strategy permitted to cover most interesting matters regarding their identity constructions and changes in times. Most of the topics regarded how Chokwe identity is

constructed and how it could be understood through the lenses of material culture on the one hand, and body management, on the other. These chapters had the advantage to reveal how Chokwe society is confused with many other cultures in Africa where it is obviously established that women suffer under an excessive weight and men's influence. On the contrary, the Chokwe singles out a culture where gender divide goes through another dynamic. Often, women use ambiguity as social strategy to solve issues and draw attention to points that could, otherwise, be completely forgotten. That strategy has lifted women to a level where they choose the main meanings given to their society and followed by everybody. In other words, in the same way they give birth to life, they also give "birth" to meanings, i.e., their approval of any cultural dimension is completely taken as such by their society. Also, their dimension as meaning givers is fully revealed in the Likumbi Lya Mize where their activities are a determinant for the entire event and ritual, and for its complete meaning for the Chokwe/Luvale culture survival throughout time.

## **CHAPTER TEN: DISSERTATION OVERALL CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**

### **X.1 Introduction or a Quick Overall View of the Dissertation**

This is the end of a long research journey whose details are revealed in the preceding nine chapters. Despite the strong desire to continue with nine new chapters and discuss additional aspects related to Chokwe identity construction perceivable through material culture body management and rituals, it is high time to clarify every lesson learned in the entire dissertation and to define landmarks to other research horizons. It is an excellent moment to review the coherence that links different information data accumulated in this academic quest. As announced in the general introductory pages, this dissertation chose an organization of themes grouped in nine chapters with sub-themes under various subtitles all regarding the main research question and the dissertation topic. From the beginning, the journey was baptized under the name of a vigorous and direct question: “Does Chokwe material culture give a possibility to study Chokwe identities over years and find evolution patterns?” This research question included many sub-questions about body management within a dimension that aimed at getting deeper into the comprehension of the Chokwe material culture. It is indeed obvious that many Chokwe cultural aspects may stand for parts of the people’s material culture. To make sure the material studied is paid enough attention, we had to select some artifacts and other social material that are obviously material culture sequences set through the Chokwe history. Thus, this dissertation essentially considered following cultural facts including Mukanda masks, rituals (Mukanda and Likumbi Lya Mize), initiation songs, diviner’s baskets and healing, and at a minimized level dances and songs.

If chapter nine gave us an opportunity to review respondents’ responses to an interview, chapter ten intends to put a specific stress on how the entire dissertation is a coherent answer to the main research question re-mentioned in the above paragraph. This chapter intends to reveal how the Chokwe identity construction is strongly perceivable through a self-motivated dynamic that has permitted it to survive, construct, and reconstruct itself and face different challenges over years.

The dynamic organization of the dissertation includes a consideration of artifacts that are visible all around when the Chokwe King Mwene Mwa Tshisenge visits Tshikapa. It is worth noticing

how it was the first time that this part of the country had the opportunity to welcome a Chokwe king despite the fact that the Chokwe populations have been living there since the eighteenth century and consider that land as theirs. The presence of local chiefs and their advisers with their traditional and royal paraphernalia became an opportunity to raise questions about the relations that link these objects and royal leadership. It became more more evident that the bearers of royal paraphernalia have a particular position in the social hierarchy. Their social positions give them powers believed to link them straight to ancestors, spirits, and God. These artifacts became the first components in our collection of details that contribute to the comprehension of Chokwe identities. Apart from the paraphernalia, the dissertation has also gone deep into specific masks since most of them play symbolic roles within human societies. In fact, masks reflect their society and reproduce social organizations (Jordan, 2006).

The visitor will doubtlessly and immediately see how the significant number of masks not only represent the Chokwe social organization but stand for ancestral spirits. The Mukanda masks represent what goes on in society and are named with reference to their social interventions. They show both good and bad behaviors in society and especially how evil characters always lead to catastrophes. In the same vein, the Chokwe who do not preserve ancestral ways and good relations with their elders, ancestors, and good spirits are condemned to leading a sad life and cannot be of any assistance to themselves or their community. Masks also indicate how gender issues are lived among the Chokwe. Thus, the masks reproduce mimetic scenes that show men and women in opposition over matters related to their households and the roles they fill in their community. Songs and dances participate in the show, but mainly are opportunities through which the human bodies can express different feelings and emotions to have access to other spiritual dimensions.

In chapter four based on Tshikapa, the Chokwe King Mwene Mwatshisenge, local chiefs, and populations led us to understand how the interferences between certain artifacts and the Chokwe are a part of their identity or let us say their identity construction. Also, these artifacts participate in several rituals that are placed in mimetic presentations while repeating what ancestors did at a given time of the Chokwe history. They confirm in their way how they participate in the construction and de-construction of the Chokwe identity. The boundary separating the Chokwe

from their artifacts is so thin and can be understood only in the perspective of social outcome that links people in their daily life to the creator and deities.

It is also this same lesson around artifacts and traditional leaders that gave our readers an opportunity to raise another question regarding how many Chokwe connect or disconnect from their traditions and their daily environment. Also, several Chokwe cannot think about their past, present, and future without having a special vision of their social world concerning the main social details that build their social outlook. As a way to understand how the Chokwe social life is organized, the following theme is raised with the assistance of Bourdieu's field and capital theories, global space occupation theory by Appadurai and social intersubjectivity by Stroeken. The results showed that the Chokwe culture as expressed in their cultural manifestations, and in the community life, is the mold that reproduces their society and reinforces it all along time and rituals set for different opportunities. Ancestors are adored and represented by elders and are permanent in communities for people's protection and the leadership towards spiritual life sources. It is through elders that social life is planned. They build up the capital system through which education is ensured, continued for the construction of bridges from one generation to another. Education is an extensive offering however only addressed to those who can go through initiations like the Mukanda and succeed undergoing various tests. Those who succeed have also to prove how they fit into their society by taking on the best functions in servicing their community. Once they can pursue their skills and other capacities for their people, and thus mark their personal contribution and personal profile, they have the opportunity to move up in the social hierarchy. It is this same theme concerning community life management that finally demonstrated how the Chokwe have now reached a development level where they do not need their respective country governments for marking communication spaces with their close neighbors and with the world. In that way, their social behaviors reflect theories largely documented all along the dissertation (Appadurai, 1996). Other scholars have facilitated the comprehension of the ways in which the Chokwe deal with their traditions and ensure their survival within history, the past, while projecting their future (Stroeken, 2006; 2008; 2010; 2011; 2012).

The comprehension of the above theme permitted getting new comprehensions of events otherwise difficult to approach. Thus, it was possible to look at initiations with a particular stress

on the male initiation, Mukanda. The dissertation showed with many details how the Mukanda is the obliged transition through which young people must go in order to find out the right ways to join and serve their community with the necessary skills. However, the acquisition of these skills has the particularity that some of these young men can do better than others and therefore have access to life secret levels that their peers cannot access. In that way, there is a continuation from one generation to another. Mr. Kachongo, from Zambezi, however, insisted also on the fact that most of these professions are likely to stay within the same families that ensure secret transmissions from one generation to the next. It is also during the time they spend in seclusion that the young Chokwe people learn how to use their bodies for many social functions. First of all, the use of their bodies for learning dances that permit them to reach out to spiritual dimensions and to interacting with divinities. Secondly, during their seclusion, the initiates get to know medicinal plants and other practices that contribute to the Chokwe health and healing conditions. Also, some of them continue life increasing their healing expertise, and become the diviners healers of their communities. Thirdly, during their seclusion, and especially during their apprenticeship, they learn how to connect their lives with their ancestors and elders in the ways inherited from long traditions. They especially learn how to use supernatural forces inherited from the first Chokwe Fathers, the founders of their culture and civilization. They spend their time learning how to do things that their ancestors would have approved. In the protection of their people from potential enemies through physical fighting as well as through the use of magic powers, they confirm their leadership and, eventually, their capacity to keep a specific social class functioning for the interest of the Chokwe through their social continuation.

It is worth mentioning that the seclusion time is also used to lead the young people (male and female) to understand social phenomena that are often a source of fear among the majority of the population. Geschiere (1997; 1980; 1991; 1996) and Mvone-Ndong (2014a; 2014b) largely document a generally spread phenomenon that has been going on for centuries and that the Chokwe, like many other Africans, consider either with fear or admiration: witchcraft. For the Chokwe, “Wanga” is a name that can be confused with the medication called the same name. However, in this context, it means the capacity that humans have to bewitch others, send curses on them, and lead their life towards complete suffering that is usually followed by death. With the evolution of time and a kind of update of its capacity, witchcraft is now seen as those hidden capabilities used for getting more financial and leadership powers. Goods, powers, political

elevation, strong leaders without any open training may be suspected as the outcome and the fruits of witchcraft. The bottom line perceives the witch's joy in seeing the majority of people suffer and exposed to poverty while being the only exception. Reflecting on witchcraft and its expansion over years in Cameroun, J. Comaroff (2012; 2009) depicts the extensive understanding of victimization. Witchcraft comes with a kind of barbarity that many people suffer from, on the one hand, and is somehow contrasted with the egotistic joys and pleasures that the witch seems able to set and profit from, on the other hand. That contrast motivated the move of a similar discourse within churches in order to achieve a social dynamic that could lead to a boomerang effect. Those who are saved through Christ's blood would be happy, in a way, to see, suffering and humiliation going to the witches. It is all about a kind of postmodern communication where the sender and the receiver may exchange roles within a structure that depends not only on their information capacity but also the auxiliary (or assistant) they have (Bremond, 1966). Evil for the witches and God for the Christians would be the auxiliaries. However, many Chokwe would put such an equation into question for the benefit they believe to get from their ancestors and good spirits is believed to be more appropriate and well oriented.

Apart from the above, one of the most important themes in the dissertation was in the Likumbi Lya Mize masquerade. It is mostly known for its presentation of the special masquerade at the end of the Mukanda and the return of the newly initiated young people into their community and a wildly joyful celebration that lasts about seven entire days. From a long tradition constructed around the first Luvale populations who believed that the harvest time had to be celebrated in a time of thanksgiving marked by new tree shrubs called "Mize". However, instead of paying attention to the masquerade, music, songs, dances, costumes and the people coming and going in all directions, we have paid attention to the place and the role the Chokwe women play at the Mukanda exit. The exercise consisted of trying to find out how the Chokwe women manage to be part of everything, and how they organize the appropriation of the event. In fact, from the time the initiated leave the graveyard where they spend the last night of their initiation, they are taken care of by Chokwe women. It is as if these women provide them with an additional training they could not get while in seclusion. These women teach the initiates the actual meaning of their life, and the meaning they need to give to all social events from their household, personal life, connections with leaders, and their recognition of the king as the center of the Chokwe life.

Through their relations with the king or local chiefs, the young initiated keep their connections alive with ancestors and with living and assisting spirits.

Out of every detail here above mentioned Chokwe from Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia (all around the indicated the hinterland) lead us to understand their identities and various structural operations that assist them in the identity construction work. Several Chokwe look at their human body as an occasion to live different emotions, but also as spaces that make possible the passage of several emotions, learning skills, and the power to connect with others. It is also through their bodies that they build communities and measure their capacities to assist in the growth of their human capital, thus putting the body at the center of many dynamics going either towards social or spiritual questions challenging the Sacred and the Profane.

This overall survey has certainly gripped the main points described all along the dissertation. However, there is still more regarding material culture, rituals, passage through the graveyard, dances, and music. We shall also quickly summarize their particularities before moving to the final, conclusive remarks. Before everything, it is important at this level to try to understand how the Chokwe studied in the dissertation have been able to build the national space (though only virtual) within which they live, and that overlaps three countries.

## **X.2 From Anderson's Nation Layout to Chokweland Virtual Nation**

Throughout the dissertation, when referring to Anderson (1991:18; Ortner, 1984) and other writers in the same field of anthropology, it was evident that people's love for their country was an exclusive variable, an important factor and a symbolic representation of the whole unity characteristic of the sameness met in sharing land, values, ideals, cohesion with the "Mater Patriae." Whatever the nation-state may have done or failed to do, the citizens of the state still knew that it was theirs, or at least that they were its leaders and inhabitants through a kind of identity equation (a concept that Descombes has largely developed and widely used in the first chapter). There seems to be a strong rope, invisible to the eyes, knotting all people to each other within the same cultural, socio-political, and philosophical visions concerning the shared lands and its inhabitants. In other words, there is a strong agreement, a freely chosen bondage that links the people together and to the land that stands for their nation, and above all,



They knew what the state could require of them, and accepted their duties as a condition of the rights that came with them. They recognized, therefore, the principal grounds of rights and duties themselves. In short, there prevailed a sense of collective interest and purpose that gave substance to individual aspirations as well as those of the group. Anderson (1991:18)

The agreement that is obviously often silent but quite expressive constructs the basis around which the comprehension of community life becomes feasible and stays forever possible and identifiable. Consequently, general cultural lines strengthen all along time and mark the main identifiable characteristics of a group (ethnic or social group) – or a nation – in its comparisons to others within the limits of the sub-region, the continent, and the world. In this vein, Anderson (1991:19) distinguishes the concept nation from other political organizations through its specific features, for a nation is essentially “limited, sovereign, and community-based.” With the above, an observation of such a big group of people reveals “comradeship and fraternity.” These values stand for its stronghold pillars as they are like the fertilizers that motivate commitment to togetherness while accumulating strong psychological and historical (archaeological) proofs that build up along particular traditions and strong references to the past (Mudimbe, 1993). They also create the robust foundations over which it is possible to figure out several potentials for envisioning the future through work, inside harmony, and navigating spaces with close and far neighbors.

However concerning the long history and social groups gathering together for their survival and common interests, Anderson (1991:19) points out language, literacy, and the wide-ranging effects of the printing press. The language question may certainly be the common tool of the entire population living in a given geographical zone. However, it is often rather a question of the language that is considered as sacred for its use and relevance in rituals (Geertz, 1966; 1977). It articulates a religious community and its dynamic contribution for the existential conventions that build up a nation. By the way, it is language that makes things possible, for it names them and chooses a potential existential route for them that leads to various dynamics and possibilities concerning outcomes (J.Derrida, 1978). Through the above existential criteria, different nations have built their place in the world whereas ethnic-linguistic groups decide to come together and strengthen their religious and historical beliefs, mythological constructions, and commonality such as the case of Indonesia (Anderson, 2001:234). Anderson (1998) already pointed out many

presumable comparisons that can be found and documented around the world. Above everything, Utz (2005:616-617) particularly points out the cultural interventions. They are far more important than the mere territory or area. They involve a kind of modified social structuralism that emphasizes “the creative and imaginative aspect,” which in turn legitimizes an ideology later taking advantage of printing facilities for its propagation around a vast territory and the world (Utz, 2005:621). It goes without saying that this printing propagation could easily be replaced in oral societies and traditions with oral genres that fill the same roles life in the printing. Such narratives would essentially be aiming at ideological purposes. They would fill people with fear and hope to get satisfaction from “evil” perpetrator leaders, a kind of impossible project. Thus, everything in certain societies could lead to a vicious circle that expects answers and orientations from the same evil doers at the origin of social curses.

Also, in order to strengthen their common life, survival perspectives and capacities to face different challenges around the world, many social structures and interactions need much clarification. They are reinforced through various strategies that the people or citizens share for common values and preferences. These strategies define them as one people and facilitate their various communications within their land. They have been through a long process that has seen them identify their commonalities around the same interests, goals, and preferences that necessarily put them together (Alesina, 2015:1-3). In this vein, Alesina (2015) suggests different parameters that may eventually lead to the construction of various kinds of nations (or models) with stress on the characteristics that make the cohesion of a big group. (Alesina, 2015:7).

In light of the above, our considerations of the Chokwe living in the Chokwe hinterland overlapping the three countries studied, i.e., Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia, need to accept many changes. First of all, there are details that can be mentioned and documented. Thus, we can consider land, people, same language, sharing the same interests, the same will to live around (or with) the same leaders and the same religious constructions. It is also worth pointing out projections in of their common future within the same environment, and the presence and recognition of the same traditional leadership and authorities. The above shows that there is much in common that should lead us to recognize a Chokwe nation. Despite the details mentioned in the early chapters and regarding the fact that the Chokwe were moved away from the territories they had occupied and that had become their land (Vellut, 2006), despite also the

fact that they had to wander around for some time, they have managed to stay together, and rebuild unity and cohesion. Consequently, their commonalities have continued over a long time, and they have rebuilt their nation in the Chokweland. Also, we could look at the Chokwe and their indigenous rights. UN (2009:108), Godden (2010:IX), Laher (2014:X-XIII) inform our readers that indigenous people have rights to free access to lands that they cannot dispute with settlers whatever law they could use. The concept “Terra Nullius” had to disappear as many people around the world had the right to live in places that were theirs by birthrights. Throughout the world and also in the Chokweland, discourses around ownership, appropriation, and rights to access resources are developed. Despite their life on the margins of the three countries with whom they should normally build up nations, the Chokwe have developed their ownership discourse that includes not only cultural aspects but also many other aspects regarding facing challenges in a quickly growing world. A quick development of this “national” discourse has created a Chokwe public ideology that shows at certain moments. One such particular illustration could be seen and pointed out at the end of the Likumbi Lya Mize Festival. For no apparent reason, the Zambezi inhabitants openly show their disapproval of the president’s speech and promises. He cannot inspire any hope in them. They instead showed their preference for their local representative. The atmosphere was tense enough to the point that President Lungu had to leave quickly for the capital city. Any visitor would notice how His Excellency President was in a foreign land, should we say in another nation. (The above is an important detail when it comes to an interpretation of the Zambian August 11, 2016 presidential elections.)

In fact, a series of questions can still be raised regarding this nation. That is why we took the precaution to call it a “Virtual” country or nation. For, it is not an internationally recognized land, and less a country. However, the criteria here above revealed are robust enough to draw our attention to what is successful. Thus, for instance, despite living in an area where other languages can also be observed and are spoken, the Chokwe live in such a way that they communicate with these people and do not have any need to translate their communications. The other people sharing the same area can use their languages. However, they recognize sharing spaces with the Chokwe especially since they have in common the same long history sending them back to the same archetypal ancestors presented in the previous chapters. These ancestors are believed to have departed from the same point to other parts of the world, i.e., from “Nkalayi” in the then Lunda/Chokwe territory. The king’s crowns are historical pieces that bear the same past. They

have the same motifs and see the traditional leader in a central position, one who represents ancestors and powers that spirits bring to the land where the Chokwe live.

Finally, the Chokwe have been able to build an environment that puts them together and challenges their capacity to figure out a shared future. As a nation, they could fight for their rights as a community, and as here above mentioned, the Chokwe could indeed claim their rights to the land and its resources. However, in the case of the states that were supposed to build three different nations, the Chokwe have been curiously marginalized. They have never had any choice, nor have they received their right share of the national resources. Under today's circumstances, the Chokwe are isolated in their countries. If the case is not seriously brought to the table for discussion, we fear the Berlin boundaries passing through the Chokweland could still be questioned. In fact, the Chokwe have put these boundaries into question through the construction of a virtual space we have called the Chokwe nation. It goes without saying that for the stability of modern states, and as the present case concerns three different countries, we think that the three countries should call for a symposium that considers international solutions regarding local people's rights, circulation, and state building in order to keep these people within the countries where they are. It is a matter of rethinking social life together within the same borders. That should be possible and the experience has been successful in many other countries. The ideas here above developed and mostly based on Anderson's understanding of nation birth and growth have also other dimensions regarding power, structure, action within time and space, and social structuration (Giddens, 2007). The Chokwe populations have not stuck to the same space and habits for centuries, they have developed different strategies to update their cultural environment and local and global dynamics.

### **X.3 Material Culture, Identity, and Social Management**

The sections above have already pointed out this Chokwe material culture, although without going deeper into the discoveries that were made. This section would like to achieve a succinct presentation of the Chokwe material culture and its influence on identity construction and social management. From the very beginning, chapter four sent us to Tshikapa for the welcoming event of His Royal Highness Mwene Mwa Tshisenge. Our early text in the dissertation, instead of paying much attention to the welcoming as such, rather chose to look at material culture at the

welcoming event. As a matter of fact, the king who had worn a brown costume had a royal walking-stick in his left hand, a crown on this head, and a lion flyswatter in the right hand. These materials are among the most valuable items of the paraphernalia that the royals own. They resemble what princes and local chiefs put on and have similar colors. However, their differences are to be seen in their sizes, color and general forms. The king's crown has the most vivid sun colors and in many ways, represents the sun. The other crowns have more yellow rather than red colors for they represent a pale light that stands for the moon. These insignias are put on when there is a special opportunity that requires that His Royal Highness represent his population and, eventually, speak in their name.

The above paragraph has given us one major characteristic of a nation based on the agreement linking together a large population as distinct group (Anderson, 1991). Presently, through the physical presentation of the king, all Chokwe recognize their leader, a living representative of their ancestors whatever his age. King Mwene Mwa Tshisenge is relatively young and strong. Within the Chokwe social hierarchy, from his access on the throne, the new king fills the ancestors' social functions. He becomes ipso facto an ancestor welcoming good spirits and making sure his population lives in peace and security. J. Vansina (2004), writing about crowns, believes animal skins are totems and symbols of powers shared with the animal world whereas crowns would be an imitation of animal horns, also standing for the archetypal origin of crowns as symbols of powers.

If the insignias mentioned above refer to the king, the Royals and their representatives, the king's visit in Tshikapa gave us an opportunity to see how people look at their traditional leaders, and how material culture items reflect their relationships. Whistles, masks (and costumes), drums, and dances with painted bodies with white and red colors are the most expressive of all. It is indeed with whistles and songs that they organize their march to the airport. They can make as much noise as possible and have everybody not only follow them but also understand that the Tshikapa Chokwe have a particular event: their king's arrival. Once they reached the airport, they also used drums beating them rhythmically in such a way that everybody would join them in the dance welcoming the king in a place already considered and presented as a part of his kingdom.

As soon as their king got outside of the aircraft, drums went on with sounds beating the "Uwanga and Hunting" high vibration reserved only to the royals. It usually led to dancing for a big

celebration as they had learned from their ancestors. They laid colorful wrappers, and traditional mats as the king and the queen were not supposed to touch the ground. They were told to welcome their king as a divine celebrity compared to the sun that his crown represents. He was expected to bring them light and the necessary communion with God and ancestors. It was a big event for as pointed out earlier that was the first time the Chokwe King had traveled to Tshikapa. Also, it was for the first time in the local history that their king had gone beyond the limits fixed in the long traditions. The king was not supposed to go beyond the main rivers surrounding his palace. Everywhere the king will show up during his sojourn in Tshikapa; the people will be ready to dance for him. They undertake various mimetic exercises sending back to the primordial times when the Chokwe world was created, and spiritual powers were put into the hands of the supreme leader. They will remember in a particular way the successive generations that shared spaces (social, metaphysical, and geographical). Whatever their games, dances, rituals, most Chokwe people will always end with the recognition of their king and leader as the survivor, the blessed and the living ancestor, and the divinely empowered who links them to the origins of the Chokwe world. In the same vein, at the local Chokwe male initiation Mukanda ending ceremony in a Tshikapa stadium, they show to the world that all their powers come from the king. The newly initiated young people pay respect to the king and receive from him the necessary blessings. It is worth mentioning that it is for the first time that the Tshikapa Chokwe initiates are welcomed in that official way in a stadium. It is, by the way, an event that local media cover, and they send a big shock into local communication spaces. The Tshikapa Forum shook the political space, for it promoted the Chokwe king in the first place and openly showed the Chokwe's absolute link and cohesion with their leader. Before welcoming the Mukanda-initiated young people, all the local chiefs paid respect to the king and sat down on animal skins around him. All these animal skins were symbols showing life in the forest. The symbols meant to show them as small animals whereas the king's seat is on the lion's skin, for the lion is considered as the king of the forest. It is a metaphor of how the king is recognized as their leader, the main knot linking the living Chokwe to their ancestors and God.

Apart from whistles, wrappers, mats, drums, songs, dances and different body colors, in the midst of the king's presence in Tshikapa, many masks are seen performing at all ceremonies in their various qualities and "taking on human, animal or abstract forms and qualities" (Jordan, 1998:40). The masks having a human face include Chihongo "marked by a crown of fibers and

feathers attached to its head and protruding disc on its chin that represents a chief's beard" (Jordan, 1998:40). Chihongo always shows up with Pwo, also called Mwana Pwo whose face bears different beauty features that Chokwe women are supposed to look for. Both these masks always come together for they "represent ideals of male and female beauty and behavior, and their dances teach social and moral lessons" (Jordan, 1998:41). Around these masks are visible: Ndondo, the fool, and Ngulu, the pig. They portray bad behaviors that should be condemned and excluded from the Chokwe. In fact, "the silly behavior of Ndondo and Ngulu contrasts with the beautiful manners of Chihongo and Pwo. The message conveyed by these masks is that every Chokwe should act with the composure of Chihongo and Pwo and not act stupidly or irrationally, like Ndondo and Ngulu" (Jordan, 1998:43).

To the eyes of the Chokwe who can behave rationally and look at the good of their communities, the cone-shaped head mask, Chikuza, stands for a suggestion accessible only to the well-mannered Chokwe. For, Chikuza's main role is to protect the initiation camp both physically and spiritually. This mask is also associated with fertility, good luck, and protection. That is why it is also made in miniature, and the Chokwe take this miniaturized mask around their necks. In its association with fertility, women pray to this mask to get children and men to be and remain as much masculine and potent as possible. Jordan (1998:43) locates this mask in the Chokwe mythical traditions (Segal, 1998). A Chikuza dancer had adopted two granddaughters whose parents had suddenly died. Unfortunately, he also sadly and suddenly passed away. However, before this death, he made his village people promise to take care of them. Both girls, Chisola and Jinga, grew healthy and became influential members of their community. Their names have kept growing in the collective consciousness as a source of fertility. Diviners make amulets in their names in order to bring fertility into families. Chikuza also shows up at important ceremonies and was present at some of the ceremonies included in King Mwene Mwatshisenge's sojourn in Tshikapa. The Chikuza showed up mainly at the Mukanda graduation ceremony for his role of fertility that the initiates are supposed to carry to their community, procreating with as many children as possible needed for their social functions.

A look at the welcoming ceremony here above described is a good illustration that Anderson used in the first paragraphs of this part. The Chokwe have selected their symbols of power give a particular social status to the king and recognize him as the only leader who has the most leading

authority. The local chiefs share a bit of that authority whereas the people are mostly invested in the role of showing their obedience through praises and following the recommendations inherited from their ancestors. Otherwise, the king goes on a special seat decorated with customary motifs illustrating his authority over the lands and people. Through the above details and communication strategies, the Chokwe show how they are together and belong to the same space we have called a nation.

#### **X.4 Mukanda Initiation**

The present dissertation studied particularly the male initiation known as Mukanda. Apart from all details studied and regarding the seclusion time and the long apprenticeship the initiates undergo, it is high time to pinpoint a few nation-oriented training lessons. When they reach the initiation camp, all the young people are completely shaved for the main reason that their masters would like them to feel equal. They are given the same chances to go through the training.

Otherwise, all along the training, they are valued according to their responses to different training modules that include memory, body capacity, religious components and intellectual skills. First of all, their memory is trained through the learning of the Chokwe history moments. The initiates are led in the historical moments that saw the Chokwe in the Lunda/Chokwe kingdom, particularly in the time Queen Lweji was at the head of the kingdom and got married to a royal hunter from a neighboring empire, Chibinda Ilunga. They recite the reasons for which a big group of the population later called the Chokwe left the kingdom. They did not agree that a male foreigner come to take the leadership of their kingdom whereas the kingdom had princes who deserved to take things into their hands. Apart from the official history, the initiates are also taught other versions of that long tradition. These versions include the controversies that could have opposed King Mwaku to his children. The princes did not take care of their father when he was drunk but were rather accused of beating him. They were forbidden to have access to the throne and expelled from the place. One other version accused a prince of an incestuous behavior with a half-sister and was therefore forced, according to their customs, to leave the palace and go elsewhere. Whatever the version, those who left the kingdom were able to rebuild their unity and stronghold that changed in a military force that went several times to the rescue of the Lunda empire from which they had departed. The young initiates are taught to understand that despite



their departure and separation from the Lunda, their fraternity and reference to their origins continued throughout time.

Physically, the initiates are trained in different ways. First of all, they are exposed to many physical exercises. They go on long walks in the forest and learn how to use their body strength to solve all situations needing physical work, such as carrying heavy loads, cutting timbers, building houses, hunting, and defending their lands from all possible enemies. They have building exercises turning around the transportation of poles from the forest to the initiation camp where they continue the work. They cooperate and share the techniques included in processing the material and the achievement of the project. They learn different techniques regarding construction, material protection against ants, the selection of the best resisting wood and the best material for thatching roofs. Another physical aspect has to do with their resisting capacity for extended hours of extremely intense dances that require that they climb trees and perform from the top of trees. Finally, their physical resistance is exposed to incisions that are a part of the health system and through which men are supposed to show their resilience. They are not expected to show any sign of weakness. Also, the initiates look differently at their bodies and go through rigorous exercises as they fast, or live on wild fruits and water collected from hollow trees.

It is also around these ascetic exercises that they learn different ways that require much more intelligence in the application of different skills. The initiates learn how to track animals, discover hidden eggs, find out through various vegetation signs how seasons may change and what may be the consequences on the harvests and the life of their cattle. In the case they discover that natural catastrophes happen, all the same, they also learn how to provide their populations with the best solutions.

The rigorous exercises they go through also stand for their introduction to religious studies based primarily on the knowledge of ancestors and the prominent place they occupy in the Chain of Being. They learn about the creation of the world and the responsibilities that God gave the Chokwe regarding the expansion of their civilization and the conquest of other lands. It is in respect of the Chain of Being and their different expectations that they learn how to fabricate various religious objects that the diviners use. They also learn how to make different objects that participate in the Chokwe's daily life. When they make masks, they also find out how to get them

empowered with spirits and different names, and eventually the names the initiates will take as they put on these masks.

The initiation camp, the Mukanda Camp, is finally the place that produces royal heralds. When speaking with Mr. Kachongo, a Tshilombola and mask organizer from Zambezi, he openly showed that institution was the maker of the kingdom, the king, common rules, and ethics: “The Mukanda makes our society even though there are other institutions that come in after for the implementation of different orientations”. The initiates who excel in their apprenticeship may be chosen for working for the king and in the ranks of his advisors, oral historians, and wise men in palavers looking after different issues the village faces. The heralds are seen at events such as the Likumbi Lya Mize (in Zambezi) or the Mukanda exit celebrations like the one held in Tshikapa. They kneel down and sing the praises of the king. These praises remind everybody of the king’s powers and the actions that led the Chokwe from their mythical departure point to their present locations in the three different countries studied. Their praises are mostly about the unity of the Chokwe wherever they are and in their recognition of their ancestors, temporal and atemporal powers that have been leading them through different lands and times.

All in all, the seclusion time the initiates spend in the Mukanda camp aims at changing them in adults responsible for taking different responsibilities in their society. They integrate their society as leaders of their people with whom they share their knowledge and skills. However, above all the heralds as here above written take the responsibility to spread the main ideology of the Chokwe. In other words, they contribute to the survival of the Chokwe and their cohesion around the king and their ancestral values. The heralds contribute as propagandists and ideologists whose work consists of making sure that the Chokwe stay one within their nation. Anderson (1991) gave the necessary details that make us understand the heralds’ work. They take into their hands the same responsibility ideologist literature takes in modern spaces, and that contributes to the propagation of the vision of the Chokwe. We can also say that several rituals are performed in a mimetic way so that everybody in the community gets the opportunity to learn about the past and stay one and united around their king whatever happens. Thus, the heralds play a significant role in the construction of the Chokwe identity.

### **X.5 Ancestors Updated**

Whenever the dissertation mentions the Chain of Being, the natural tendency would be to locate it in the distant past and especially in what M. Eliade (2005) would call the “*illo tempore*.” If that is how our consideration is of that distant past, we have to accept that we are mistaken. We need to clarify the understanding of the Chain of Being. The comprehension of ancestors and their socio-religious place in the Chokwe society does not only belong to a distant past. It is a social vision that is present among the Chokwe and continues to lead their socio-political life. In fact, Tempels (1947), who lived among people sharing the Chokwe world vision, documented the permanent presence of the ancestors whose names are given to the newborn who are also supposed to bear the same powers and destiny. It is also the same powers that healers and diviners call upon for the different physical, mental, and magic issues they face. In this way, the ancestors continue being present and participate in the daily activities of the Chokwe. In the same way, all new connections with visitors and newcomers are placed under the auspices of the same ancestors who are considered as guardian angels whose main work is to protect all the Chokwe and help them in the best choices that can contribute to their wellbeing. It is so interesting to consider that these ancestors are not only those who passed away long ago, but also those who have just passed away. However, it has to be clear that it is not everybody who passes away who becomes positive and is ready to fill the role of ancestors (Mbiti, 1990). It is most about those who underwent their initiation obligations, learned how to connect with ancestors and good spirits. Ancestors also include those who had wasted their life and energy for the interest of their people and whose names have survived throughout time as their memories have contributed to the greatness and the power of the Chokwe.

Many Chokwe as pointed out in the dissertation have been moving through different spaces. They have finally been pushed towards three main spaces in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, and Zambia. In their peregrinations, they have accumulated new ancestors and new leaders who had sacrificed their best life years for the safety of the Chokwe. Their names have become popular and meaningful to those who would like to serve their people and to the revolution that had started from the Lunda/Chokwe Empire. Several Chokwe had left and had gone towards other lands where they managed to continue their social life organizations, but looked differently at gender issues. They had indeed modified their family institutions from

patriarchy to matriarchy. The powers that were so high in the hands of men had shifted to women. Most Chokwe had by now learned to rely on women. They had enough proof of their capacities to care of social institutions and especially of families within ethnic groups. The lands they had gone through had proved that giving women the charge of raising children was the best thing they could go. In that way, men would give most of their time to other works and could even be more often absent of their villages as they would be going in search of all possible means to make their life home the best possible.

The recognition of women's capacities also meant eventually getting them closer and closer in decision-making circles. That is why at the level of the village, things were once for all clear. Women were invited to court sessions, and their participation was valued for they knew many secrets and understood how social conflicts could oppose people. Jordan (1998:24) highlights this situation:

During a village court session, the male elders sit together on one side of the open yard. Female elders sit on the other side. The parties involved in the conflict sit in the middle, where they explain their situations one at a time. Usually an audience gathers to listen. The individuals and the witnesses involved in the disputes are asked direct questions. A decision is made by court agreement. Guilty individuals are instructed to apologize and may have to pay fees of goods or money or to repair the damages they have caused.

The above paragraph shows how women, even though sitting on another side and separate from men participate in decision-making. They have reached a level where officially their words count much in any palaver. They now participate in the survival of the Chokwe. They have always participated in the management of their culture, however in a hidden way. They had always used different strategies to get men understand what they thought and how they could be right concerning social phenomena. However, with their public participation in palavers, Chokwe women still reinforced the same strategies they were using earlier in order to avoid a straight confrontation to men. Fretz (1987) earlier mentioned in this dissertation documented the communication strategies that Chokwe women use. Through "ambiguities" they use strategies that reproduce their sand drawings, *soma*, which by the way, they continue making during palavers. These one-line drawings stand for the metaphor of their interventions whenever they can. However, the words chosen are such that none of the men (or even the other women) would be able to give an answer immediately if not through keeping silent as if going through the

drawing lines. These lines are more than a labyrinth whose entrance and exit are not clear and could be forgotten even by the drawer. Chokwe women were the specialist of that kind of drawing that has changed the strategy they use in their oral intervention and that Fretz (1987) has called ambiguity. Through their activities and participation in the daily social life, Chokwe women have lifted their people to social global visibility. Even though officially when they are gone from the ancestors' world, they are not called ancestors. The Chokwe recognize their women as the keepers of magic, witchcraft, and the best at giving meaning to social orientations that their society could eventually follow. They are known for their natural capacity to get into a trance and communicate with good spirits whose benefits go to their entire community (Kaputu, 2010; 2002).

#### **X.6 New Spaces, Identity Construction, Feasts, Commemorations, and Population Waves**

With new responsibilities they are called to fill in their society, and Chokwe women symbolize a new balance power in their household. Indeed, a simple look at the Chokwe house as built in the traditional environment reflects what men and women are called to play in the building of their society. As pointed out earlier, Chokwe men deal essentially with thatching houses, even though they are also the ones who build the entire wooden frame, or again the mixture of adobe bricks skelton and the top wooden framework. The thatching work is done in such a way that it can last for many years. Otherwise, their work is also seen in many kitchen utensils, the chairs and stools bearing the marks of men's hands. It is recognized for their artifacts that include female figurines in honor of the mask Mwana Pwo, the representative of Chokwe women's beauty. She is present in her different postures and composures on artifacts. Men seem to sing the beauty of that woman. However, for a scholar or researcher of the Chokwe, it is important to know that while in seclusion in the initiation camp, men are taught to adore women. They are like their saviors, for it is only thanks to women that they can realize essential lessons and obligations they are given during their initiation training. All young people who spend time in the initiation camp, Mukanda, are exhorted to be fertile and to fill the world with Chokwe. Implicitly, that recommendation requests that they have as many children as possible. They cannot achieve such a proposal by themselves without women. They, therefore, let Chokwe women lead given sectors of the household. For only women can make the miracle of children possible even if men have been trained to excel in love within their marriages.

Also, the metaphor that leaves women to fill the lower frame of the house and decorate it at their will is the main symbol they give to weddings and childbearing. Chokwe women are known for their decorative capacities, color selection, and light and heat management. As pointed out earlier, they are acquainted with different clays found either on the banks of rivers, in plains flooded in the rainy seasons and at the bottom of anthills. Several Chokwe women also know how to apply different mixtures with ashes of various kinds and other forest products (powders) to get the needed colors without using smart strategies as such. In this way, they can decorate outside walls with different motifs. They also decorate the inside walls and the house floors. With the thatched house-tops, and the walls either in clay or abode bricks, the inside of the house is cool a place that invites rest when compared to the outside that is hot. It is within this fresh and resting place that many communications with men take place. It is also here where ambiguities are somehow clarified. Here, women talk more openly with their men and clarify ambiguities and send them armed with new words and argumentations they use publicly at palavers.

Chokwe houses also describe how spaces are managed. If men may be seen through the symbol of the thatch on the house that could extend to their leadership in other social sectors, women keep the foundation and men the structures of the house. They are in charge of feeding everybody in the household in such a way that enough time is left for evening activities essentially oral transmissions of history lessons, proverb learning, and accepted behaviors. It is also during the night that many people are given a chance to learn oratory strategies. With much respect, everybody is invited to listen to others and to respond in time, and whenever possible to respond with the most known and recognized strategy, ambiguities made more difficult with well selected examples as the evening pushes on. The women contribute much to this communication space. They also provide the talkers with light beverages and foodstuffs that men take care of: groundnuts, cassava, corn, and other forest fruits.

Through their management of daily life in their household and in particular evening meetings that gather the village together around the same fireplace, Chokwe women learn about different needs of their communities. Also, when public sellers reach Chokwe villages, they mostly deal with the ladies who pay either with cash or with a part of the stocked harvest. Quite often in the dry season when it is so difficult to get condiments for the evening food, women do not hesitate to buy what comes from other places and sometimes from the city. As in the tradition, they always

cook for the group and food comes from the women who bring it to the public space where men share it; it is often surprising that all plates come with the same condiments.

In order to avoid such routine in their kitchen and recipes, the Chokwe women have developed many strategies. First of all, when men can bring exceptional food such as meat from the games from their hunting, women manage to reserve some in their barns exposed to smoke and heat that dry them. When the times become harsh, and, it is hard to find any other food, they go to these reserves. In the same vein, they dry mushrooms, vegetables, caterpillars, and groundnuts that are often used oil in many cases. They take care of their chickens and goats, but only slaughter them in exceptional circumstances when they get visitors, or for big celebrations. Otherwise, poultry and cattle are often reserved for sacrifices and for offering to the diviners who take care of the family.

With the evolution in time, even though their respective countries and governments neglect them, people circulate them for different reasons. Some come as here above mentioned for commercial reasons and often exchange with local harvests, scholars visit them for the Chokwe artifacts, and some others for research questions related to ethnography. As women are the ones who are often home when men are gone far, they started developing different kinds of contacts with business perspectives encouraging tourists to visit their places. It is such a dynamic that developed in cases such as the Likumbi Lya Mize. As pointed out in earlier chapters, this festival today a UNESCO world heritage has become an opportunity for Chokwe women not only to develop meaning distribution to their communities but the time when they increase as much as possible their commercial activities. They get as much money as possible that permits them to participate actively in their family management, and in filtering new habits.

Ferguson (2006) points out interesting details observed in Togo that also apply to the Chokweland. The traditional activities that include different rituals have become opportunities to develop meeting points. Chokwe living in cities and those living in villages meet to celebrate the Likumbi Lya Mize and their ancestors. It is also during such opportunities that old traditions are celebrated. These opportunities now permit traditions to survive and continue through time, thus emphasizing the Chokwe's will to stick to their ancestral roots and communion.

## **X.7 The Chokwe Body**

### **X.7.1 Introduction**

The Chokwe body may be looked at from different perspectives that fill various social functions required for the population growth and its security in a dangerous world. Most Chokwe pay much attention to the human body all along its complete development starting from its conception. Several prayers are addressed to ancestors so that they send a baby who brings happiness to everybody in the community. Their prayers also go in the sense of having children who are able to ensure a continuation of the rich culture inherited from ancestors. Peace, harmony, power, useful knowledge and skills, fertility of the land and the fertility of the humankind for continuing filling the world and connecting it with other people are among the missions that are assigned to the Chokwe from their birth.

Failing to accommodate with the above missions is dangerous for the individual and the community. The individual necessarily ends up feeling useless and isolated from everybody and all social structures. The community looks at this kind of situation as a waste of time, money, and above all a loss of important links with ancestors. Every individual is supposed to be linked with ancestors in order to do the right things for the community and for personal fulfillment. The coming paragraphs give a succinct presentation of the body as admired and progressively adjusted to social norms all along centuries.

### **X.7.2 Quick Survey of Chokwe Gendered Body Presentations**

Lock (1993) largely documents body mediation roles that are quite often a result of social constructions and politics. Also, the human body becomes the center of the policy of reproduction, as it goes through consequent physical and psychological training and behavior shaping that respond to the collective unconscious perceived through continuous and changing patterns throughout years with strong reference to historical sources of memory (Mudimbe, 1993). A look around contemporary societies will make us understand a few things regarding body size, household understanding, the number of children, clothes, outfits, and being different from others (P. Bourdieu, 1984; Kapferer, B., 1986; Mauss, M., 1973; Comaroff, J., 1985; Lock, M., 190). Politics of the human body lead it in the directions the society has chosen. The body is



expected to follow social norms for people to be treated as normal citizens, understandable, society members, and community managers, reflect the social norms of their society.

Lock (1993) also documents the politics of human sexuality as another result of social body construction. For both, this point and the above, the present dissertation analysis of the Chokwe healing system and initiations, mainly the male initiation, Mukanda, showed different preparations adapted to both initiations and the healing system. In their initiation, the young people are led to believe everything comes from God and ancestors, and that they have to treat their bodies consequently. They are submitted to physical exercises that are supposed to make them brave and fearless soldiers. They are also led to construct their image as male characters within their society. The training is of course so ideological and political that the entire Chokwe society builds its main social framework from the initiation mold. Manhood and womanhood are perceived through strong references to initiations. Masculinity is an outcome of the Mukanda that gives a place in society. A “Chilima,” as explained in the first chapter of this dissertation, especially known for lack of circumcision, is automatically excluded from the men who can have a say in the Chokwe society. During their training both male and female candidates undergo ascetic privations, and their bodies are exposed to extreme hunger, extenuation, physical suffering, isolation organized and scheduled for them to change into what their society has planned for them. During their seclusion, they learn through several pre-established conditions how rules determine their sexual pleasure principles.

Men are circumcised and have to get married to female partners within social rules inherited from ancestors. Women are secluded for a few initiation days at the same time they get their first menstruation. They are submitted to the care of elderly women and are not supposed to react to any provocation. For long hours, they sit with crossed legs in meditation and cannot look straight at anybody coming close to them. Their intimate life is finally exposed to everybody in the village as their body situation is communicated. The Chokwe old tradition would also make this first menstruation coincides with their marriage to a man close to the family. In any case, their training time teaches them to keep in mind how marriage is only heterosexual. There is not space left for any kind of belief that leads them to imagine same-sex marriage could be possible at all.

Initiations also build up the foundations of medical systems; they are the places where young people are introduced to a variety of knowledge regarding medicinal plants and use. It is during

the same time they learn different practices that participate in body management and healing through mediumistic processes and trances (Katz, 1997). The body changes into a communication vessel that gets in contact with ancestors and other spirits for the benefit of the community (Kaputu, 2010). We have pointed out particular cases where mediums get into a trance and speak “Portuguese” or another foreign language. There are also cases where the ritual includes a meal and eating in the Western style. Once again, the human body is at the center of that experience and undergoes changes and new orientations according to the community needs.

Finally, Lock (1993) refers to the human body as the center of emotions, and he mentions shamanism that also operates from the same body. Simeon Kaleji explains, “If there is something that the Chokwe women make sure they have learned during their initiation, it is the emotions they need to develop during funerals. They learn funeral songs and dances.” In other words, during their seclusion, women are led to make sure that whenever there is a funeral, their bodies respond automatically with songs, tears, body movements that make the event. They are at the same time using theatrical, mimetic gestures repeating what they know from their ancestors and innovating through their actual bodies, all the while making connections with others within their society. Whereas there is sadness when somebody passes away, it is also true that the level of sadness depends on the closeness level. Close parents are sorry for the loss of a close parent, and their emotions are certainly genuine. However, some of the participants at the funeral cry because that is how things have to be. Women have to cry. In fact, they have even a schedule that they have to respect for the number of times they cry at night and dawn.

Men, on the contrary, through their initiation school have been educated to give the impression of being the unshaken and strong leaders who are not supposed to cry at all, and worse in the presence of women. Thus, at the same event, women would be crying indoors whereas men would be chatting outside and making plans for the burial or for the season in keeping their voices as low as possible. Funerals become an opportunity for a definite division of male and female bodies as different social commodities for specific emotions and social constructions.

Regarding shamanism, the Tshikapa experience documented in chapter four of this dissertation already introduced our readers to the description of that local chief who attempted to measure Mwene Mwa Tshisenge’s royal powers. Our interlocutor Mbunge, advisor of the local city Mayor of Tshikapa, reported to us that the local chief went lost in the wilderness, and was unable to be

seen or react all along the visit of the king. Also, at the public event welcoming the initiates, the ceremony seemed to send the entire assistance back in times when the initiates' presence at any place was associated with an amount of magic and other extraordinary powers from different ancestral spirits. The scene is full of symbols and meanings; local chiefs sit on animal skins and keep completely silent while the king is the only one blessing the initiated with kaolin powder.

From the arrival of the king in Tshikapa, all details taken into consideration, make sense in the understanding Lock (1993) shares with readers regarding the human body in its different dimensions based on social politics. These politics concern life reproduction, sexuality, and emotions. The Chokwe are trained from their childhood to adopt different behaviors that are acceptable in their societies. Their bodies (not to mention their minds) are shaped to meet social expectations.

### **X.7.3 Chokwe Body Socialization from the Roots**

Kapferer (1986), Mauss (1973), J. Comaroff (1985) offer an extraordinary theoretical combination turning around social body management. The combination leads in different directions concerning various capacities that the body can achieve. First, all the readers learn that the body can perform much. In the Chokwe traditions, much of the body performance is achieved through dances. We earlier mentioned the "Chisheta" dance that comes with songs learned during female initiation. The female body is led to show emotions in such a way that the entire community knows that there is a funeral and the loss of human life. In fact, through this dance "Chisheta" and "Chihanda." human bodies perform with the intention to get in rituals, and being completely part of the ritual (Geertz, 1966; 1977). Thus, apart from funeral songs escorting the souls of the dead to everlasting rest with ancestors, the other dances are very much about life. Through mimesis as Grimes (2014; 2006; 1962) points out, these dances will recall the joy of getting married, pregnant, and of giving childbirth. These songs are also about heroes who can fight for their land and people. Among these heroes are the Royals who led their people through years, different weather implications on the land and population, invasions and resistances. The songs are about raising children, linking with neighbors to celebrate the same ancestors. They are about celebrating life and its continuation, and eventually, about death where the right people are

celebrated for their choices to join ancestors after many years of suffering and for taking on different social responsibilities.

In order to achieve these various performances, bodies are taught patient techniques to apply that follow a process inclusive of other dimensions than just the body. Also, Van Gennep (1960) informs us that rituals follow a body mapping that slowly covers it and in the process includes many psychological aspects. Kunene (1985) documents how most of the old African rituals, especially the ones that include seclusion from the communities, include two different training components regarding bodies. First of all, the rituals reinforce the body physically so that to permit it to resist the most extenuating conditions. The expected results should reflect in physically capacity to face different human conditions. Secondly, as they go through various training stages, the initiates are led to psychological states of mind that they have to develop and rely on when they are facing different conditions in their society.

In fact, Van Gennep (1960), Campbell (1990; 2004; 1969), P. Bourdieu (1985; 1990), de Certeau (1984), M. Griaule (1965), and Mauss (1973) concur in their perception of the human body, perception that also reflects Chokwe traditions. In many cases, the rituals and development projects that the young Chokwe are submitted to, young males and females, seem like empty vessels. They undergo training sessions that empower them with different capacities necessary for their society. It is so interesting whenever you interview the Chokwe wherever they are and whatever they are facing that they answer, “I am a Chokwe, and that is my answer!” There are indeed answers that have moved from one generation to another and for which no change can be perceived in a near future. It is as if the Chokwe have taken the responsibility to transfer attitudes that make their identity from one generation to other.

The seclusion for whatever its length of time, long or short, changes the human body and reinforces it in different ways. First of all, they learn to know that their bodies go through changes they have to assume. However, they are the ones to notice these physical changes and understanding their social meanings. The initiates’ body capacity to develop and respect their elders depends on the training. They also make sure to transmit them to next generations. Secondly, during the exclusion time, the young people, male and female, learn to stay ready for their bodies to be used as empowerment vessels. In fact, even beyond initiation time and rituals, the young member of the Chokwe society acquires different tools th needed for personal and

collective growth within and without the community. It is with these acquisitions that everybody is offered the chance to move at different social levels in the social hierarchy.

#### **X.7.4 Chokwe Body Politicization and Ethnicity**

J. Comaroff (1985:5-27), Geertz (1966; 1977) provides the opportunity to understand how culture operates as a façade of political rituals. The examples that the author draws from South Africa explain how the South African Apartheid past (despite everything recorded against it in the history of that country) has offered patterns of socio-political constructions adaptable at different levels. First of all, it offers the possibility to combine montage and mimesis. Montage has mainly to do with social organization that responds to given parameters reinforced through local institutions. As for mimesis, it considers the reconstruction of a distant past that justifies social institutions as normal and responds to body construction, preservation, capacities, and social integration. J. Comaroff (1985) perceives in the combination of montage and mimesis the main ingredients that make up for ethnicity, itself a mixture of the cultural (fact) and identity. In this way, ethnicity stands for a social construction essentially based on its cultural component. J. Comaroff (1985:27) goes as far as to find associations between that kind of ethnicity and strong (though fabricated) relation with the divine. Consequently, the combination and construction of ethnic origin, cultural fact, and identity takes the dimension of nationality or nationalism divinely inspired. Also, cultural commoditization facilitates the changes that impact nationality based on ethnic origin, culture, and identity.

The Chokwe can be located in the pattern her above mentioned through body orientation as the basis of ethnicity. As pointed out earlier, several Chokwe learn quite early in their life to look at their bodies as a belonging of their community. In this vein, says Simeon Kaleji, they quite often refer to their myth of creation which puts them at the center of the world. In that way, they consider their ethnicity as unique and largely depending on the body acquisitions that reflect in their association with a big community. The Chokwe have succeeded in completely integrating their ethnicity and its culture, and identity in mimetic rituals.

Bodies are mostly offered for ethnicity and nationality construction. At the same time, Ferguson (2005:1-5) brings into consideration another dimension. It is evident that it is not only about

bodies as such and their vessel capacity as pointed out in the above paragraphs. It is rather about the ability of agencies to reflect the greatness of people, the Chokwe. Their bodies become a part of the commoditization process that opens their space to globalization and “Freer Market” (Ferguson, 2005:3).

It is their bodies that the Chokwe use to be a part of globalization. Even though the entire dissertation insists on the fact that the Chokwe do not accept much from the Western world, the Chokwe have managed to participate in globalization within different communication spaces that break through conventional boundaries and borders (Appadurai, 1996; 1986; 2013). All the same, that development remains a matter of life and death (Ferguson, 2005:3). The Chokwe have found their entrance into the global spaces and try to use body instructions to face global challenges without necessarily going through the world known governmental structures, and structured official education. They use traditional strategies for improving their population’s wellbeing. The Chokwe have reviewed their long history to maintain a strong backbone, leading back to their origins and revealing their capacity to learn body and mind survival strategies from their different neighbors.

In this vein, J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. eds (1997:5) looks at the African colonial experience as an encounter for everyone as far as a personal and collective contribution in cultural façade construction is concerned. The Chokwe individual bodies changed into a collective body of resistance to the colonial invasion as well as to any other inside and outside imposition. With the resistance capacities attributed to the body, it has reached different levels of identification in addition to the mediation role known in traditional rituals, mediumistic rites, and trances in shamanistic religious connections between the living world and ancestors (Geertz, 1966; 1977).

The human body takes a precise location at the crossroad of social conventions regarding definitions, decisions, and identity construction, and the emergence of new social classes (J. Comaroff, Comaroff, J.L. eds, 1997:5-6). Social structures resisted for many years to see the emergence of new classes or bodies within the Chokwe traditional leadership or hierarchical conventions. However, the creation of new cities and the forced labor recruitment led to the presence of a new group of Chokwe whose life is different from their traditions. They spend their life either in urban spaces and continue claiming their Chokwe identity, or after living for a couple of years in the cities, they finally decide to go back home. When they reach home, they try

to bring with them a few ways from the city and suggest including them in new behaviors and habits. There is much resistance in the Chokwe communities to accept a kind of “katoyo mask” from their people. These are people who claim to be Chokwe, but come with suggestions that make them supporters white men, the colonials. Their community does not want the Chokwe who have collected knowledge and skills from the white men to think they could become their community leaders and the masters of traditions, in one way or another.

### **X.7.5 Chokwe Artifact Scarifications as Body Mirror<sup>80</sup>**

Schildkrout (2001, Winter) covering many parts of the world documents the fact that body art reveals itself to be a visual language. The human body offers possibilities to have permanent and ephemeral arts for pursuing ideals of beauty expressed through painting, makeups, body shaping, hair, piercing and tattooing. In a continuation of such coverage, Cullivan (1998) focuses on the people of Wa in Ghana and posits that scarifications are closely connected with masks and human bodies. They retrace medicinal marks, and they represent decorations or some slave features. They stand for decorations of the past, present, and possibly of the future. In the same vein, Uzobo (2014, March) similarly continues such kind of classification however with rather a focus on indigenous scarifications in Nigeria and their impacts on the body as social constructions. As a construction, the body gets different marks associated with socio-political roles. Close to the area studied, Claes (2013) depicts how realism is on the basis of Suku, Luluwa, Songye, and Lega masks reflect the human body in its different functions. The artists objectively carve on woods different details that reflect their respective social organizations and the hierarchy that determines their actions and social implications. Also, Ani Casimir (2015, May) brings an easy comprehension of the Chokweland and many other areas. In Central Africa, the Kuba and the Songye, also reveal how their artistry reflects their social organizations. However, concerning the Chokwe, the relationships between masks and the human bodies are pointed out insofar as masks are presented in their capacity to duplicate the society as a whole. Also, masks show what the

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<sup>80</sup> Frank (1993:35-41) informs his readers about the treatment that was reserved to African artifacts: “At first anthropologists treated sculpture simply as an aspect of religion, but soon took note of the divergence from natural proportions shown in the sculptures.” With exaggeration, African art was classified as “Spirit-regarding, man-regarding, and the art of ritual display.” It took long for the west to find out that there was something else than just religious aspects in African artifacts. Much attention went to the direction of African art as soon as Western artists such as Gauguin, Derain, Picasso, and Matisse found it a big source of inspiration.

human bodies display as physical characteristics, whereas masquerades describe what happens in the mind of social actors with their different motivations.

Chikukuango (2013) inspired by every source here above-mentioned and their outstanding overview in Africa, presents the human body in the Chokwe traditions. His first statement is that the Chokwe body has always been performative and shows up in mimetic presentations reproducing a long history. In addition, after an observation of local traditions, the author finds out that the Chokwe body reflects a complete history of the land and its people. Through body painting, scarifications, masks and dancing, the Chokwe body has witnessed different eras and their social implications. Apart from going through the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial eras and mentioning the body representations all along these various periods of time, Chikukuango's study also moves to the diaspora. All around the diaspora, it is the performative aspects that are the biggest concern. Through plays, bodies can achieve commemorations and raise memories from far back in time.

All in all, with the last paragraph, we have covered enough to confirm what the dissertation has explained in previous pages. The Chokwe as a people have different strategies that have helped them to survive through centuries. However, the most important strategies utilize the human body trained in various ways to make it fit into social obligations, both physically and psychologically. Once both male and female initiations have ended, the lessons learned and skills mastered continue all along their life. Other practices applied to the human bodies extend the training in reinforcing their fit concerning various social aspects. Health, divination, social classes, social history and responsibility are all shown through body marks, scarifications, paintings, anthropomorphic masks, and other body performative rituals or plays.

#### **X.8 From “Chilima” to Future Anthropology and Interdisciplinary Research Projects on the Chokwe and the Chokweland**

The dissertation started with the concept “Chilima” applied to the researcher of this dissertation. The first attempt to find its coherent explanation and understanding within the Chokwe culture proved difficult; every finding was never enough despite the amount of information that was available and necessarily useful. Finally, the entire process did not seem to lead far enough to reach a definitive overview and a satisfactory explanation. The orientation taken by the general



topic of the dissertation and its research questions permitted me to cover many useful rubrics, coherently adding a better comprehension of “Chilima,” while at the same time responding to the research questions, as the concept in question was a part of the research.

Also, the entire dissertation regarded different aspects related to the Chokwe material culture and its implication in identity construction, and a general comprehension of the Chokwe population in the three different countries studied: Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia. Through their material culture, the Chokwe have been able to keep their culture based on many rituals celebrated all along seasons and within the year (Rao, 2006). Through the same rituals and initiations, the Chokwe have kept their traditional education systems moving ahead within their social organizations, resisting inopportune novelties from irresponsible governments, or any other influential postcolonial institutions.

In keeping the same culture, language, beliefs, resistance to new education models and government intrusions, and above all claiming ownership of significant territorial areas submitted to samenesses, the Chokwe have been able not only to keep constructing and deconstructing their identities but also to use different stratagems for their social survival. They have sharpened their capacity to learn from neighbors, and continue constructing their unity within the same space that deserves the name “nation” within what we have called the Chokweland. Apart from different survival strategies, the Chokwe mainly maximized women’s contribution in all social fields and have completely updated their gender comprehension in a total self-construction so far different from their Lunda/Chokwe origins. At the same time, the Chokwe have conserved their creation myths and other oral traditions (Segal, 1998).

In whatever social readjustments they have been able to achieve, many Chokwe have valorized their body to extremes. Through art in its different forms, medicinal plant experiences, diviners’ work, rituals, palavers, the Chokwe body (and mainly the female body) is celebrated in all its dimensions (Glucman, 1962a; 1962b). First of all, the human body is trained to fit in their society. Secondly, the body is used for communication, and thirdly as a vessel it gets powers and wisdom from ancestors. The Chokwe body becomes an excellent medium through which social connections and community welfare are expressed to the world.

The achievements reached in this dissertation open many possibilities for future studies needed for full coverage of the entire Chokweland. Material culture can serve as a pretext to consider many other research topics turning around the following ones:

- 1) gender and domestic life,
- 2) domestic material culture,
- 3) nation construction and public politics,
- 4) old African cultural facts and their survival in modern Africa,
- 5) Chokwe material culture through a global space,
- 6) Chokwe body and social communications,
- 7) Chokwe's perspectives in global socio-economico-political,
- 8) the Global North and the Global South through Chokwe's perspectives,
- 9) the anthropology of the Chokweland,
- 10) the anthropology of the twenty-first century Chokwe

The Chokwe population studied may also serve as a pilot experience about possibilities material culture offers to study other people in the region and elsewhere in the world. In the same vein, the Chokwe population offers an opportunity to understand nation construction without necessarily going through official government strategies. The Chokweland has in its own ways successfully built a nation with a complete dynamic identity. As an exploratory research, we had the opportunity to have access to different methods and perceive how they could be useful. In future research projects covering the same area, the Chokweland, we will be able to select the best tools that will permit a quick progress for specific research questions.

The present dissertation faced many limitations related to its nature and its endeavor in interdisciplinary studies. It could not have the same easy access to sources that would contribute to its quick development. Snowball sampling seemed the best strategy that could lead us to many respondents in the three countries where the Chokwe population studied live. However, fieldwork realities have their own dynamic related to social realities. We had to go through several intermediaries to get enough confidence and socially accepted interactions, talks, and interviews. Many Chokwe living inside the country still look at people coming from cities as potentially bad in so far as they can betray village customs. Many city visitors are suspected for working as

species for government security institutions. It takes time to get easy and unsuspected conversations.

The time frame during which everything was supposed to be completed, eighteen months, was too much short to make sure all details from the field were collected and in sticking to the most updated research strategies. Fortunately, we chose from the beginning to behave as a “Chilima”, on the one hand, and to move around around through “Bricolage”. Thanks to an exceptional involvement of exceptionally motivated field assistants, we were able to achieve a lot. We were also able to manage quickly a network that will still be quite useful for future focused and detailed research projects in the Chokweland. Despite the difficulties met, we were able to collect an important amount of data that could not be completely used for the present dissertation. The remaining data will serve for writing articles and will give a starting point for future research projects.

### **X.9 On African Philosophy Coverage and Updated**

The writing of this dissertation has primarily concerned finding out how the Chokwe identities are constructed over many years and how the human body participates in the construction. However, that exercise used quotations, explanations and amplifications of well-known African scholars whose names are often mentioned with reference to African discourses and the production of African philosophy. Also when hearing names such as V.Y. Mudimbe, Paulin Hountondji, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Abiola Irele, Achille Mbembe, Francis B. Nyamjoh, John Mbiti with quite often a few names from America like Molefi Kete Asante and Henry Louis Gates, Jr, the reader is sure that the questions treated will concern discourses developed around different contemporary themes and mainly the development of African philosophy as an independent science liberated from different clichés developed early by missionaries, and from prejudices accumulated along the centuries. In fact, most of the discussions that include discourse presentations and developments raise questions regarding language use and its capacity to reflect truth, reality, and thought, a sort of personal and communal questioning that would otherwise be called philosophy. These discourses attempt to present in academic concepts and general frames of how African thoughts analyze social situations, and in fact, construct various levels of interactions between the sacred and the profane, the human and the divine, and male and female characters in society.

This dissertation, from its first pages, combined Derrida and De Saussure for questions regarding meaning creation, acceptance and socialization. The use of the concept “Chilima”, for instance, was an excellent excuse to reconsider the process that leads to an accepted social meaning through a particular thought process and community adoption. The use of the concept of “Chilima” within the Chokwe context was also an opportunity to find out how the signifier and the signified may not follow what other communities and people could follow, in order to arrive at a given consensus if the process does not follow a complete meaning production cycle.

The large group of scholars here above mentioned concurs in its refusal of the first attempt of a presentation of African Metaphysics to which Placide Tempels courageously gave the name of “African Philosophy”. These scholars have thus provoked strong reactions from the African intelligentsia. Tempels was accused of taking on a responsibility that was not his, talking about things he could not understand as such. The most important accusations came from the fact that he used his stronghold colonial position to impose his view on the locals and present them in ways that suited only his colonial mission (Apter, 1992: 91). The accusation was particularly reinforced by the last chapter of his book that questions what the colonialists should do once they find out what the locals knew and how they were able to live without the presence of colonial powers.

In fact, Tempels’ attempt failed on several levels. First of all, he was unable to fully assume his student position regarding what he had to learn from Africans. He did not have enough humility for going to the end of his quest and learning from local masters. He rather preferred to come to conclusions for an ethnophilosophy whose sense of observation would reflect matter as lived and thought about by locals. Secondly, the hierarchy of his church in the Congo saw in him an enemy who would endanger the “mission”. Bishop Jean-Felix de Hemptinne came to the conclusion that Tempels was a dangerous missionary and informed the Church hierarchy, and suggested that the missionary be removed from Africa<sup>81</sup>. On a third level, the wrath of most intellectuals found clear

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<sup>81</sup> Apter (1992) documents this sequence that saw Tempels’ work attacked by African scholars under the pretexts mentioned in this part. However, we would like to point out that we could also attack these scholars for taking part so openly in what they think to have been Tempels’ mistakes without letting social situations, artifacts, and locals express their skills and knowledge. It is here that we would like to come into the discussion and demarcate ourselves from the scholars mentioned in this part. The Likumbi Lya Mize is a self-speaking event that describes a given philosophy.

terminologies in the analysis and presentation of two important African scholars: Mudimbe and Hountondji. For Mudimbe, Tempels contributed to the invention of Africa as wanted and described in the colonial discourse. For the philosophy in question did not reflect what people were after and the ways they produced their different discourses regarding various life aspects (Apter, 1992: 92). Hountondji even goes as far as to schematize virulent attacks to Tempels' ethnophilosophy through what has come to be known as the Bible of anti-ethnographers. This long condemnation has left wide open spaces that could be used for the formulations of clear strategies that could lead to the understanding and construction of African philosophy as such. Apter's article (1992) has had the absolute merit to reformulate the achievements the above-mentioned scholars have achieved.

However, to his question "que faire", we believe these scholars have not given clear suggestions; vernacular strategies were not formulated to show their real capacities (Apter 1992: 108). It is at that level that this dissertation may pretend to have achieved a possibility of knowing African Philosophy or better how Luvale/Chokwe philosophy defines itself and takes its place in the world.

Tempels' mistakes are due to forcing his entry and presence in a world he does not master. He does not have enough humility to accept learning from the locals or does not know how to come closer to them to learn what the local philosophy really is. The condemnation considers the fact that nobody can pretend to be skillful and to master the secrets of a social life and particular culture without undergoing training. The formation should include Social Meaningful interactions (SMI) and personality formation through a specific view of Society, Culture, Personality in an interlocking system where the individual and the community share spaces and interests for their access to the same material culture (Fredericks, M. et al., 2012:13-15)

Apart from material culture that has led us through this dissertation in long a discussion finding out many details about the Chokwe, chapter nine taught us a big lesson. Whatever we are able to discover through personal research, observation, and social life spent in a kind of conversation with the material, it is essential to pay attention to people and learn from them. We have thus found a specific answer to the question "Que faire?." By going through personal research taking into account many details shared in chapter three dealing with methodology, we have been able to develop a deep understanding of how the Chokwe have been able to construct their identities

over the years. Our discoveries have finally gained much through different conversations with local people. They are the best witnesses of their knowledge, skills, and place in their daily life. The information collected from the population has permitted us to confirm absolutely everything mentioned all along the dissertation. The combination of different research strategies has permitted us to know how Chokwe identities have been constructed all over many centuries. The Chokweland identified as such in this dissertation offers many opportunities for further research projects. We will continue to scrutinize different ways through which the Chokwe have not only survived, but are more and more authorized to build different networks that reach out to the world. Thanks to their strategies, they have been able to survive and connect with the world through spaces and imagination(s) that anthropologists and scholars mentioned in this dissertation have helped us to understand.

#### **X.10 “Que Faire”**

The section above has mentioned Apter’s article whose title we are using for this section. We are not trying to bring back on the table a debate that has lasted many years. It is not a matter of looking at either Tempels or the above-mentioned African scholars and opposing them. It is rather about pushing ahead and try to find the best way to define African Philosophy or again Chokwe philosophy in a way that may be as objective as possible. Our many references to world philosophers served to acknowledge as many as possible perspectives that can contribute to the understanding of the concept philosophy generally speaking. Western and African philosophers offer us an opening frame for a discussion and general considerations regarding how local people think about their social structures and cultural facts throughout time.

If we agree that Tempels did not choose the best options to get in the African world and offer a clear explanation about philosophy (or metaphysics), we don’t think that the African scholars here above documented offer the best option to understand African philosophy or Chokwe philosophy at all. If Tempels was condemned for not being a disciple of the African initiation masters, we can formulate the same condemnation against the African scholars. They do not leave local people much space their academic formulations. Local cultural facts should “speak up” and self define in such way that scholars can only reveal the right way possible how social situations and individuals bring about questions and answers through their social constructions. Scholars should be interested in the process that produces solutions and communications at local

and global levels. These communications also include the Sacred and the Profane and their perceptions that have various expression ways. The Chokwe populations studied in this dissertation have shown through their actions, use of artifacts and traditions, discussion styles, and social organizations that they have their “Philosophy” that has continued through years and has constructed different survival strategies, kept a strong connection with a distant past, and the capacity to (re)construct novelties and borrow the needed social details from neighbors as the structuration process takes place (Giddens, 2007).

Let us end with the first main concept I used: I strongly believe that the originality of this dissertation, as far as the understanding of African Philosophy is concerned, should be found in the word “Chilima”. It is a significant metaphor that applies perfectly to the knowledge of another culture and its capacities to interact with neighbors and the world. In the same way, my cousins contradicted me and showed me that I could not penetrate their village and initiation secrets, scholars in the past and today will not be able to penetrate the Chokwe “Soul” and philosophy. They will want to know as much as possible but have to show hesitation towards spontaneity, creativity and adaptations to new environments which do not follow pre-established patterns. It is rather in their military nature that a well thought response comes and is proposed to the community without necessarily giving the public the opportunity to see it grow. Leaders take such responsibility in the name of the community. Also, even the knowledge of Chokwe identities through material culture or lenses will have to foresee a limitation not only due to many ambiguities, differently interpreted, but to spontaneous creativity that comes in different ways; with masks, dreams, and mediums. Bourne, G. (2013) and Brinkman, I. (2007) provide our readers with several examples of agencies that participate in disclosing different identity aspects through material and body social presentations and use. Even still, material inclusion in a field of knowledge will leave unknown and unpredictable philosophical aspects. Thus, “Chilima” seems the best option left for the consideration of Chokwe’s identities, identity construction and social life. Everything is included in a long process that keeps asking for more personal participation with the community in order to understand and figure out how things happen. By the time one thinks to have mastered enough resources, the community has moved ahead and its leaders have figured out something new. The locals remain the only excellent source of knowledge. It is only through a permanent intercommunication with them that more new details are known. It is finally through this credit paid to the Chokwe themselves that this dissertation has managed to point out

innovation and originality through the concept “Chilima”; it stands as a springboard one step ahead in the necessity of keeping a student attitude for better knowledge of both Chokwe identities and philosophy. The closeness of ethnic groups concerning their spoken languages, cultural traditions, social fabric have made “chokwescapes” possible, going in different directions and often orbiting the same spheres. The Katoyo’s experience has transformed itself into a philosophical quest and a sum of “scapes” as katoyoscapes delve deeper into knowledge and skills otherwise unknown without an absolute submission to the other, object, animal, or human, for a dynamic learning process without any possibility to claim any kind of superiority. It is finally the Katoyo’s experience that leads to the understanding of Chokwe philosophy, its “scapes” and ambiguities that have constructed the originality of this dissertation. It is a serious challenge to African scholars who, at different times, blamed Tempels and thought themselves to have rightly depicted African philosophy. No depiction can be that right if it does not condemn Tempels, i.e., the capacity to accept submission to the “Vilombola”, the masters of initiation, the artifacts, and all other locals without preference or prejudice.



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## GLOSSARY

### -A-

**A-Ruund:** One of the ways in which the Lunda from the Democratic Republic of the Congo are called to differentiate them from the other Lunda known as Ndembo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and called Lunda both in Angola and Zambia.

**Asalampasu:** An ethnic group, neighbors to the Lunda/Chokwe and sharing commonalities regarding the same past, a cultural heritage, and especially rituals and royal succession ceremonies.

### -B-

**Bembaland:** A few historians refer to the vast land comprised in the Zambian mining Copperbelt, but also extending in the Democratic Republic of Congo Copperbelt and in Malawi and a bit in Tanzania.

### -C-

**Chavuma:** A Zambian District of the Northwestern Province. Located at about 1,100 km from the capital city Lusaka. It is on the border with Angola. Most of the people are Luvale speakers. However, all along the 20<sup>th</sup> century Chokwe and other closely related population groups from both Angola and the Democratic of the Congo massively migrated to Zambia through this shared border.

**Chibinda Ilunda:** Chokwe cultural hero. He is believed to have come from a neighboring people, the Luba. He is known as a prince from the royal blood. He brought to the Chokwe

new technologies regarding hunting and war strategies. He also brought novelties concerning magic, health care, relationships with ancestors, and rituals set for many cultural ceremonies.

**Chibuku:** Zambian local and traditional beer produced with cereals essentially corn. It is industrially brewed and left for quick fermentation with yeast.

**Chief Ndungu:** Traditional Luvale King living on the western bank of the Zambezi river, in Zambezi District, Zambia. His palace is located at the Mize. It is the place where the Likumbi Lya Mize, largely documented in the dissertation, ends after a week full of activities turning around the Makishi (masks).

**Chihanda:** Traditional Chokwe dance, joyful dance gathering young people around fire for no specific purpose but joy, and spending time together. It is also an opportunity of learning how to live together without fighting. The youth learn to know each other in a context that does not require work, or specific surveillance from adults.

**Chihongo:** Chokwe, Luvale, Luchazi, Lunda, Mbunda mask known essentially for its large chin. It is a mask of pride, present at all royal events. It always appears along Mwana Pwo mask in all major events, especially in rituals. It represents prosperity and wealth.

**Chijikaji** also known as Kashinakaji: Chokwe, Luchazi, Mbunda, Lunda, Luvale mask known for its specific presentation as an old woman bent and walking with a cane. The presence of this mask especially at the Likumbi Lya Mize masquerade stands for a long link

to the backbone leading to ancestors. The mask is also a representation of wisdom, patience, and right decisions for community preservation, harmony, peaceful relations with neighbors, community wellbeing construction. It is not excluded that, in some cases, this mask also represents an old man.

**Chikunza:** Chokwe, Luvale, Luchazi, Mbunda, Lunda mask of fertility (of the land, couples, birth giving, luck, prosperity, and protection). It is inserted in the long history of the Chokwe as a gift of one of their ancestors who had welcomed his great children, two girls, as orphans, Chisola and Jinga. Unfortunately, he died earlier, leaving them alone and unattended. He left them to the village to take care of them and, in return, he promised protection, fertility, magic, success, and wellbeing to the village. This mask is presented under a coned form. It is also miniaturized and taken around the neck as a pendant. Pictures from Tshikapa artists showed Chikunza masks in different forms.

**Chilende:** Luvale word used in this dissertation in the scope of the Likumbi Lya Mize Festival in Zambezi. It means a large plain, meadow, pasture. On the first day of the masquerade, the mask procession starting from the far east in the ancestors' graveyard moves to the "Chilende", the large plain that is on the eastern Zambezi river bank. Here, the masks temporarily proceed alone to one of the Mukanda camps for restoration of the body and artifacts. They then come back in small groups that spend hours of didactic dances with the public until sunset. They leave the public

and move on the Zambezi western side where the Likumbi Lya Mize will continue on the next day.

**Chiluba (1943-2011):** Second President of Zambia (1991-2002). Frederick Jacob Titus Chiluba. Otherwise, the same spelling and the same name (Chiluba) are used about one of the largest ethnic groups and one of the four main languages of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, it is often spelled as "Tshiluba".

**Chimbanda:** Healer, Chokwe and Luvale name given to the traditional healer whose name turns around healing the body and the soul. S/he is therefore, quite often, in situation where medicinal plants are used. Some other times, s/he is likely to work on a level that requires dealing with spirits. When the task is too much demanding, the Chimbanda will work with a Tahi. The latter also heals, but is more focused on spirits and magic.

**Chinguli:** Both in Chokwe and Luvale, it means a tortoise. It is also a mask used in large meetings for the role it fills in many tales whose main lessons are around patience as a source of victory, the hidden force that surprises everybody. It is also an important didactic material used in the Mukanda school that explains why initiates should keep absolute secrets about everything they learn at this school. Secrets also include what they learn about each other as weakness or revelation of social potential.

**Chinhama:** Also written as Chinyama especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is the name of one of the ancestors of the Chokwe and Luvale. His brother Chinguli went with the branch that became the Chokwe, whereas



Chinhama became the ancestor of the Luvale. His name is particularly mentioned at the end of the Likumbi Lya Mize Festival when the royal herald signs praises to the ancestors. Chinhama is depicted as a cultural hero and the founder of the Luvale civilization.

Chisheta: Chokwe and Luvale dance performed at funerals. It is supposed to escort the dead towards the ancestors. It is a transition dance leading the dead from their present location to the ancestors' place. Ancestors continue their life in a social environment like the one human beings live. The dead who led a normal life through initiations and social responsibilities have the possibility to join the ancestors.

Chisola: One of the two girls known all along Chokwe traditions as orphans with her sister Jinga. After the death of their guardian and grandpa, the village took care of them and was thus rewarded with a specific mask: Chikunza, a mask of land and people fertility, chance, life, prosperity and community wellbeing.

Chiwigi: Chokwe, Luvale, Luchazi, Lunda, Mbunda mask known especially in Zambia. It is one of a few new masks that mock African women's search of beauty. They prefer buying wigs made from artificial hair instead of sticking to their traditions that give them interesting hair styles through Mwana Pwo mask, for instance.

Chizaluke: Chokwe, Luchazi, Lunda, Mbunda and Luvale mask of small size. It is particularly visible at the beginning of the Likumbi Lya Mize Festival, as it is submitted to crawling and finding out of the sand things hidden there by village women dancing around the mask and hailing every finding as a victory.

Chokwe art: It is a part of African art which was for long considered within the Lunda/Chokwe production without any particular distinction. It is only late in the early seventies and eighties that foreign scholars found details that permitted them distinguish Chokwe artifacts from the other parts from the regions.

Chokwe art aesthetic: It is about different artistic features that once collected define and determine Chokwe art and differentiate it from other regional arts.

Chokwe art production: Processes and opportunities that lead to the productions of the main Chokwe artifacts.

Chokwe diet: This concept has been used to find out Chokwe food, i.e., that the Chokwe still identify and claim to be from their distant past.

Chokwe Doctor: Chimbanda and Tahi are known as Chokwe doctors healing both the body and the spirit.

Chokwe healers: Cf. Chimbanda, Tahi, and Chokwe Doctor.

Chokwe initiation: Initiations are traditional schools through which both boys and girls. There are schools for boys and others for girls. Through initiations they learn different skills needed and expected in their society.

Chokwe kingdom: The Chokwe have never had a kingdom of their own until they left the Lunda Empire in the eighteenth century. Unfortunately it is a large kingdom that recognizes one main king, whose power is also disputed since the colonial time. The colonial powers had tried to oppose the king with other local chiefs chosen by the colonial administration.

Chokwe masks: Chokwe masks are among well known artifacts in Africa and around the world. They are a production of long southern

traditions. Scholars like Jan Vansina believe they are a result of a combination of oral traditions, rituals, and material culture essentially linked to raising cattle and other animals. Many symbols come from the animal world and are identified with social structures.

**Chokwe masquerades:** They are mostly related to cultural events, rituals, and family ceremonies that may request different kinds of masks. Masks are generally known to duplicate human society and interests.

**Chokwe material culture:** A scholar like Jan Vansina would find the Chokwe material in every item that is used in a Chokwe household. Every kitchen utensil, meeting stools, music instruments, religious material are all made with artistic details and are often miniaturized and full of female and male figurines.

**Chokwe mediums:** Apart from the mediums who have large responsibilities in the connections with God and ancestors, we can also consider, in fact, every material culture, as a medium of communication.

**Chokwe men:** Chokwe men are often presented opposed to Chokwe women. We would not like to point out how essentialists they would be, but rather to underline how their social activities are divided into these two gender groups. Both look at their respective initiations as determining the characteristics of each group and excluding anybody who has not attended.

**Chokwe mercantilist:** All along their history, the Chokwe are known for their involvement in commercial activities. For a long time they worked for the Lunda emperors. Then, they worked for their own leaders before embarking on slave trade with Portuguese. Because of

their activities they were often called to move from one place to another while keeping their headquarters in given places.

**Chokwe migration:** It is the entire narrative about the Chokwe population movements around the large areas including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Zambia. The narrative could also include their other migrations to southern African and to other continents and especially other different waves of the diasporas.

**Chokwe mythical traditions:** These traditions are unique. They are mostly linked to their origin in the Lunda empire. At the same time, these traditions share much with other communities from the entire regions.

**Chokwe nation:** elsewhere this concept is presented under the Chokweland that determines the area in which the Chokwe mostly live in the hinterland that overlaps borders at their intersections with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Zambia.

**Chokwe people:** Professor Nduwa Solol whose name is mentioned a couple of times in the dissertation, has reached specific conclusions in the study of the Chokwe. Based on history, neighborhood, and social dynamic, he talks about Chokwe people as a concept rather than a precise social group.

**Chokwe refugees:** In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Chokwe moved in different waves towards the three countries studied: The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and Zambia. However, as Zambia has been the most stable country of the three, many Chokwe moved to Zambia where they felt to be safer.

**Chokwe religion:** The Chokwe religion is not so much different from other African religion revolving around ancestors as the main actors. It is

- worth mentioning that the Chokwe rather believe that God created them at once and gave them the responsibility to conquer the world.
- Chokwe rituals: They are of different kinds and are adapted to social events.
- Chokwe royal dynasty: The dissertation has particularly mentioned the Mwatshisenge royal dynasty that goes as far back as at the time the Chokwe left the Lunda empire.
- Chokwe secrets: The dissertation has mentioned secrets that are shared in initiation camps and that the initiates are supposed to keep forever. They are indeed quite respected and are not shared with the people who did not attend the initiations, especially the Mukanda initiation.
- Chokwe shattered identities: These few words are still present here and there under different contexts in the dissertation. They were a part of the first title later changed. However, they are still in many places and they refer to the Chokwe's identities and their construction conditions. Despite their strong connection to their distant past, the Chokwe have often borrowed cultural facts from their neighbors.
- Chokwe social institutions: They govern the Chokwe social organizations. They are many and are often led by men. More and more, women have access to leadership through several negotiations.
- Chokwe Symposium: It refers to the first general Chokwe conference held in July 2015 in Tshikapa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Chokwe traditional chieftaincy: Refers to the Chokwe social organization regarding access to power as traditional chiefs.
- Chokwe traditional education: This is a reference to the education offered in initiations, and in initiation camps.
- Chokwe traditional healers: Cf. Chimbanda and Tahi.
- Chokwe traditional political institutions: These political institutions revolve around the king and the heads of all social institutions. The power is shared through different institutions that represent the people.
- Chokwe trance traditions: In the Mahamba or religious and medicinal traditions, different kinds of trance are observed.
- Chokwe villages: Chokwe and Luvale have specificities regarding their construction structures and especially their roof building.
- Chokwe women: Cf Chokwe men, refers to this society where all social activities are divided under gender male and female.
- Chokwe world vision: This word comes into the dissertation in a discussion about African philosophy and metaphysics.
- Chokwe/Luvale culture: This is presented as one culture especially in the Likumbi Lya Mize. It is also a proof of their long reference to Lunda spaces where both the Luvale and the Chokwe came from.
- Chokweland: The dissertation refers to the hinterland where the Chokwe live and where the borders from the studied countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and Zambia, overlap.
- Chokwe-Lunda: It is rather Lunda/Chokwe that is mostly mentioned as it regards the time when the Chokwe were under the orders of the Lunda and nothing could be identified with them.
- Chota: Meeting place built in a simple way with essentially four pillars and

beautiful thatched roof. At the center is a fireplace surrounded by many stools where neighbors sit down for talks and at food time. Sometimes, a wind protection is constructed around in a lower part]makes no sense while leaving the upper part free for air and light.

**Circumambulatory evolution:** The most known reference is to the circumambulatory process that points out the learning, memorizing, and psychological that reflect how the human being evolves towards maturity yet regularly looks back for refreshing the memory.

**Community fabrics:** This is a reference to the dynamic process that the Chokwe social institutions go through even if from the outside the impression may be that nothing changes. Their social community is regularly updated with borrowings from neighbors and other visitors from distant lands.

**Community identities:** This is an important concept found in the dissertation. It refers to the fact that the individual is challenged to construct a personal identity while struggling to reach and reflect a community identity.

**Community interests:** Initiations are traditional schools during which young boys and girls are taught different strategies that will result in the community interests and wellbeing for the survival of the social group.

**Community protection:** It is one of the main aims of the education transmitted through the initiations aiming at getting individual and group protection.

**Community rituals:** Rituals address social issues and are attended by most community members. However, there are rituals held for personal health issues. They are organized in the presence of the traditional healers (Chimbanda or Tahi) and their

assistants. The patient also comes with a family member. However, there are also times when such rituals may request the presence of all village people.

**Computer:** In the dissertation the word computer refers to a new mask presented under the form of a computer. Kabompo guys are innovators and they bring new masks every year reflecting new technologies and world social questions. Even though this mask is made by the Luchazi, it may be labeled Chokwe, Luvale, and Mbunda as these three groups participate in the same initiation and recognize the artifacts.

**Condom:** In August 2015, the innovators from Kabompo District in Zambia made a new mask representing a circumcised penis and a condom. In this way, they made a link between their custom and the novelty related to safe sex that protects from HIV-AIDS. Unfortunately, the Zambezi elders did not agree about the circulation of such a mask. They ordered it off immediately.

**Copperbelt:** Zambian province bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo, rich with many minerals, but essentially copper. The same name is also used on the other side of the border, the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the same reasons.

**Cultural hero:** The Chokwe consider Chibinda Ilunga as their cultural hero. Myths report that he was prince and a hunter and came from the Luba kingdom. He got married to Lunda princess Lweji. He is also seen as the main reason for which Lweji's brother decided to leave, for her sister had given the royal bracelet to the foreigner, Chibinda Ilunga.

**Divination:** It is a process through which an ancestral spirit is connected with, in order to find out what is wrong with a patient's condition. The Chimbanda, Tahi, and Mbuki, the healers, often turn to divination when they cannot explain what is happening to the patient. There could then be two possibilities. Either the patient or the healer would fall into a trance. However, quite often, it is the healer who falls into the trance for getting advice for the treatment,

**Divinatory consultations:** They are times during which divination takes place. The diviner uses a divination tool called ngombo, a shallow and round basket filled with divinatory objects called Tupele. These are essentially figurines, shells, ceramics, animal parts, bones or skins, that are frequently shuffled for the study of the patterns in which these objects are at the moment of the consultation. Their position gives the diviner a possibility to interpret health conditions the patient is undergoing.

**Dogon:** People from Mali. They are known for their art, rock and mask art, and their myths that French anthropologist Marcel Griaule studied. The Dogon are mentioned in this research for different aspects of their art and mythology through which they are compared with the Chokwe.

**Dr. Tshipoya:** Famous African healer working in the Northwestern Province, Zambia. His most heard stories are about the time he spent on the road from DR Congo border Kipushi to Solwezi, Zambia. He went around offering divinations and healing consultations along the villages found on the road. He did not use any means of transportation. He ended collecting many goats and chickens he had received as a token of appreciation for his work. His assistants regularly traveled forth and back while taking his gifts to safe

places. When he reached Solwezi he had a big farm waiting for him.

**Drumming ceremony:** Generally known when related to divinations and to the work of healers when they consider trance and mediumistic events as parts of healing rituals. Drumming is important in so far as it leads the medium into a state of trance. It is during trance that the healer is believed to communicate with an ancestor or a spirit that indicates the ways to follow for the healing.

**Dynamic identity:** The Chokwe identities have been very dynamic when observed from historical, sociological, and anthropological perspectives from the time they left the Lunda empire. Their social activities and connections with different neighbors have helped them to review their social constructions, local interactions, and external relations.

**Ethnoscape:** A concept that Appadurai has conceived and uses much in his attempt to explain how ethnic understanding has changed much through years. It is now a mind creation that puts groups of people around the same interest and understanding without necessarily going through the same traditional human groups related to family bonds.

-F-

**Financescape:** Another concept conceived and used by Appadurai to point out how finances circulate around the world not only under different known forms, but also for shaping and reshaping spaces. It is also about various forms that finances take in global exchanges.

-G-

**Gendarmerie Katangaise:** This was the name given to the soldiers who launched the

Katanga session with Moise Tshombe in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the early 1960's. They later retired to Angola where they were hired by different Angolan rebellions. It is known for its responsibility into two rebellions launched against the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but which failed. Unfortunately, President Mobutu used these rebellions as an opportunity to mistreat the population (essentially Chokwe and Lunda) living close to the Angolan border, all suspected of collaboration with the rebellions.

**Gender balance:** This dissertation has given much attention to gender conditions in Chokwe communities. It has showed that despite a significant divide line along its history, Chokwe women have been able to change their social situation in using several strategies that have slowly placed them as socio-political co-leaders with men.

**Global space:** This concept should be understood in the lines of Appadurai's redefined spaces that quickly change and link different parts of the world.

**Glocalization:** A combination of the two concepts; globalization and localization. It is used essentially to show the potential that local events have to connect with the global space. Local events are no longer isolated, but communicate in different ways at the world level. Also, there is more and more interest in socio-cultural facts that would be labeled as primitive in the past. They are also moving from one end of the world to the other.

-H-

**Haikinde Hichilema (born 1962 -):** Zambian politician and president of United Party for National Development. In the 2016 presidential elections, he was most elected in rural areas where he represented hope and change. He was

almost elected president and his case stands for a situation where results were disputed and the country largely divided for what were believed to be triggered elections.

**Hamba:** A reference to spirits. Hamba being singular and Mahamba as the plural form. The dissertation has discussed a variety of Mahamba as the Chokwe consider their use for physical and spiritual healing conditions. The spirits are believed to operate the healing.

**Hanga Twayoya:** Luvale idiom whose meaning is the main line of their philosophy around endless life. Death is not any kind of barrier. The Luvale (like the Chokwe) believe in resurrections and consider the spirits that command masks to be the returned ancestors, for death does not end life, but only opens onto another dimension that shows the powers and the return of the dead.

**Haut-Katanga:** It was formerly a District of the Katanga Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and was mainly known for its mines and as a part of the Congolese Copperbelt.

**Helicopter:** This is the name of a new mask made by the innovators from Kabompo District in Zambia. It is added to the ancient and classic masks. It is showing the connection of the Luvale/Chokwe world to the global space. It shows how the Luvale/Chokwe world is not isolated from the world. New technologies, though filtered, find their way into the Chokwe living traditions.

**His Royal Highness King Ndungu:** He lives on the western bank of the Zambezi river and is considered as the leader of all the Luvale, Luchazi, and also Chokwe (living in Zambia) until recently. Chokwe did not have their own local chiefs until 2016 when two were sworn in by His Royal highness Mwene Mwa Tshisenge and

recognized by the government. King Ndungu is still in many ways the leader of the larger group whose migration to Zambia goes centuries back.

-I-

Ideoscape: Another concept that Appadurai uses for relating to the ways ideas and ideologies, religious and political movements, move around the world in occupying spaces otherwise unsuspected.

IDPs: A concept used with reference to Internally Displaced People. However, although specialists consider the way the Chokwe were moved from one place to another within the same area, most Chokwe, as documented in the present study, do not believe that they are going to another land when they move from one of the three countries studied (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Zambia) to another. They believed themselves to be within the Chokweland and often smuggled goods from one territory to another without paying attention to immigration.

Ifika: A small termite mound used in traditional ceremonies where they represent ancestors: male and female slightly differently ornamented.

Imago Dei: Borrowed from Mircea Eliade, the concept used in the comprehension the Chokwe is likely to refer to concerning ancestors who are at the center of everyday life. The same understanding can be found in the fact that ancestors' names are given to children.

Initiation camp: Otherwise called Mukanda, they stand for traditional schools where the young people, mainly male, are trained into skills they need in order to fit in their society.

Initiation masters: They are in charge of leading and managing initiation camps. Their selection also goes from initiation camps where aptitudes are observed and slowly made into the position to lead others.

Initiation rituals: Important ceremonies that include rites of passage and other rites that stand for landmark.

Itako: Blind Medium women from Northern Japan, Osorezan, to the fearful mountain. They were mentioned in the dissertation in a comparison of ancient healing ceremonies and rituals. We mentioned them in an article written years back on global shamanism.

-J-

Jinga: The sister to Chisola, one of the two sisters (Chisola and Jinga). Both sisters were raised as orphans in their village. Their grand parent had passed away early leaving them alone. At his death, he promised to send to the village the fertility spirit that comes through the fertility mask, Chikuza.

-K-

Kabre: The word Kabre is a location in the North of Togo. Charles Piot's book *Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa* has a chapter about Kabre. The location is important for its annual meetings; it gathers people from cities and elsewhere around the world. They all come together to celebrate their ancestors and remember rituals they also learned in their childhood.

Kabre rituals: These are rituals for which the Togolese from North come from wherever they live to celebrate their traditions. It is also the time politicians visit this remote place and connect with their electorate.

Kachongo: A traditional Luvale leader from Zambezi. He played a main role as a respondent in our interviews, and a

volunteer to guide us in the knowledge of the Chokwe and the Luvale. He is special for us as the first person we met who could explain how witchcraft operates, and his personal capacity plays different roles in village witchcraft.

**Kalelwa:** Chokwe, Luvale, Lunda, Luvale and Minungu initiation mask. Its head has a kind of disc. The mask is in charge of discipline. It is also in charge of food collection and distribution to the initiates.

**Kaleji:** Simon Kaleji, journalist to Zambia Broadcasting Cooperation. An expert of the Likumbi Lya Mize Masquerade. He has covered the event for the last twenty sessions.

**Kalulu:** A Chokwe mask representing the hare. It fills the same roles the hare takes in most oral traditions.

**Kalunga:** That is the name the Chokwe give God the creator. He is not often mentioned in rituals and ceremonies because most ceremonies turn around ancestors. In fact, God's role is much considered for world creation whereas ancestors continue the work.

**Kamboyi:** Charles Kamboyi is a retired Zambezi elementary school teacher. He has a wide knowledge of Luvale culture. He is particularly invested in the world of medicinal plants found in Zambia, Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo. As an important leader of the Zambezi District New Apostolic Church, he had to make choices. He is no longer involved in all cultural aspects that his church cannot agree with. He can use medicinal plants, but cannot take part in rituals.

**Kamong:** Name of the servant that queen Lweji gave to her husband when she found out that she could not give birth to a child. She decided to do so since she could not in any way consider the possibility of having a childless family, Chibinda Ilunga. Unfortunately, the name has its own story as its story

stands for female sex, i.e., the producer of children.

**Kanampung:** Name given to a category of royal advisors.

**Kandandji:** Singular form and Tundandji (plural). It is the name of the Mukanda initiates. Also, the girls attending an initiation are called "Tundandji".

**Kapalu:** Mask (mostly Luvale and used a bit by the Chokwe) essentially knitted from cotton. During ceremonies, this mask is supposed to threaten people, and keep them far enough for the ceremony to move ahead safely. In the hierarchy, it is coming after Kayipu, the biggest mask.

**Kashinakaji:** Another version of the female mask made from ephemeral material, often wood and often identified as Shinakaji.

**Katotola (also called Litotola):** Closely related to Mupala Mask, it is a Chokwe, Luchazi, Luvale, Luchazi, Lwena mask with a large arch like Mupala. Their main distinction: Katotola mask does not have features on its back.

**Katoyo:** This Chokwe, Luchazi, Lunda, Mbunda and Luvale mask is finally the most important of this dissertation. It represents a white man torn by work under the sun. It is an old man who has lost most of his hair. Also, most of his teeth are gone, despite being still relatively young. The mask is used for laughing at the whites. It also stands for a symbol used in the dissertation for learning beyond appearances. The public can laugh, but elders have much to learn from the Katoyo.

**Kaunda (1924-):** The first President of Zambia. He was known for "humanism", a philosophy he applied in the light of socialism. He was on power from 1964 to 1991 and was replaced when the country accepted a system of several political parties.

**Kayipu:** (Mostly Luvale and Luchazi) A huge anthropomorphic mask made of ephemeral material with strong colors. It has many feathers on its back. It is



linked to the royal category and is believed to have magic powers.

**Kenya:** Eastern African country. However, it is used in the dissertation with reference to a municipality of the Democratic Republic of the Congo named Kenya in the city of Lubumbashi. In the distant past under the colonial times, it was called “Nyasi” in reference to material used for building, grass, tree branches and earth exactly like in villages. It was a municipality that the local people built at a short distance from their different work places for the colonial settlers.

**Kiluba:** A Congolese language, also the name of the ethnic group from which the Chokwe cultural hero came.

**Kitobo:** A name well known in many ethnic groups of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in the former Katanga province. Normally, it was mainly found in Luba, Sanga, Kaonde, Bemba ceremonies. With time, other ethnic groups have also adopted it as title given to the assistant of the healer (Chimbanda, Tahi), the one in charge of giving an interpretation of the healing message that the healer gives. The role of the Kitobo is crucial especially when the healer gets in trance and uses either a language or a kind of communication that the patient and his/her family cannot understand.

**Kolwezi:** A city of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Historically famous for wars that opposed President Mobutu’s troops to rebels coming from Angola. Twice, President Mobutu’s army was saved thanks to foreign interventions from Morocco, Belgium, and France. It is part of the geographical area where the Chokwe population is the majority. It is through that area that the “Gendarmes Katangais” most natives of the area retired to Angola after the failure of Katanga secession. It is

finally the area that has seen many Chokwe waves to Angola, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to Zambia.

**Kuba:** These people are mostly known to produce works of art with particular designs with raffia fibers. They also carve wood and produce quite heavy masks. In Tshikapa, Kuba artists work with the Chokwe. They respect their respective art traditions, but they also, from time to time, put their traditions together and produce artifacts for tourists.

**Kuchiyose:** Consultation process that the Itako medium follows in Osorezan in northern Japan. It was mentioned in this dissertation for pointing out how mediums organize concertations and connect with spirits in quite similar ways. My first comparative study on shamans was a result of a comparison of Osorezan mediums, in Japan, and Moero’s, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Kumbi Liolinayi:** One of the songs sung when the young initiates leave their village. It is a hymn to a setting sun. In the same way, the sun “leaves” the village with the boys who go to the Mukanda camp. The song is a final symbol revealing how joy, life, and harmony from the village leaves with the boys who go to the Mukanda.

-L-

**Leele;** Like the Asalampasu and the Kuba, they are somehow Chokwe neighbors within the same cultural area. Similarities can be found in their art creativity and production, and different rituals organized all along a year.

**Likumbi Lya Mize Festival:** Luvale and Chokwe masquerade held in the last week of August in Zambezi. It celebrates ancestors through masks that come back to the village after

- spending time in seclusion with male initiates attending the Mukanda initiation.
- Litu: Girls' initiation location.
- Luba: The ethnic group from which the Chokwe cultural hero Ilunga Chibinda came.
- Luba culture: One of the main neighboring cultures that shares areas with the Chokwe, and from which the cultural hero came. Also, the Luba people are also known for their significant number within a large territory in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Luba Kasai: One of the main ethnic groups of the Congo at the center of the country. Its language is often referred to as "Tshiluba".
- Luba royal hunter: In oral traditions, the Luba royal hunter is the Chokwe cultural hero, Chibinda Ilunga.
- Luba-Kasai: A compound word used to call the Luba from Kasai.
- Luchazi: Ethnic group present in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and Zambia and sharing many cultural features with the Chokwe and the Luvale since it also claims it comes from the Lunda.
- Lwena: Ethnic group of the Luvale, name they are given in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sometimes, it is also extended to all ethnic groups from the same culture like the Chokwe.
- Lukano: More often used now as a name, it has a specific place in the history of the Chokwe. It was at the origin of the conflict that pushed a large group of people to leave the Lunda empire and latter be known as Chokwe and Luvale. It is the royal bracelet that the princess Lweji gave the royal hunter, Chibinda Ilunga, and gave him access to the throne.
- Luluwa: Ethnic group from the Kasai in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is also one of the groups that share some cultural features with the Chokwe as they are among the once conquered people.
- Lunda Empire: It is the main known ancient space from which the Chokwe moved. However, for many years it was impossible to recognize the Chokwe differently from the Lunda, for they seemed to be one and the same people.
- Lunda princess: The dissertation has mentioned Lweji. Historically, she is the one who took the royal power from her brothers accused of mistreating their father the king.
- Lunda/Chokwe: A compound concept that refers to the ongoing confusion that could not separate the Chokwe from the Lunda.
- Lusaka: Capital city of Zambia. However, it was a village and the name of the traditional village chief.
- Lusona: Traditional sand drawing from the Chokwe and the Luvale. Its particularity is around the fact that lines could not meet. They are the main symbols of silent work and the occupation that some community members undertake while they participate in palavers. The challenge consisted in having the drawing while listening to the talk.
- Lutuku: Traditional alcohol making flames at its contact with fire. It is drunk at traditional events and it has more and more become just a liquor mostly taken by men during village entertainments.
- Luvale anthem: Luvale anthem that recalls history, faith in their past and the potential for their future around their traditional leaders. The anthem underlines how nowadays the Luvale situation is a result of a distant past when fighting was important to give them a geographical location they are not ready to leave. The anthem also promises to live in good terms with the government and their neighbors, but only if they can respect the Luvale.
- Lweji: First Lunda princess who received the Lukano, royal bracelet. She got married with the Luba hunter prince Chibinda Ilunga.

-M-

**Mahamba:** The plural form of Hamba. Ancestral spirits that are taken into consideration for healing sessions including human, physical and psychological aspects.

**Mahamba a Makuluana:** Mahamba inherited from ancestors. They have the characteristics of reflecting long traditions.

**Mahamba maha:** Mahamba that belong to the living traditions. They come with people's continuing experience gained in the contacts with other people, and under the supervision of elders.

**Mahamba Njize:** These are ceremonial spirits inherited from neighbors. In their conquests, the Chokwe also took whatever they could include in their ceremonies for their community wellbeing, and especially for keeping close relationships with ancestors.

**Makishi:** Spirits. They are considered as the spirits of ancestors, the founders of the Chokwe culture, and who are remembered for their success in working for their communities. Many of them are the ones who initiated new social behaviors, rituals, and ceremonies adapted to seasons and local needs.

**Makishi Masks:** Masks that are used in rituals, masquerades, succession ceremonies and have stopped being artifacts. They have become spirits and bear the names of different spirits. They are known by these names.

**Makishi masquerade:** It is a masquerade that includes a procession of masks that stand for ancestral spirits and behave as such. Chokwe masks reflect the living society and its different hierarchies.

**Male initiation:** The Chokwe society has initiations reserved exclusively to the different genders. They do plan activities reserved to both boys and girls. It is however our understanding

that both boys and girls are given opportunities to come together when there are social events calling on villages. These events may not be enough, and as such they may reflect suspicions and reflect a social distance that may separate men from women.

**Malhinda:** Simon Kayembe Malhinda was a Professor at the University of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Chokwe, he was a professor at the department of African languages and Culture. Most of his work was about the Chokwe cultural heroes. He particularly published about Ndala Kayitamba, a traditional hunter known for his use of magic powers and knowledge of secret language. Professor Kayembe was also known for bringing clarification to the confusion in which the Chokwe had endured for centuries, as they were always perceived as a component of the Lunda at large. He passed away in 2016.

**Mbunda:** Neighboring people sharing many cultural features with the Chokwe. They are in Angola and Zambia.

**Mbundu:** Another neighboring cultural group sharing much in common with the Chokwe. They are closer to the Atlantic Sea and they were in contact with the Portuguese before the Chokwe and became their first collaborators.

**Mbwela (Ambuela, Shimbuela):** Large population group from Angola. They are Chokwe neighbors on the South towards Namibia. They are in Bie, Moxico, Cunene and Huila Provinces

**Mediascapes:** A concept developed by Appadurai, it is about the capacity media may have to develop and travel around the world without necessarily depending on the leadership of a given group or people. Social events have their traveling ways and reach out to the end of the world.

**Memoing and Iterative (activities):** In this dissertation, this concept reflects the major activity that the scholar should

go through by going to the sources many times until s/he can find a solid line of explanation that puts him/her in a position to produce a clear and self-imposing narrative.

**Memorae Loci:** Expression borrowed from Mudimbe referring to the interaction between history, archeology, and social events. Events linked to population growth, rituals, management and identity construction that happen with details that remain like archeological marks and testimonies. They are still present many years after many changes have happened.

**Mimesis:** Like in Greek traditions, the concept turns essentially on the reproduction of traditions and rituals as they were practiced in the distant past.

**Minungu:** An ethnic group very close with the Luvala and the Chokwe with whom they share the same cultural traditions and often participate in the same rituals. They are one of the ethnic groups that claim their origin from the Lunda empire.

**Mize:** It has become a significant Luvale word throughout years, and is more and more also used by the Chokwe. In the beginning, it was a reference to the annual event to which the king invited his population for celebrating ancestors for a successful agricultural year with enough harvests to cover the needed food. The event was scheduled at the transition time between the cold season and the beginning of the hot season, when new flowers were bursting out

**Mize arena:** It is the big arena managed next to the royal palace and where public traditional ceremonies take place. It is worth mentioning that the royal palace of the Luvale, where king Ndungu resides, is named Mize.

**Mpende:** African ethnic group close to the Kuba. It is also known for its artistic productions whose main lines and characters reveal possible comparisons with the Chokwe

productions. The Mpende population is essentially in the Congo.

**Mufuzi:** Dr. Friday Mufuzi has been until recently the director of the Zambian National Museum. Historian, his recent research focused on witchcraft as expressed through different artifacts in Zambia. Although his research focuses on the Zambian Lozi and Nyanja people, the narrative he has constructed offers similarities with witchcraft as conceived, accepted, and conserved through generations by the Chokwe.

**Muhunga:** Herman Ambroise Muhunga was a Chokwe notability known from the independence of the Democratic of the Congo. He wrote about the Chokwe from Angola, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He gave explanations about the differences that separate the Chokwe people from the Lunda. From the royal court where he grew up, he learned the genealogic tree of the Chokwe successive kings.

**Mukanda:** Concept that may have several meanings among which are Mukanda Initiation; Mukanda Camp isolated from the village and where nobody is supposed to go but the members in charge; and the Secret Society of the initiation. The Mukanda is also the isolation time during which young boys attend the initiation.

**Mukanda camp:** Initiation camp where boys undergo their main first initiation.

**Mukanda ending ritual:** It involves the return of the initiates to the village. In Zambia, that return coincides with the Likumbi Lya Mize Festival. The masks go back to the village and bring back to their parents the boys who attended the initiation.

**Mukanda exit ceremony:** The initiates painted with white lines go back to their villages and dance with their families, all participating in a general feast.

Mukanda initiates: Tundaji or young initiates.

Mukanda Initiation: The seclusion time during which the boys undergo their first male initiation that includes circumcision and the learning of different skills they will need in their society.

Mukanda initiation camp: It is called Mukanda and is a camp protected from intruders. Spiritually, it has different masks (Makishi) that protect it from evil.

Mukanda initiation rite: Another name for the entire initiation time.

Mukanda masters: They take care of the initiates during the initiation time. They are called: Tulombola.

Mukanda ritual: Mukanda initiation

Mukazo: Chokwe Informant, Claver Mukazo, student at the University of Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Muke: Chokwe informant, he talked about witches' capacity to travel from one place to another at night, and using home objects to fly.

Mulimbula: Person in charge of the initiates at the Mukanda camp.

Mungonge: An initiation that adults who attended the Mukanda can undertake.

Mupala: A Chokwe, Luvale, luchazi giant mask (smaller than a Kayipu) having feathers on its back and also called Litotola in some places.

Musefu: Tree used in healing ceremonies.

Mushala: From Zambia, Adamson Mushala led a rebellion against President Kaunda in a style that combined guerrilla and ancestral rituals from 1975 to 1982. He was sent to China for studying guerrillas, but later decided to oppose the government. He was eventually arrested in Angola as he was a so dangerous man killing innocent people. Later on, a Zambian soldier shot him down in 1982.

Mushidi: Famous name in the Lunda history. Mushidi I a Nambing, Mwant Yav

during the Congolese Free State (1887-1907).

Musumba: Capital of the Lunda Empire.

Mwa Tshisenge: Also known as Mwene Mwa Tshisenge, the Chokwe king.

Mwaku: In creation myth of the Chokwe, known as the son of Yala and Konde (a couple of a brother and a sister). Mwaku got married to his sister Naweji and had also two children, Yala Mwaku and Konde.

Mwanami Yakwo: Song sung when young boys are taken by force from their village for the initiation camp, Mukanda.

Mwanawasa (1948-2008): Third Zambian President (2002-2008) remembered for this respect for democracy and fight against corruption.

Mwant Yav: Royal title of the Lunda emperor.

Mwanta Yawvo: Same as above, found most in the first writings by Portuguese and Belgian explorers.

Mwatha: Respectful title given to Chokwe traditional leaders.

Mwene Mwa Tshisenge: The Chokwe king living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but whose traditional powers extend to Angola and Zambia.

Mwinilunga District: Zambian district of the Northwestern Province.

-N-

Nange Kudita: Also known as Sesemba Nange Kudita. A Tshikapa Chokwe intellectual. He helped the Tshikapa artists in connecting them with Belgian artists and with the Central Africa Royal Museum of Belgium. Unfortunately, he died so quickly and didnot have enough time to complete his program with the artists.

Ndondo: Also called Ngondo or Katotola, Chokwe mask representing the fool. He has a small headdress. He uses

beating sticks that are called the bones of the dead.

Ngalami: The uncircumcised male.

Ngandu: Crocodile.

Nganga: Fortune teller. The same name is used to refer to the witch. It has a supernatural dimension. Nganga Mukanda also known as Tshilombola are also connected with the supernatural for bringing health and wellbeing to the initiates.

Nganga Mbuki: Healer.

Nganga-mukanda: Tshilombola, Mukanda masters.

Ngombe: Informant from Zambezi District Zambia, a woman in her early sixties. (Otherwise in everyday language Ngombe stands for cow.)

Ngombo: Divination basket.

Ngulu: Pig, a Chokwe, Luvale, Luchazi mask carved in wood and representing a pig as symbol of dirt.

Njamba: 75-year-old man and informant from Lusaka. He does not believe in any difference between the Chokwe and other people from the same group. For him, they are all the same. (This name also means elephant.)

Njinga: One of the girls (with Chisola) known as mythological orphans left with their grandpa who, unfortunately also died. He left them to the other village people and promised to send them the fertility spirit, Chikuza. Chikuza is the Chokwe, Luvale mask of fertility.

Nkalayi: Location known in mythology as the original departure point of the Lunda, close to Musumba, the capital city of the Lunda empire.

Nyakandanji: Mother of the initiates, male or female.

Nyali: Virgin girl. Vanyali or virgins are presented to king Ndungu at the end of the Likumbi Lya Mize Festival at the Mize arena. They represent the chance given to the future for the continuation of the population.

Nyanga: Population of the eastern Congo.

Nyantundanji: Mothers of the initiates.

Nyashi: Ancient name of a Congolese commune now known under the name of Kenya in the city of Lubumbashi.

Nyi amama: A call to the mothers in a farewell song as the initiates get on their way to the Mukanda camp.

Nyi atata: A call to the fathers in a farewell song as the initiates get on their way to the Mukanda camp.

-O-

Osorezan: Location in northern Japan, and where the Itako give their consultations to people who wish to get in contact with their dead ancestors.

Ovimbali: A word used to refer to some of the objects found in the divination basket. It is also used to refer to people's enemies such as the Ovimbundu who were believed to betray other people in their relations with the Portuguese.

Ovimbundu: a big Angolan population group. They mostly live on plateaus and were already close to the Sea. They thus met the Portuguese before many other ethnic groups and were among their first guides inside the continent.

-P-

Papa Muteba: 72-year-old man from Lubumbashi, famous for his healing capacities using plants. He lives in the city of Lubumbashi and his services are demanded everywhere despite the presence of large modern hospitals. He is quite successful and with assistants in charge of bringing him plants from far inside the country.

Patriotic Front: Political party of the Zambian President, Edgar Lungu.

Princess Lweji: The princess who got married to the Luba prince and

hunter, Chibinda Ilunga, the Chokwe cultural hero.  
 Process of individualization: Process of making an individual.  
 Process of Individuation: Psychological process that makes an individual different from others.  
 Profane: Ordinary reality that should not be opposed to the sacred.

-R-

Ruashi: Municipality of the city of Lubumbashi. It was known in the distant past as the location where foreign workers who came for work in the mines in the Katanga province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had to stay for some time for their adaptation to local weather and social conditions before being sent to their work place.

-S-

Sacred: Divine, connected with the divine. In the case of this dissertation, the sacred is connected to ancestors, the founders of the Chokwe group.  
 Sakaimbo: A Chokwe Zambian Doctor. Originally from Kabompo District in the Northwestern Province. He has been working for many years in Kabwe, Zambia.  
 Sakashivi: Luvale and Chokwe mask that appears at the Likumbi Iya Mize, smaller than Kayipu. In the Likumbi Iya Mize procession, Sakashivi gives a show of his strength in breaking in one blow a calabsh full of water.  
 Samazemba: Historical name of a Chokwe known for his resistance to the colonial power.  
 Samutu: Known as the first human creature in Chokwe mythology.  
 Sandoa: Rural town in the Lunda empire in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.  
 Sasa Chokwe: Famous music group that has given a new life to the Chokwe traditions. It is unanimously

acclaimed and recognized wherever the Chokwe are in Africa and abroad.

Sata: Michael Chilufya Sata (1937-2014), Zambian fifth President (2011-2014), died while in office, also known under the name of Cobra.  
 Saurimo: Capital of Lunda Sul Province in Angola.  
 Savimbi: Jonas Malheiro Savimbi (1939-2002) Angolan political and military leader. During his guerrilla war against the colonial power at first and then against the Angolan government, his operational zones were in the area where the Chokwe live. The Chokwe thus ended up regularly moving in the Hinterland named Chokweland in the dissertation with borders overlapping Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Angola.  
 Sayengele: From Chokwe mythology, the name of the founder of the Mukanda initiation. He is also known as Songolo Makala.  
 Shamanism: Indigenous religious practices that include different states of consciousness in the interactions with beliefs and the assistance. It also includes instances of trance.  
 Shamazemba: Another way of calling Samazemba.  
 Shikashivi: Another way of calling Sakashivi mask.  
 Solwezi: Main city of the Northwestern Province, Zambia. It is called the New Zambian Copperbelt more now as it has replaced the Copperbelt with most mining activities and industrialization taking place in the Northwestern Province. More and more workers move from the Copperbelt to Solwezi and places near by.  
 Songolo Maka: See Sayengele  
 Songye: One of the many neighboring people who share much of cultural secrets with the Chokwe. Studies about their masks and initiations have much in common. They have similar secret societies.

Sukuma: One of the largest Tanzanian populations. It is an ethnic group of about 6 million.

Shingilo: Sukuma word meaning the token of gratitude that is given in a consultation, or as recognition for ancestors' assistance.

-T-

Tshilima: See Chilima.

Tshipango: Also Chipango, it is the ancestral altar where the sacrifices are offered. It is considered as a place where a family, a village, or traditional healers offer prayers and sacrifices.

Tahi: Traditional healer.

Tata: Respectful way of addressing grandpa and elderly people.

Technoscapes: A concept by Appadurai Arjun. It describes the different, unknown, and unpredicted ways in which technologies go around the world, and how even the less known and archaic skills can still move around the world.

Tempels: Father Placid Tempels, a Franciscan Priest, he worked in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Luba area and had access to the Chokwe area as well. He was the first one to coin the word "African Philosophy". He gave a description of local people's beliefs and artifacts are part of these beliefs. He concluded that the Africans knew God and did not need a forced evangelization. Vital Force and Chain of Being are among the main features of the Metaphysics he described.

Thumba VI: Mythological early queen married with Yala Mwaka. The mother of Chinguli and Lweji.

Tongomoshi: Starts that move around the moon, "Kakweji" in a kind of dance.

Tshiboko: Geographical area in Angola where the Chokwe are believed to have moved when they left Nkalayi and Musumba the area mainly populated by the Lunda.

Tshikapa: A gold mining city in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has a large Chokwe population that has kept its original culture and its connection with the Chokwe royal family living quite far in the Katanga province. Their culture also connects them with other Chokwe in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and Zambia.

Tshikapa artists: A group that includes Chokwe, Kuba, and Leele artists working together, respecting their different traditions, and also innovating.

Tshikapa Chokwe: Chokwe population from Tshikapa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Tshikapa Chokwe artifacts: A section of Tshikapa artists.

Tshikapa Chokwe Symposium: Symposium held in Tshikapa in July (15-17) 2016 in the presence of Mwene Mwa Tshisenge and local traditional chiefs. Also, many local people attended.

Tshikapa informants: They are the Chokwe local people who were consulted for the interview and for follow-up.

Tshikapa people: The inhabitants of Tshikapa mining city.

Tshikolokolo: Local Chokwe wise woman in charge of girls' first initiation that is taken when they get their first menstruation.

Tshikumbi: Also called Ukule is the first initiation that girls take.

Tshikuta: Simon Kayembe Malhinda Tshikuta. There is also an informant by the same name of Tshikapa.

Tshileu or Chiheu: Chokwe, Luvale, Lunda, Mbunda, Luchazi mask representing the foolish spirit; reflects an old man sometimes. This mask comes along with Kalelwa and Mulimbula masks.

Tshilombola: (sing, plural: Yilombola) Initiation master. The initiation masters live with the initiates during the entire seclusion time that could be long for several months in the



past and is reduced now to a few months only.

Tshimbalanga: A Chokwe village near Sandoa

Tshimbanda: Also Chimbanda, a traditional healer.

Tshimboj: Donat Tshimboj, Professor at the University of Lubumbashi, Department of French Civilization and Culture. He is an A-Ruund intellectual known for raising the teasing question regarding the Lunda and the Chokwe, as he asks, "Which of the egg and chick comes first?"

Tshinaya Mukwa Lwena: one of the three children of Yala Mwako: His two other siblings are: Tshinguli Mbangala and Lweji ya Kondi.

Tshinguli Mbangala: See here above.

Tshipoya: Traditional healer whose work started in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and was later continued in the Northwestern province, Zambia. His family traveled by car to Zambia. With his assistants, he went on foot, collecting consultation gifts. When he reached his destination he had a big farm of goats.

Tshombe (1919-1969): Congolese Political personality, leader of the Katanga secession. He was from the Lunda ethnic group and his soldiers came especially from both the Lunda and the Chokwe groups.

Tshyanza Ngombe: Mythological ancestor of the Chokwe in couple with mama Nyawezi.

Tundaji: Plural form of Kandandji or initiate.

Tupele: Objects placed into the divination basket. When shuffled, the Mbuki or the Chimbanda get from them an interpretation of the situation.

Tupuma: Fetish needed for catching the witch.

-U-

Uchokwe: Chokwe vision of the world, mainly leading the social life that could be characterized as Chokwe life.

Ujamaa: From Tanzanian Swahili, community politics that President Nyerere applied it was also known as African communism based on the country welfare.

Ukule: Chokwe word referring to girls' first initiation happening on their first menstruations.

UNITA: Angolan rebellion movement from the end of the colonial times and that changed in political party. Savimbi was its leader until his death.

University of Lubumbashi: Second biggest university of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has some 30,000 students.

Usoko: Chokwe word for fraternity. Brotherhood and sisterhood in the Chokwe traditions that have a large comprehension. Conquered people may eventually become Chokwe through naturalization and adoption. Also, when they attend the same initiation camp, even though they are from different ethnic groups, they become brothers or sisters, and Chokwe forever with the absolute duty to protect each other.

Utenu: Chokwe, Luvala, Luchazi mask, also known as the angry mask in charge of discipline running after people to keep them far enough from masks. Utenu is known for moving around with a machete and forcing especially women to run in all directions.

-V-

Vimbali: See Imbali above.

-W-

Wakule: Borrowed from the welcoming girls who are of age and have had their first menstruations. It is also the name of girls' first initiation.

Wanga: Chokwe word with a double meaning referring to witchcraft, or to medicine of all kinds taken for healing.

-Y-

Yala Mwaka: See Mwaka above.

Yamukanda: Old woman who no longer has menstruations and who has permission to get to the Mukanda camp. She symbolizes the presence of the female and the initiates' comprehension of the fact that male and female characters build life together.

-Z-

Zambezi District: Northwestern Zambia District. It shares border with Angola, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Zambia-compound: Name quite frequent in Zambian big cities. It is a reference to shanty locations with any kind of construction that permits people to live close to the city.

Zambian Copperbelt: big geographical area overlapping the Zambian and Congolese borders. It is known for its minerals and mining companies. Historically, these locations were the first to be developed. They also recruited, especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, workers coming from far within the country and from other countries. They are known for big demographic waves. However, this dissertation has discussed these waves concerning the Chokwe whose lifestyle makes them independent from national structures, and strongly willing to stay in their villages, as they keep their traditional values.

## ANNEXES

## Annex 1 Interview: Details and Questions

## Interview Details

Question	Answer	Sexe	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
Q1	No	Male	45	44	43
		Female	13	36	37
	Yes	Male	4	7	3
		Female	5	8	5
Q2	No	Male	7	14	10
		Female	3	11	5
	Yes	Male	40	40	36
		Female	17	30	37
Q3	No	Male	8	12	12
		Female	6	12	18
	Yes	Male	38	45	36
		Female	15	26	22
Q4	No	Male	47	46	41
		Female	15	33	31
	Yes	Male	3	5	5
		Female	2	11	11
Q5	No	Male	2	4	3
		Female	0	3	1
	Yes	Male	48	47	43
		Female	17	41	41
Q6	No	Male	3	1	2
		Female	0	4	1
	Yes	Male	47	50	44
		Female	17	40	41
Q7	No	Male	35	50	39
		Female	13	27	29
	Yes	Male	6	5	6
		Female	3	3	5
Q8	No	Male	2	4	6
		Female	4	5	5
	Yes	Male	48	48	40
		Female	13	38	37
Q9	No	Male	4	4	4
		Female	0	9	7
	Yes	Male	46	47	42

		Female	17	35	35
Q10	No	Male	0	4	5
		Female	4	11	8
	Yes	Male	50	47	41
		Female	13	33	34
Q11	No	Male	10	12	10
		Female	7	8	7
	Yes	Male	38	45	40
		Female	12	30	31
Q12	No	Male	16	6	16
		Female	7	10	12
	Yes	Male	28		
		Female	14		
Q13	No	Male	4	4	6
		Female	3	12	9
	Yes	Male	46	44	39
		Female	14	35	34
Q14	No	Male	46	45	40
		Female	16	43	44
	Yes	Male	3	6	2
		Female	2	1	2
Q15	No	Male	5	13	12
		Female	3	14	15
	Yes	Male	45	40	34
		Female	14	28	27
Q16	No	Male	2	4	1
		Female	2	7	8
	Yes	Male	46	47	45
		Female	17	37	34
Q17	No	Male	2	1	5
		Female	4	3	6
	Yes	Male	46	47	45
		Female	16	41	39
Q18	No	Male	5	9	6
		Female	3	9	6
	Yes	Male	42	42	40
		Female	17	35	36
Q19	No	Male	2	6	6
		Female	3	9	
	Yes	Male	45	44	39
		Female	17	36	37

Q20	No	Male	5	6	2
		Female	6	8	7
	Yes	Male	44	45	44
		Female	12	36	35

MIGRATION		DRC	Zambia	Angola	
Q1	No	Male	45	44	43
		Female	13	36	37
		Total NO	58	80	80
	Yes	Male	4	7	3
		Female	5	8	5
		Total YES	9	15	8

BELIEFS		DRC	Zambia	Angola	
Q5	No	Male	2	4	3
		Female	0	3	1
		Total NO	2	7	4
	Yes	Male	48	47	43
		Female	17	41	41
		Total YES	65	88	84

BELIEFS		DRC	Zambia	Angola	
Q6	No	Male	3	1	2
		Female	0	4	1
		Total NO	3	5	3
	Yes	Male	47	50	44
		Female	17	40	41
		Total YES	64	90	85

BELIEFS		DRC	Zambia	Angola	
Q10	No	Male	0	4	5
		Female	4	11	8
		Total NO	4	15	13
	Yes	Male	50	47	41
		Female	13	33	34
		Total YES	63	80	75

BELIEFS		DRC	Zambia	Angola	
Q11	No	Male	10	12	10
		Female	7	8	7
		Total NO	17	20	17
	Yes	Male	38	45	40
		Female	12	30	31
		Total YES	50	75	71

BELIEFS		DRC	Zambia	Angola
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Q15	No	Male	5	13	12
		Female	3	3	15
		Total NO	8	16	27
	Yes	Male	45	40	34
		Female	14	28	27
		Total YES	59	68	61
BELIEFS			DRC	Zambia	Angola
Q16	No	Male	2	4	1
		Female	2	7	8
		Total NO	4	11	9
	Yes	Male	46	47	45
		Female	17	37	34
		Total YES	63	84	79
BELIEFS			DRC	Zambia	Angola
Q17	No	Male	2	1	5
		Female	4	3	6
		Total NO	6	4	11
	Yes	Male	45	50	38
		Female	16	41	39
		Total YES	61	91	77
BELIEFS			DRC	Zambia	Angola
Q19	No	Male	2	6	6
		Female	3	9	6
		Total NO	5	15	12
	Yes	Male	45	44	39
		Female	17	36	37
		Total YES	62	80	76

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS			DRC	Zambia	Angola
Q7	No	Male	35	50	39
		Female	13	27	29
		Total NO	48	77	68
	Yes	Male	6	5	6
		Female	3	3	5
		Total YES	9	8	11
POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS			DRC	Zambia	Angola
Q8	No	Male	2	4	6
		Female	4	5	5
		Total NO	6	9	11
	Yes	Male	48	48	40

		Female	13	38	37
		Total YES	61	86	77
POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS			DRC	Zambia	Angola
Q12	No	Male	16	6	16
		Female	7	10	12
		Total NO	23	16	28
	Yes	Male	28	45	32
		Female	14	34	28
		Total YES	42	79	60
POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS			DRC	Zambia	Angola
Q18	No	Male	5	9	6
		Female	3	9	6
		Total NO	8	18	12
	Yes	Male	42	42	40
		Female	17	35	36
		Total YES	59	77	76
POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS			DRC	Zambia	Angola
Q19	No	Male	2	6	6
		Female	3	9	6
		Total NO	5	15	12
	Yes	Male	45	44	39
		Female	17	36	37
		Total YES	62	80	76
POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS			DRC	Zambia	Angola
Q20	No	Male	5	6	2
		Female	6	8	7
		Total NO	11	14	9
	Yes	Male	44	45	44
		Female	12	36	35
		Total YES	56	81	79

INTERVIEW						
Sex	effectif			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	AN GO LA
M	50	51	46	74.6	53.7	52.3

F	17	44	42	25. 4	46.3	47.7
T C T	67	95	88	10 0	100	100

**Q1 Did you migrate from your village to the city?**

Sex	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOL A
M	45	44	43	77. 6	55.0	53.8
F	13	36	37	22. 4	45.0	46.3
T C T A L	58	80	80	10 0	100	100

Sex	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOL A
M	4	7	3	44. 4	46.7	37.5
F	5	8	5	55. 6	53.3	62.5
T C T A L	9	15	8	10 0	100	100

**Q2 Does Mukanda/Chokwe prepare for leadership?**

Sex	Answer/ Not			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOL A
M	7	14	10	70. 0	56.0	66.7
F	3	11	5	30. 0	44.0	33.3
T C	10	25	15	10 0	100	100



T A L						
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S e x	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOL A
M	40	40	36	70. 2	57.1	49.3
F	17	30	37	29. 8	42.9	50.7
T O T A L	57	70	73	10 0	100	100

**Q3 Does Chokwe education contribute to social changes?**

S e x	Answer/ Not			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	8	12	12	57. 1	50.0	40.0
F	6	12	18	42. 9	50.0	60.0
T O T A L	14	24	30	10 0	100	100

S e x	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	38	45	36	71. 7	63.4	62.1
F	15	26	22	28. 3	36.6	37.9
T O T A L	53	71	58	10 0	100	100

**Q4 Does modern education prepare the Chokwe to face changes?**

s e x e	Answer/ Not			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	47	46	41	75. 8	58.2	56.9
F	15	33	31	24. 2	41.8	43.1
T O T A L	62	79	72	10 0	100	100

s e x e	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	3	5	5	60. 0	31.3	31.3
F	2	11	11	40. 0	68.8	68.8
T O T A L	5	16	16	10 0	100	100

**Q5 Do you believe in witchcraft?**

s e x e	Answer/ Not			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	2	4	3	10 0.0	57.1	75.0
F	0	3	1	0.0	42.9	25.0
T O T A L	2	7	4	10 0	100	100

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s e x e	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	48	47	43	73. 8	53.4	51.2
F	17	41	41	26. 2	46.6	48.8
T O T A L	65	88	84	10 0	100	100

**Q6 Do you use medicinal plants for different diseases?**

s e x e	Answer/ Not			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	3	1	2	10 0.0	20.0	66.7
F	0	4	1	0.0	80.0	33.3
T O T A L	3	5	3	10 0	100	100

s e x e	Answer / YES					
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	47	50	44	73. 4	55.6	51.8
F	17	40	41	26. 6	44.4	48.2
T O T A L	64	90	85	10 0	100	100

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**Q7 Do you trust modern political institutions?**

s e x e	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	35	50	39	72. 9	64.9	57.4
F	13	27	29	27. 1	35.1	42.6
T O T A L	48	77	68	10 0	100	100

s e x e	effectif/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	6	5	6	66. 7	62.5	54.5
F	3	3	5	33. 3	37.5	45.5
T O T A L	9	8	11	10 0	100	100

**Q8 Is traditional chieftaincy relevant for new identities and global developpement practices?**

s e x e	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	2	4	6	33	44.4	54.5

F	4	5	5	66. 7	55.6	45.5
T O T A L	6	9	11	10 0	100	100

s e x e	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	48	48	40	78. 7	55.8	51.9
F	13	38	37	21. 3	44.2	48.1
T O T A L	61	86	77	10 0	100	100

**Q9 Can Chokwe traditional political institutions inspire governments today?**

s e x e	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	4	4	4	10 0.0	30.8	36.4
F	0	9	7	0.0	69.2	63.6
T O T A L	4	13	11	10 0	100	100

s e x e	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	46	47	42	73. 0	57.3	54.5
F	17	35	35	27.	42.7	45.5

				0		
T O T A L	63	82	77	10 0	100	100

**Q10 Are Chokwe masks and other artifacts still important to you?**

s e x e	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	0	4	5	0.0	26.7	38.5
F	4	11	8	10 0.0	73.3	61.5
T O T A L	4	15	13	10 0	100	100

s e x e	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DR C	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	50	47	41	79. 4	58.8	54.7
F	13	33	34	20. 6	41.3	45.3
T O T A L	63	80	75	10 0	100	100

**Q11 Is your diet still based on Chokwe food?**

se xe	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBI A	ANGOL A	DR C	ZAMBI A	ANGOLA
M	10	12	10	58.8	60.0	58.8
F	7	8	7	41.2	40.0	41.2

T O T A L	17	20	17	100	100	100
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se xe	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBI A	ANGOL A	DRC	ZAMBI A	ANGOLA
M	38	45	40	76.0	60.0	56.3
F	12	30	31	24.0	40.0	43.7
T O T A L	50	75	71	100	100	100

**Q12 Does gender today favor men's superiority**

se xe	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBI A	ANGOL A	DRC	ZAMBI A	ANGOLA
M	16	6	16	69.6	37.5	57.1
F	7	10	12	30.4	62.5	42.9
T O T A L	23	16	28	100	100	100

sexe	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	28	45	32	66.7	57.0	53.3
F	14	34	28	33.3	43.0	46.7
TOTAL	42	79	60	100	100	100

**Q13 Is sexual life important for a Chokwe?**

sexe	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	4	4	6	57.1	25.0	40.0
F	3	12	9	42.9	75.0	60.0

TOTAL	7	16	15	100	100	100
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sexe	Answer/ Yes			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	46	44	39	76.7	55.7	53.4
F	14	35	34	23.3	44.3	46.6
TOTAL	60	79	73	100	100	100

**Q14 Are men and women sufficiently trained for safe sexual life?**

sexe	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	46	45	40	74.2	51.1	47.6
F	16	43	44	25.8	48.9	52.4
TOTAL	62	88	84	100	100	100

sexe	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	3	6	2	60.0	85.7	50.0
F	2	1	2	40.0	14.3	50.0
TOTAL	5	7	4	100	100	100

**Q15 Does religion influence your life?**

sexe	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	5	13	12	62.5	48.1	44.4
F	3	14	15	37.5	51.9	55.6
TOTAL	8	27	27	100	100	100
sexe	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	45	40	34	76.3	58.8	55.7
F	14	28	27	23.7	41.2	44.3
TOTAL	59	68	61	100	100	100

**Q16 Is Chokwe music still important to you?**

sexe	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	2	4	1	50.0	36.4	11.1
F	2	7	8	50.0	63.6	88.9



TOTAL	4	11	9	100	100	100
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sexe	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	46	47	45	73.0	56.0	57.0
F	17	37	34	27.0	44.0	43.0
TOTAL	63	84	79	100	100	100

**Q17 Are Chokwe rituals important to you?**

sexe	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	2	1	5	33.3	25.0	45.5
F	4	3	6	66.7	75.0	54.5
TOTAL	6	4	11	100	100	100

sexe	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	45	50	38	73.8	54.9	49.4
F	16	41	39	26.2	45.1	50.6
TOTAL	61	91	77	100	100	100

**Q18 Are political institutions as presented today failures to the eyes of the Chokwe?**

sexe	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	5	9	6	62.5	50.0	50.0
F	3	9	6	37.5	50.0	50.0
TOTAL	8	18	12	100	100	100

sexe	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	42	42	40	71.2	54.5	52.6
F	17	35	36	28.8	45.5	47.4
TOTAL	59	77	76	100	100	100

**Q19 Is the Chokwe body still the agency at the center of identity formation?**

sexe	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	2	6	6	40.0	40.0	50.0
F	3	9	6	60.0	60.0	50.0
TOTAL	5	15	12	100	100	100

sexe	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	45	44	39	72.6	55.0	51.3
F	17	36	37	27.4	45.0	48.7
TOTAL	62	80	76	100	100	100

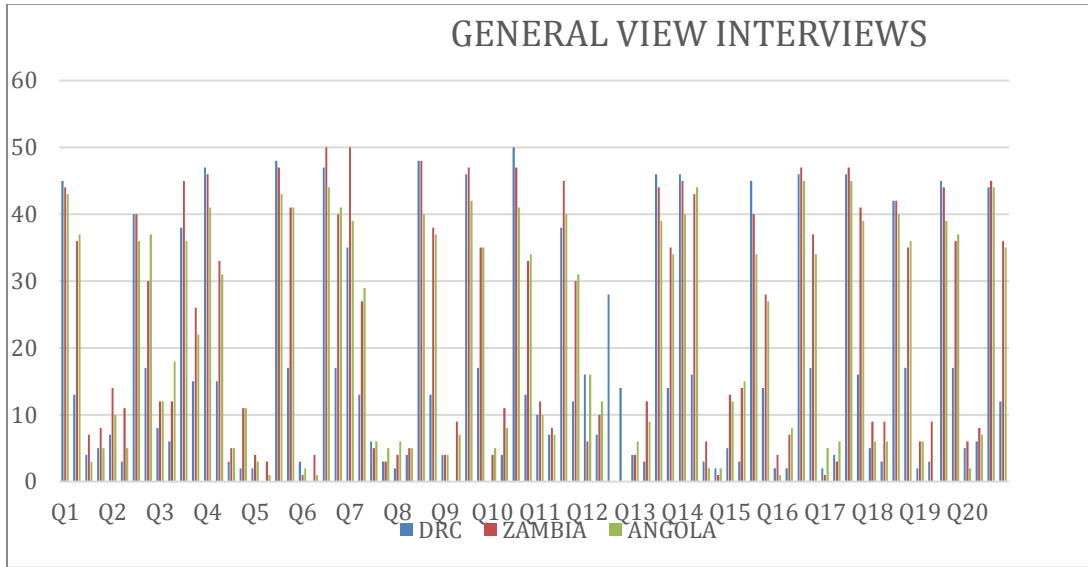
**Q20 Is the Chokwe society today ready to get in globalization?**

sexe	Answer/ No			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	5	6	2	45.5	42.9	22.2
F	6	8	7	54.5	57.1	77.8
TOTAL	11	14	9	100	100	100

sexe	Answer/ YES			%		
	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA	DRC	ZAMBIA	ANGOLA
M	44	45	44	78.6	55.6	55.7
F	12	36	35	21.4	44.4	44.3
TOTAL	56	81	79	100	100	100

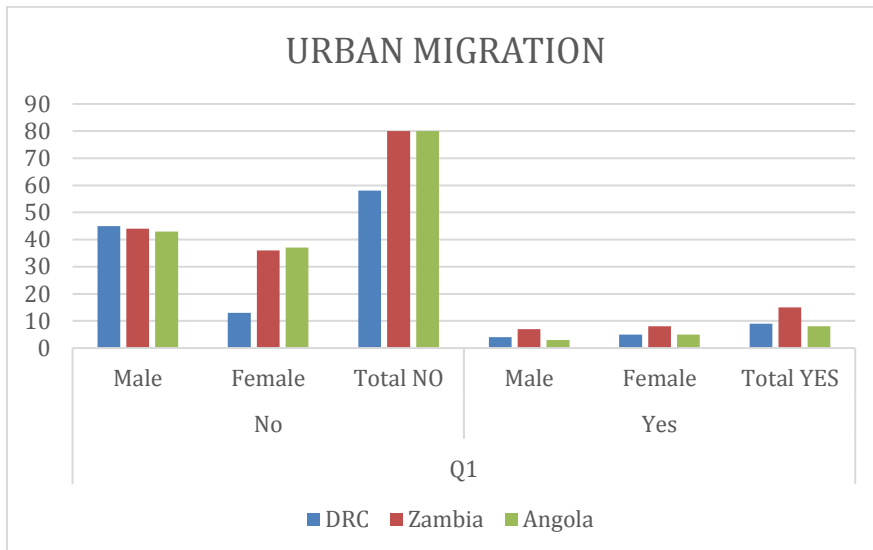
**Annex 2**

**A2.1. General View Interviews**

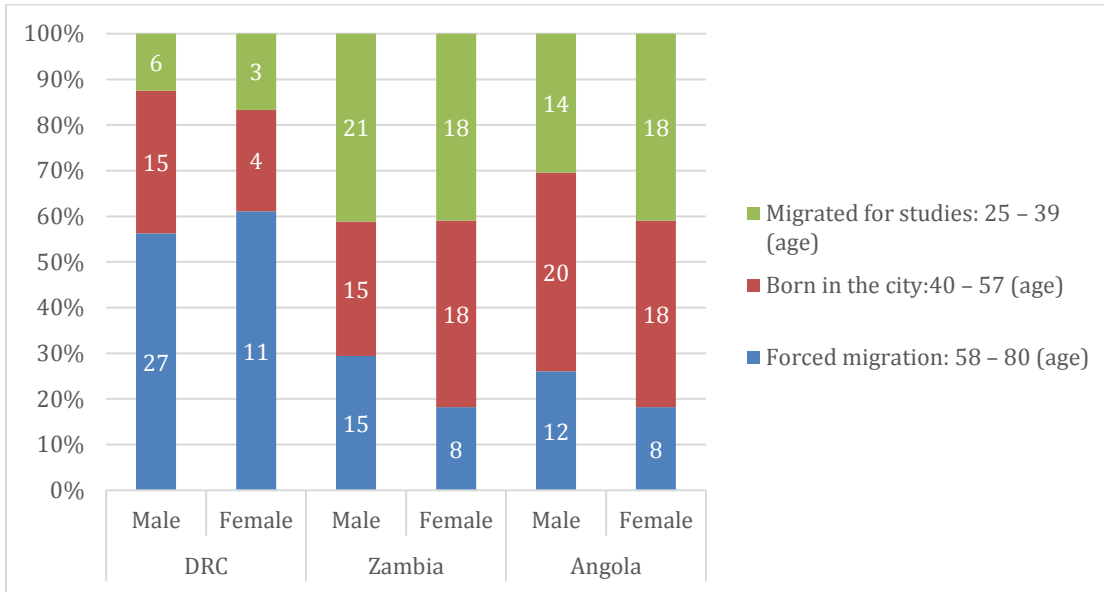


**A2.2 Urban Migration**

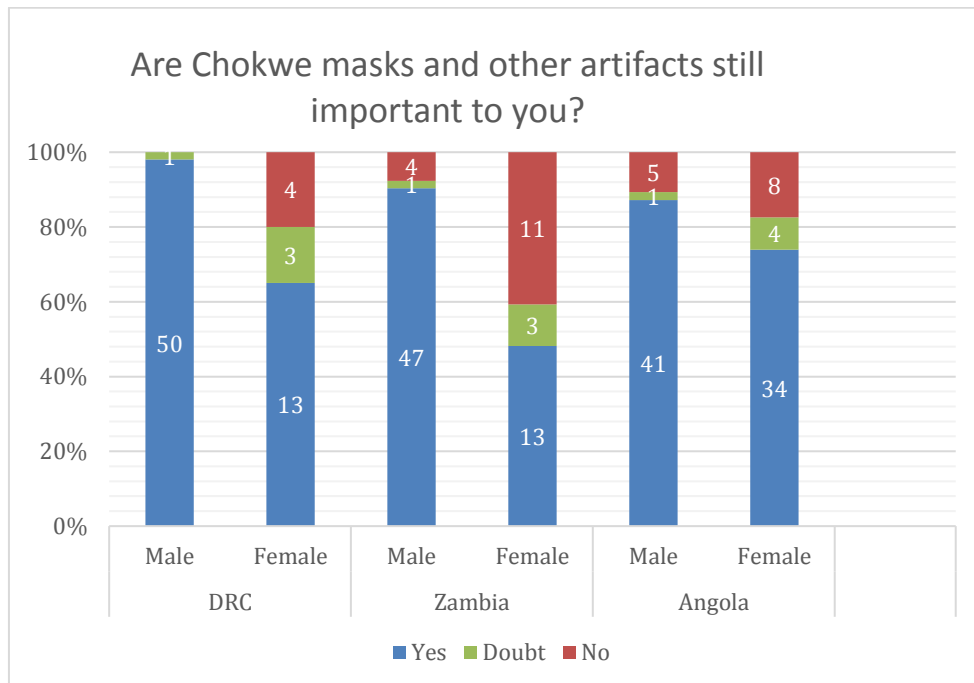
**A2.2.1 Did you migrate to the city?**



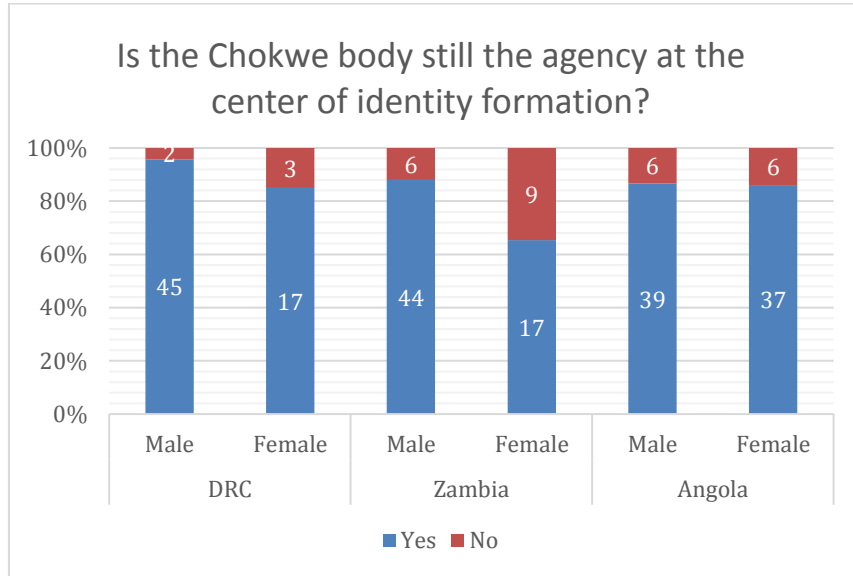
**A2.2.2 Migration: General View**



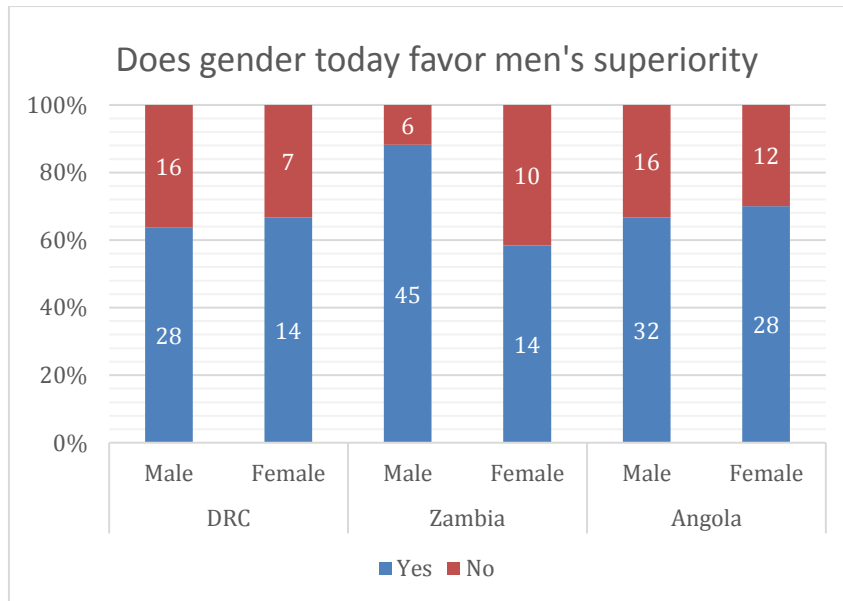
**A2.2.3 Chokwe Masks and Artifacts: Importance**



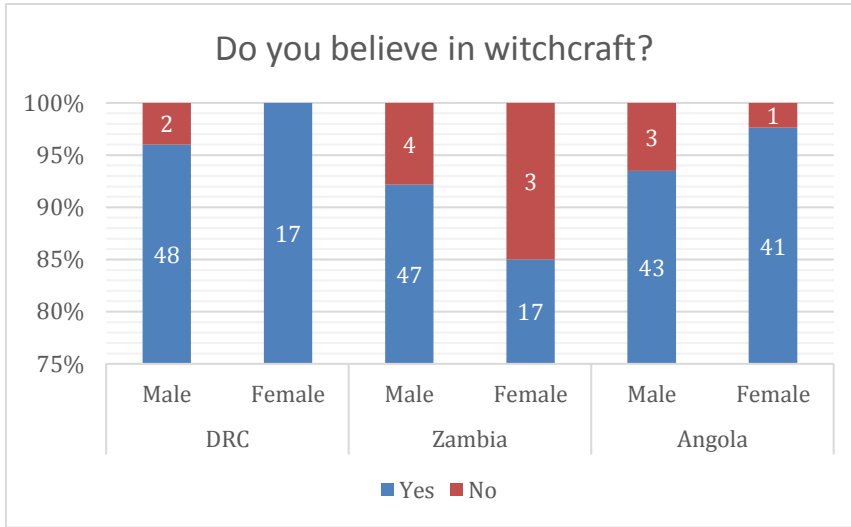
**A2.2.4 Body Agency and Identity Formation**



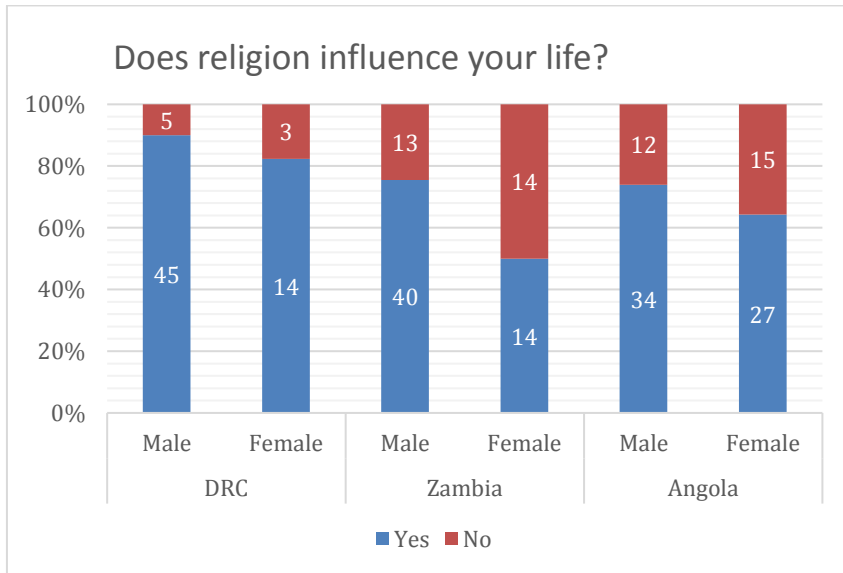
**A2.2.5 Gender and Men's Superiority**



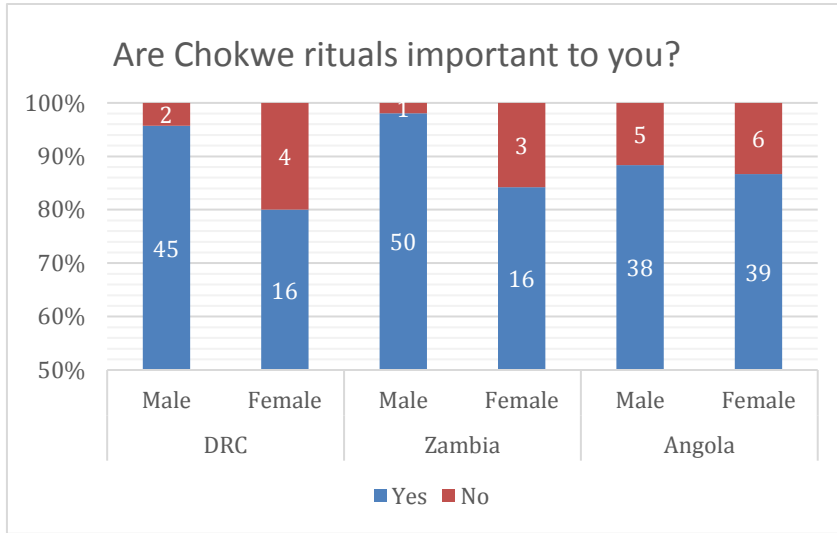
**A2.2.6 Belief in Witchcraft**



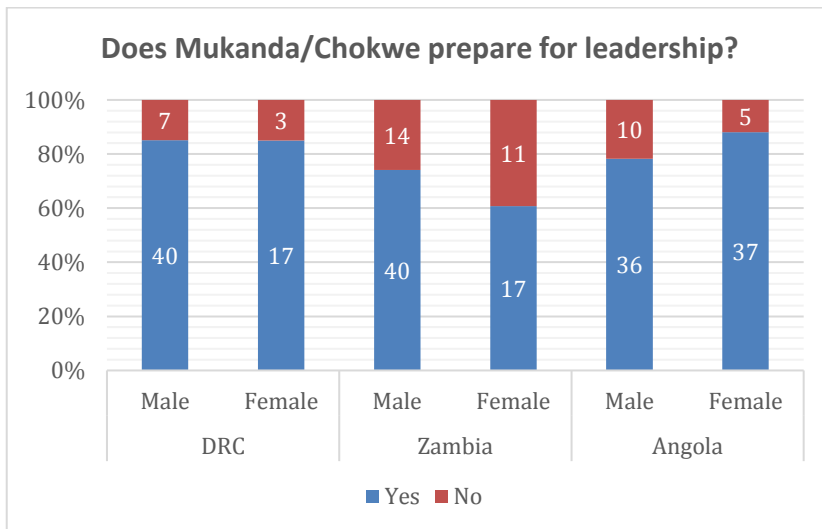
**A2.2.7 Religion Influence in Life**



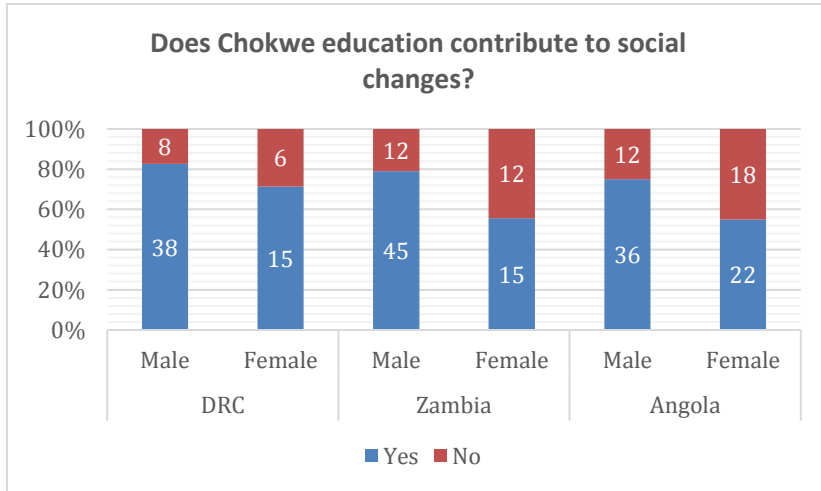
**A2.2.8 Chokwe Rituals**



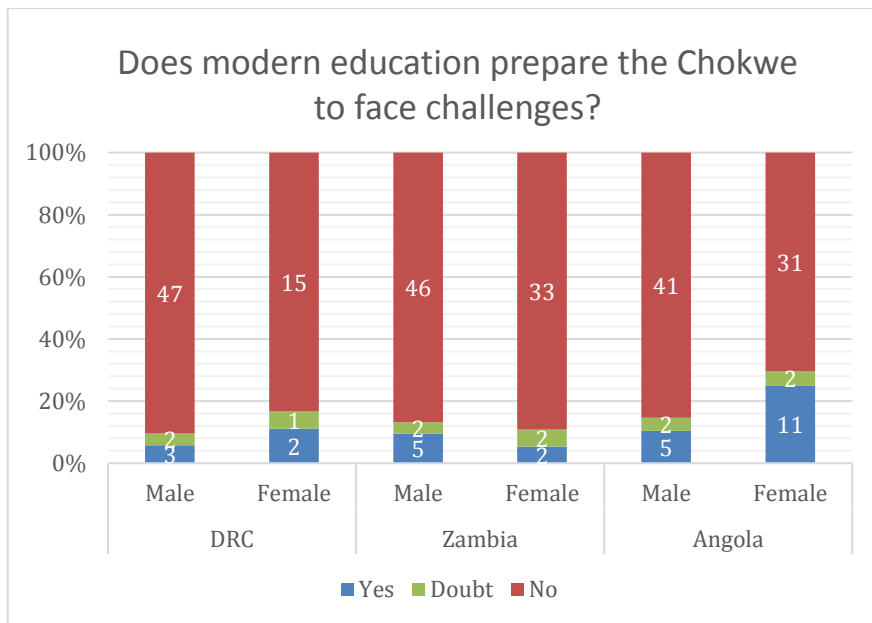
**A2.2.9 Chokwe Education and Leadership**



**A2.2.10 Chokwe Education and Social Change**

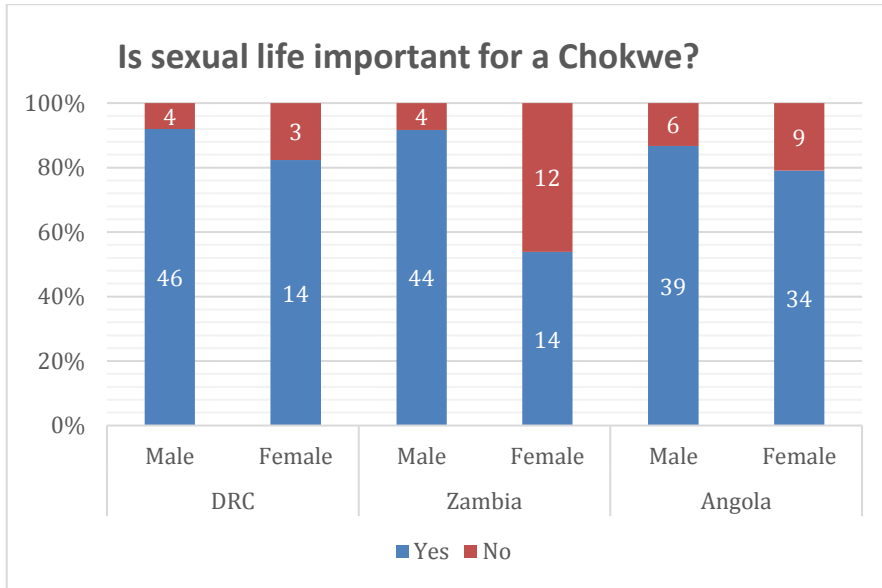


**A2.2.11 Chokwe Education and Modern Challenges**

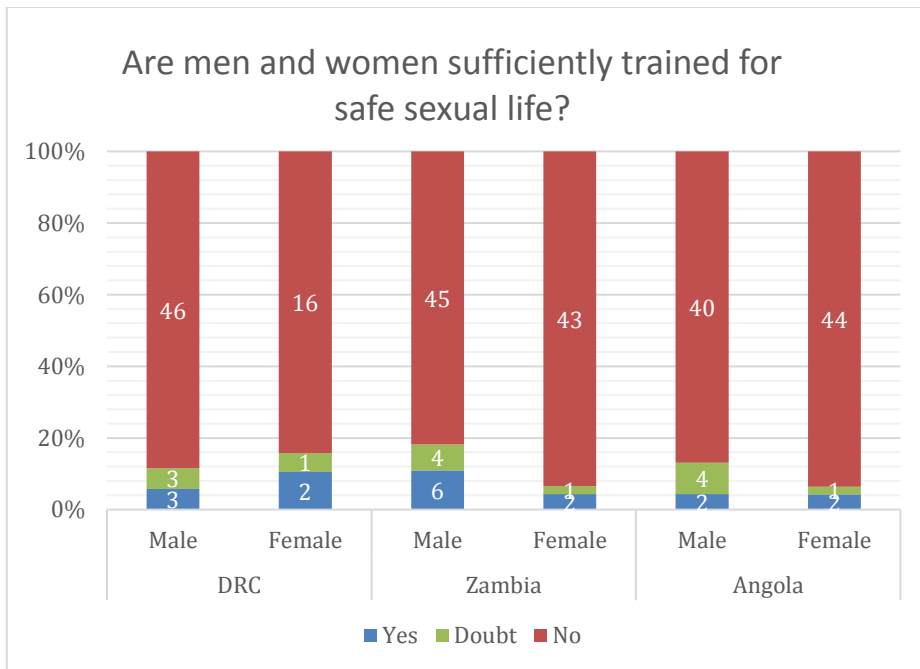




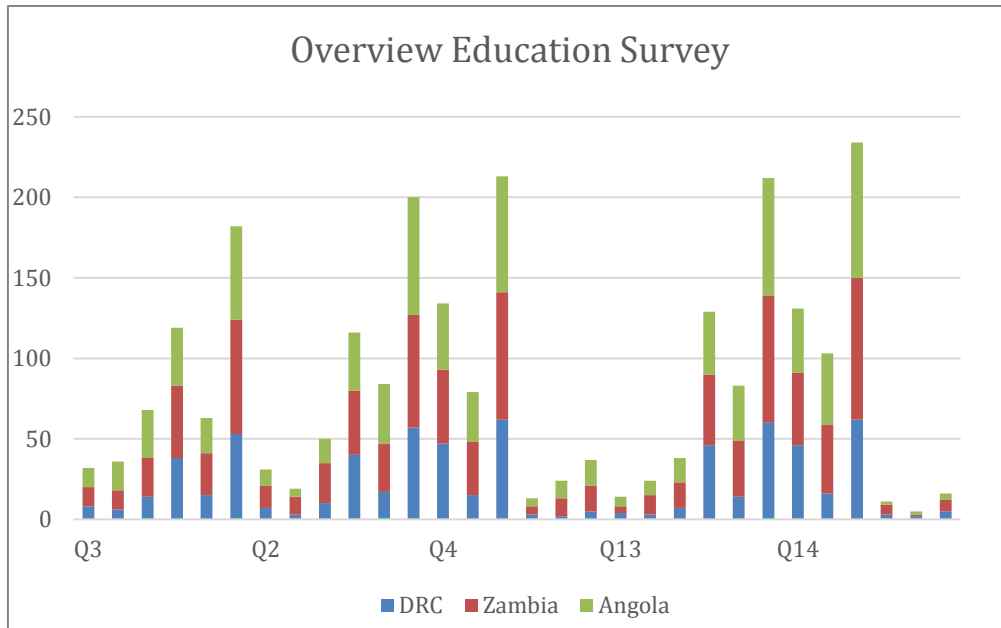
**A2.2.10 Chokwe Sexual Life**



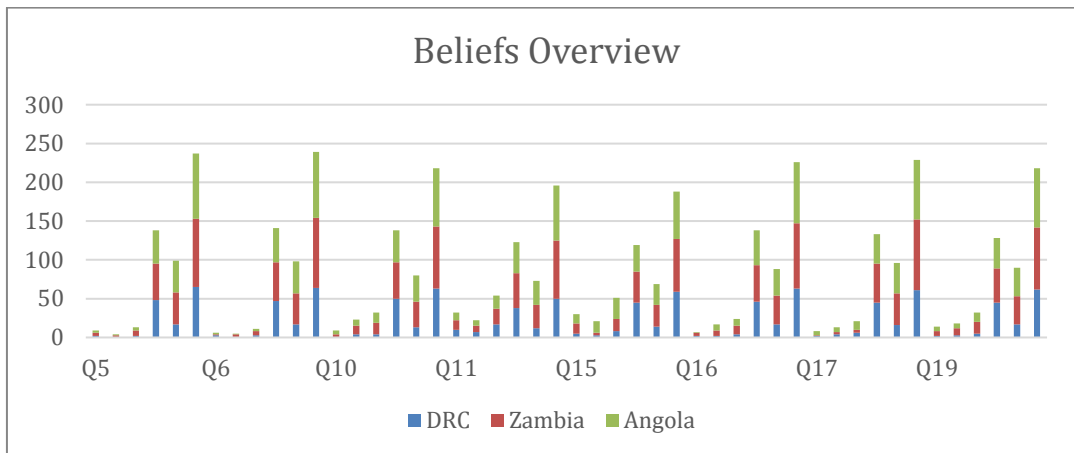
**A2.2.11 Modern Sexual Life Training viewed by the Chokwe**



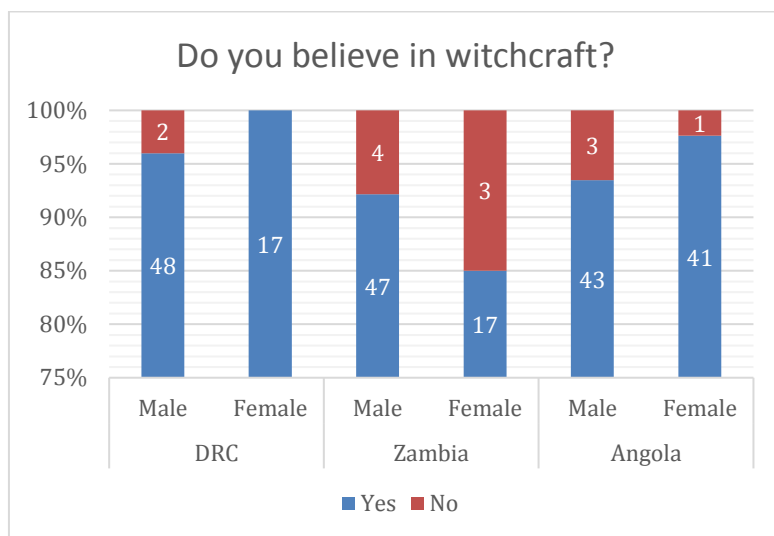
**A2.2.12 Education Survey**



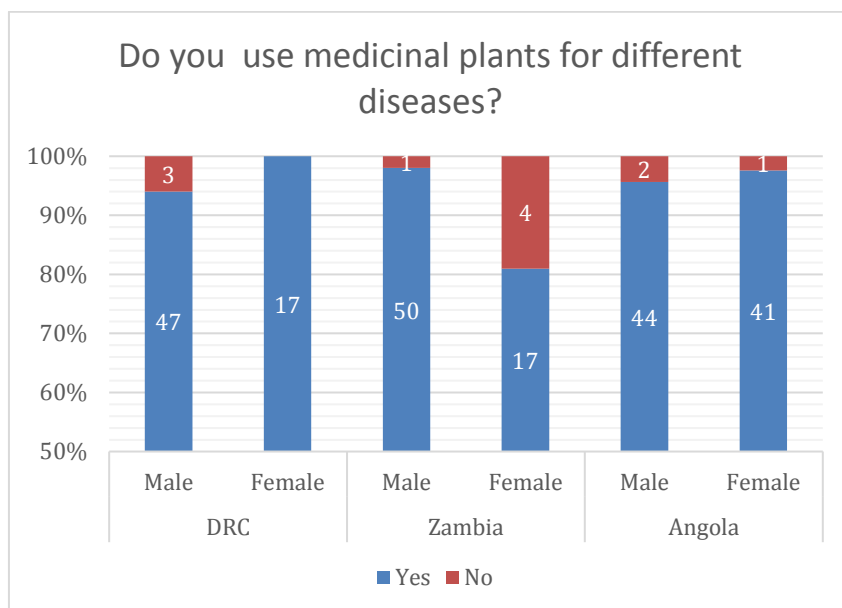
**A2.2.13 Beliefs**



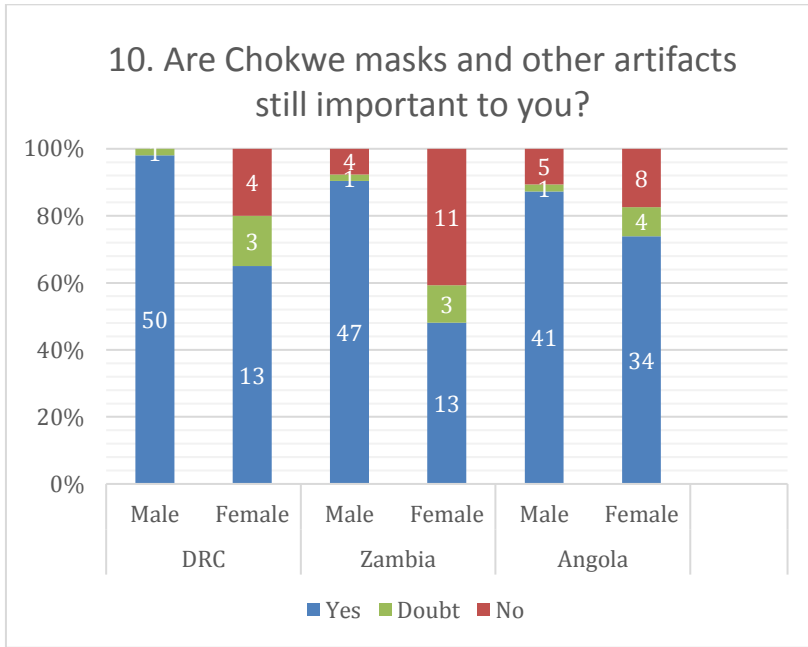
### A2.2.14 Chokwe Belief in Witchcraft



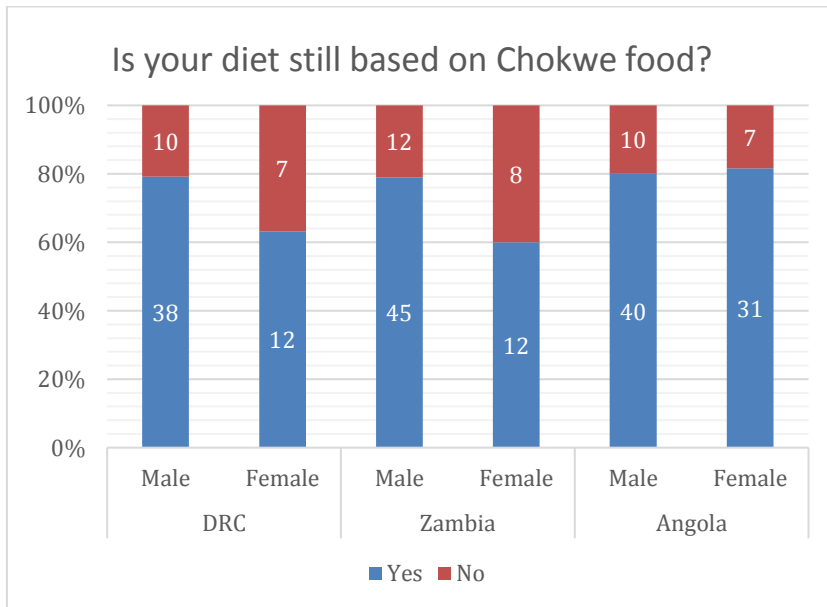
### A2.2.15 Chokwe and Medicinal Plant Use for Diseases



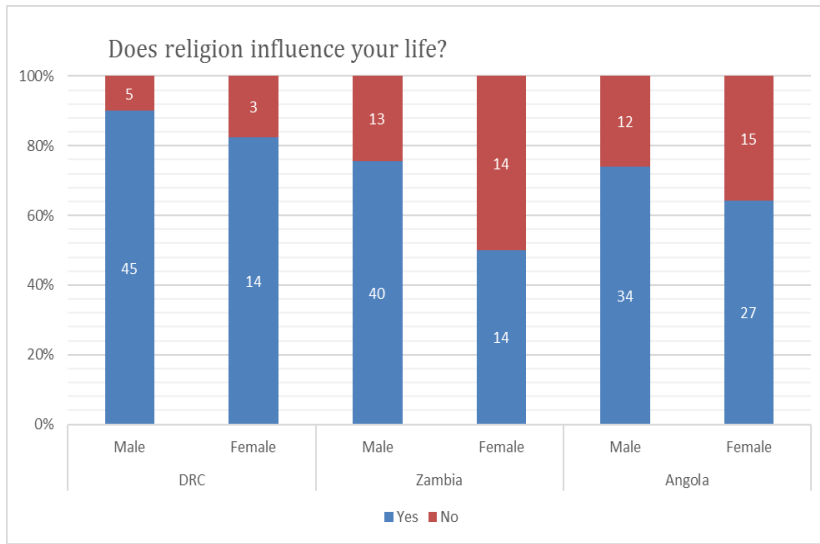
**A2.2.16 Chokwe Masks, Other Artifacts, and Beliefs**



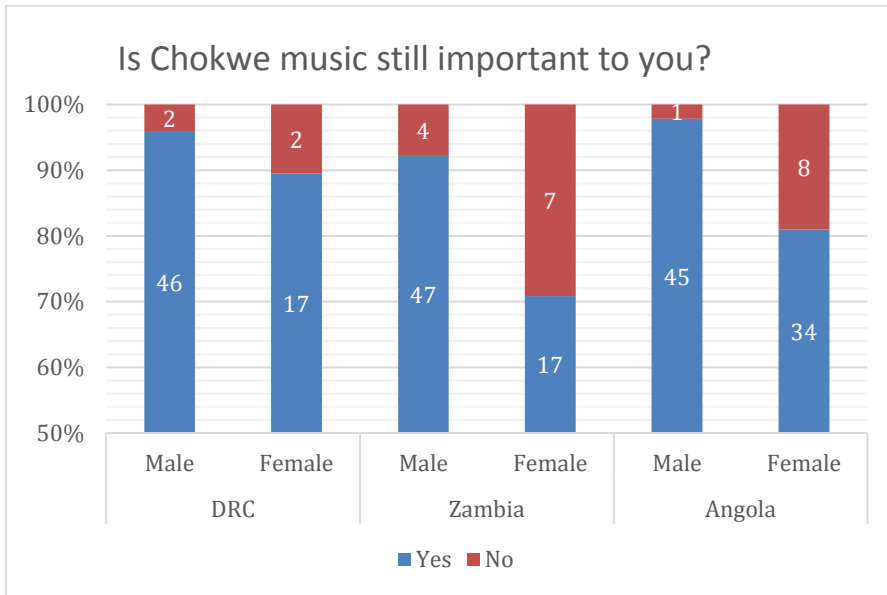
**A2.2.17 Chokwe Masks, Other Artifacts, and Beliefs**



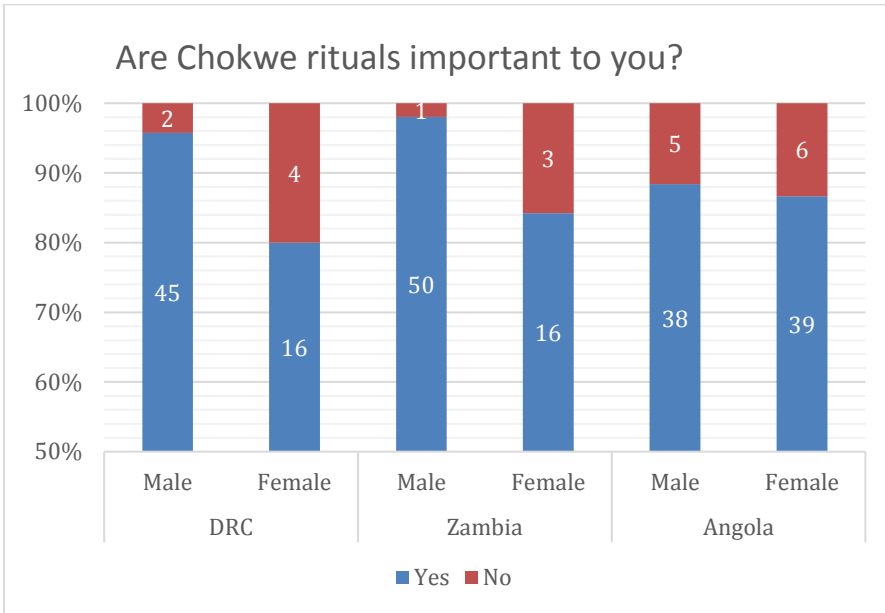
**A2.2.18 Chokwe and Religion**



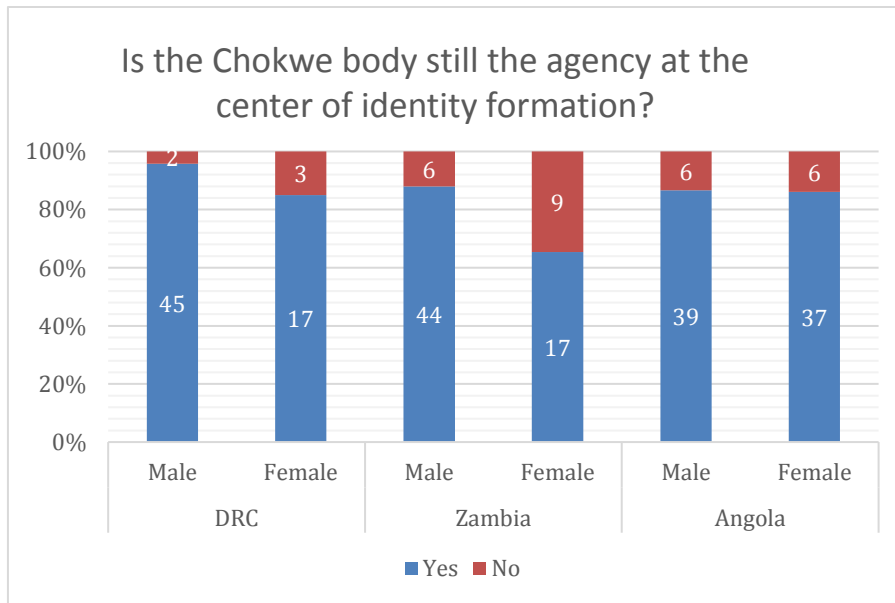
**A2.2.19 Chokwe Traditional Music**



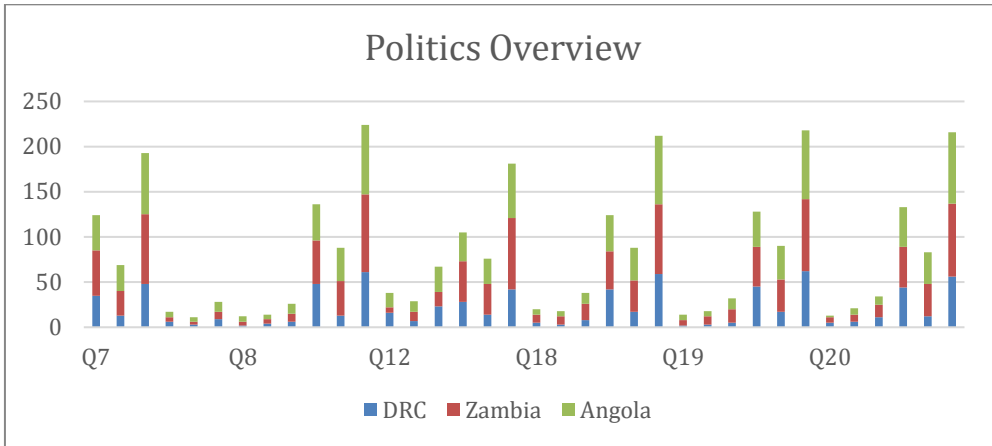
**A2.2.20 Chokwe Rituals**



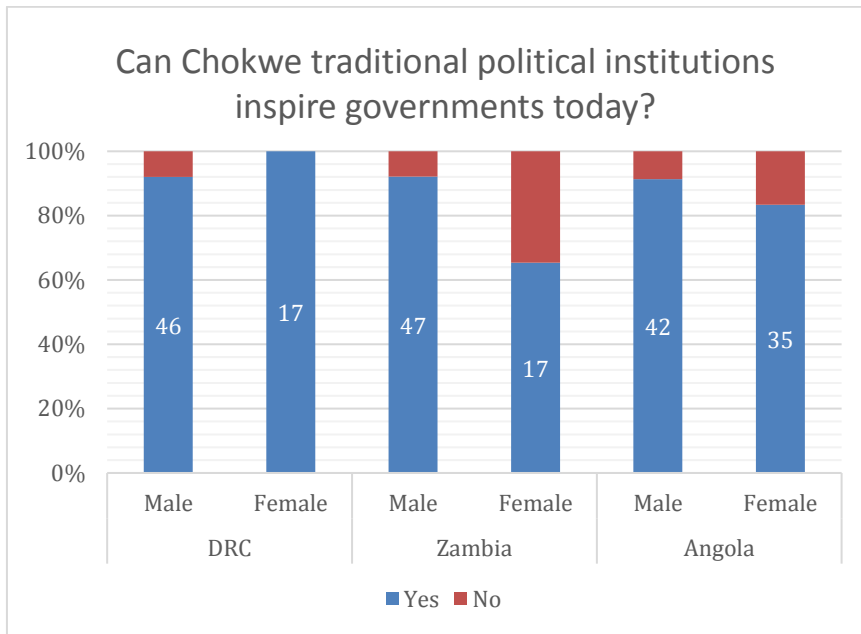
**A2.2.20 Chokwe Body Agency**



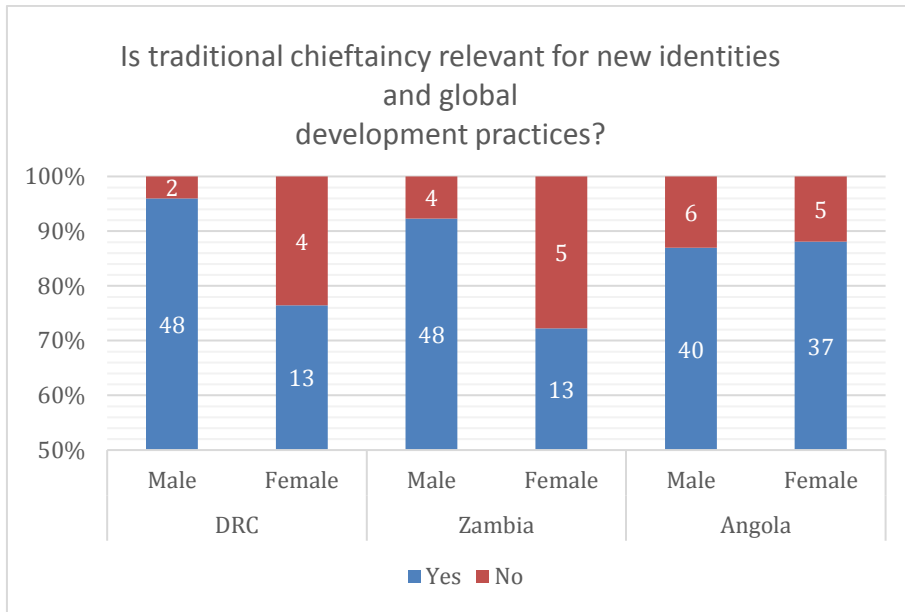
**A2.2.21 Chokwe and Political Institutions**



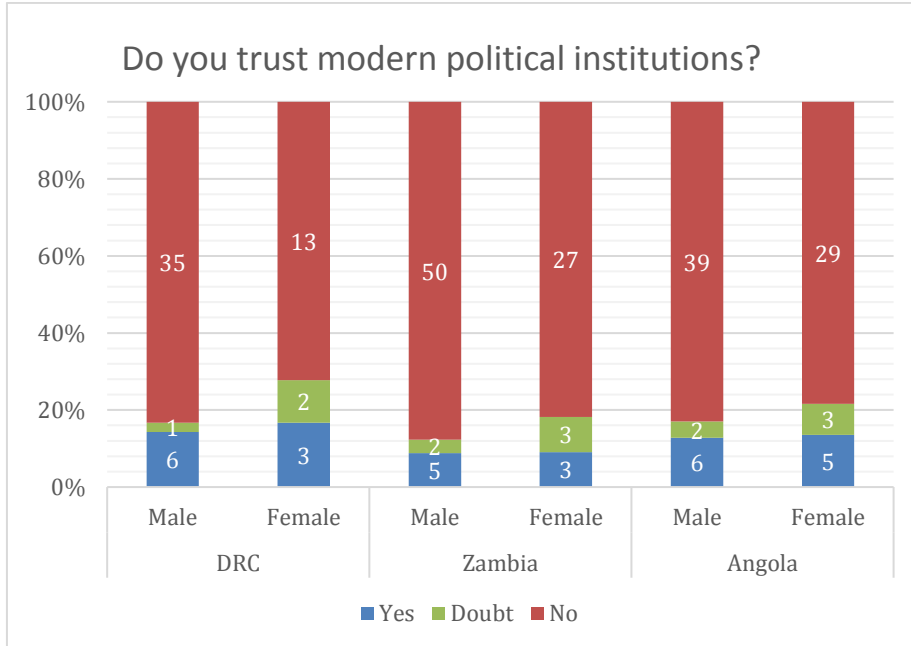
**A2.2.22 The Chokwe and National Political Institutions**



**A2.2.23 Chokwe Traditional Chieftaincy and New Global Identities**

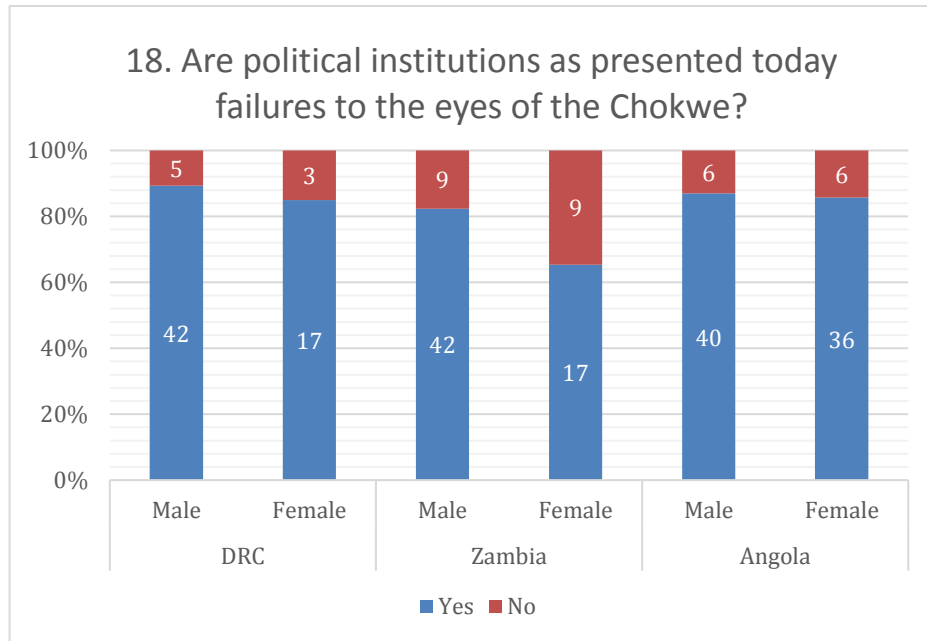


**A2.2.24 Modern Gender as perceived by Chokwe**

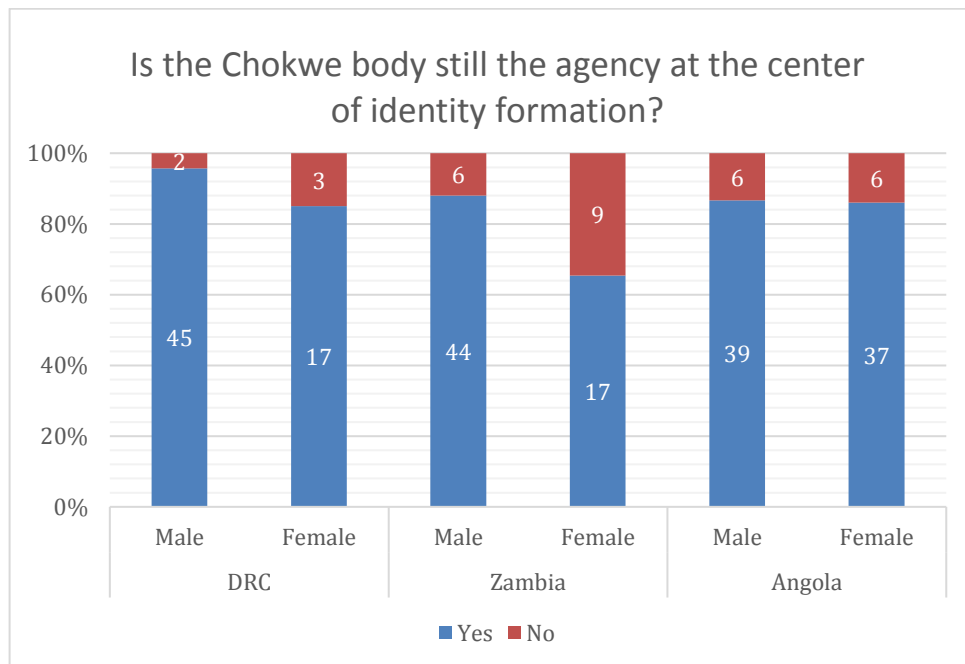




**A2.2.25 Modern Political Institutions as Failure**



**A2.2.26 Body Agency, Identity Center**



**A2.2.27 Chokwe Modern Institutions and Globalization**

