

**KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN**  
FACULTEIT SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN

**Men, mines and masculinities: the lives and  
practices of artisanal miners in Lwambo  
(Katanga province, DR Congo)**

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Proefschrift tot het verkrijgen  
van de graad van:  
Doctor in de Sociale en Culturele  
Antropologie  
aangeboden door **Jeroen Cuvelier**

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# Table of contents

Table of contents .....	1
Acknowledgements.....	1
List of abbreviations .....	5
Map 1: The Katanga province .....	9
Map 2: The Kambove territory .....	10
0. Preface .....	11
0.1 The birth and coming of age of industrial mining in Katanga .....	12
0.2 The gradual decline of industrial mining during the Mobutu era.....	13
0.3 The negative impact of the political and economic crisis of the 1990s .....	16
0.4 The revival of the Katangese mining industry during the period of political transition .....	19
0.5 The expansion of artisanal mining.....	21
1. Introduction.....	26
1.1 Anthropological accounts of mining and metallurgy in Sub-Sahara Africa .....	29
1.1.1 Saving the artisanal miner from oblivion .....	29
1.1.2 Mining and modernity.....	31
1.1.3 Evidence of black worker resistance.....	34
1.1.4 The archaeology and anthropology of mining.....	36
1.1.5 Theorizing mining cultures : liminality, habitus and moral economy .....	38
1.2 The Western preoccupation with the ‘crisis in masculinity’ .....	43
1.2.1 Psychoanalytic views on masculinity.....	43
1.2.2 The sex-role framework .....	44
1.2.3 Feminist scholarship and the literature on women.....	45
1.2.4 The emergence of masculinity studies as a distinctive field of research.....	48
1.2.5 Critical remarks on Connell’s masculinity model.....	51
1.3 Two trends in the masculinity practices of Katangese miners .....	53
1.3.1 Concepts for the analysis of the levelling trend.....	54
1.3.2 Concepts for the analysis of the differentiating trend .....	56
1.3.3 Some remarks on the notions of subculture and self-making.....	58
1.4 Methodology .....	62
1.4.1 Research assistants.....	62
1.4.2 The selection of Lwambo as a research location .....	64
1.4.3 Different stages in the approach of the field.....	65
1.4.4 Research techniques .....	66
1.5 Overview of the chapters .....	68
2. Working for Hedonism .....	72

2.1	Introduction.....	72
2.2	The gender ideology of the UMHK.....	74
2.2.1	The institutionalization of a form of hegemonic masculinity.....	74
2.2.2	The promotion of monogamous marriages.....	77
2.2.3	The medicalization of motherhood.....	80
2.3	Gender at work in Hedo's mining community.....	82
2.3.1	Armand Hedo's contract with the UMHK.....	82
2.3.2	The emergence of a subculture among the members of Hedo's workforce.....	85
2.3.3	Evidence of a hierarchy of masculinities in Hedo's mining compound (I).....	90
2.3.4	Evidence of a hierarchy of masculinities in Hedo's mining compound (II).....	97
2.4	Conclusions.....	106
3.	The joker and the thief.....	107
3.1	Introduction.....	107
3.2	Money and masculinity in the mining subculture.....	111
3.2.1	Views on money handling.....	112
3.2.2	Rules for financial arrangements.....	118
3.2.3	Mining masculinities associated with money handling.....	125
3.3	Lessons from a deal gone awry.....	129
3.3.1	Background information about the members of the digging team.....	129
3.3.2	The agreement with Eugène Kasongo.....	134
3.3.3	Tshinyama's departure from Kalabi.....	136
3.3.4	The rise and fall of Tshinyama in Mbola.....	140
3.3.5	A sensational arrest in Kalabi.....	150
3.3.6	The masculinity ideals of a Lunda-Ndembu migrant.....	152
3.3.7	Things fall apart.....	155
3.4	Conclusions.....	160
4.	Stories about female mining spirits.....	163
4.1	Introduction.....	163
4.2	Living on the edge: artisanal miners between life and death.....	168
4.2.1	Mortal fear in the mine shaft.....	168
4.2.2	The ecstatic joys of survivorship.....	170
4.2.3	The cathartic effects of deadly mining accidents.....	172
4.2.4	Celebrating liminality.....	174
4.3	Female mining spirits and changing gender relations.....	178
4.3.1	Rising groundwater and the grudge of a female mining spirit.....	179
4.3.2	Lovers in the twilight zone.....	190
4.3.3	Musalaba and Madame Hélène.....	195

4.3.4	Van Damme's near-death experience .....	207
4.4	Conclusions .....	212
5.	Rastaman goes mining .....	216
5.1	Introduction .....	216
5.2	Rastafarians in search of law and order .....	222
5.2.1	Soldiers of love: the emergence of the Katangese Rastafarian movement .....	222
5.2.2	The doctrine of Katangese Rastafarianism .....	227
5.2.2.1	‘Rasta tête’: the need for introspection, self-knowledge and concentration .....	228
5.2.2.2	‘Rasta créateur’: the need for altruism and creativity .....	231
5.2.2.3	‘No violence’: the need for solidarity and self-discipline .....	233
5.2.3	The hierarchy of masculinities among Katangese Rastafarians .....	243
5.3	Rastafarian diggers on the move .....	246
5.3.1	The composition of a Rastafarian digging team .....	246
5.3.2	The performance of masculinities under a ‘situation of duress’ in the Nimura mine ..	254
5.3.3	Commander Bob’s visit to the Ecole Jah in Lwambo .....	260
5.3.4	An improvised marriage ceremony .....	263
5.3.5	Love child, never meant to be .....	269
5.3.6	A drunken man is always dry .....	272
5.3.7	Rising from the ranks .....	278
5.4	Conclusions .....	285
6.	General conclusions .....	287
6.1	Introduction .....	287
6.2	Relevance of the research findings .....	290
6.2.1	For the research on artisanal mining .....	290
6.2.2	For the research on masculinity .....	293
7.	Bibliography .....	303
8.	Summaries .....	370
8.1	Summary in Dutch .....	370
8.2	Summary in French .....	376
8.3	Summary in English .....	382

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## List of abbreviations

AFDL	Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaire
AIMO	Affaires Indigènes et Main-d'Oeuvre
ANR	Agence Nationale de Renseignements
BCK	Compagnie du Chemin de Fer du Bas-Congo au Katanga
CEPSI	Centre d'Etude des Problèmes Sociaux Indigènes
CMKK	Coopérative minière Madini Kwa Kilimo
CNL	Conseil National de Libération
CO	Cycle d'Orientation
COM	Cour d'Ordre Militaire
CONAKAT	Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga
CPP	Comité du Pouvoir Populaire
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EMAK	Exploitants Miniers Artisanaux du Katanga
FAP	Forces d'Autodéfense Populaire

FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FC	Franc Congolais
FIP	Frais d'Intervention Ponctuels
FNLA	Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola
FNLC	Front National de Libération du Congo
Gécamines	Générale des Carrières et des Mines
Gécomin	Générale congolaise des minerais
Gécomines	Générale congolaise des mines
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISAT	Instituto de Salud y Trabajo
JMPR	Jeunesse du Mouvement Populaire pour la Révolution
MK	Mwamba Kabasele
MOI	Main-d'Oeuvre Indigène
MOI/C	Main-d'Oeuvre Indigène Civilisée
MOI/O	Main-d'Oeuvre Indigène Ordinaire
MOI/S	Main-d'Oeuvre Indigène Spécialisée

MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola
MPR	Mouvement Populaire pour la Révolution
MRFCO	Mouvement de Rastafarisme au Congo
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPEN	Oeuvre de Protection de l'Enfant Noir
PNC	Police Nationale Congolaise
PPRD	Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie
RCD-Goma	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie, Goma section
RCK	Radio Communautaire du Katanga
RCD-ML	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Mouvement de Libération
RCD-N	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-National
SAESSCAM	Service d'Assistance et d'Encadrement du Small-Scale Mining
SNCC	Société des Chemins de Fer du Congo
SNEL	Société Nationale d'Electricité

SOGEFOR	Société Générale des Forces hydro-électriques du Katanga
SOGEMIN	Société Générale des Mines
UDPS	Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social
ULB	Université Libre de Bruxelles
UMHK	Union Minière du Haut-Katanga
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association
UNILU	Université de Lubumbashi
UNITA	Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
USGS	United States Geological Survey
ZER	Zones Exclusives de Recherche

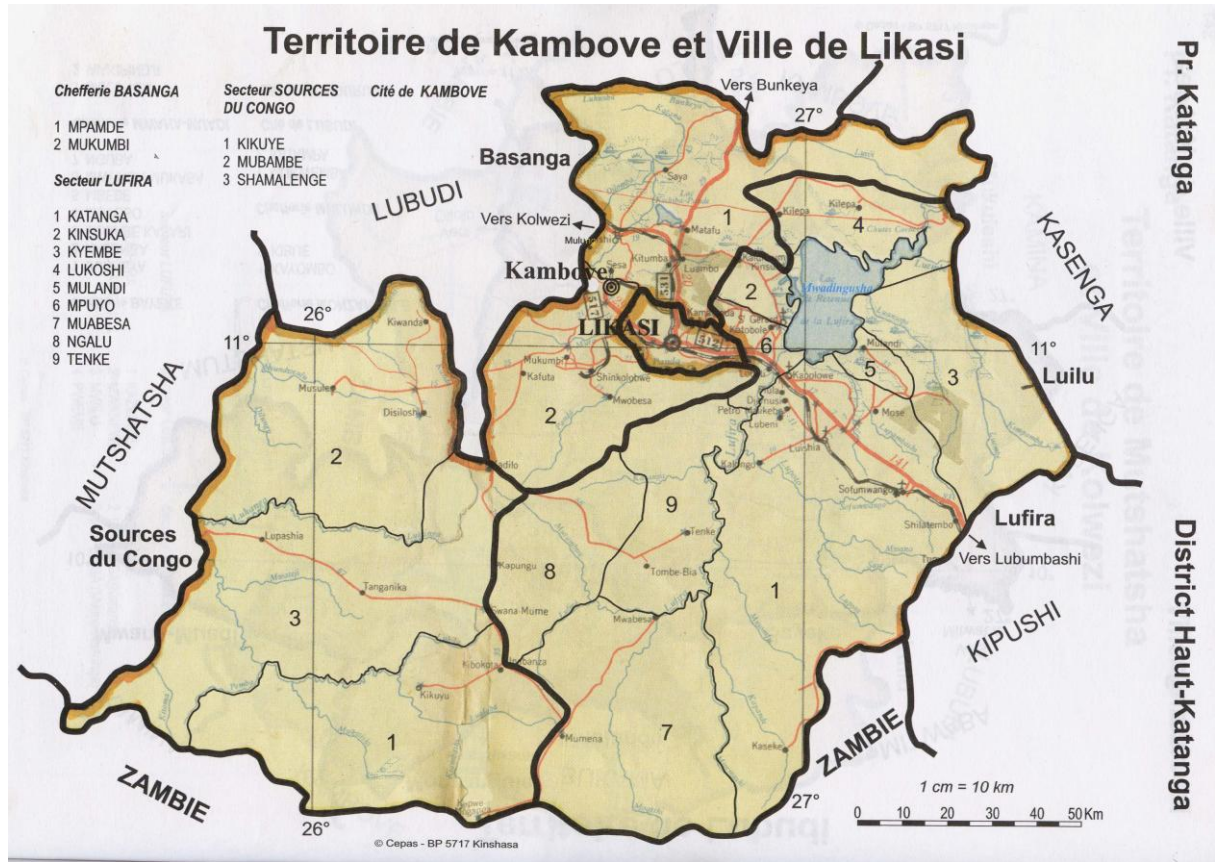
## Map 1: The Katanga province



By courtesy of the International Crisis Group



## Map 2: The Kambove territory



Source: de Saint Moulin & Tshibanda 2005

## 0. Preface

*'We mined here for a hundred years  
Bringing the nation wealth  
Father, son and grandson,  
Too are planted 'neath this earth'  
(Coggin 2006: 141)*



UMHK workers during colonial times (source: Brion & Moreau 2006)

This dissertation deals with the lives and practices of artisanal miners in Katanga, the southeast province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In order to bring readers up to speed on the most important events in Katanga's mining history, and in order to inform them about the political-economic context in which the phenomenon of artisanal mining has come into existence, I will use this preface to present a succinct overview of the main stages in the development of the region's mining industry in the past century. Subsequently, I will devote the first chapter of this dissertation to a discussion of my own approach to the issue of artisanal mining, to a presentation of the theoretical framework and the methodology that have guided me in my research, and to a survey of the various chapters.

## 0.1 The birth and coming of age of industrial mining in Katanga

With a surface of 496.965 km<sup>2</sup>, Katanga is 16 times bigger than Belgium (Lekime 1966: 14). The Central African copperbelt, which stretches along the DRC/Zambia and DRC/Angola borders in southern Katanga, contains 34 % of the world's cobalt reserves and 10 % of the world's copper reserves. In addition to this, it also holds various deposits of minerals associated with copper, including zinc, silver, uranium, lead and germanium (Global Witness 2004a: 23). Belgian geologist Jules Cornet, who toured round Katanga as a member of the Bia-Francqui expedition between 8 August and 12 September 1892, was so impressed by the region's mineral wealth that he reportedly called it a 'geological scandal' (Lekime 1992: 19-25).

The industrial exploitation of Katangese natural resources took off at the beginning of the twentieth century. Controlled by the *Société Générale de Belgique* as well as by *Tanganyika Concessions Ltd*, the *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* (UMHK) was created in 1906, after a number of rich copper deposits had been discovered in the region. Initially, the UMHK had problems getting started due to the area's geographical isolation and the lack of a local and stable labour force (Buelens 2007: 197). Yet, once the company had managed to solve these two issues by constructing a railway to the Atlantic Coast (Katzenellenbogen 1973), it grew to one of the largest copper and cobalt producers in the world (Perrings 1979; Higginson 1989; De Meulder 1996). After their extraction, minerals went through a process of refining in the factories of the UMHK in Katanga, before being shipped to Belgium, where they were further refined in the company's metallurgical plants in Olen and Hoboken. During the colonial period, the UMHK succeeded in transforming Katanga from a region characterized by extensive agriculture into a showpiece of the mining industry, while simultaneously transforming a savannah area into an urbanized zone with factories, mission stations and schools (Rubbers 2006: 115-116).

During the Second World War, the Katangese mine of Shinkolobwe was of strategic importance for the Allied Forces. With minerals containing 65 % of U308 on average, Shinkolobwe constituted one of the richest uranium deposits in the world. When the UMHK saw that the Allies' Manhattan project was in dire need of huge quantities of uranium to prepare the creation of atomic bombs, it decided to reopen the Shinkolobwe mine, which had been closed and flooded since 1937. All in all, the company supplied 75% of the uranium needed to prepare the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 (Lekime 1992: 122-132).

Since the copper industry continued to thrive in the years after the war, it is hardly surprising that both population numbers and the standard of living showed an upward trend. By 1958, the Central African

copperbelt had a population of almost half a million Africans. Their purchasing power was perhaps the highest of all urbanized Africans in tropical Africa at that time. Although the copperbelt had only come into existence in the second half of the twentieth century, it had managed to become the biggest market complex of Central and Eastern Africa, with goods sometimes coming from places as far as 600 or even 900 miles away (Miracle 1962: 698-699).

The Katangese secession, proclaimed on 11 July 1960, resulted from collusion between copper mining interests, the Belgian government and local political actors favouring a continued foreign control of the mines in the region (Nest 2006: 17). There can be no doubt that the UMHK endorsed Tshombe's decision to break away from the rest of the country. From a telex sent by the company's Elisabethville office to its headquarters in Brussels on 12 July 1960, it can be gathered that the UMHK was not at all surprised by the events in Katanga and had made up its mind to support the secessionist government financially. Moreover, a senior executive of the Société Générale is known to have contacted King Baudouin the same day, asking him to make sure that the Belgian government would not obstruct Katanga's independence (De Vos et al. 2004: 41).

In 1965, the UMHK owned assets with an estimated value of 430 million dollar, including metallurgical plants, auxiliary industries, agricultural equipment and a vast social infrastructure. It boasted an annual copper production of approximately 300.000 tonnes, employed more than 20.000 people (including 2000 expats) and produced a net benefit of 53 million dollar. In addition to this, the company generated 50 per cent of public revenues and 70 per cent of foreign exchange revenues (Rubbers 2006: 116).

## **0.2 The gradual decline of industrial mining during the Mobutu era**

In 1967, the UMHK was taken over by the Zairian state. The motive behind this nationalization was that the Mobutu regime wanted to increase its political independence from foreign corporations dominating the Zairian mining business (Nest 2006: 18). The name of the Katangese mining giant successively changed from *Gécomin (Générale congolaise des minerais)* to *Gécomines (Générale congolaise des Mines)* and finally to *Gécamines (Générale des Carrières et des Mines)*. The management of the new company was granted to the *Société générale des Minerais (SOGEMIN)*, a branch of the *Société générale de Belgique*, which pocketed a commission of 6.5 % on the sale of the minerals in return for technical services rendered on production, exploration and marketing (Rubbers 2006: 116; Bezy, Peemans & Wautelet 1981: 82-85).



The nationalization of Zaire's most important mining company had ambiguous consequences. While, on the one hand, it contributed to the creation of an indigenous bourgeoisie and to the 'africanization' of the company's workforce, on the other hand, it also jeopardized the reliability of mineral rents for the Zairian state. Given the fact that the Zairian government assumed market risk, it also exposed itself to greater price fluctuations than had previously been the case. When, in 1975, the international copper prices dropped dramatically, this had a very negative impact on state revenues (Nest 2006: 18). To make things worse, Gécamines was faced with the quadrupling of the price of petroleum products<sup>1</sup> as well as with the closure of the export routes to Angola as a result of the civil war in that country<sup>2</sup> (André 2003: *passim*).

At the end of the 1970s, Zaire was shaken up by the so-called Shaba wars<sup>3</sup>. In 1977 and 1978, former members of Tshombe's police force, known by the name of Katangese gendarmes, invaded the country's most important mining province from Angolan territory (Zinzen 2004: 134; 221, footnote 74)<sup>4</sup>. A small group of low-ranking Zairian executives seized upon the occasion to demonstrate their value for Gécamines: they secured the continuation of the operations and tried to convince their leaders to africanize the high-ranking executive positions in the company by arguing that the expat salaries represented too high a cost for Gécamines. By the second half of the 1980s, they were able to reap the fruits of their campaign, as the leader of the protest movement succeeded in gaining the presidency of the board of administration (Rubbers 2006: 124-125).

Although the fraudulent appropriation of Gécamines' assets by members of the Mobutu regime started as early as the end of the 1960s, the lootings became far more systematic and significant in the course

1 Apart from Libya, Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, Gabon, Angola, Tunisia and Congo, which became significant producers of petroleum products from the 1950s onwards, all African states were forced to import oil from abroad. While this caused little problem during the 1960s since the oil price was relatively low, things changed in the 1970s. Following the deposition of the Iranian Shah and the ensuing invasion of Iran, the price shot up to 34 USD between 1979 and 1981 (Fage 1995: 502).

2 In Angola, the liberation war against Portuguese colonialism was not waged by one united African army, but by three nationalist movements, namely the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA), the Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA) and, finally, the Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola (FNLA). The ethnic, racial, rural/urban and ideological differences between the members of the three movements resulted in an open war, exacerbated by the dynamics of the Cold War. Whereas the Soviet Union and Cuba supported the MPLA, the United States and apartheid South Africa provided assistance to UNITA (Cilliers 2000: 1).

<sup>3</sup> During the Mobutu era, Katanga was called Shaba, which means copper.

<sup>4</sup> The history of the Katangese gendarmes goes back to the beginning of the 1960s, when Tshombe declared Katanga's independence. On that occasion, he raised an army consisting mainly of Lunda. The corps' name was changed into the *Front National de Libération du Congo* (FNLC) after its members were forced to cross the border with Angola at the end of the Katangese secession. The FNLC grew out to be a powerful mercenary force, incorporating not only Lunda but also various opponents of the Mobutu regime. At the end of the 1970s, two attempts were made to invade Congolese territory via neighbouring countries. The first invasion took place on 8 March 1977 and caused a shockwave in diplomatic circles. Only with the military support of France, Belgium, the United States, Morocco and Egypt was Mobutu able to restore order. A similar scenario was played out in 1978, when France, the United States and Belgium came to Mobutu's rescue. Finally, the long-term dictator agreed to recognize the FNLC as a legal political party in 1990, thereby persuading half of the Katangese gendarmes to put down their arms and return to their area of origin (Goossens 2000: 251).

of the 1980s, when Zaire was forced to apply structural adjustment measures imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions<sup>5</sup>. As a result of these measures, Mobutu and his allies experienced increasing difficulties to find enough money to cover their personal expenses (Callaghy 1984: 196). Zaire's official economy was weakened by the existence of a vast clientelist structure run by Mobutu cronies. The embezzled revenues were distributed among members of the MPR, public servants and members of the judicial apparatus in the form of salaries or special advantages (Gould 1980; Gran 1979; Schatzberg 1980). For their part, the directors of Gécamines were unable to refuse orders coming from Kinshasa, since their position depended directly on Mobutu's goodwill (Rubbers 2006: 118-119).

At regular intervals, the central authorities in Kinshasa took possession of part of the revenues of Gécamines, a practice which came to be known under the name of '*ponctions*' or punctures (Gorus 2002: 5-6). Profits were transmitted to the State Treasury and were supposed to be given back to Gécamines afterwards. In reality, however, this refund never materialized. As a result, Gécamines did not have enough money to cover its debts and was forced to develop different kinds of financial constructions to prevent its minerals from being seized by its creditors. This was one of the reasons why the company started cooperating with external traders for the sale of its products. The traders bought Gécamines' finalized products but also accepted to give the company advances, so that it was able to carry on with its production (André 2003: chapter 6).

The end of the 1980s saw the development of networks specialized in the theft of cobalt from Gécamines' metallurgical plants in Likasi and Kolwezi. These illicit operations were organized by locally based expats, mostly of Greek or Lebanese origin, who mobilized funds through contacts with clients on the international market and powerful businessmen from their own communities. In order to increase their chances of success, the expats sought help from a number of Congolese associates who were able to secure protection from members of local MPR-dominated political and military networks. On the one hand, these associates bought off the metallurgical plant's executive staff, the security guards (*garde industrielle*) and a number of army officials. On the other hand, they composed a team of 50 to 100 people charged with the task of stealing cobalt inside the factory building (Rubbers 2004: 32-33).

Apart from the trade in minerals illegally taken away from Gécamines' factories, there was also a trade in fuel stolen from the mining company. The key players in the latter business were members of the military, who had the advantage of being able to enter the company premises without being

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<sup>5</sup> Structural adjustment consisted of scaling back state control and encouraging the development of the free market. The rationale behind this process was that the weight, inefficiency and corruption of African states stood in the way of development (Chabal & Daloz 1999: 119-123).

stopped by company guards. Their suppliers were drivers of heavy machines, trucks and trains. Although this trade was obviously detrimental to the functioning of Gécamines, it did have two advantages for the local economy: on the one hand, it generated benefits for the military and the traders involved, and, on the other, it had a positive effect on the river fishing industry as well as on the food production in the area around Nyunzu, Kitenge and Kongolo in Northern Katanga. Given the shortages of fuel from legal sources, the trade in fuel stolen from Gécamines was of vital importance for the supply of salt fish, maize, cassava and peanuts to the urban markets of the Katangese copperbelt, while it also helped to hold down food prices paid by urban consumers (Rukarangira wa Nkera & Grundfest Schoepf 1991: 87-88).

### 0.3 The negative impact of the political and economic crisis of the 1990s

In September 1990, Gécamines was faced with the collapse of the Kamoto mine. As a result of this accident, the company's total production dropped 90 per cent between 1989 and 1993 (Nest 2006: 19). Around the same time, Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza, the then governor of Katanga, launched his campaign '*Debout Katanga!*' (stand up, Katanga!). Claiming to strive for the creation of a new Katangese middle class (*classe moyenne*), he authorized the commercialization of scrap material (*mitrailles*) originating from Gécamines plants. This meant that ordinary citizens could obtain a permit to enter the factory buildings of the moribund mining parastatal in order to collect copper junk which they could then sell to local or international buyers<sup>6</sup>. At first sight, this appeared to be a smart initiative, as it actually gave people a chance to make some extra money in times of deep economic crisis. Yet, it soon became clear that the trade in *mitrailles* was also leading to the destruction of a substantial part of Gécamines' already obsolete production apparatus (Dibwe 2001: 159). This had disastrous consequences for the company's economic performance. Whereas, in 1990, Gécamines had still contributed 14,8 per cent to the Congolese state budget, by 1992, this figure had dropped to zero. In a similar fashion, Gécamines' copper production declined from 418000 tonnes in 1988-1990 to merely 38900 tonnes in 1996 (Kennes 2005: 161). In 1994, a specialist of the US Geological Survey stated that the Mobutu government would need between 500 million USD and 1 billion USD to renovate and upgrade its mining concerns. Moreover, he wrote that '*even after banks put the necessary financial packages back in place, Gécamines will need three to five years before it can produce at "normal" levels*' (US Geological Survey 1994: 17.5).

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<sup>6</sup> One of the most attractive characteristics of copper is that it is highly recyclable. Remarkably enough, after reprocessing, recycled or secondary copper is indistinguishable from copper originating from ores (i.e. primary copper) (International Copper Study Group 2007: 5). In 2005, recycled copper accounted for 34% of copper consumption (ibidem: 19).

In addition to tolerating *mitrailles* trade, Kyungu wa Kumwanza took another measure that had a very detrimental effect on the functioning of Gécamines. Being in cahoots with Mobutu, who wanted to destroy the power base of the *Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social* (UDPS), Zaire's leading opposition party which was very popular among people from the Kasai region, he encouraged the 'autochthonous' Katangese to chase away all Kasaian immigrants from Katanga and to replace them by a local bourgeoisie (Goossens 2000: 252-254). Since there was a considerable degree of popular resentment about the fact that Kasaians had always been able to occupy the majority of the positions in middle and upper management of Gécamines, Kyungu's call gave rise to a violent and long-lasting xenophobic campaign throughout Katanga (Goossens 2000: 247). As a result, Gécamines lost a substantial part of its executive personnel within the time span of only a couple of years (Dibwe & Mutombo 2005).

Under pressure from major international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, the government of Kengo wa Dondo carefully started privatizing the Congolese mining sector in the middle of the 1990s. In most cases, foreign companies were expected to contribute capital and expertise, in exchange for the acquisition of management and exploitation rights of Gécamines. Thanks to these new agreements, it became possible to restart certain branches of Gécamines, not only with regard to exploration and the processing of tailings but also with regard to the production itself (Kennes 2000: 311-312; Verbruggen 2006: 29).

Most of the tenders in the mining sector were won by so-called 'junior companies'. Given the slowly declining copper price and the downward economic trend in the country as a whole, 'major' mining companies preferred to leave it up to these small and specialized 'juniors' to carry out the inherently costly and risky exploration activities, for this allowed them to save expenses. At a later stage, the 'majors' could then try to take over the mining licences from the juniors or to conclude a partnership with them for the exploitation of the mineral deposit(s) at stake (Kennes 2002a: 602). Although, on the one hand, 'juniors' resembled 'majors' in that they were unfamiliar with the political and social context in which the Congolese mining sector was embedded, on the other hand, they stood out by their less complicated structure as well as by their higher level of mobility and versatility, which made them more capable of striking informal and sometimes even illicit deals with government officials in order to land contracts (Rubbers 2004: 28).

Near the middle of the 1990s, it became obvious that the days of Mobutu's regime were numbered. While, on the domestic level, Mobutu was faced with growing dissatisfaction at the disastrous state of



the Zairian economy<sup>7</sup>, on the international level, he had to cope with harsh criticism on his lax attitude towards the former Rwandese army and the extremist Interahamwe militias who had fled to Zaire in the course of the Rwandese genocide in 1994. Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who had been leading various insignificant rebel movements since the beginning of the 1960s, took advantage of this to invade Zaire in October 1996. With support from Angola, Rwanda and Uganda, his '*Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaire*' (AFDL) succeeded in toppling the Mobutu regime in May 1997 (Willame 1998: 68-72; Kennes 2003: 304-322).

Contrary to what is generally believed, the AFDL did not conclude a single contract with a foreign company while it was marching on Kinshasa. However, Kabila's party did leave its imprint on the Congolese mining industry by introducing the system of so-called '*Zones Exclusives de Recherche*' (ZER) (Exclusive Zones of Research), which had a maximum surface of 20.000 square kilometres. Companies equipped with a ZER permit had the permission to engage in exploration activities in a well-defined area. Once a company had reached the end of its exploration period, it had the possibility of concluding a contract with the Congolese government, a '*convention minière*' or mining convention that could only become effective after an official confirmation through a presidential decree (Kennes 2000: 312-314).

On 2 August 1998, Kabila was faced with a new war, which pitted him against his former allies Rwanda and Uganda. The latter were strongly dissatisfied with Kabila's move to become less dependent on them, because they feared that their economic and security interests would sustain severe damage as a result of it (International Crisis Group 1998: 1). For his part, Kabila tried to prepare his country for war by handing over some of Gécamines' assets to businessmen close to Robert Mugabe, in exchange for Zimbabwe's military support<sup>8</sup>. Although, in theory, these agreements were supposed to be beneficial for the political elites in both countries for a period between 10 and 25 years, in practice, they turned out to be rather shaky, as they could be revoked from one day to the next by a presidential decree (Rubbers 2006: 127). Moreover, Zimbabwean investors were impeded by the inefficient Congolese banking sector and they were faced with the fact that many Congolese did

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<sup>7</sup> Between November 1993 and November 1995, the level of inflation amounted to 57656 % (Dibwe 2001: 161).

<sup>8</sup> Between 2001 and 2003, a UN Panel of Experts published several reports on the Congolese war economy (see: Interim Report, 16 January 2001 (S/2001/49); Report, 12 April 2001 (S/2001/357); Addendum Report, 13 November 2001 (S/2001/1072); Interim Report, 22 May 2002 (S/2002/565); Report, 16 October 2002 (S/2002/1146); Addendum, 20 June 2003 (S/2002/1146/Add. I); Report, 23 October 2003 (S/2003/1027)). The UN reports provide a detailed description of how members of so-called 'elite networks', composed of politicians, businessmen and military officials, took advantage of the chaotic situation during the war to obtain a privileged access to natural resources. According to the Panel of Experts, the belligerents used the revenues from the trade in these resources to fund their war effort, but also to enrich themselves (Verbruggen 2006: 28).

not pay their debts to Zimbabwean firms. At some point, even the Congolese state owed money to two Zimbabwean parastatals (Nest 2006: 50).

#### **0.4 The revival of the Katangese mining industry during the period of political transition**

During the peace talks in South Africa in 2002<sup>9</sup>, it was decided that, during the transition period, the Congolese parliament would set up a commission with the aim of scrutinizing the validity of economic and financial contracts signed between 1996 and 30 June 2003. In addition to this, the commission would also be charged with the task of calculating the financial costs of the war. It took two years before the commission, composed of 17 parliamentarians from a cross-section of political parties, was finally able to start its investigative work under the chairmanship of Christophe Lutundula. Its final report was completed in 2005 and made public in February 2006. Arguing that dozens of contracts signed during the war were either illegal or almost useless with regard to the development of the country, the Lutundula commission recommended that some of the contracts be revoked and others be renegotiated or amended. Furthermore, it proposed to declare a moratorium on new contracts until after the elections<sup>10</sup> (Global Witness 2006: 38; Verbruggen 2006: 25-27).

Meanwhile, the World Bank attempted to boost the Katangese mining sector through the promotion of foreign investment (Global Witness 2006: 35). Considering the mining sector as an important dynamic force in Congo's economic recovery, it launched the restructuring of mining parastatals such as Gécamines, the preparation of a new mining registry and the promulgation of a new mining code in July 2002 (Verbruggen 2006: 29). The aim of the new mining code was to attract new investors by offering them solid legal parameters and rules with regard to the prospecting, exploration, processing

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<sup>9</sup> The Global and Inclusive Agreement on the Transition in the DRC, signed in Pretoria on 16 December 2002 between the Congolese government, the principal rebel movements (RCD-Goma, MLC, RCD-ML, RCD-N and the Mai-Mai), the most important parties of the political opposition and civil society organizations, was ratified in April 2003. The transitional government – consisting of 1 president, 4 vice-presidents, 36 ministers and 25 deputy ministers - was charged with the task of reunifying and reconstructing the country, establishing an integrated national army and organizing legislative and presidential democratic elections (Verbruggen 2006: 16).

<sup>10</sup> According to the report of the Lutundula commission, the failure of Gécamines' relaunch was largely due to the absence of a strategic vision on the part of the Congolese government. The report suggested that the negotiations between Gécamines and private partners were not well prepared, neither by the directors of the company nor by the tutelage. Apparently, in none of the cases, a preliminary study was made of the value of the assets that Gécamines was planning to put on the negotiation table. The inevitable result of this was that, in most cases, Gécamines' assets ended up being undervalued in the eventual contract. Apart from that, it appears that some of the private partners were also partly responsible for the failed relaunch of Congo's biggest mining parastatal. As a matter of fact, they failed to respect their part of the agreement: they did not invest as much money as they had promised or they did not carry out the transfer of technology as planned. A couple of these private mining companies lacked the necessary financial capacity to be able to participate in industrial mining projects in a serious manner (Verbruggen 2006: 36).

and sale of Congolese minerals (Global Witness 2004b: 15; Mazalto 2005: 7-31). Furthermore, in May 2003, the World Bank helped Gécamines to launch a so-called 'voluntary departure' programme (*départ volontaire*), with the intention of reducing the number of personnel from 24.000 to 14.000 (Rubbers 2006: 117)<sup>11</sup>.

As a result of the gradual decrease in conflict in Congo as a whole, the announcement of the first democratic elections since Congolese independence and the adoption of a new mining code, the investment climate in Katanga became a lot more favourable than it used to be. Another factor that certainly had a positive influence on the industrial mining sector in Katanga was the spectacular increase of the copper and cobalt prices on the world market. While the global demand for copper rose due a combination of increased consumer spending and expanding infrastructure in rapidly developing countries such as India and China<sup>12</sup>, the global demand for cobalt went up as a result of the worldwide increase in chemical applications such as catalysts and rechargeable batteries<sup>13</sup>. Significantly, the copper price at the London Metal Exchange reached an all-time high of 4,08 USD per pound in April 2008 (US Geological Survey 2009), whereas cobalt prices tripled between May 2003 and June 2004 (Kennes 2005: 173). Encouraged by the sudden 'metal mania', mining companies, banks and institutional investors started showing an interest in countries like the DRC, which were previously considered too risky for investment (Global Witness 2006: 11; 13).

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<sup>11</sup> Although, at first sight, the voluntary redundancy pay-offs appeared to be quite substantial, ranging from 1.900 USD to 30.000 USD for the most senior managers, the programme was still looked at with Argus' eyes by members of Gécamines' workforce. Apart from condemning the fact that many of them had already worked for two years without pay when the pay-offs were carried out, they also deplored the uncompensated loss of a wide range of social provisions previously offered by Gécamines, including food rations, education and healthcare (Global Witness 2004b: 17; ASADHO 2003: 4; Verbruggen 2006: 30).

<sup>12</sup> Since 1978, China has witnessed an unprecedented economic growth. While the per capita income rose ninefold to 1.700 USD in 2005, the number of those suffering from poverty dropped from 280 million in 1978 to 140 million in 2004. In the beginning of the 1990s, the Chinese government realized that it needed to have access to secure sources of energy as well as to other critical resources if it wanted to keep its economy going. Being aware of the possible impact of political instability in the Middle East on its own resource provision and learning from America's military intervention and occupation of Iraq in 2003, China decided to set its mind on Africa, a continent with a great amount of unexploited energy sources as well as timber, agriculture and fisheries (Alden 2007: 8-13).

<sup>13</sup> Cobalt has increasingly been used in rechargeable batteries since the mid 1980s. Given the reduced size and the portable nature of electronic appliances such as camcorders, portable telephones and laptop computers, there has been a growing need for high capacity, rechargeable batteries to power these devices (source: info from the website of the Cobalt Development Institute: [www.thecdi.com](http://www.thecdi.com)).

## 0.5 The expansion of artisanal mining

The revival of industrial mining coincided with a remarkable expansion of artisanal mining. Benefiting from the legalization of the artisanal mining sector by Laurent-Désiré Kabila's regime<sup>14</sup>, thousands of men went to the mining areas to work as diggers or creuseurs. Basically, they worked in two different places: either legally, in concessions granted to them by Gécamines on instructions of the Congolese government, or illegally, in concessions belonging to private companies or to Gécamines. Organizing themselves in teams of 4 to 6 people, the creuseurs supplied minerals to middlemen or négociants, who, on their turn, arranged for the transport of the minerals from the mines to the warehouses of maisons (buying houses) established in Kolwezi, Likasi and Lubumbashi, Katanga's three main mining hubs (Rubbers 2004: 34; Mthembu-Salter 2009: passim).

Two different categories of négociants could be distinguished: on the one hand, mineral buyers working directly for specific maisons and selling exclusively to them, and, on the other hand, mineral buyers working independently, selling their products to the company offering them the best price. Every maison composed its own price list with a different price being paid in accordance with the percentage of copper and cobalt that could be found in the load of minerals. There were price variations between companies, between regions and between seasons (Global Witness 2006: 20; Kennes 2005: 172-175).

When a buying house decided to sell the minerals to a foreign company, it struck a deal with a transport company, which took care of the transport of the minerals by truck to Zambia via the Kasumbalesa border post. Alternatively, minerals could also be transported into Zambia by rail, via the Sakania border post. While some of the ore merely transited through Zambia on its way to South Africa or Tanzania, some was also processed by smelters located on the Zambian Copperbelt, along with Zambian local production<sup>15</sup>. The products arriving in South Africa were usually offloaded in Johannesburg, where they were re-sampled and packed into containers. Subsequently, these containers were brought to the port of Durban in order to be shipped to companies mostly based in China and

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<sup>14</sup> Referring to the ordinance-law nr. 81-013 of 2 April 1981, the former Minister of Mines Kibasa Maliba signed a ministerial decree which authorized the artisanal exploitation and trading of minerals in Katanga (ASADHO 2003: 6).

<sup>15</sup> Basically, there were 4 exit points through which Congolese copper and cobalt could leave Zambia: Chirundu (to South Africa via Zimbabwe), Livingstone (to South Africa via Botswana), Nakonde (to Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania) and Chanida (to Beira Port in Mozambique) (Global Witness 2006: 11; 15).

other parts of Asia<sup>16</sup>. Sometimes, the products were processed or retested by companies established in South Africa (Global Witness 2006: 15; 47; 48).

For various branches of the local administration, the phenomenon of artisanal mining offered interesting opportunities in terms of revenue collection through the imposition of taxes or fines (André 2003: chapter 6). Though, in May 2004, only the *Agence Nationale de Renseignements* (ANR) had its representatives at the entry and exit points of the mining sites, by late 2005, this situation had changed significantly. Apart from the ANR, the *Police des Mines* (the branch of the national police force responsible for law enforcement in the mines), the Ministry of Mines, the mayor's office and numerous traditional chiefs had also delegated people to collect payments from the diggers and the middlemen working in the mines. In most cases, the payments were made in cash, but sometimes they were also made in kind, that is, through the transmission of a couple of bags of minerals (Global Witness 2006: 11; 15).

Another organization with representatives stationed at almost every mining site was EMAK (*Exploitants Miniers Artisansaux du Katanga*), which was created in 1999. According to its memorandum of association, its main goal was to defend the interests of *négociants* and artisanal miners. In addition to protecting and supervising members of these two groups, it also registered them and kept records of the number and identity of workers. In exchange for these services, members were to pay a membership fee. It should be noted that membership was voluntary: nobody was obliged to join EMAK, even though the organization did its best to persuade everyone to buy a membership card. Still, EMAK officials did not shy away from making extra money through the imposition of illicit taxes on both miners and *négociants* (Global Witness 2006: 22-23)<sup>17</sup>.

The monopoly of EMAK was broken in 2004. This was due to the arrival of a new player on the scene, namely the '*Coopérative minière Madini Kwa Kilimo*' (CMKK). CMKK defined itself as a cooperative, a theoretically neutral and thus attractive intermediary between the miners and the buying houses in the big cities. As could be expected, it did not take long before an open conflict erupted between EMAK and CMKK, with the former accusing the latter of stealing away its members by offering them cheaper membership fees. Just like their colleagues of EMAK, CMKK officials

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<sup>16</sup> In 2005, the countries importing Congolese copper and cobalt included Belgium, China, Finland, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, USA and Zambia (Global Witness 2006: 49).

<sup>17</sup> While miners were sometimes forced to pay a monthly fee to EMAK representatives, *négociants* were only allowed to take their products away from the mines if they paid a certain amount of money per bag of minerals. Furthermore, agents of the *Policar* (*Police des carriers*), EMAK's internal police force, did not restrict themselves to their official tasks of protecting the products from the mines against theft or substitution and resolving disputes between miners or between miners and *négociants*. As a matter of fact, they asked miners to pay them protection money, thereby engaging in a form of racketeering (Global Witness 2006: 22-23).

sometimes tried to take advantage of their position, for instance by waiting a long time before paying the miners for their minerals or by prohibiting them to sell their minerals to other parties (Global Witness 2006: 24).

SAESSCAM (*Service d'assistance et d'encadrement du small-scale mining*), established by the Congolese government in 1999 with the aim of organizing and overseeing artisanal and small-scale mining throughout the DRC, rendered the competition between EMAK and CMKK even more intense than it already was. SAESSCAM was not only expected to increase productivity and to improve artisanal miners' working conditions, but also to combat fraud by developing methods to trace products from the mine to the point of sale. Although, in the beginning, SAESSCAM worked across several ministries, in 2003, it was transformed into an official government department that was part of the Ministry of Mines. From the second half of 2005 onwards, SAESSCAM started focusing on artisanal copper and cobalt mining in the DRC (Global Witness 2006: 25).

In the early years of the international market's 'metal mania', only a very limited number of companies were processing their minerals on Katangese soil. Theoretically speaking, according to article 85 of the new mining code, unprocessed ores could only leave the country with the express permission of the Minister of Mines. The only situation when the Minister was supposed to authorize the export of raw minerals was when it proved impossible to treat the substances on national territory at an economically viable cost and when the export of the minerals was in the interest of the country. However, since it was assumed that there was too little capacity to process minerals locally, the vast majority of minerals continued to leave Katanga in their raw form (Global Witness 2004b: 10-15).

Moïse Katumbi Chapwe, who was elected as governor of Katanga at the end of 2006, did his best to clamp down on the lawlessness in the artisanal mining business. Attempting to force companies to build concentrators and thus bring greater benefit to Katanga, he imposed a ban on the export of untreated copper and cobalt ore. When he noticed that some companies were taking advantage of their export permits to continue exporting raw minerals instead of concentrates, he even prohibited the export of cobalt concentrates<sup>18</sup>. Katumbi claimed that the level of corruption in the mining sector declined considerably after his appointment as a governor. Not only did he succeed in bringing about a remarkable rise in mining tax revenues, but he also managed to step up the volume of official exports from Katanga<sup>19</sup>. Still, it is important to note that Katumbi's reform initiatives were not always as

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<sup>18</sup> 'Rivals manoeuvre for copper and cobalt trade', Africa Mining Intelligence nr. 184, 23 July 2008; 'Ban on cobalt concentrates exports', Africa Mining Intelligence nr. 180, 28 May 2008; '300 Chinese expelled', Africa Mining Intelligence nr. 175, 12 March 2008; 'Surge in mining revenue', Africa Mining Intelligence nr. 162, 5 September 2007.

<sup>19</sup> 'Moïse Katumbi: Tout se passe bien au Katanga, mais tout n'est pas rose à 100 %', Radio Okapi, 22 July 2010.

successful as he wanted to public to believe. To give but one example: although, on 26 November 2008, he sent all local authorities in Katanga a note in which he prohibited the presence of security services other than the mining police at mining sites and industrial installations (as well as at the public roads surrounding them), in many cases, security services simply ignored this prohibition (De Koning 2009: 11).

The global financial crisis had a very negative impact on artisanal mining in Katanga. As pointed out in the 'World Economic Outlook', published by the International Monetary Fund in October 2008, the financial crisis that erupted in August 2007 as a result of the collapse of the US subprime mortgage market started gaining momentum in September 2008. Confidence in global financial institutions was badly shaken and increasing solvency concerns brought about a series of bankruptcies, forced mergers and state interventions in the United States and Europe. The crisis led to a dramatic change of the financial landscape and, most importantly, to a slowdown of the global economy<sup>20</sup> and a sharp decline of the copper and cobalt prices on the international market. While, in July 2008, the copper price was still at 8.500 USD a tonne, by December 2008, it had dwindled to a mere 4.350 USD a tonne. In a similar fashion, the cobalt price dropped from 94.000 USD a tonne to 31.000 USD a tonne in the same period<sup>21</sup>.

Two years after the global financial crisis was at its peak, however, things are slowly getting back to normal in Katanga. Copper and cobalt prices are on the rise, and mining activities are going at full speed again<sup>22</sup>. At the time of writing, there is a lot of tension between, on the one hand, large-scale mining companies trying to develop industrial mining projects, and, on the other hand, artisanal miners fighting for their right to excavate minerals by artisanal means. In August and September 2010, several people got badly wounded when groups of protesting creuseurs clashed with police forces in Fungurume<sup>23</sup> and Karajipopo<sup>24</sup>.

From the preceding account, it should be remembered that Katanga witnessed a shift from artisanal mining to industrial mining in the course of the colonial period. The *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* played a key role in the transformation of the southeast part of Congo from a region dominated by agriculture to an area known as one of the most industrialized and urbanized places in Sub-Saharan

<sup>20</sup> 'World Economic Outlook', International Monetary Fund, October 2008: 1.

<sup>21</sup> 'Katanga: minerais: les prix s'effondrent, le chômage monte en flèche', Syfia Grands Lacs, 15 January 2009.

<sup>22</sup> 'Katanga: le Congo mise gros sur le cuivre', Trends, 14 July 2010.

<sup>23</sup> 'Fungurume: des creuseurs protestent contre TFM', Radio Okapi, 9 August 2010; 'Incidents de Fungurume, procès en flagrance annoncé contre trente-deux creuseurs artisanaux', Radio Okapi, 10 August 2010.

<sup>24</sup> 'Echauffourées dans la carrière de Karajipopo, 3 personnes aux arrêts', Radio Okapi, 15 September 2010.

Africa around independence time. Years of political misrule and corruption during the Mobutu era wrecked UMHK's successor Gécamines and plunged the country into a painful civil war and a deep political and economic crisis. When the war finally came to an end and the former belligerents agreed to organize democratic elections, Katanga was able to benefit from the 'metal mania' on the international markets: on the one hand, it attracted several industrial mining companies who were willing to make new investments in the local mining business, and, on the other hand, it was able to give many unemployed men a new source of income as artisanal miners or mineral buyers.



## 1. Introduction

*The fillers look and work as though they are made of iron. They really do look like iron. They really do look like iron – hammered iron statues – under the smooth coat of coal dust which clings them from head to foot. It is only when you see miners down the mine and naked that you realise what splendid men they are. Most of them are small (big men are at a disadvantage in that job) but nearly all of them have the most noble bodies; wide shoulders tapering to slender, supple waists and small pronounced buttocks and sinewy thighs, with not an ounce of waste flesh anywhere. (source: George Orwell, 'The road to Wigan Pier' (1937), quoted in Beynon 2002: 53)*



In the early days of my fieldwork in Katanga, I noticed that shopkeepers in the major urban centres have the habit of putting up cartoons at the walls of their shops in order to inform customers about their house rules. One particular cartoon in Lubumbashi has a caption saying ‘he gave credit to his clients’ (*il faisait credit à ses clients*). Underneath it, there is a picture of an impoverished African carrying a knapsack and an empty wine bottle, and wearing a cylindrical hat, a ripped white shirt with a sleeveless jacket, a loosened red tie, a faded pair of blue jeans, and an old pair of white shoes with the soles coming off. He says ‘the bad payers have ruined me, I’m going back to the village’ (*les mauvais payeurs m’ont ruiné, je rentre au village*), while he walks past a signpost that reads ‘village z-1000 km’.

At first sight, the cartoon appears to convey a clear and straightforward message: those hoping to buy goods on credit have come knocking at the wrong door. Shopkeepers in the urban centres of Katanga are very wary of passing on goods without receiving an instant payment, because they know that people are experiencing more and more difficulties to pay off their debts due to the economic crisis. An additional reason to be reluctant towards the ones asking for credit is that, very often, shopkeepers do not know them personally. The fleeting nature of encounters in a big city such as Lubumbashi increases the risk of getting cheated.

There are a number of reasons why the cartoon deserves further attention. First of all, it is an expression of urban popular culture with a very long and complex pedigree. The French folklorist Saulnier has discovered that the oldest wood engravings about the 'death of credit' were produced in Italy in the sixteenth century. Later on, the theme spread through various European countries, including France, Belgium, Germany and Poland, where it was incorporated in shopkeeper pictures whenever there were periods of political upheaval and intense economic and financial crisis (Saulnier 1946: 34-38). Following Belgian colonialism, Zairian painters reworked and reinterpreted the theme against the backdrop of the decline of their own national economy during the Mobutu era (Jewsiewicki 1996: 335). Given the continued political and economic crisis in the years after the Congolese war, it is hardly surprising that, on their turn, Lubumbashi's cartoonists have drawn inspiration from the early Zairian paintings to produce sketches that are meant to help shopkeepers in their struggle against defaulters.

The second reason why it is interesting to have a closer look at the cartoon is that it tells us something about local views on the phenomenon of urban-rural migration. The sketch suggests that it is possible to go and work in the rural areas in order to save up a new starting capital. Yet, from reading the distance indicated on the signpost, it is also clear that 'going back to the village' is believed to be a painful experience. The artist creates the impression that, in addition to passing through the physical ordeal of travelling over long distances, impoverished city-dwellers also face the psychological challenge of having to adapt to living conditions in the countryside, which are assumed to be quite different from the ones in Lubumbashi.

Clearly, the cartoon contains echoes of stereotypical binary oppositions ('modernity' and 'tradition', 'city' and 'countryside', 'centre' and 'periphery') characteristic of a modernist way of thinking and expressing a strong belief in the fact that people's movements between urban and rural areas are linked with a transition between two stages along the civilization path (De Boeck & Plissart 2004: 41; Ferguson 1999: 86). According to the modernist paradigm, people are expected to travel from the countryside to the city, where they can become acquainted with 'civilization' and where they have the opportunity to develop a 'modern' lifestyle. When they travel in the opposite direction, so the

modernist reasoning goes, it is almost inevitable that they experience this as a humiliation, because it means they are forced to return to an earlier stage in their development.

The third reason why the cartoon deserves a closer look is that the artist emphasizes the ambiguous position of the ruined shopkeeper through certain details in the latter's appearance. The shopkeeper looks too bedraggled to pass for a respectable urbanite, but it is also clear that, during the time he was still prospering, he invested a lot of energy in piecing together a modern and elegant outfit. Strikingly, although the artist makes it very clear that the shopkeeper has lost his old status, he leaves us guessing at what will be his new status. The shopkeeper is being presented as a classic example of someone living in the margins of society, having no clear position in the social structure, looking for new sources of revenue and searching for new ways of being a man. The image we get of him is that of a lonesome traveller, someone who does not yet know when he will be able to return to his point of departure nor what will become of him once he reaches his destination. It seems as if the ruined shopkeeper has no other option but to live in the present and to rebuild his life from scratch.

Of course, I did not start this chapter with the analysis of a cartoon from Lubumbashi in order to suggest that all Katangese artisanal miners are ruined shopkeepers or that they are all former city dwellers influenced by modernist thinking about the urban-rural divide. What I wanted to illustrate by focusing my attention on this drawing was, on the one hand, the creativity with which cultural actors in economically marginalized regions give meaning to their deteriorating livelihoods, and, on the other hand, the vital connection between work and masculinity.

In many places in the world, paid work constitutes an important source of masculine identity, status and power. Men's personal success in the workplace is very important for the construction of their gender identities. Moreover, men who are lucky enough to be engaged in formal employment enjoy the advantages of having access to economic resources, skills and experience, career progress and positions of power and authority (Collinson & Hearn 2000: 62-63).

In Katanga, paid work is denoted by the term '*kazi*'. It was introduced during colonial times and has become synonymous with a job in a large company offering accommodation, food rations, healthcare, schooling for children and, of course, a monthly salary. Due to the deep economic crisis the country has been struggling with for the past few decades, the notion of '*kazi*' has been hollowed out. People are being paid late or not at all, the system of food rations has been abolished, and the state of Katanga's healthcare facilities is precarious, to say the least (Jewsiewicki & Dibwe 2004: ix-xi).

Just like the character in the cartoon, almost 250.000 Katangese men have temporarily opted out of society and have migrated into the interior in search of new job opportunities. In this dissertation, I

will show that their involvement in artisanal mining should not only be seen as an economic survival strategy, but also as an attempt to retain a sense of individual achievement and masculine working pride. By spending their days in seclusion, miners are able to experiment with new masculinities, that is, with new *'cluster(s) of norms, values and behavioural patterns expressing explicit and implicit expectations of how men should act and represent themselves to others'* (Lindsay & Miescher 2003: 4).

This chapter is divided into 5 parts. In the first part, I will give an overview of how masculinity has been conceptualized in the anthropological literature on mining in Sub-Saharan Africa. The overview will show that, although there has been a host of publications on the role of men in mining activities throughout the African subcontinent, the issue of masculinity is still largely under-researched and under-theorized. Therefore, in the second part of the chapter, I will introduce a number of theories and concepts about masculinity developed by social scientists interested in the implications of the gradual decline of patriarchy in Western societies. In the third part of the chapter, I will explain how these theories and concepts can help me make an analysis of the construction of masculinities among Katangese miners, while I will also clarify what will be my main lines of argument throughout this dissertation. Finally, the fourth and the fifth parts of the chapter will be dedicated to a presentation of the methodology I have used to collect data for this research project as well as to an overview of the different chapters in the dissertation.

## **1.1 Anthropological accounts of mining and metallurgy in Sub-Saharan Africa<sup>25</sup>**

### **1.1.1 Saving the artisanal miner from oblivion**

At the outset of industrialization, there was a tradition of 'salvage anthropology', characterized by the description of African societies as timeless reflections of a distant and lost European past (Harries 1994: xi-xix). Deploring the gradual fading out of indigenous mining, professional anthropologists as well as amateur writers such as missionaries and administrators committed themselves to ethnographic descriptions of small-scale exploitation and smelting techniques that were on the verge of disappearing.

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<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that Harries' review of the scholarship on migration labour in Southern Africa (Harries 1994: xi-xix) has been an important source of inspiration for the survey presented below. Following Harries, I have decided to treat the group of 'salvage anthropologists' and the anthropologists of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute as two distinct schools in the anthropological research on mining in Sub-Saharan Africa. It was my own idea, however, to make a distinction between three other schools of thought on the same topic.

In his book *'Mining and metallurgy in Negro Africa'* (1937), London-based British anthropologist Walter Cline presented a survey of all the data he had managed to find in the available literature on artisanal mining in West, East, Central and Southern Africa. In the section on the social and religious aspects of metal-working, he made the following comment on the organization of the smelting process among the Ondulu in Angola:

The master smiths always direct the smelting. During the whole smelting period, which usually covers the last five months of the dry season, the men and boys sleep in a circle of huts built around the furnace, where the women bring them their food. They lighten the work by continual choruses and intervals of dancing, but any breach of rules during this time, either by males or females is punished by a fine (Cline 1937: 123).

Roscoe, a member of the Church Missionary Society and an anthropology lecturer at Cambridge University, described how the activities of excavating and smelting iron ore were organized among the Bakitara, who lived in what was then still known as the Uganda Protectorate. Just like Cline, he noticed that smelters were to observe several taboos in order to avoid accidents and to make sure that the smelting process succeeded. He reported that, when a smelter went to the forest to cut wood, he always made sure to bring home two pieces of firewood: one to hand over to his wife for cooking purposes, and another one to put on his own fire. According to Roscoe, a smelter was not allowed to approach his wife, to touch her or to sleep with her in the same bed as long as he had not fulfilled the task of bringing home two pieces of firewood. Furthermore, he was not supposed to have sexual intercourse with his spouse as long as the charcoal was not ready for use. As soon as the smelters had burned enough wood to fill the furnace with charcoal, they isolated themselves for a while so that they could apply themselves completely to their smelting activities (Roscoe 1923: 218-219):

When sufficient wood had been burned and the charcoal had been broken up ready for use in the furnace, the men went out in a body of from ten to twenty to the hill where the iron had to be quarried and gathered, and there they lived together while the work was going on, building grasshuts to sleep in. (...) In addition to all the ordinary taboos, none of the men might wash while the work was going on, nor might they approach their wives (...) (Roscoe 1923: 219).

Authors such as Lefebure (1930), Marchal (1939), Bower (1927), Dowie (1901), Gutzeit (1934), Ladame (1921), Maes (1930) and Rickard (1927) made similar observations with regard to mining and metallurgy in Central Africa. Monsignor de Hemptinne, the head of the Benedictine order in Katanga, voiced his ambivalent feelings towards the social consequences of industrialisation in the following manner:

On our way back from our expedition in Dikuluwe in October 1924, I passed by the mine of Kalabi (...). The famous summit (of the smelting furnace) was still there, but to the right and left of it enormous trenches of 35 metres deep had joined up with the most profound mine shafts of the natives. The ancient summit of the old (traditional mining) song will soon have disappeared. This precious summit is made out of cobalt. Where there used to be a hill, a large hole will open up, like an empty eye in the eyesocket of a skull. It is not without a certain melancholy that we sang the (traditional mining) song one last time on that rocky ridge, already staggering and doomed to die. A page of native history is being turned. A global industry is rising from the ashes of the extinct furnaces (de Hemptinne 1926: 403).

The influence of British functionalism was evident in salvage anthropologists' assumption of balanced and harmonious tribal societies. They emphasized the strict division of tasks among the various indigenous mining institutions and presented metallurgy as a seasonal activity that did not disturb the agricultural calendar. The only references to masculinity in the works of salvage anthropologists were descriptions of gender roles. It was pointed out that only men were involved in metallurgical activities and that they were expected to isolate themselves completely and have no direct contact with women during the period of their isolation. While most miners' wives limited themselves to the preparation of food – which their husbands could pick up at an agreed place – there were also some women who engaged in the sorting out of mineral ores, often assisted by young children and operating at a considerable distance from the mining sites and the furnaces. Reportedly, both men and women were compensated for their efforts by the customary authorities overseeing the mining activities.

### **1.1.2 Mining and modernity**

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the age of modernisation was coupled with an intensification of colonial rule and the introduction of applied anthropology. In Central and Southern Africa, it was felt that industrial development needed to go hand in hand with some form of social planning. Anthropologists focused their attention on the phenomenon of migrant labour, investigating how African migrant workers coming from a rural background adapted themselves to the modern way of life in the urban centres.

During the first half of the 1930s, Richards, a student of Malinowski, did pioneering work among the Bemba ethnic group on the Tanganyika plateau in Northern Rhodesia. Having noticed that the opening of industrial mines in Katanga and near the Northern Rhodesian town of Ndola was giving rise to the exodus of forty per cent of the adult males from Bemba villages, she got interested in the social values and institutions of 'semi-detribalized men' at work in the urban centres. In one of her first articles on this topic, she suggested that the beliefs, habits and modes of thought of these men had not undergone profound changes, despite the fact that they wore European clothing, used bicycles and other manufactured articles and utilized a series of English phrases in their everyday talk. In Richards' view, African miners in Northern Rhodesia saw their work for a white employer as something temporary.

She had the impression that they easily shook off the habits associated with life in the city once they returned to their villages (Richards 1932: 124-126).

In 1939, Read, a lecturer in social anthropology at the London School of Economics, did a special study on the effects of migrant labour on village life in Nyasaland. Just like Richards, she found that most of the temporarily urbanized African labourers maintained some links with their areas of origin, so that it was wrong to think of them as completely 'detrribalized'. According to Read, it was high time to abandon the idea that industrial centres, townships, mining compounds and plantations were the only places where new ideas and ways of living had a chance of developing. Upon closer examination, it became evident that social and economic life in the villages was undergoing significant changes as well (Read 1942: 605-613).

In a book on the impact of migrant labour on the Tswana people of the Bechuana protectorate, Schapera (1947) supported the argument of Richards and Read that it was wrong to believe that all returned workers had difficulties readjusting to tribal life after having spent some time living and working in an urban social environment. In his view, much depended on the degree of education of the people involved as well as on their willingness to make a break from tribal life. He reckoned that chances were fairly low that an 'un-educated tribesman' going to the mines would be heavily influenced by what he saw and experienced during his stay in the city. Pleading in favour of the preservation of the system of migrant labour, Schapera pointed out that the majority of Tswana men needed some form of wage earning outside the Bechuana Protectorate in order to satisfy their financial and other needs. As a result of the fact that migrant labour had already existed for so long, it had become integral part of Tswana culture: travelling to the mines was seen as part of the process of becoming an adult, just like the old initiation ceremonies (Mitchell 1948: 106-107).

Following in the footsteps of Richards, Read and Schapera, British anthropologists of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, founded in Livingstone under the leadership of Godfrey Wilson and led by Max Gluckman between 1942 and 1947 (Eriksen & Nielsen 2001: 57; 87), concentrated their research efforts on the causes and consequences of migrant labour in rural areas. Additionally, they also started to consider groups of industrialized labourers as legitimate and viable research entities (Harries 1994: xi-xix).

Powdermaker, who conducted fieldwork in the Zambian town of Luanshya between 1953 and 1954, described the conditions of family life and marriage in mining townships as ambiguous and complicated. She was under the impression that men were practically the only ones embodying European culture, while women adopted a more traditional and often anti-European stand. Since men were only able to dedicate a limited amount of their time to the education of their children as a result

of their working obligations, the passing on of moral values remained a woman's task and privilege. Powdermaker feared that, in the long run, this could possibly have negative implications for the integration of Africans in modern society, while it could also lead to increasing levels of violence against Europeans (Powdermaker 1962: 205-206).

In his study on the administrative and political system in which urbanized Africans in Northern Rhodesia participated, Epstein focused almost exclusively on male city-dwellers. He argued that, although these men remained 'tribesmen' who brought with them certain patterns of behaviour, values and attitudes associated with the tribal system in the countryside, they nevertheless learned how to attune their behaviour to the new social environment they had entered<sup>26</sup>. According to Epstein, Africans occupying a position of authority in the western-style political institutions in the city became very skilful at conforming themselves to modern standards whenever they appeared in public and switching back to traditional standards when they were in the intimacy of their homes. He suggested that members of the African elite in urban mining communities were very good at combining different social roles (Epstein 1958: 233-239):

Over the years representatives whose appointment was on a tribal basis have gradually been supplanted by men whose prestige and authority among the new urban dwellers owed little to high status enjoyed within a tribal polity, but derived from their education and conscious approximation to European standards. (...) many of the customs, if sometimes difficult to comply with, are not fundamentally incompatible with the conditions of urban life. They continue to be adhered to by sophisticated and unsophisticated alike. Thus, the African trade union leader who marries may pay bride-wealth to his parents-in-law, may be most meticulous in his observance of the in-law and other domestic taboos, and may apply customary precepts in his relations with his children, all without doing violence to his role of Union official (...) (Epstein 1958: 233-234).

As opposed to the anthropologists of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, who were rather liberal for their time and took an optimistic view of the modernist assimilation project, the Belgian district commissioner's assistant Grévisse commented pessimistically and even cynically on the capacity of Katangese miners to climb the civilisation ladder. In an impressionistic sketch of the relationship between the prototypical labourer and his wife, he described the former as a dominant breadwinner who was served hand and foot by his wife, who fully depended on him from a material point of view and therefore could not allow herself to rebel against him (Grévisse 1951: 276). Furthermore, Grévisse doubted whether the Congolese professional elite would ever really make themselves familiar with

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<sup>26</sup> For a collection of essays on the behaviour of African townsmen in Zambia, see also Mitchell (1969).



western values. He had the impression that maybe superficially some things did change in the way of life of the so-called *évolués*, but that in the end they remained prisoners of their 'old dispositions', 'their traditional, dominant characteristics' (ibidem: 381-382).

Clearly, the authors of this second school in the anthropological literature on mining and metallurgy in Sub-Saharan Africa were convinced that the system of migrant labour had a significant impact on the lifestyle of men travelling to the mines. Nevertheless, they also believed that a stay in an urban setting did not automatically make these men forget about the ideas, norms and values of the social environment in which they had grown up. They argued that African migrant labourers learned how to display different kinds of behaviour depending on the situation they found themselves in. Moreover, they suggested that men were more able to adopt a western lifestyle than women, because the latter did not seem capable or willing to get rid of their traditional links.

### **1.1.3 Evidence of black worker resistance**

While, during the 1950s and 1960s, it was still argued that African labourers had no other option but to accept the projects of social engineering that were imposed on them, the 1970s witnessed a growing interest in the agency of miners. Henceforth, miners were portrayed as active agents who tried to take their lives into their own hands, despite the fact that they often had to live and work in oppressive conditions.

Writing from a phenomenological perspective and drawing inspiration from the works of Merleau-Ponty and Shutz, Alverson (1978) argued that Tswana migrants employed in the South African mining industry retained the capacity to give meaning and value to their lives, notwithstanding the harsh living conditions in the mining areas. He succeeded in correcting the image that migrant labourers living in oppression were incapable of realizing and challenging their own predicament (discussed in Comaroff 1982: 1439-1440; Kuper 1979: 414-415).

Fabian illustrated the growing awareness among labourers in the Katangese mining centres by taking the example of *Jamaa*, a charismatic movement created by Placide Tempels (Fabian 1971: 9-10). He pointed out that members of *Jamaa* had developed a spiritual form of kinship, which involved the increasing replacement of blood relatives by spiritual relatives (ibidem: 75). His book contained examples of the genesis of new ideologies in mining compounds, involving a mix of various elements, including the Christian idea of charity (ibidem: 9-10) and local ideas concerning the gathering of as many dependents as possible (ibidem: 92).

While Alverson and Fabian kept aloof from politics, other researchers were strongly influenced by Marxist political-economic analyses in the style of Wolf (Ortner 2006: 1), putting the stress on the exploitative nature of capitalism in general and Western mining capital in particular. Van Onselen examined how the inhabitants of mining compounds in Southern Rhodesia had dealt with mining companies' strategies to turn them into proletarians depending entirely on wage labour. Instead of restricting himself to a discussion of large-scale and organised forms of resistance against this exploitation – such as the creation of mutual aid societies and strike movements – he resolved to also explore '*less dramatic, silent and often unorganised responses*' (van Onselen 1976: 227). A first advantage of this approach was that van Onselen showed an interest in the relationship between class and masculinity. This revealed itself in the analysis of the sexuality of the different categories of workers, who were all troubled by the lack of women in the compounds. While labourers at the higher levels of the hierarchy enjoyed more privacy and had easier access to prostitutes due to their higher wages, some labourers at the bottom of the hierarchy were said to have committed acts of bestiality. A second point in favour of van Onselen's approach was his analysis of the ways in which elements from the traditional world were mixed with the way of life in the industrial setting. After the labourers, for some time, spent their Sundays holding their own version of western 'tea meetings', 'big dinners' or 'dances' - on the occasion of which they had sought company among women in the camp or among prostitutes – they eventually turned to an innovative form of traditional tribal dancing. Dances of the latter kind served to celebrate and highlight important masculinity aspects in the mining community:

As is customary in much peasant dancing, their dances would portray ethnic origins, historic achievements, or the attributes of manhood and virility. Groups of workers drawn from different parts of central Africa would each perform their own 'tribal' dance. Largely done for pleasure, these dances also had the important implicit function of reasserting the worker's individual and group identity amidst an industrial setting which too often denied his humanity altogether (ibidem: 187).

On his turn, Higginson investigated processes of class formation among miners of the *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga*, zooming in on the period between 1907 and 1949. Criticizing the neglect, in the existing literature, of agency among these miners, he made an effort to show that the Katangese working class did not come into existence in a passive manner, that is, as a result of the policy of Belgian and foreign capitalist interests, but that it constituted a social entity capable of actively pursuing goals that were potentially harmful to both the mining company and the Belgian colonial state (Higginson 1989: 13-16). The main virtue of Higginson's book was that it identified links between social practices from the countryside and social practices in the urban areas. It demonstrated that urbanized miners used the '*cultural mores*' from their villages to '*redefine the constraints imposed upon them by town life and wage labour*' (ibidem: 61).

Contrary to van Onselen and Higginson, Gordon analyzed the power relations in a Namibian compound by concentrating on the range of registers in miners' behaviour. Availing himself of Goffman's theory on total institutions, he came to the conclusion that African labourers made a distinction between two sorts of social worlds in order to survive their working situation. The first social world was dominated by a private or enclave culture called the 'Brotherhood', which was largely unknown among white supervisors and which allowed Africans to protect their own people, whereas the second social world was the one in which black miners interacted with their white supervisors. According to Gordon, interracial relations were influenced or determined by two types of etiquette. While the basic form of etiquette required that Africans should avoid getting into trouble or incurring sanctions, the manipulative etiquette prescribed that Africans were to behave in a coaxing fashion in order to obtain patronage or material goods from their supervisors (Webster 1978: 265-268).

In sum, during the 1970s, anthropologists interested in the social context of mining sketched a different picture of masculinities than their predecessors in the 1950s and 1960s. First, they underlined that men constructed their masculinity against the background of asymmetric power relations. Second, they paid more attention to the fact that mining masculinities were of a hybrid nature: they did not only display features associated with tradition, but also features associated with modernity. Many authors considered culture as a useful weapon in the class struggle: there was a conviction that miners used the cultural baggage they had taken with them from their area of origin to stir up a sense of belonging to a group and be more resistant towards supervisors in mining compounds.

#### **1.1.4 The archaeology and anthropology of mining**

From the beginning of the 1970s onwards, archaeologists interested in the history of metalworking in Africa carried out extensive fieldwork in Ghana, Nigeria, Eastern DRC and the Great Lakes region, the Middle Zambezi valley, portions of the Swahili coast, the Zimbabwe plateau and eastern Transvaal (Herbert 1984: xxi). Over the years, they intensified their collaboration with anthropologists, historians and metallurgists working on the same topic. What makes their research interesting for the present dissertation is that they were able to establish that, even during pre-colonial times, mining and metallurgy were two typically masculine fields of activity. In addition to this, they also found that participants in these two fields of activity have always carried out rituals emphasizing male power and potency.

Van der Merwe and Scully, two members of the Department of Anthropology at the State University of New York, investigated pre-colonial mining activities in the Phalaborwa district in the South African Transvaal region by combining an archaeological approach with an ethnographic and an

ethnohistorical approach. They argued that, thanks to the information drawn from oral traditions and testimonies by witnesses of the last small-scale metallurgical activities in the beginning of the twentieth century, they were able to improve their interpretations of the archaeological findings and to make a more faithful reconstruction of the metallurgical process as it was organized by the Iron age group that was living in that same region in the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Van Der Merwe & Scully 1971: 194-195).

In his book '*Traditional African iron working*' (1983), Kense repeated the argument of Van der Merwe and Scully that it was very important to develop a multidisciplinary approach to the study of African metallurgical techniques in pre-colonial times. In Kense's opinion, an archaeologist was incapable of coming up with a decent reconstruction of these techniques if he relied exclusively on typical archaeological data such as furnace remains, slag debris, scattered tuyère fragments and burnt clay profiles. It was absolutely indispensable for him to call upon the help of ethnographers and metallurgists in order to collect more information on the technical side of the smelting process as well as on the social and economic importance of the activity and the rituals associated with it (Kense 1983: 164-165).

De Maret, an archaeologist and anthropologist working for the *Université Libre de Bruxelles* (ULB), illustrated the advantages of such a multidisciplinary approach in a book chapter entitled '*The smith's myth and the origin of leadership in Central Africa*' (1985). The aim of his work was to make a number of observations on the discovery of smith tools as grave goods in Iron Age cemeteries excavated in Central Africa. Relying on a wide range of ethnographic sources on metallurgical activities and enthronement ceremonies in Bantu and semi-Bantu Africa, de Maret argued that the presence of a hammer or an anvil in those graves was probably due to old ideas about the relationship between iron working and leadership. In his view, there was strong evidence that, during the Iron Age, metallurgy was seen as an important source of wealth and prestige. Therefore, even highly esteemed men who did not know how to forge were often associated with metallurgy and were buried with the typical tools of a smith (de Maret 1985: 85-86).

In her book '*Iron, gender and power: rituals of transformation in African societies*' (1993), Herbert offered another example of the multidisciplinary approach advocated by Van Der Merwe, Scully and Kense. Having noticed that, in many parts of Sub-Sahara Africa, pre-colonial smelting furnaces were gynecomorphic, she decided to screen the ethnographic literature for information on all the beliefs and practices associated with metallurgy. In the course of her research, she found out that there were striking parallels between the rituals for metallurgists and those for hunters and future chiefs. In her opinion, these parallels were due to the fact that all three groups of men wanted to achieve a transformation (the transformation of ore into metal, of a wild animal into meat, and of an ordinary

human being into a chief with special powers, respectively) and that they all tried to do this by appropriating the procreative powers of women through the performance of rituals and the observance of a number of taboos (Herbert 1993: 3; 228).

In a report on a conference entitled '*The archaeology and anthropology of mining*', which was organized by the Wenner-Grenn Foundation in July 1996, Knapp and Pigott put forward the relation between gender and mining as one of the major challenges for future research. They pointed out that the archaeology of mining had long presented men as gender-neutral, which made it almost impossible to rid mining terms of their androcentric essence. The authors suggested that written and material sources should be looked at from a less biased point of view, so that the dominant androcentric representation of the mining experience could finally be ended (Knapp & Pigott 1997: 300-304).

Acting upon the advice given by Knapp and Pigott, Childs and Killick published a review article in which they drew the reader's attention to a number of archaeological findings in Central Malawi and Southern Zambia. The findings suggested that smelting sites before 1200 AD were situated inside villages, so that, in the opinion of the authors, it could not be excluded that ironworkers at that time were less concerned about the allegedly harmful influences of witches and sexually active women on the smelting process than their more recent counterparts (Childs & Killick 1993: 319-328).

From the preceding sections, it can be gathered that scholars belonging to the fourth school in the literature made efforts to document the historical depth of mining and metallurgy in Sub-Saharan Africa. They showed that, ever since pre-colonial times, men have dominated the mining sector, developing a wide variety of symbols and rituals to highlight their own virility and creative power.

### **1.1.5 Theorizing mining cultures : liminality, habitus and moral economy**

Since the 1970s, there is a growing awareness among anthropologists that miners usually share a number of characteristics that set them apart from the rest of society. It is noted that they are often physically isolated, while they also behave in ways that may be strongly at variance with the norms and values of society at large. The recognition of the peculiarity of mining communities has led to an increasing use of the expression 'mining culture' (Moodie 1994: 21; Harries 1994: 118-119; Grätz 2003: 169, footnote 14). Attempts have been made to find out what are the distinctive features of specific mining cultures and in what sense and to what extent miners' masculinity ideas and practices are influenced by their belonging to such a mining culture. Three concepts that often come up in literature on mining cultures are the notions of liminality, habitus and moral economy.

Turner used the concept of liminality to indicate an interstructural situation, which constitutes the passage between two states. A state is defined as '*any type of stable or recurrent condition that is culturally recognized*' (Turner 1967: 93-94). In fact, liminality refers to 'limen' or 'margin', one of the three phases that are characteristic of all rites of transition, according to Van Gennep. Once an individual has been symbolically detached from the position previously held in the social structure (=separation), he first has to go through a liminal phase before he can take up the rights and obligations associated with his new position in society (=aggregation). It is typical of the liminal period that the individual involved has an ambiguous status: he does not have the characteristics of his original state and neither does he possess the characteristics of the position in which he will eventually end up. According to Turner, the initiation ritual is one of the rites of transition that have a clearly marked and lengthy liminal phase (ibidem: 94).

Many of the authors writing about mining in Sub-Sahara Africa have been struck by the parallels between staying in a mining camp or compound and going through an initiation ritual. In a study about Mozambican labourers who went out to work in South African diamond mines, gold mines and sugar plantations in the period between 1860 and 1910, Harries pointed out that migrant labour was locally considered as one of the stages in '*a boy's passage to manhood*'. In other words, all young men were expected to engage in mining activities as part of the process of growing up (Harries 1994: 157). De Boeck highlighted the similarities between a stay in a Lunda initiation camp and the seclusion of the Bana Lunda, young Zairean urbanites who leave the Bandundu province to dig for diamonds in the Angolan province of Lunda Norte. It is as if the youngsters who come back from Angola have been initiated: they have gone through a transformation and have acquired a new identity and social status as adult men (De Boeck 1998: 796). Grätz believed that, for several reasons, West-African gold miners can be said to occupy a liminal and ambiguous position. Not only are they perceived as fringe figures by the outside world, they are also usually staying in mining camps cut off from the outside world and they appear to pass through the three stages of a classical initiation cycle: a pre-liminal phase, a liminal phase and a post-liminal phase (Grätz 2003: 157-159). Finally, in a remarkable book on the social history of the South African gold mines, Moodie related how young miners were more or less obliged to go through a kind of initiation during the initial period of their stay in the compounds in the early decades of the twentieth century. Before being accepted as full members of the mining community, they were still in a liminal condition and therefore had to obey special rules of conduct. This implied, among other things, that they were encouraged to conclude a homosexual mining marriage with one of the senior men. While the elders rewarded their 'women' handsomely for everything they did, the latter offered their sexual services, took care of all sorts of household chores and kept their 'husbands' company. In many respects, the young miners behaved in exactly the same way as women in the countryside: they told their husbands when they were about to go out on an errand, they assumed a kneeling position when they wanted to say a few words, they did their best to

look feminine and attractive and they were not allowed to have an orgasm, as this was the privilege of the husband (Moodie 1994: 119-158).

Bourdieu's concept of habitus refers to a set of internalized structures, common schemes of perception, thought and action that predispose an individual actor to certain practices. Put differently, the practices of the individual are structured by internal schemes of which he is not always aware. These schemes have come into existence in the course of history, as a result of past experiences of the group to which the individual belongs. The habitus generates all possible forms of behaviour that are adapted to living in certain conditions. Since members of the same social class are likely to encounter the same kind of situations and experience similar material conditions, Bourdieu found it reasonable to assume that they also have the same habitus (Bourdieu 1990: 59-60). Apparently, the main reason why mining anthropologists are so charmed by Bourdieu's notion of habitus is that it helps them to make a connection between living conditions in a certain area – the mining site and the mining camp – and the genesis of particular social structures that condition the behaviour of individual miners. An additional reason to apply some of Bourdieu's concepts in the mining context is that they are of great value to explain the repetition and reproduction of practices throughout time and space. According to De Boeck, searching for diamonds has become an important part of the construction of male identity among the Bana Lunda, by analogy with the role played by hunting. While, in the past, Lunda hunters could use the distribution of meat as a strategy to increase their power and obtain a higher social status, nowadays, Lunda youngsters operating as artisanal diamond miners can lavishly spend hundreds of dollars on alcohol and women in a bid to increase their prestige. De Boeck showed that aspects and connotations of traditional Lunda personhood and masculinity continue to exist. While he acknowledged that male identities are to a large extent constructed discursively, he also showed that there is some continuity, which makes it useful to use Bourdieu's concept of habitus (De Boeck 1998: 793). Grätz also used this notion, because he found that certain patterns of social relations, dispositions and points of view among West-African gold miners appear to reproduce. He was under the impression that the habitus of the miners is adapted to the living conditions in the mining areas, while it is also coupled with a certain masculine style:

The dangers specifically associated with gold exploitation incite them (...) to share risks and, despite numerous disputes, to accomplish a considerable degree of internal cohesion. These emergent identity dynamics bring about a particular masculine lifestyle – characterized by ostentatious consumption and a certain type of public performance – which combines local, regional and global features. Certain cultural practices (like drinking, gambling, etc...) can be interpreted as a reaction against the particular situation of the migrant miners in the camps, or as (an indication of the feelings of) attraction towards certain consumption styles and a way of self-affirmation. The self-portrait of the gold diggers results –

to a certain extent – from a reaction against strong imputations, against images of the Other and against stereotypes, all of which give them a bad reputation in the eyes of the outside world (Grätz 2003: 168).

The quote from the study by Grätz makes it possible to move to a third concept that is often used in the description of mining cultures, namely the notion of ‘moral economy’. This expression refers to the influence of culture-specific norms and values on economic activities (Scott 1977; Petit & Mutambwa 2005). In a fine-grained and perceptive account of the disruption of the Katangese mining business, Rubbers drew attention to a striking feature of the discourse used by people involved in the trading of copper and cobalt ores. Despite their awareness of being considered and treated as ‘traffickers’, a term having a pejorative ring about it and denoting shrewd and thievish behaviour, the traders do not exert themselves to justify their actions vis-à-vis the outside world. On the contrary, they seem to act in conformity with the image ascribed to them. In the words of Rubbers, *‘they present themselves as bandits who astutely manipulate the dark side of the Congolese economy, even though their misdeeds would not even impress the pettiest shoplifter.’* Another way of living up to their reputation consists of *‘concealing part or all of their activities, despite the fact that the latter are not illegal or reprehensible.’* And yet, it would be wrong to consider the ostensibly positive attitude towards outlaw behaviour as an indication of a degenerate sense of morality. Rubbers pointed out that, contrary to what one is led to believe, the traders do distinguish a clearly defined category of ‘traffickers’ of their own. People who fit into this category are those who enjoy political protection and use this privilege to buy, sell or export minerals without any official paperwork or to use mining machines on sites where it is strictly forbidden (Rubbers 2004: 35-36). Pointers to the existence of a moral economy closely tied up with a given mining community can be found in the ways members of that community manage their money. In many anthropological analyses of money management by miners, the terms ‘bitter’ or ‘hot money’ are used, suggesting that revenues generated by resource exploitation are considered as ill-gotten wealth in several cultures. Werthmann demonstrated that both the local communities and the migrant artisanal miners in south-west Burkina Faso consider gold as a resource that is potentially harmful. Although it carries the promise of wealth, people believe that it can also have damaging effects on their personal well-being and on social relations. Werthmann did not exclude that, in the future, gold-mining camps may come to be viewed as cultural exclaves, in other words, as spaces where other rules apply than in the rest of society, making it possible to spend money earned on minerals in an undisturbed manner (Werthmann 2003: 118-119). In an article on money handling among sapphire diggers nearby Ambondromifehy, a town in the northern part of Madagascar, Walsh suggested that miners’ moral economy bears some resemblances to the one that can be witnessed in the outside world, though in several respects it is also very different from it. While most ordinary town dwellers are concerned about the development and continued existence of the community in the long run, miners tend to concentrate on the present. The latter focus can be seen as a form of protest against impending marginalization. Instead of obediently going along with the passive



role allocated to them by higher powers such as states or markets, miners try to act upon the world that surrounds them. One of the ways of doing so is through so-called 'daring consumption'. The money earned with mining activities is spent excessively, without aiming for durable accumulation through investments in cattle or buildings. Walsh pointed out that miners' daring consumption closely resembles the stereotypical conduct of young men in Malagasy society: it is socially accepted that young men temporarily engage in daring, antisocial, individualistic and irresponsible behaviour. The author also acknowledged that miners in Ambondromifehy have very few options in terms of money storage: on the one hand, there is a high risk of theft or fire, and, on the other hand, the nearest bank offices are located at a considerable distance from the gold mining area. Yet, he was convinced that the remarkable consumption behaviour should first and foremost be understood as a strategy developed by people in a weak position who are trying to get a grip on reality. According to Walsh, the local population of the mining town is not so much disturbed by the lavish spending of the miners, but rather by their transgression of taboos and by the fact that they are not inclined to invest in the community in which they are staying for only a short period of time (Walsh 2003: 290-305).

The preceding account has shown that, in the eyes of these anthropologists, mining communities constitute perfect breeding grounds for the emergence of mining cultures, the hybrid nature of which is nicely captured by De Boeck who talks about '*a very complex and fluid social space in which local and global, pre- and postcolonial meanings, practices and imaginaries meet and merge*' (De Boeck 2001: 551). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that these mining cultures are usually marked by strong internal cohesion and reproductive social structures, and that a stay in a mining camp can be a significant landmark in the process of coming of age. Finally, there are indications that miners often have their own distinctive moral economy.

Attentive readers will have noticed that the authors of the first two paradigms still considered miners as ordinary members of society: it was admitted that they exercised a special kind of activity, but nobody suspected that this had an impact on the construction of their masculine identities. Even the anthropologists of the second paradigm did not distinguish between the 'modern' masculinities of industrial miners and those of other African inhabitants of urban areas in the late colonial period. It is only since the third paradigm that researchers have become aware of the fact that miners actually develop their own forms of masculinity that are sometimes different from the ones in the outside world. Taking the research of their predecessors one step further, the authors of the fifth paradigm have produced very detailed descriptions of mining cultures, focusing more on what miners had in common than on their differences.

In my opinion, it is a good thing that anthropologists focusing on mining and metallurgy in Sub-Saharan Africa are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that African miners tend to create forms of

masculinity that are different from the ones developed by men outside the mining sector. However, there is still a need for a theoretical framework that helps to explain both the similarities and the differences in their masculinity practices, and that allows for the analysis of power relations between different forms of masculinity. In order to create such a theoretical framework, it is necessary to consult the growing body of literature on men and masculinities.

## **1.2 The Western preoccupation with the ‘crisis in masculinity’**

The phenomenon of masculinities has been studied from many different angles in the course of the past century. Given space limitations, I will restrict myself to a discussion of only the most important approaches. The reader will notice that the current availability of a wide range of concepts for the analysis of the construction of masculinities results from long-standing efforts by Western social scientists to understand the implications of the gradual demise of patriarchy for men’s feelings of self-esteem. Since the late 1990s, this so-called ‘crisis in masculinity’ has not only become a much-discussed topic in the media but also in academia (Robinson 2007: 90-91).

### **1.2.1 Psychoanalytic views on masculinity**

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the growth of industrial capitalism. As a result of this, the lives of women changed dramatically and some of them proceeded to the creation of emancipation movements. Scientists responded to this threat to male dominance by paying increased attention to what they described as the ‘problem of women’. Initially, biologists were in the forefront of the research on sex differences, but, later on, their position was taken by social scientists. The key goal of psychological research in this era was to demonstrate, in a scientific manner, that women were inferior to men (Carrigan et al. 2002: 101).

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, psychoanalysis emerged, a new discipline that focused on the analysis of people’s feelings, thoughts and fantasies with the aim of finding an explanation for various psychic phenomena. Freud and his followers were convinced that it was of vital importance to examine the ways in which individuals experienced their earliest social relationships, especially with their parents. Childhood was seen as a process in which primitive or anarchic feelings were either kept under control or redirected towards socially sanctioned goals. As far as the development of a male gender identity was concerned, psychoanalysts pointed out that the ‘phallic’ or ‘Oedipal’ stage in a boy’s childhood was by far the most important one. It was believed that, in that particular section of their youth, all young boys developed a sexual interest in their mothers and started considering their fathers as rivals. With regard to the relations between men and

women, early psychoanalytic scholars had no doubts about the superiority of men over women (Edley & Wetherell 2000: 98-99; see Freud 1938: 580-603, 307-309).

### **1.2.2 The sex-role framework**

The second group of social scientists who played an important role in the research on men and masculinities were the so-called 'role theorists'. Role theory emerged in the beginning of the 1930s and was based on the premise that all social behaviour had to be seen as a kind of performance. It was believed that all human beings learned how to play socially prescribed roles, just like actors played their parts when they were performing a drama on stage. The pioneers of sex-role theory were Terman and Miles (1936), who conceived of masculinity and femininity as two opposing types of personality. They worked with a 'M/F-scale', with masculinity and femininity located on opposite ends. Each of the characteristics associated with the masculine role had its opposite in the feminine role. According to Terman and Miles, it was possible to calculate a person's gender personality by checking how many masculine and female traits he or she possessed (as discussed in Edley & Wetherell 2000: 100-101; Bryson 1937: 791).

Talcott Parsons was responsible for the establishment of the classic version of the American sex-role theory, which came to dominate the western sociological discourse on women by the middle of the twentieth century. While the concept of role had already become influential in the social sciences in the 1930s, Parsons was among the first to apply it to questions of gender. Instead of explaining the social pattern of sex roles by referring to biological differences between men and women – as many of the nineteenth-century social scientists had done – he tried to account for this pattern by taking a general sociological principle as the cornerstone of his analysis: the imperative of structural differentiation (Parsons 1964: 12; as discussed in Carrigan et al. 2002: 101).

In Parsons' view, the genesis of sex roles had to do with the structural differentiation observable within the conjugal family. He argued that the stability and cohesion of this social unit depended on a clear division of tasks and responsibilities between husbands and wives: while men were expected to play technical, executive and 'judicial' roles, women had to take on supportive, integrative and tension-managing roles. Parsons also offered an explanation for the reproduction of sex roles across generations: he suggested that this was due to the fact that each individual internalized his or her role in the course of the education received in the nuclear household (Parsons & Bales 1956: 46-51; as discussed in Carrigan et al. 2002: 102).

Parsons' sex role theory harmonized nicely with the political and social atmosphere in the US in the 1950s. Not only did many American intellectuals have conservative ideas about women, women

themselves were hardly taking any action to challenge their own subordination. Functional sociologists following in the footsteps of Parsons did not seek to explain why women were being dominated by men, but were preoccupied with finding explanations for the fact that, in some cases, women's sex role enactment was characterized by dysfunctions and tensions. The approach of these sociologists was normative: they were concerned about the stability of family life and strove to find solutions for social problems such as 'maternal deprivation', divorce rates, juvenile delinquency and intergenerational family conflict (Carrigan et al. 2002: 102-103).

Role theory did not cease to exist in the 1950s. From the early 1960 onwards, there was a group of so-called social learning scholars, who developed theories about how the male sex role gets taken up or internalized. The best known among these theorists were Mischel (1966; 1970) and Bandura (1980). In their view, the acquisition and performance of sex-typed behaviour took place through a combination of processes of observation, imitation, indoctrination and conscious learning. Other social learning scholars such as Fagot (1974), Fling and Manosevitz (1972), Lewis (1975) and Snow et al. (1983) paid attention to the ways in which sex-appropriate behaviour was encouraged by different types of socializing agents, including family, school and media (as discussed in Edley & Wetherell 2000: 101).

As far as more recent work in the field of role theory is concerned, it is important to mention the Bem Sex Role Inventory, which was developed by psychologist Sandra Bem. The aim of this inventory was to measure men and women's sense of themselves on masculinity and femininity scales. People were asked to go through a list of characteristics judged to be desirable for a man or a woman in society and to give themselves a score for each characteristic. On the basis of the final score, their personalities were categorized as either masculine, feminine, androgynous or undifferentiated (as discussed in Hearn 2000: 204; see also Bem 1993: 118-120).

### **1.2.3 Feminist scholarship and the literature on women**

While psychoanalysts and role theorists supported the prevailing patriarchal system in Western societies, feminists vigorously rebelled against it. They did their utmost to distinguish themselves from earlier generations of social scientists by focusing their investigations on the position of women and by pushing men to the background of their analysis. Since several of their arguments and propositions served as a vital source of inspiration for later generations of masculinity scholars, it is important to say a few words about their contribution to the debate. I take the liberty of restricting the discussion to feminist scholarship in the era after World War II, because it would lead us too far if I were to describe the evolution of feminist thinking from the very beginning, in other words, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

In the two volumes of '*Le deuxième sexe*' (1949), de Beauvoir presented a history of women's oppression. She demonstrated that the category of 'woman' was not the inevitable outcome of biology but rather the result of social construction. In the opinion of de Beauvoir, equality and reciprocity between men and women was theoretically possible, because reason, will and projects were available to both women and men. Nevertheless, she acknowledged that women were differently situated than men and that, in the same stages of life, their attitudes, behaviours and experiences were distinct (de Beauvoir 1949b: 482-504; as discussed in Murphy 2007: 205; Gardiner 2007a: 209).

During the 1960s and 1970s, radical feminism emerged. Inspired by the revolutionary spirit of the New Left, the US Civil Rights movement and the opposition against the Vietnam war, radical feminists started criticizing sexism, while they also embarked on an analysis of distinctively female social relations, practices and spheres of activity. Almost simultaneously, the Women's Liberation Movement was created, the members of which claimed that the most important form of inequality was that of men dominating women. They were convinced that gender division lay at the root of all other social divisions. A well-known slogan of these activists was that 'the personal is political', which was another way of saying that what we are as individuals constitutes a political construction (Murphy 2007: 205; Gardiner 2007a: 210).

Paying attention to several sources of male bias and considering patriarchy as the single most important cause of female oppression, scholars subscribing to the new paradigm investigated how writers of earlier generations used to be so much influenced by Eurocentric ideas of male dominance that they were prone to emphasize only men's beliefs and practices in the communities they studied. In order to put women back in to the picture, they made efforts to describe the world from a woman's point of view and to find strategies that would allow women to criticize and remedy their subordinate position towards men (Cornwall & Lindisfarne 1994: 28-29).

Boserup showed that, although women in Africa, Latin America and Asia were often prevented from participating in the modern sectors of the economy, they played a vital role in the development of their countries, especially through their involvement in agriculture, trade and various domestic activities. According to Boserup, colonialism had a negative impact on the position of women in developing countries. She argued that, when European colonists, administrators and technical advisors tried to introduce a modern and commercial form of agriculture in the territories under their control, they mainly focused their attention on local men, whom they trained to become more productive through

the use of modern equipment. Women's role in agriculture was not appreciated and, in many cases, their rights in access to land were even undermined to the benefit of men (Boserup 1983: 57-70)<sup>27</sup>.

Rubin developed her argument on the oppression of women on the basis of a critical reading of the theories of Freud and Lévi-Strauss. Although she realized that both authors wrote in an intellectual tradition produced by a culture that was characterized by sexism and the oppression of women, she still appreciated their work because it encouraged her to highlight the role of sexuality and marriage in her analysis of female subordination. In Rubin's opinion, Freud and Lévi-Strauss were among the first to recognize the place of sexuality in society and to pay attention to the fact that men and women experience social reality in different ways. She suggested that the feminist movement had to fight for a reorganization of the domain of sex and gender so that the Oedipal crisis would stop having such a negative impact on the young female ego, while men would no longer have such dominant rights in women in the spheres of marriage and sexual intercourse (Rubin 1975: 198-204).

Meillassoux argued that, in agricultural societies, women were usually susceptible to two forms of exploitation: on the one hand, they were exploited in their work, because a substantial part of what they produced was automatically handed over to their husbands or elders without any form of compensation, and, on the other hand, their procreative capacities were also exploited, because rights over progeny were always fixed in arrangements between men, never between women. Meillassoux also observed that women could play two roles in intergenerational relationships: either they were used by elders who wanted to exercise authority over their juniors, or they were used by juniors who tried to obtain more autonomy vis-à-vis their elders (Meillassoux 1975: 116-121).

Later on, a number of researchers moved away from the static dichotomies associated with the categories 'men' and 'women' (Mac an Ghaill 2000: 1). They started criticizing the old notion of patriarchy, because it was a-historical and because it led to the neglect of women's resistance and agency. In order to overcome the deficiencies of patriarchy in its original definition and conception, new studies paid more attention to the historicizing of patriarchy (Collinson & Hearn 2000: 63).

In an essay on the division of labour in agriculture among the Beti in Southern Cameroon, Guyer stated that, at first sight, Meillassoux's model of patriarchal relations in agricultural societies seemed applicable to her own research material. She noted that Beti society witnessed intense struggles for control of women during colonial times, with men trying to subject women to their authority through marriage and elders trying to use women to strengthen their authority vis-à-vis young men. Yet, she

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<sup>27</sup> The original title of Boserup's book is '*Women's role in economic development*' and it was published in 1970. I consulted the French version of this book.

also pointed to an important shortcoming of Meillassoux's approach, namely that it left no room to take into account a whole series of historical changes in the control of women by elders (Guyer 1988: 249).

Finally, writing from a feminist poststructuralist angle, Butler did not agree with the view that gender was an internal essence or a stable identity. Instead, she emphasized the performative dimension of gender, pointing out that gender requires a repetition of acts, gestures, enactments through time, a gendered stylization of the body. In Butler's view, gender was produced through repetitive human actions such as ways of dressing or walking. Challenging the idea of sex as a biological certainty, she argued that it was gender that defined and naturalized sex and not the other way around (Butler 2007: 185-193; discussed in Gardiner 2007: 210; Warren 2007: 604).

In sum, feminists took the debate one step further by documenting and elucidating the subordinate position of women in gender relations, by highlighting the importance of sexuality and marriage in gender dynamics, by historicizing patriarchy and by underlining the fluidity and the performative dimension of gender. In the following sections, I will show that feminism was instrumental in the genesis of masculinity studies as a distinctive field of research.

#### **1.2.4 The emergence of masculinity studies as a distinctive field of research**

The first wave of the men's movement emerged in the early 1970s. Inspired by feminist scholarship, authors such as Fasteau (1976) and Pleck (1985) noted that sexism did not only have negative effects on women but also on men. They argued that the old, traditional form of masculinity prevented men from experiencing emotions such as joy and tenderness, because it stimulated them to be only concerned about achievement, power, prestige and profit seeking. Therefore, there was a need for men to be liberated from this patriarchal form of masculinity, similarly to the way women had to be freed from it. Significantly, some men decided to create their own consciousness-raising groups, with the intention of analyzing men's roles in patriarchal institutions and changing them. Furthermore, they made efforts to promote the forging of non-sexist masculinities and showed a strong belief in personal and institutional change (Pleck 1985: 137-159; Fasteau 1976: 16-20, 214-227; as discussed in Adams & Savran 2002: 4; Beynon 2002: 15).

The second wave of the men's movement, which was also called the 'mythopoetic men's movement' (because one of the ways in which its members supported each other was through the sharing of myths and poetry), started during the 1980s. It was characterized by a deep concern about the supposed emasculating effects of feminism and effeminizing culture. In order to get their male power back, men belonging to this movement developed the habit of retreating in the wilderness and engaging in

spiritual interrogation. Authors such as Keen (1992) and Bly (1990) repeated the discourse used by the early twentieth-century wilderness movements, which pleaded in favour of an escape from the burdens associated with family life and conventional social life. Apart from that, they also suggested that the desire of certain men for a return to nature, spirituality and male bonding was caused by their feelings of emptiness and alienation (Adams & Savran 2002: 5; Barton 2007: 453-454).

For their part, gay liberationist writers such as Altman (1972), Mieli (1982) and Plummer (1981) highlighted the power dimension in the organization of sexuality in western societies. They showed that, at a certain point in history, a specific form of heterosexual masculinity had managed to gain the upper hand and that this had been coupled with the oppression of women as well as the oppression of other types of masculinities, including homosexual masculinities. Gay liberationists investigating the history of homosexuality made a very important contribution to the field of men's studies by demonstrating that masculinity is not fixed but that it is constantly constructed within the history of an evolving structure of sexual power relations (Mieli 1982: chapter 2; Carrigan et al. 2002: 108-111; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 831).

In his three-volume study on the history of sexuality, Foucault elaborated on the idea that male sexuality should not be considered as biological, constant and inevitable, but rather as socially and culturally variable and historically contingent. He pointed out that the 'invention' of the homosexual as a specific type of person dated back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when a number of North European scientists came up with definitions of what they believed to be 'the homosexual identity' (Foucault 1978, 1984a, 1984b, as discussed in Edwards 2005: 52).

It was not until the beginning of the 1990s, however, that the development of masculinity studies as a distinctive field of research really gained momentum. Increasingly, efforts were made to adopt an eclectic approach towards the issue of masculinity, in other words, to develop concepts and analytical tools on the basis of a critical reading of a wide variety of earlier developed theories in the field of gender studies. At the same time, there were also attempts to do something about the Western bias in masculinity studies: more and more research was done on masculinity issues in non-Western contexts.

In his book *'Manhood in the making'* (1990), Gilmore made a cross-cultural survey of 'appropriate manhood', that is, the sets of norms and values that constitute masculine gender ideologies. Pointing out the striking similarities among cultures with regard to the behaviour expected of 'real men', he argued that men were frequently forced to comply with 'three male imperatives': they were supposed to impregnate women, to protect the people depending on them and to provide for the latter's livelihoods. According to Gilmore, the existence of parallels in criteria for man-playing could be explained on the basis of post-Freudian theories about regression: in every society, he said, there were



mechanisms that prevented men from relapsing into the stage of oneness with their mothers, because such backsliding was considered harmful to men's independent selfhoods as well as to their participation in social life (Gilmore 1990: 11; 29; 223).

Gilmore's approach was criticized on several grounds. Cornwall and Lindisfarne stated that Gilmore was wrong in suggesting that maleness was unitary, based on evolution and inborn psychological and biological tendencies, and absolutely in contrast with everything that was female. Furthermore, they attacked him for creating the impression that, in any setting, there was only one way of being a man. In the opinion of Cornwall and Lindisfarne, one had to take into account that there could be multiple and competing masculinities within one and the same cultural setting. By this, they meant to say that, depending on the context, different masculinities could prevail and different male attributes could be emphasized over others (Cornwall & Lindisfarne 1994: 20; 27).

For his part, Connell contended that Gilmore's work was a typical example of an inquiry rooted in sex role theory, an approach based on the premise that being a man or a woman means enacting a general set of expectations attached to one's sex (cfr. supra). According to Connell, Gilmore, just like other sex role theorists, made the mistake of reducing gender to two homogeneous categories: male and female. Moreover, he also blamed him for having exaggerated the differences between men and women, for not having documented the distinction between expectation and actual behaviour and, finally, for having neglected issues of power (Connell 2005: 21-27; 32-33).

Arguing in favour of a more dynamic view on gender relations, Connell proposed a theoretical model that helped to make sense of changing relations among different types of masculinities. The concept that occupied a central position in this model was that of 'hegemonic masculinity'<sup>28</sup>, a notion that had its roots in Gramsci's analysis of class relations. Connell made it clear that 'hegemonic masculinity' is not a fixed character type but a configuration of practice that is culturally exalted at a certain point in history. Hegemonic masculinity can either be established through negotiation or through the use of power and coercion (Connell 2005: 77; Beynon 2002: 16).

Connell argued that, apart from this 'hegemonic masculinity', it is also possible to identify 'subordinate masculinities', 'complicit masculinities' and 'marginalized masculinities'. 'Subordinate masculinities' are forms of masculinity that are being oppressed because they are believed to

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<sup>28</sup> As Connell himself has rightly pointed out, the first formulations of the concept of hegemonic masculinity can be found in a field study of social inequality in Australian high schools (Kessler et al. 1982), in a discussion of the construction of masculinities and the ways in which men experience their bodies (Connell 1983) and in a debate over the role of men in Australian labour politics (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 830).

constitute a threat to the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity. A good example is that of homosexual masculinities in a society dominated by heterosexual men. As for ‘complicit masculinities’, one could say that these are forms of masculinity displayed by men who do not succeed in embodying the hegemonic form of masculinity, but who nevertheless support the hegemonic project. Men showing complicit masculinity enjoy the benefits of patriarchy without performing a strong version of masculine dominance. Finally, ‘marginalized masculinities’ should be conceived of as masculinities influenced by the factors of race, ethnicity and class. In Connell’s view, men belonging to subordinated classes, ethnic or racial minorities, or disabled and aged groups may very well develop practices and identities that are accepted by dominant men in society, but this does not automatically mean that they are considered and treated as full members of the hegemonic masculine group (Connell 2005: 76-81; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 832-833; Carrigan et al. 2002: 112-116; Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003: 9-10; Howson 2007: 381).

Connell also emphasized the changeability of the hierarchy between different forms of masculinity. He made it clear that the hegemony of one form of masculinity was by definition temporary and that, over time, new forms of masculinity would inevitably come to replace older ones. In this sense, Connell’s theory had an element of optimism in it: it left open the possibility that, one day, a more humane and less oppressive way of being a man could become hegemonic (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 832-833)<sup>29</sup>.

### **1.2.5 Critical remarks on Connell’s masculinity model**

While Connell’s theory on the plurality and hierarchy of masculinities was tremendously influential in a wide range of fields across the social sciences and humanities, including education studies, criminology, media studies, organization studies and discussions of psychotherapy with men, violence-prevention programs for youth and emotional programs for boys (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 833-834), it also received a fair amount of criticism. As I will show in the following sections, a number of authors had doubts about the advisability of making clear-cut distinctions between different types of masculinities as well as about the feasibility of making a sound assessment of the power

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<sup>29</sup> Connell is not the only scholar who developed a theory on the relationship between masculinity and power. Just like Connell, Brittan (1989) combined the analysis of the plurality of masculinity with a discussion of the relationship between masculinity and power. According to Brittan, it was undisputable that there were many different ways of being and becoming a man. He argued that men had different ways of presenting themselves to the outside world and that it was therefore good to think of masculinities as different styles of self-presentation. In order to account for the fact that, almost in every society in history, there was an ideology that helped men to justify and legitimate their positions of power, especially vis-à-vis women, he introduced the concept of ‘masculinism’. ‘Masculinism’ referred to an ideology that emphasized the natural and inherently superior position of men, and that offered a justification for the oppression and subjection of women by men (discussed in Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003: 10-11).

relations between them. Moreover, they suggested that there was a need for more awareness of what they saw as the inherently hybrid and context-dependent nature of masculinity practices.

In a case study on the experiences of Akan men exposed to mission education in colonial Ghana, Miescher contended that it was not always possible to determine which form of masculinity was dominant or hegemonic in a given society at a specific moment in history. He showed that the teachers he interviewed in the course of his research did not perceive some notions of masculinity as dominant and others as subordinate. Instead, in the process of defining themselves as men, they made their own personal mix of different cultural practices and ideas about gender, authority and seniority (Miescher 2003: 89-91).

Lindsay, the author of a monograph on the history of a male breadwinner norm among Yoruba employees of the government railway in southwestern Nigeria in colonial times, shared Miescher's scepticism over the possibility to make a neat distinction between hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalized masculinities. To back up her argument that it was difficult to rank masculinities in such a manner, especially in colonial Africa, she drew attention to the fact that, in her area of research, there were many competing models for men to aspire to, while these models were neither coherent nor stable (Lindsay 2003: 13; 205).

In a study on shifting ideals of masculinity in south-western Nigeria in the beginning of the 1990s, a period in which political instability and economic crisis were increasingly undermining the position of men in Nigerian society, Cornwall wondered whether it was not better to think of 'hegemonic masculinity' as a popular stereotype instead of presenting it as something that all men glorified just like that, no matter how different they were. In Cornwall's view, it was better to focus on 'attributes persistently associated with idealized versions of being a man' than to concentrate on the identities they described. Moreover, she thought it was important to be aware of the fact that 'particular ideals of masculinity may be enacted and identified with in different ways by different men' (Cornwall 2003: 234).

For his part, Demetriou disagreed with Connell's assumption that subordinate and marginalized masculinities could never influence or affect the hegemonic form of masculinity. According to Demetriou, this supposition led scholars to neglect the tendency of men representing hegemonic masculinity to borrow aspects and characteristics of other masculinities if they think this can help them to consolidate and continue their domination. By conceptualizing hegemonic masculinity as a hybrid complex, a changing ensemble of elements from various sources, Demetriou paved the way for a more sophisticated analysis of the relationship between masculinity and historical change. Instead of simply stating that hegemonic masculinity adapted itself to changing historical conditions without

explaining how this happened, he pointed out that the adaptations were made possible by processes of hybridization emanating from the hegemonic masculine bloc. Examples of such processes of hybridization include the appropriation of gay men's styles and practices by straight men or the adoption of black hip-hop style and language by working-class white teenage boys in western societies (Demetriou 2001: 341-349; as discussed in Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 844-845).

Finally, writing from the viewpoint of discursive psychology, Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggested that the concept of hegemonic masculinity was based on an unsatisfactory theory of the subject. They thought it was wrong to think of hegemonic masculinity as the settled character structure of a group of men, and argued that the right question to ask was 'how men conform to an ideal and turn themselves into complicit or resistant types, without anyone ever managing to exactly embody that ideal'. According to Wetherell & Edley, men choose to support or to distance themselves from hegemonic masculinity according to their needs in specific situations. Thus, in the opinion of the authors, masculinity should not be considered as a certain type of man but rather as a way that men position themselves through discursive practices (Wetherell & Edley 1999, as discussed in Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 841).

In the preceding account, I have shown that, in the course of the twentieth century, masculinity has been examined from many different perspectives. Psychoanalysts concentrated on the importance of a boy's childhood years for the development of his gender identity, role theorists examined how men learned to play roles that were believed to be appropriate for their gender, feminists analyzed the shaping of gender relations by patriarchal systems, and gay liberationists demonstrated that the construction of masculinities always takes place against the backdrop of a structure of sexual power relations. I have pointed out that Connell probably made the most significant contribution to the debate on men and masculinities by creating a model that makes it possible to evaluate changing power relations between four different types of masculinities: hegemonic masculinities, subordinate masculinities, complicit masculinities and marginalized masculinities. Nevertheless, I have also discussed the works of a number of authors who showed reservations towards Connell's model, and who argued that more attention should be paid to the hybridity and context-dependent character of masculinity practices.

### **1.3 Two trends in the masculinity practices of Katangese miners**

The key question is, of course, in which respects the aforementioned concepts and models can help me to make a sound analysis of the construction of masculinities among miners in Katanga. Let me start by saying that I intend to set up a theoretical framework that allows me to examine two trends in the

practices of Katangese miners: on the one hand, a ‘levelling trend’, and, on the other hand, a ‘differentiating trend’. I use the expression ‘levelling trend’ to describe the efforts of Katangese miners to become a distinct social group with a number of shared characteristics in terms of masculinity. In the course of this dissertation, I will show that miners try to distinguish themselves from other men in Katangese society by displaying what they themselves consider as a distinctive kind of behaviour. In doing so, they aim to establish a collective social identity: they want to create the impression that they make up a separate category of men. When I use the expression ‘differentiating trend’, I refer to the fact that, despite their efforts to foster a common social identity, miners are still very well aware of their internal differences. They all develop their own styles of masculinity and they all have their own ways of dealing with the masculinity ideals that exist in the immediate environment of the mines.

### **1.3.1 Concepts for the analysis of the levelling trend**

An important set of concepts that should enable me to make sense of the ‘levelling trend’ in the interaction between Katangese miners is drawn from Turner’s theory about liminality. In my discussion of the anthropological literature about mining in Sub-Saharan Africa, I already pointed out that several authors have used Turner’s theory about liminality to describe and analyze the emergence of mining cultures. There are two reasons why I think it is a good idea to follow their example. First of all, Katangese miners possess several features that Turner considers to be characteristic of what he calls ‘liminaries’ or ‘edgemen’, that is, people who find themselves in a liminal position (see Turner 1969: 95; 106-107). In this dissertation, I will show that, in the process of leaving their homes and belongings and travelling to the mining areas, miners usually give up their previous statuses. In addition to this, they are under heavy pressure to temporarily suspend their kinship rights and obligations; they generally live in camps or compounds close to the mines, at considerable distances from urban centres and villages; they constantly travel from one place to the next taking almost no personal possessions with them; they speak their own slang language which outsiders find difficult to understand; they think of themselves as people who are always floating between life and death because of the dangerous work they do in the mines; they accept pain and suffering to be part and parcel of life in the mining areas; they observe a series of taboos; they create their own stories in order to express their ambiguous feelings about their stay in the mines; they experiment with new combinations of symbols and magical practices; and, finally, when they are excavating minerals, they all look the same because they all wear the same type of worn-out clothing. A quick look at this long list of liminality-related features, shared by almost all individuals working in Katanga’s mines, makes it easy to understand why miners like to think of themselves as a separate category of men.

The second reason why I think Turner's theory about liminality is useful for the analysis of the 'levelling trend' in the masculinity practices of Katangese miners, is that it offers a good starting point to discuss the spirit of comradeship, harmony, unity and equality which participants in the mining business often cite as one of the key characteristics of social life in and around the mines. According to Turner, people in a condition of liminality tend to develop 'communitas' or 'antistructure', that is, they create a rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated community, while they interact in a spirit of spontaneity, friendliness and equality (Turner 1992: 138; Buitelaar 1994: 74). According to Turner, a distinction can be made between three different types of 'communitas', namely an 'existential or spontaneous communitas', a 'normative communitas' and an 'ideological communitas'. While 'spontaneous communitas' refers to what hippies in the 1960s used to describe as a happening, 'normative communitas' comes into being when liminal people start to realize that it is necessary to have some form of social control in order to improve the organization and mobilization of resources (Turner 1969: 132). 'Ideological communitas' can be defined as the 'formulation of remembered attributes of the 'communitas' experience as a utopian blueprint for the reform of society' (Turner 1992: 59).

During my fieldwork in Katanga, I observed two forms of 'communitas'. Among the creuseurs in general, I detected a form of 'normative communitas'. An expression that is often used to designate the atmosphere of harmony in the mines is '*kazi ya creusage ni mapendo*', which can be translated as 'the work of digging is a matter of love'. In the course of this dissertation, I will demonstrate that creuseurs disregard each other's social, ethnic, educational and professional backgrounds and treat each other as equals. It is not unusual, for instance, to see the highly educated son of a former Gécamines trade union official work shoulder to shoulder with the semiliterate son of a farmer from one of the villages close to the mine, or to watch a former member of the Katangese gendarmes give instructions to the son of a high-placed official of the Congolese army. Furthermore, creuseurs frequently engage in joint protest activity, for example when they feel that their rights are being abused by other actors in the mining business such as members of the mining police or mineral buyers (*négociants*). When one of their colleagues dies in a mining accident, they hold a procession on the day of the funeral, singing offensive songs in which they glorify their own deviant and anti-structural behaviour. Creuseurs also share drinks or drugs on a daily basis and they help each other to settle debts with their respective creditors. The normative aspect of this form of 'communitas' among the diggers lies in the fact that they respect an informal code of conduct: they follow certain rules with regard to the division of labour and the conclusion of financial arrangements and they know that they are expected to observe a series of taboos.

Among the followers of a local branch of the Rastafarian movement, which was very popular with the creuseurs, I observed a form of 'ideological communitas'. As I will explain in chapter 5 of this

dissertation, Katangese Rastafarians describe their ambition to live together in a spirit of harmony and solidarity through the slogan ‘*one love*’, a reference to a pop song by reggae musician Bob Marley. They have a written code of conduct based on their personal interpretation of Jamaican Rastafarianism, they come up with utopian ideas for the reform of Katangese society and, every week, they organize meetings to discuss ideological issues. Although the structure of the Rastafarian movement is very similar to that of an army, its members maintain that they treat each other as equals and that they all pursue the same goal of becoming a good ‘*rastaman*’, a masculinity ideal associated with the Katangese version of Rastafarianism. Several elements make it clear that Rastafarians consider themselves as liminal: they explicitly compare themselves to the Africans who were abducted from their homes and families in the context of the Transatlantic slave trade, they grow their hair in dreadlocks to make it clear to the outside world that they have withdrawn from society with the aim of meditating and reconstituting themselves, and they observe a series of taboos with regard to the consumption of food and alcohol.

Although I also interviewed a number of people about what it was like to work for the mining company *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* during the colonial period, I did not manage to find any information about the existence of ‘*communitas*’ among these miners. While they suggested that, in the mining compounds of the UMHK, processes of cultural exchange and hybridization used to occur that were similar to the ones taking place in today’s camps for artisanal miners, they failed to elaborate on the feelings of solidarity and communion that may have grown from their shared experiences in and around the mines. Of course, there are several possible explanations for my informants’ silence on these issues. Yet, in my opinion, one of the most plausible ones is that most of them used to belong to the African elite in the mining compound. In chapter 2 of this dissertation, I will show that there used to be a considerable degree of competition among these members of the elite, who did their best to outmanoeuvre each other and to look good in the eyes of their white employer.

### **1.3.2 Concepts for the analysis of the differentiating trend**

This brings me to a few points about the ‘differentiating trend’ in the masculinity practices of Katangese miners. While Turner’s theory about liminality is of vital importance to understand why miners consider themselves as a separate category of men with a number of shared characteristics in terms of masculinity, it also creates the risk of overlooking the existence of a large variety of masculinity styles in the mining sector in Katanga. As I will demonstrate throughout this dissertation, miners are not only well aware of what they have in common, but also of their internal differences. They identify with different and competing ideals of masculinity, and they try to act in accordance with their own personal list of priorities.

In order to avoid putting too much emphasis on the 'levelling trend' in the practices of Katangese miners, I intend to use Connell's masculinity model, although I will also take into account the critical remarks on this model formulated by Miescher (2003), Lindsay (2003), Cornwall (2003), Demetriou (2001) and Wetherell and Edley (1999). In my survey of the literature on men and masculinities, I already pointed out that Connell's approach has the advantage of paying attention to the coexistence of multiple masculinities in the same setting, and of offering a number of concepts to analyze the power relations between these masculinities.

Connell's theory comes in handy to describe how, ever since the colonial period, Katangese miners have been enacting a wide variety of masculinities. I will show that, in the colonial period, employees of the *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* were confronted with an institutionalized form of hegemonic masculinity. While the Belgian mining company tried to make the lives of its employees more comfortable by offering them various social benefits such as housing facilities, education and healthcare, it also made efforts to transform them into 'modern industrial men' by familiarizing them with a Western gender ideology. Those who succeeded best in becoming the type of man envisioned by the UMHK had the best chances of obtaining a good position in the company. Connell's masculinity model will allow me to analyze a series of stories told by former UMHK employees about the coexistence of an institutionalized form of hegemonic masculinity with several other masculinities in Katanga's mining compounds during colonial times.

As I will illustrate further on in this dissertation, contemporary artisanal miners have followed the example of their colonial predecessors by using their stay in the mining areas to develop new masculinities. Each of these masculinities has been given a different name and has been connected with a fixed cluster of practices. While some masculinities are glorified by the majority of creuseurs and - according to the terminology developed by Connell - deserve to be called 'hegemonic', other masculinities are treated as inferior and can be categorized as 'subordinate'.

It should be noted that the labels with which creuseurs designate the wide variety of masculinities in their social environment relate to specific dimensions of manhood such as the ways in which men handle their money or the ways in which men deal with unforeseen circumstances. Since these labels are not used to describe entire lifestyles or total ways of being, it is easy to understand how several hegemonic masculinities can coexist within one and the same setting. Theoretically speaking, every dimension of manhood to which creuseurs attach importance can give rise to the development of a new type of hegemonic masculinity.

While, on the one hand, I have noticed that Katangese miners make a clear-cut distinction between different types of masculinities and are well aware of the power relations between them, on the other



hand, I have also observed that they dare to make their own, independent and sometimes unconventional choices. Just like the Ghanaian teachers studied by Miescher (2003) or the Nigerian railway workers examined by Lindsay (2003), they construct their masculinities by mixing practices from various origins, by giving personal interpretations to the ideals they identify with, and by changing their attitudes towards these ideals according to the situations they are in and the interests they are pursuing at particular moments in their lives (see Wetherell & Edley 1999). Consequently, it seems that Cornwall is right in suggesting that ‘particular ideals of masculinity may be enacted and identified with in different ways by different men’ (Cornwall 2003: 234).

I have not been able to find elements that allow me to confirm or deny Demetriou’s proposition about the existence of exchanges between hegemonic masculinities and lower-ranking masculinities. However, since I have been able to establish that miners regularly combine practices associated with different types of masculinities (cfr. supra), I am inclined to believe that Demetriou’s thesis is correct. One can easily imagine a person trying to behave in accordance with a certain form of hegemonic masculinity while simultaneously adopting practices from other masculinities, either because he is pressured by the circumstances or because he thinks that it may be advantageous to do so. When his example is followed by other creuseurs who all try out the same combinations of practices (i.e. practices of hegemonic masculinity combined with practices borrowed from complicit or subordinate masculinities), a pattern will gradually start to develop and, in the long run, this may lead to the permanent adoption of these inferior masculinity practices by the hegemonic form of masculinity.

Strikingly, among Katangese miners, there are no masculinities that Connell would describe as ‘marginalized’. In other words, there are no masculinities that are displayed by members of ethnic or racial minorities, subordinate social classes or marginalized social groups, and that are tolerated by the hegemonic masculine group (i.e. men considered as exemplars of hegemonic masculinity). In my opinion, this is due to the fact that all the people who start working as miners automatically give up their previous statuses (cfr. supra: discussion on *communitas*). When creuseurs want to distinguish themselves from their fellow workers, they do not explicitly refer to the differences that existed between them before they entered the mining business, but they attempt to make their mark through their achievements in and around the mines.

### **1.3.3 Some remarks on the notions of subculture and self-making**

Before I proceed to discuss the methods I have used to collect information about the ‘levelling’ and ‘differentiating’ trends in the masculinity practices of Katangese miners, I want to address two remaining issues. First of all, if Katangese miners can, indeed, be qualified as ‘liminaries’ developing a form of ‘*communitas*’ or ‘anti-structure’ during their stay in the mining areas, then the question

should be raised whether they all in engage in this ‘communitas’ with the same level of intensity and what are the boundaries of their so-called ‘community’. Second, considering that miners are suddenly drawn into a new social environment with norms and values that are significantly different from the ones they used to know before they entered the mining business, one should also determine the impact of this radical shift (from one social environment to another) on their capacity to carve out a path for themselves, to control their own actions and to keep track of their feelings and thoughts. One can wonder whether the fact that an individual miner experiments with different masculinities or different aspects of masculinities should be interpreted as symptomatic of that person’s lack of ‘self-constancy’ (Ricoeur, discussed in Atkins 2005: 220-223) or of his deficient capacity ‘to organize his past, present and future into a coherent and meaningful whole’ (Jameson 1984, quoted in Strauss 1997: 362), or whether it should rather be seen as evidence of an ongoing process of ‘self-making<sup>30</sup>’ or ‘becoming’ (Van Wolputte 2002: 262-263).

With regard to the first issue, it needs to be emphasized that ‘communitas’ is only one of the characteristics of the mining culture that has developed among the miners who are working in Katanga’s copper and cobalt mines. I use the word ‘communitas’ to describe a general mood or mentality, which, in varying degrees, is shared by these miners and which, in my opinion, helps to explain the ‘levelling trend’ in their masculinity practices. Yet, I do not want to suggest that ‘communitas’ constitutes the essence or core of their mining culture. I am very well aware of the fact that the cultural processes taking place in and around the mines are very complex and that it would be a serious mistake to portray them as mere emanations of the sense of communion and egalitarianism that is captured by the concept of ‘communitas’.

The questions about the differences in participation in ‘communitas’ and about the boundaries of the community of creuseurs are, in fact, questions about how the mining culture is spread over the digging population, and how it is embedded in larger cultural wholes. The notion most frequently used in this context is that of ‘subculture’. Although this notion has its origins in the works of classical authors such as Durkheim, Weber and Marx, the publications of the Chicago School and the analyses of Parsons, it only became really fashionable in the social sciences after the creation of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, a research centre that came to be known as the Birmingham School. Authors such as Hall & Jefferson (1976), Mungham & Pearson (1976), Willis (1978) and Hebdige (1983) used the concept of subculture to describe the aberrant behaviour of white, male, working-class youngsters. It was believed that the latter used their

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<sup>30</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I intend to use Moore’s definition of the self, which goes as follows: ‘The self is the product of acts of identification with internal elements of experience, but also with other people, groups and cultural representations’ (Moore 2007: 38-39).

subcultural styles to resist and subvert the norms and values of the dominant culture (Jenks 2005: 121; MacDonald 2001: 37).

While the concept of subculture was a very popular analytical tool at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, it gradually started receiving more and more criticism from scholars studying the relationship between youth and culture. Martin pointed out that there is a tendency to treat subcultures as identifiable and more or less coherent social groups, while, most of the times, these groups are rather fluid, porous, amorphous and transient (Martin 2004: 21-35). Writing in the same vein, Chaney suggested that, in today's world, it is no longer useful to make a distinction between 'sub' and 'dominant' culture, because the so-called dominant culture has exploded into a 'plurality of lifestyle sensibilities and preferences'. Consequently, the argument of the Birmingham School that people participate in a subculture in order to express their resistance against a dominant culture no longer makes sense (Chaney 2004: 47). Finally, Jenks argued that the notion of subculture is too vague and does not give a good idea of what is really going on in society. He feared that the use of the label 'subculture' might even have a stigmatizing effect: if people living on the fringes of society are always told that their behaviour is characteristic of a marginal subculture, they have every reason to feel excluded and to display deviant behaviour (Jenks 2005: 126).

One of the authors who preferred to reformulate the concept of subculture instead of throwing it in the dustbin is Hannerz. In his book *Cultural complexity: studies in the social organization of meaning* (1992), he suggested that, instead of simply assuming that members of the same social unit automatically share the same ideas, modes of thought and overt forms of culture, it was better to develop a 'distributive understanding of culture', in other words, to investigate how culture is spread over a population and its social relationships (Hannerz 1992: 1-17).

In conceptualizing the notion of subculture, Hannerz zoomed in on the point of view of the individual cultural actor. He said that the contribution of this actor to the cultural flow in society could only be understood if one took into account his perspective and his horizon. The perspective was defined as *'the device which organizes the attention and interpretation which an individual gives to externally carried meaning, as well as his production of such meaning, whether deliberate or spontaneous'* (Hannerz 1992: 65). In Hannerz' view, perspective had to be thought of as a biographical structure, a reflection of one's role repertoire. As everybody spends his life going through various different situations that are typical of the society in which he lives, an accumulation of experiences and situational involvements takes place, which influences the individual's outlook on life. The horizon is the reach of this perspective. Hannerz assumed that not everybody looks equally far. While people with a limited horizon draw their ideas from cultural sources nearby, people with a broad horizon will also draw ideas from sources that are further away from them. Subcultures can only emerge if there is

a baseline symmetry in perspectives among its participants. This symmetry becomes increasingly stable and strong as more meanings are exchanged successfully (Hannerz 1992: 65-67; 70-72).

In my opinion, Hannerz' theory provides useful concepts to analyze the existence of cultural variation among Katangese miners as well as the relationship between the Katangese mining culture and larger cultural wholes. The main advantage of Hannerz' argument is that it is built around the concepts of perspective and horizon. The latter come in very handy when an explanation is needed for the fact that, within the same group of artisanal miners, there can still be significant differences in terms of the degree of participation in the atmosphere of 'communitas' and the complexity of masculinity constructions. In the course of this dissertation I will show that miners drawing on a broad cultural source are likely to adopt a different attitude towards 'communitas', while they also tend to construct their masculinities in a more complicated manner than others who only draw on a narrow source. Another major advantage of Hannerz' approach is its emphasis on the porosity of the boundaries of a subculture. My dissertation will point out that the masculinity meanings circulating among miners are not always typical of their subculture. Since miners are simultaneously part of other social units as well, their ideas, modes of thought and forms of culture are obviously likely to constitute an amalgam, a mix of elements originating from very diverse cultural sources. Hannerz' theory leaves open the possibility that meanings concerning masculinity that have been generated in the mining subculture can eventually also start circulating in the outside world, or the other way around.

With regard to the second issue that I wanted to address, namely the impact of mining on processes of self-making, it is important to note that almost all the miners with whom I spoke in the course of my research emphasized the many ambiguities of life in the mining areas. On the one hand, miners are pleased about the fact that they can elude the social control of their family members and friends, enjoy a greater degree of sexual freedom, consume as much alcohol and drugs as they want, and accumulate wealth without being directly accountable to anyone, but, on the other hand, they also realize that they find themselves in a very vulnerable position as a result of the dangerous nature of their work, the loss of control of female sexuality (most women staying in the mining camps are prostitutes) and the possibility that relatives staying behind in the villages or the urban areas may try to kill them through witchcraft attacks because they are jealous of their success in the mining business. The situation is even more difficult for men who are working in the mines in order to support the members of their households, because they have to find a solution for the fact that, as participants in the mining subculture, they are expected to spend their money in a manner different from what is common outside the mining subculture.

While all Katangese creuseurs are trying to come to grips with their ambiguous feelings about their stay in the mining areas, and while they all try to take the opportunity to think about the type of man

they want to be or want to become, some are more successful in ‘keeping their act together’ than others. I have the impression that men with a broad Hannerzian horizon and a strongly developed reflective self-awareness are better capable of retaining a coherent sense of self than those whose horizon is narrow. This is probably due to the fact that, thanks to their higher level of self-knowledge and their more extensive experience of life, they are better able to react to unexpected events and make choices in agreement with the paths they have carved out for themselves.

From the preceding discussion, it should be remembered that a distinction can be made between two trends in the masculinity practices of Katangese miners, namely a ‘levelling trend’ and a ‘differentiating trend’. While the ‘levelling trend’ will be analyzed through the use of Turner’s concepts of liminality and *communitas*, the ‘differentiating trend’ will be examined through the application of Connell’s masculinity model, which makes a distinction between hegemonic, complicit, subordinate and marginalized masculinities. I have pointed out that, both in colonial and postcolonial times, Katangese miners have constructed their own distinctive styles of masculinity by making a personal mix of practices and by changing their attitude towards ideals of manliness according to their needs and interests in specific situations. In order to make sense of the insertion of the Katangese mining culture in larger cultural wholes and to analyze the dynamics of cultural variation among Katangese *creuseurs*, I have decided to adopt Hannerz’ theory on subcultures, which proposes a distributive understanding of culture and which is built around the notions of perspective and horizon. Finally, I have argued that artisanal mining has an important impact on processes of self-making among Katangese men, because it confronts them with a whole range of ambiguities during their stay in the mining areas.

## **1.4 Methodology**

In the following sections, I will give more information about the identity of my research assistants, the criteria I have used to pick out a research location and the research techniques I have used to collect information for this dissertation. In total, I spent more than 15 months in the field: 7 months in 2005, 7 months in 2006, and 6 weeks in 2007.

### **1.4.1 Research assistants**

In April 2005, I was invited to a reception organized by the Belgian consulate at the Park Hotel in Lubumbashi. The occasion was the closing session of a workshop aimed at raising the awareness of stakeholders in the Katangese mining business about issues related to the working conditions of artisanal miners. By some whim of fate, I struck up a conversation with Ilunga Katwe-Teba, who attended the reception in his capacity of trade union representative of the mining parastatal

Gécamines. After I had given him a general explanation about the reasons behind my stay in the Katangese capital, he told me that Santa, one of his sons, was working as a mineral buyer and would probably be very willing to get me started on my research. I gladly accepted his proposal and met with Santa two days after the reception. Although, initially, I had planned to limit myself to an information gathering exercise on Santa's *modus operandi*, we soon decided that it would be to our mutual benefit to make a joint tour of some of the mines in the region. For Santa, it would be a nice opportunity to discover new possibilities for his personal business activities, whereas, for me, it would be a handy way of getting an insider's advice on the most appropriate location to conduct long-term research on artisanal mining. As we got to know each other better, I became increasingly convinced that Santa had all the qualities to grow into a valuable research assistant: he was knowledgeable about the technical side of artisanal mining, he was good at chatting with the diggers and he proved to be extremely skilful in negotiating with mining officials – an important asset in a context in which expatriates like me were forced to cough up ridiculously high sums of money to obtain all sorts of permits. Luckily for me, Santa agreed to interrupt his buying activities and stay with me for the rest of my fieldwork. We decided to establish ourselves in Lwambo, a town of approximately 25.000 people, situated at 20 km north of Likasi. Hotel Kyandimuna, located in Lwambo's '*quartier commercial*', served as our operating base. With most of the other hotel rooms occupied by mineral buyers and diggers regularly dropping by to show samples of their mineral ores, it was relatively easy to keep track of the latest developments in the local mineral business.

In addition to the help received from Santa, I received assistance from two other people as well. Numbi Kaboto, one of the sons of the hotel owner who had just finished high school by the time I arrived in Lwambo, agreed to help me out with the interviews in Sanga. Although most of my informants – and especially the diggers - were used to expressing themselves in Swahili, it turned out to be of vital importance to conduct certain interviews in the original vernacular. This was the case, for instance, when it came to collecting data on various aspects of Sanga culture, the political history of the Sanga chieftaincy and the social history of Lwambo. As neither Santa nor Numbi were capable of producing acceptable interview transcriptions, I decided to take Jerry Kalonji on board as a third research assistant. Holding a degree as a linguist, Jerry was employed by the *Observatoire du Changement Urbain*, a research centre founded by Pierre Petit of the *Université Libre de Bruxelles* and led by Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu of the UNILU (University of Lubumbashi). We met once a month, that is, each time I came to Lubumbashi to stock up provisions and arrange my field notes. The deal was that Jerry would provide me with extra information on some of the expressions I had collected in the field, in addition to taking care of the transcriptions of the interviews in Sanga. Before embarking on this PhD project, I had followed a three-year course in Swahili Bora at the University of Leiden, so it did not take me too long to speak enough Shaba Swahili to make myself understood and to be able to follow people's daily conversations. Having mastered the grammar and being able to ask

Santa and Numbi for help every time parts of a recorded conversation were unintelligible to me, I felt capable of handling the transcriptions of the Swahili interviews myself. Nevertheless, I made sure to discuss a selected number of interview sections with Jerry in order to avoid interpretative mistakes.

#### **1.4.2 The selection of Lwambo as a research location**

For several reasons, Lwambo proved to be an interesting research location. To begin with, it is situated in the heart of an area traditionally occupied by the Sanga ethnic group. The Sanga are reputed for being one of the autochthonous groups in Katanga having developed their own metallurgy long before the arrival of the Belgian colonizers. Legros has indicated that copper originating from the Sanga area played an important role in the regional trade in pre-colonial times (Legros 1996: 107-128). Early ethnographic works by de Hemptinne (1926) and Roland (1937) provide a good starting point for the analysis of the evolution and transformation of cultural practices related to resource extraction. The second reason why Lwambo turned out to be an attractive research location is that it harbours the residence of Pande, the paramount chief of the Sanga. Two of his sons, who are directly involved in artisanal mining, skilfully use their affinity with the institutions of traditional authority to secure an easy access to the most lucrative mining sites in the area. This indicates that the domain of artisanal mining is an excellent arena to investigate issues related to the interface between tradition and modernity. The third reason why I decided to do fieldwork in Lwambo is that the number of artisanal miners is rather limited. Kalabi, the most important mine in the immediate surroundings of the town, is visited by approximately 500 creuseurs a day. From a practical point of view, this offered the advantage of being able to conduct interviews in a comfortable and safe environment. The importance of safety issues should not be underestimated. During my tour of other Katangese mining sites, I noticed that, more often than not, artisanal miners tend to be suspicious of and even outright hostile towards foreign visitors. On the one hand, this hostility can be ascribed to the fact that – according to the official mining code - only Congolese nationals are allowed to enter mining sites. On the other hand, it may also have to do with the fact that there are constantly rumours about foreign companies planning to buy Katangese mining concessions and preparing for the eviction of the artisanal miners working there. If I have been able to do fieldwork in a fairly undisturbed manner, it is undoubtedly the result of my sustained efforts to gain the confidence of both the local mining officials and influential members of the digging community. Finally, the profile of the miners in Lwambo allowed for easy contact with the households they belong to: most of them are villagers from Lwambo or migrant labourers from Lubumbashi or Likasi.

Nevertheless, the limited size of the abovementioned group of interviewees and the high level of shared characteristics in terms of level of education, professional background, place of origin and household composition made additional, comparative research indispensable. It was absolutely vital to

put the experiences, visions, feelings and expressions of the diggers in Lwambo and their households in a comparative perspective. That is why supplementary data have been collected through interviews with other miners, working in different mines and conditions. In doing so, I have conducted what Marcus has called a ‘multi-sited ethnography’, that is, an investigation of the movement and spread of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space. This new type of ethnographic approach, which Marcus thinks is more suitable to deal with the complexities of the contemporary world, breaks away from the reliance on macro-theoretical analyses of the world system that were characteristic of single-sited ethnography. In order to describe the ‘contextual architecture’ of the group of subjects under investigation (Marcus 1998: 79-80), I have striven for increased personal mobility, following my informants to several places outside of Lwambo such as Luishia, Kakontwe, Fungurume, Kamwale, Katanga, Mulungwishi, Mpande, Likasi and Lubumbashi.

### **1.4.3 Different stages in the approach of the field**

During my first stay in the field, I made an effort to approach social reality as open-mindedly as possible. Therefore, I did not select my informants on the basis of a pre-established list of criteria and neither did I go to great pains to develop themes that seemed relevant to me but not at all to the interviewees. I followed people systematically along the places that had a special significance for them, so that, after a while, conversation topics presented themselves automatically.

Having picked out the initial informants, I used the technique of snowball sampling to get in touch with other people. This meant that, at the end of each interview with an initial informant, I asked the person in question whether he could refer me to another *creuseur* who was equally well informed about the topics in which I was interested. Proceeding in this way offered several advantages: it enabled me to keep close track of the interview process, it helped me to get a better idea of the factors influencing or determining the relationships inside the digger community, it brought me in touch with informants who had contacts in more than one group of the community, and it increased my credibility towards new informants – I could approach them easily, since I had been referred to them by somebody they already knew and trusted.

When I went to Katanga for the second time, I had a clearer idea of what would be the main research themes. Furthermore, I was under the impression that my key informants trusted me then and I felt more secure about whom to talk to about which topic. Still, just like in the first period of fieldwork, I invested a lot of time and energy in maintaining contacts with as many people as possible. I frequently visited mines, went to local bars, entered cinemas, watched games of the World Cup Soccer on a large screen near the vegetable market, attended wrestling contests, spent hours sitting in one of the huts in



front of chief Pande's residence trying to get a clue of which cases were being presented to him and talked to traders invading Lwambo on the town's weekly market days on Monday and Thursday.

It is important to mention that the presence of my wife Lien, who worked for the local branch of the NGO World Vision for a period of 5 months during my second stay in the field, had two positive effects on my research. First of all, new opportunities presented themselves in terms of gathering data on typically female fields of social life such as cooking and child care, which were difficult to access for a male researcher like me. On many occasions, Lien spent several hours in the company of female household members of one of the diggers working in Lwambo, while Santa and I were busy doing interviews in another area of Likasi. Visits of this kind enabled Lien to collect useful pieces of information. She got a good impression of the division of labour at the household level, women's personal ambitions, frustrations and expectations of the future, and their views on the long-term absence of men working in the mines. While Lien was only able to talk to those women who could express themselves in French, she manifested herself as a keen observer and took notes of everything she saw and experienced. This proved to be very useful because I noticed that she paid attention to things that I somehow took for granted. A second advantage of Lien's presence was that it appeared to increase my respectability among elder men and women in Lwambo. Many of them told me they had revised their initial impression of me, expressing their relief that I was not leading a lawless life 'like most of the other men who travelled to the mining sites on their own'. Though, of course, I did not consciously try to live up to this newly acquired reputation, I nevertheless attempted to capitalize on the fact that the aforementioned seniors were all of the sudden more willing to share information with me.

#### **1.4.4 Research techniques**

I used five different techniques to obtain information about the relationship between mining and masculinity in Katanga. These were archival research, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, life histories and the handing out of notebooks to 10 of my informants, who promised to keep notes about their revenues and expenses as well as about the activities of all members of their household units. Even before I entered the field, I knew that I wanted to construct my dissertation around a number of concrete cases so that it would be necessary for me to collect as many data as possible about the people who were playing a leading part in these cases: I needed information on the history of the environment in which they had lived before entering the mining business, on their personal curriculum vitae, on their daily activities, on their relationships with people inside and outside the mining business, and, of course, on their ideas about masculinity.

Historical ethnographic data regarding the Sanga and their neighbours as well as information on the history of mining in the region could be gathered through archival research. I consulted the archives of the former Union Minière du Haut Katanga in Brussels, the ethnographic and historical collections of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, the personal library of Father Leon Verbeek in Lubumbashi, the archives of the Benedictine missionaries in Bruges and a wide range of unpublished Phd and MA theses available at the history and sociology departments of the University of Lubumbashi.

Since the expression 'participant observation' can mean many different things, I should probably clarify how I used this technique in my own research. Although I agree with Jackson's argument that *'practical and social skills should be as constitutive of our understanding (as ethnographers) as verbal statements and espoused beliefs'* (Jackson 1989: 9), I have to admit that I hardly ever engaged in any mining activities myself. This was not only due to the fact that I was physically unfit to do so – hacking at a rock wall tens of metres under the ground and lifting 50 kg bags of minerals are terribly heavy activities if you are used to spending most of your day sitting at a desk, going through literature and writing texts - but also to the fact that most mining activities were highly unsafe. Both the miners and the public servants overseeing the mining process prevented me from entering the mineshafts, because they knew that, if I ever had an accident, their superiors would certainly hold them responsible for what had happened to me.

As an alternative, I followed the example of mineral buyers who often spend several hours sitting at the edge of a mine pit watching how the creuseurs excavate the minerals they are planning to buy. By spending so much time observing the activities of the miners, I not only got a clear idea of the division of labour among the members of a digging team but I also got a very good impression of the daily interactions at the workplace, the discussions, the arguments, the gossips, the jokes and the stories. Moreover, sitting at the edge of a mine pit for several hours a day also gave me the opportunity to win the confidence of a limited group of informants. While, at the time of my arrival in Lwambo, many creuseurs found it hard to believe that I was just there to see how they lived, my persistence in visiting them and talking to them day by day gradually convinced them that I could be trusted and that I was not just using my research permit as an excuse to engage in business activities.

The semi-structured interviews always took place along established lines: first I asked the interviewee a couple of questions about his personal background (i.e. date and place of birth, marriage status, number of children,...), then I presented him with a number of fixed questions about the topic under discussion and at the end I tried to dig deeper into some of the issues highlighted by the interviewee during the first two parts of the interview.

Life histories allowed me to make connections between ethnographic settings that I would never have associated with one another if I had merely limited myself to interviews about events and processes in one single context. Marcus has noted that life histories ‘*reveal juxtapositions of social contexts through a succession of narrated individual experiences that may be obscured in the structural study of processes as such*’ (Marcus 1998: 94). The information gathered through the collection of life histories made it possible to look at the construction of masculinities among Katangese miners in a wider perspective. As a matter of fact, norms, values and patterns of behaviour with regard to masculinity could be linked up with processes outside the world of artisanal mining.

With regard to the abovementioned notebooks, I would like to stress that this information has not been taken at face value. I am very well aware of the risk that data about household budgets and even about some of the quite ordinary daily activities may be wrong, because the person who kept the notebook had his or her reasons to hide certain things from view. As could be expected, I have also learned that not everybody keeps these notebooks in the same accurate manner. Often, I discovered during a first inspection that the pages of several days had been left blank, while a second inspection - a couple of days later - revealed that the empty spaces had been filled with information that was cut and pasted from other sections in the same notebook. All things considered, it seemed appropriate to use the information from the notebooks first and foremost as points of departure for conversations with the owners of the notebooks. Very frequently, the notebooks helped to draw my attention to aspects of social life that might otherwise have remained invisible to me.

## **1.5 Overview of the chapters**

As I already explained, in this dissertation, I intend to analyze the levelling and differentiating trends in the masculinity practices of Katangese miners. This means that, on the one hand, I aim to shed more light on what miners have in common and what sets them apart from other men in Katangese society, while, on the other hand, I also intend to elucidate the differences that exist between them in terms of the construction of masculinities.

Since my approach will be kaleidoscopic and not linear or chronological, I hope to make the chapters into a coherent whole by using the image of the mining process as a structuring metaphor. The different stages that can be distinguished in the course of excavating minerals by artisanal means are, indeed, quite similar to the phases I have gone through in my own research, while digging for data. Furthermore, the mining metaphor is perhaps not a very subtle but still a pretty effective and expressive device to describe the ways in which my Katangese informants deal with the culture that surrounds them. For each chapter summary that follows, I will therefore present a label in the form of

a Swahili expression that refers to one of the stages in the mining process. The reader will notice that the meaning of the expression is always meant to be compatible with the content of the chapter to which it is attached.

Having clarified my theoretical framework in the first chapter, I will build the second chapter around the expression '**kufanya découverte**'. This refers to the operations that need to be carried out before the actual exploitation can begin: a pit is dug until one reaches the level where the vein of ore is visible. As far as my own research is concerned, my *découverte* consisted of looking for information about the construction of masculinities in the past. I have focused primarily on the period of the stabilization policy, an era in which the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga (UMHK) embarked on a drastic policy of social engineering. In a bid to lure part of its workforce into long-term commitments to the company, the UMHK offered a wide range of social benefits to its labourers and their families, especially in the fields of healthcare, education and food provisioning. What is important for this dissertation is that this welfare policy went hand in hand with the institutionalization of a hegemonic form of masculinity. In order to get an idea of how the inhabitants of colonial mining compounds have coped with this imposed form of hegemonic masculinity and with the UMHK's gender ideology in general, I will analyze a number of stories told by former workers of Armand Hedon, a Luxembourg subcontractor of the UMHK who used to operate the mine of Kalabi, situated close to the centre of Lwambo. It will become evident that, during the colonial period, the inhabitants of UMHK mining compounds created a subculture characterized by porous boundaries and complex processes of hybridization; that the differentiating trend in their masculinity practices was stronger than the levelling trend; and that they were strongly aware of the existence of a hierarchy of coexisting masculinities.

The third chapter will be built around the expression '**kupanga kitabu**', which literally means 'to compose a book'. In the context of artisanal mining, it refers to the financial agreements made between a mineral buyer (*négociant*) and a group of diggers (*creuseurs*). I will show how today's artisanal miners have created a subculture in which money is of vital importance for the construction of masculinities. The levelling trend in *creuseurs*' masculinity practices manifests itself in the fact that they exhibit a deviant kind of behaviour described as *kivoyou*. An important aspect of this *kivoyou* style is to spend money in a wasteful fashion. The existence of a differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese miners can be inferred from the considerable variation in the degree of wastefulness. I will show that some diggers do their best to develop a more parsimonious lifestyle, to transfer part of their mining revenues to their relatives back home, and to think about how they can use their money to start up other and more lucrative economic activities outside the mining sector. Making use of Connell's model, I will demonstrate that *creuseurs* use two criteria to classify their masculinities in a hierarchical manner, namely the way in which people handle their money and

the extent to which people are capable of coping with the insecure living conditions in the mining areas. In order to provide the reader with a concrete illustration of the ways in which Katangese miners with different Hannerzian horizons use money to construct their own characteristic styles of masculinity, I will discuss a dispute of which I have been a privileged witness, due to the fact that I already knew all of the people involved before they got into an argument with each other. For several months, they had been working together in the same team, until one day one of the diggers took off, moved to the mining site of Mbola and left his working mates in Kalabi with a large amount of unpaid debts. Keeping in touch with both the 'deserter' and his duped colleagues, as well as with their respective relatives and friends, I have been able to follow in great detail how each of the parties involved has coped with the financial consequences of the interrupted cooperation agreement.

The fourth chapter is built around the expression '**kufwata filon**', which means 'to follow an ore vein'. It is considered to be the job of the '*attaquant*', the man taking the lead of a digging team during the excavation process, to hack his way through the subsoil and make a good assessment of which way to go to obtain the best minerals. Both the *attaquant* and his fellow workers feel very tense when they are deepening the mineshaft, because they realize they are exposing themselves to enormous risks. In this chapter, I will explain that diggers' daily confrontation with death during their work in the underground is one of the main reasons why they think of themselves as liminal figures, who are 'betwixt and between' (Turner 1969: 95), who stand on the threshold between the realm of the living and the realm of the dead, and who therefore do not have the rights and duties of ordinary human beings. Living together in an atmosphere of 'normative communitas', they are convinced that they constitute a distinct category of men undergoing hardships of which outsiders do not have the remotest idea. I will show that one of the miners' strategies to give meaning to their predicament is to tell each other stories about female mining spirits whom they believe to be the supernatural guardians of the copper and cobalt reserves. In these stories, they relate how the spirits impose all sorts of taboos on them in order to mark the boundary between the spaces of the mines and the spaces outside of the mines. In the miners' view, the spirits play the role of gatekeepers, encouraging them to treat the mines as bulwarks of male power and domination and pushing them to protect their working places against the polluting influences of women. The stories about female mining spirits form excellent illustrations of the dynamics of meaning-making at the subcultural level. I will demonstrate that the participants in the Katangese mining subculture show a remarkable tendency to recycle longstanding local ideas about the relationship between mining, gender and death and to reinterpret them in the light of their own socio-economic situation. In my opinion, creuseurs' habit of telling each other narratives about female mining spirits is one of the most conspicuous manifestations of the levelling trend in their masculinity practices: it proves that they are actively searching for common ground and that they are looking for ways to highlight a number of shared characteristics in terms of masculinity.

The fifth chapter is built around the expression ‘**kuangaria tableau**’, which refers to the habit of studying the ore wall before striking a new vein. In this chapter, I will analyze the masculinity practices of men who do not only participate in the mining subculture but also in the Rastafarian subculture. In the second half of the 1990s, marginalized youngsters in the Kenya neighbourhood in Lubumbashi decided to create their own utopian blueprint for a better society on the basis of a reinterpretation of Jamaican Rastafarianism and a potpourri of local cultural ideas, practices and symbols. Interestingly, the development of ‘ideological communitas’ among these Rastafarians was coupled with the institutionalization of a form of hegemonic masculinity. Nowadays, members of the Katangese Rastafarian movement are expected to attend ideological training sessions during which they are taught how to become a good ‘*rastaman*’.

The sixth chapter will be conceived of as a theoretical and concluding chapter drawing together the main lines of argument that have been presented in the course of the dissertation. I will specify how my research findings can contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of the construction of masculinities in mining subcultures in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## 2. Working for Hedo

*'(...) the compound manager regularly told my husband: I congratulate you because you are a good man. You have a good and wise wife; as for yourself, you are wise because you take care of your wife like you should. The best proof of this is that her behaviour is irreproachable. She has never committed any stupidities. I can only encourage you (to carry on like this). By the way, I respect you a lot. You are civilized.' Apart from these compliments, there were gifts and premiums. It also had a positive impact on the professional evaluation. My husband had been promoted to the rank of capita, because the whites reckoned that a man who was able to take care of his wife would also be capable to be in charge of a group of men.'* (Testimony by the wife of a former UMHK employee, quoted in Sizaire 2002: 49).



Armand Hedo and Maria Oglietti on the day of their marriage, by courtesy of Odette Vieilvoye

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is built around the expression '*kufanya decouverte*' (i.e. to perform preparatory digging activities), because I want to dig into one of the most crucial episodes in Katanga's labour history, namely the period between the beginning of the 1920s and the end of the 1960s, when industrialization gained momentum. As I already explained in the preface of my dissertation, the Belgian mining company *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* played a key role in the transformation of Katanga from a savannah area characterized by extensive agriculture into a highly urbanized area filled with factories, mission stations and schools. Within the time span of only a few decades, thousands of people moved

from the rural areas to the cities in order to work for the UMHK or for one of the other colonial enterprises.

The emergence of the colonial wage labour economy had a strong impact on local ideas about the relationship between work and masculinity. In the process of working for a colonial company, Katangese men started considering their job as an instrument to achieve higher social status, to gain power, prestige and respectability, to accumulate wealth and to obtain access to Western consumer goods. During their stay in the ‘white man’s place’ (*kizungu*), they created new lifestyles and ideals of masculinity, while taking pride in being people in salaried employment (*bantu wa kazi*).

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the relationship between work and masculinity in the colonial wage labour economy by analyzing a number of stories told by former employees of Armand Hedo, a Luxembourg entrepreneur who worked as a subcontractor for the UMHK during the 1940s and 1950s. During their stay in the mining compound, Hedo’s workers enjoyed the benefits of a welfare policy designed by the UMHK, but, at the same time, they were also subjected to a project of social engineering. In accordance with the guidelines of the UMHK management, Hedo taught his employees and members of their families how to develop a Western lifestyle so as to make a positive contribution to the industrialization and modernization of Katanga. In addition to this, he also confronted the members of his workforce with an ‘institutionalized form of hegemonic masculinity’ (see Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 834): those men who succeeded best in displaying the kind of behaviour expected by the UMHK were granted the largest number of benefits and they also enjoyed the best chances of getting promoted.

I will show that Hedo’s endeavours to implement the UMHK project of social engineering gave rise to two reactions among his employees. First of all, rather than simply displaying the type of behaviour expected of them by the UMHK, they created a new subculture by mixing ideas and practices of various origins. Second, although members of the African elite in the mining compound also participated in the newly created subculture, they still appear to have been much more influenced by the UMHK project of social engineering than the other compound-dwellers. This is evidenced, amongst other things, by the fact that they used the institutionalized form of hegemonic masculinity as a standard to evaluate the reputations of other members of the elite. From listening to their stories, it is evident that they were engaged in a tough competition with one another for the best positions in the hierarchy of the mining compound. They criticized their competitors’ deviations from the ideal of hegemonic masculinity, and made sure to distinguish themselves from those men in the mining compound who enacted inferior forms of masculinity.



In the following sections, I will first explain what the project of social engineering of the UMHK entailed. Subsequently, I will show how the inhabitants of Hedo's mining compound responded to the attempts of the UMHK to regulate their lives and practices through this project.

## **2.2 The gender ideology of the UMHK**

Cooper has pointed out that a so-called stabilization policy was developed in several African colonies with the aim of improving the wages, social provisions and benefits of male labourers, so that they could keep their obligations towards their families more easily. In fact, this came down to the application, in an African context, of a labour policy that had previously been introduced in Western countries following pressure by the International Labour Organization to improve worker rights universally. There was a strong belief in the universal nature of modern working culture. Policy makers were convinced that labour-related problems in the colonies could be resolved in exactly the same way as in the West. They hoped that African labourers would grow out to be 'a-cultural industrial men' (Cooper 1989: 755-756). An important implication of this stabilization policy was that it contributed to a gendering of social rights: the benefits and privileges granted to the workers and their spouses were shaped by assumptions about their respective gender roles. While men were treated as family providers, women were considered as 'the ones who were provided for' (Cooper 1996: 467-468).

The Union Minière du Haut-Katanga, a mining company that set the pace for the industrialization of Central Africa for more than half a century, is generally considered to be a trendsetter in the field of policy development for issues related to the well-being of the labour force in colonial Sub-Saharan Africa (Di Cesare 2002: 3-4). While most colonial companies waited until the end of World War II to adopt their version of the stabilization policy, the UMHK already started with the stabilization of its labour force in 1927. Unfortunately, paternalism tended to degenerate into totalitarianism due to the fact that the company put everything at the service of yielding as high a return as possible. Charles d'Ydewalle once aptly described the UMHK as 'a soft prison, mixing comfort with discipline and well-being with permanent control' (Di Cesare 2002: 132).

### **2.2.1 The institutionalization of a form of hegemonic masculinity**

The first sphere of social life in which the UMHK tried to impose its gender ideology was education. As might be expected, the company did not want to leave the responsibility over the organization of the educational programme to just anyone. The Catholic Church presented itself as a faithful and

reliable partner. In 1926 a contract was signed with the Belgian Benedictines<sup>31</sup>. According to the terms of the agreement, the mining company would take care of the logistical framework, while the Benedictines would apply themselves to education and the organization of corporate life. This was a win-win situation: the missionaries received a unique opportunity to present themselves as a new moral authority in the industrial setting, whereas the UMHK rested assured that its future employees would enjoy a thorough education<sup>32</sup>.

The education coordinators designed a curriculum based on clear ideas on how children were to behave in the different phases of their lives. The expectations underlying the training at the schools of the UMHK were also stated explicitly in certain publications. Thus, the annual report of the Department of the M.O.I. (i.e. *Main-d'Oeuvre Indigène* or Indigenous Labour Force) in 1940 read as follows:

‘The instruction given in schools, to boys as well as to girls, is expressly pushed on a more practice-oriented track, instead of one that is purely theoretically-oriented. **Of the boys, we want to make qualified artisans. The notions instilled into them in school should help them to better understand and execute the tasks entrusted to them once they have become labourers. Turning them into pretentious candidate clerks should definitely be avoided.** The market is already replete with those young blacks, who - just because they hold a primary or secondary school degree – would feel dishonored to accept manual work and are embittered for not being able to succeed in the desk job they dream of (author’s stress).’

In order to understand why the author of this report spoke in horror about what he perceived as the arrogance and unwarranted ambition of Congolese pupils, one should take into account a number of widespread ideas about the role of colonial education among Belgian policy makers at the time. It was generally believed that the acquisition of practical skills was to be prioritized because of the assumed lack of capacity of Congolese children to think abstractly. In addition to this, it was assumed to be much more important to drum the appropriate work ethic into pupils than to impart scientific or

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<sup>31</sup> The Vatican had assigned Katanga as a missionary zone to the Belgian Benedictines in 1911. Initially, an alliance between the Benedictines and the UMHK was far from obvious. The Benedictines travelled to Katanga in a spirit of rural romanticism: they were convinced that new communities would automatically spring up around their abbeys, offering them the opportunity to make headway with their evangelization work. Yet, the reproduction of a rural society modelled upon the Flemish countryside failed bitterly. This failure can be ascribed to several factors: most of the missionaries were of noble origin and were not used to practice agriculture, the Katangese soil was not suited for intensive agriculture and cattle-breeding proved impossible in a large part of Katanga due to the presence of the tsee-tsee fly. At first, the Benedictines observed with regret how industrialization was overcoming Katanga. After some hesitation whether they would actually relocate the focus of their activities from the countryside to the mining camps, Monsignor de Hemptinne eventually made up his mind after the First World War. He realized that industrialisation was irreversible (De Meulder 1996: 96-100).

<sup>32</sup> The UMHK made school attendance compulsory. Mothers lost their food rations when their children were caught playing truant (De Meulder 1996: pp. 94-95).

literary knowledge to them. Policy makers found it difficult to predict how many pupils would be able to join the ranks of the elite and how many of them would have to content themselves with an anonymous existence as an ordinary worker or as a country dweller (Briffaerts 2004: 17-70). Duperoux, the director of the education programme of the UMHK in 1950, was one of the strongest advocates of this curriculum policy, although he also realized the need to create an African elite. In an article for the journal of the colonial think tank '*Centre d'Etudes des Problèmes Sociaux Indigènes*' (CEPSI), he expressed his views as follows:

A country cannot live without an elite; here more than elsewhere, the black elite should assist the guardian (i.e. the Belgian colonizer) in his social work (...). It is not impossible to base the education system on a more realistic type of training. Automatically, his attitude towards work (i.e. the attitude of a member of the elite) would change and this would influence the attitude of the less favoured (Duperoux 1950: 166).

Thus, on the one hand, the UMHK management wanted to make sure that children acquired skills and qualities that accommodated the economic needs of the company, while, on the other hand, it also strove for the creation of an African elite by offering the most intellectually gifted pupils the opportunity to continue their studies at a higher level. Once boys had finished primary school, they were dispatched in different directions: 5 per cent of the pupils were sent to the *école normale* with the idea of turning them into teachers, 25 per cent was sent to a pre-professional school where they would train as electricians or carpenters, and the remaining 70 per cent would remain on the shop floor as ordinary labourers (Di Cesare 2002: 119). For girls, the opportunities in terms of social mobility were far more restricted. Starting from the age of 10, they received their education in the so-called '*ouvrirs*', supervised by the Sisters of Charity from Ghent, or in a 'foyer social', monitored by social assistants. Apart from the alphabet, they were taught how to keep in repair and clean their houses, how to maintain a good level of hygiene, how to do the dishes and how to iron clothes. After a while, schools were established where girls were trained in managing their household budgets, among other things (Onawamba 2004: 181).

The hierarchical differences between the various categories of the school-going population were mirrored by stratification among the employees. Within the so-called '*Main-d'Oeuvre Indigène*'<sup>33</sup> or

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<sup>33</sup> There was yet another way of classifying the labourers of the UMHK, namely by considering the nature and the duration of their contracts. Thus, the *MOI Immatriculée* (1) included that segment of the labour population which was entitled to all the rights and privileges granted in the context of the stabilization policy. As the term itself already indicates, these labourers were officially registered with the UMHK and were permanently subject to the social control of two key services of the company: the '*Département MOI*' and the '*service médical*' (= medical service). The *MOI auxiliaire* (2) was composed of labourers who were only hired for temporary assignments. They took care of seasonally-defined activities and, due to the limited duration of their contracts, they did not receive any training. Finally, labourers who were being employed far away

indigenous labour force, a distinction was made between three categories of workers. The first category, called the *Main-d'Oeuvre Indigène Spécialisée* (MOI/S), was created in 1934 and included elite employees possessing 'extraordinary professional qualities', while displaying 'great dedication and discipline'. The *Main-d'Oeuvre Indigène Civilisée* (MOI/C), which constituted the second category of workers, was established in 1937 and grouped employees who were prepared to climb the social ladder by behaving in a 'civilized and exemplary manner'. All remaining employees were pigeonholed as *Main-d'Oeuvre Indigène Ordinaire* (MOI/O) (Di Cesare 2002: 56).

The UMHK strove for the creation of a payment system that would be to the benefit of those employees who performed most satisfyingly. For that reason, by 1936, a new grading system was adopted which evaluated contract labourers on the basis of their personal qualities and the requirements of the job, instead of only paying attention to their skills and seniority. Throughout their careers, employees would receive points in accordance with their intelligence, dexterity, endurance and education, and taking into account the hazards of the job, the training it required and the number of candidates interested in the same job (White 2000: 284-285). Taken together, all of the abovementioned measures can be seen as contributing to the institutionalization of a form of hegemonic masculinity, since membership of the African elite was largely made dependent upon a person's capacity to display a certain type of male behaviour.

### **2.2.2 The promotion of monogamous marriages**

The second sphere of social life in which the UMHK tried to impose its gender ideology was marriage. The architects of the stabilization policy believed that marriage had a positive influence on labourers' behaviour and, more specifically, on their readiness to continue living in the camps and working for the UMHK. At the outset, the recruitment procedure had been oriented exclusively towards the male labourers, but gradually the attention shifted to complete households during the stabilization era. The idea was to offer a wide range of social benefits to women, so that they would be prepared to draw their husbands into a continuation of their contracts. For convenience's sake, it was assumed that, in the 'traditional' environment, women were inferior to men, to the extent that their position was almost similar to that of a slave (De Meulder 1996: 82-83).

The UMHK management came to realize that the miners needed assistance in their search for a spouse. The 1937 annual report of the M.O.I. contained an alarming account of the difficulties encountered by young workers from the *territoire* of Lomami who wanted to enter into a marriage

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from the industrial and mining centres belonged to the category of the MOI non immatriculée (3). They had no certainty about the duration of their contract and they were only rarely visited by the services of the MOI (Di Cesare 2002: pp. 55-56).

agreement. Their problems were attributed to the inflation of the bride price, which was believed to result from the growing success of the cotton business. With cotton workers making good money and many of them being married and polygamous, miners had a hard time convincing their potential fathers-in-law to let their daughters go. A woman's entry into a marriage alliance was equated with the loss of a helping hand on the cotton fields. In order to compensate for their departure, fathers imposed a high bride price. The money of the bride price enabled them to engage somebody else to help them out in the cotton business<sup>34</sup>.

The UMHK embarked on a multi-tiered strategy to assist young miners with respect to marriage. Already at the time of their recruitment, labourers were encouraged to take their wife and children with them, if they had any. In case they did not yet have a wife, but had already started the 'traditional' negotiations with the family-in-law, the recruiter did everything in his power to make the marriage happen (Annual Report MOI 1947: 24-25). Apart from that, a number of special measures were taken as well. To begin with, a propaganda campaign was launched to induce the workers to start saving operations and to get married at a later stage in their lives (Annual Report MOI 1938: 17). A second measure consisted of financial assistance. The labourers were able to get an advance on their wages in order to finalize the marriage arrangements more rapidly. In case the bride price was fixed at a high level and they wished to receive support in settling the marriage obligations, they had the option of coming to the M.O.I. for help. A prerequisite for an intervention by the M.O.I. was that the worker had to pay an advance on the anticipated bride price to this service and that he had to deposit part of his wage on a special saving account on a monthly basis (Annual Report MOI 1939: 19-20). The third and final measure was that labourers could get a two-month leave in order to travel to their home region and choose a wife (Annual Report MOI 1947: 25).

It was hoped that the UMHK's project of social engineering would leave little room for variation or divergence. The formation of nuclear households was considered to be of vital importance. The type of household promoted by the UMHK included a monogamous man, his wife and his children. Being the head of the household, the man was expected to be the only one performing wage labour<sup>35</sup> and to

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<sup>34</sup> The concern about the negative side-effects of the cotton business was repeated in the annual report of 1938. It was feared that the inflation problem would also arise in Kabongo, similarly to the situation witnessed in Lomami (Annual Report MOI 1938: p. 17).

<sup>35</sup> Dibwe agrees with the argument that the UMHK consciously contributed to the genesis of the male breadwinner ideal. He notes that the worker's authority was reinforced in a subtle manner. Women originating from the countryside were offered all sorts of social benefits, making their lives far less burdensome and rendering them economically dependent on their husbands. Yet, Dibwe also points out that the UMHK ensured a certain degree of continuity: women were given the opportunity to cultivate land in the immediate vicinity of the mining camps. The author draws our attention to the fact that some women also participated in informal economic activities such as the production and the sale of beer and the manufacturing of clothes. In his opinion, revenues generated by these activities constituted an interesting supplement to the wages of the labourers, which sometimes were rather meagre (Dibwe 2001: pp. 61-64).

be accountable to the company. When one of the members of the household was suspected of wrongdoing, the supervisors of the camp would put the pater familias on the spot for this<sup>36</sup>. The UMHK tried to make women and children aware of the fact that they owed their good life in the camp to the male breadwinner. Should he get fired for one reason or another, then the whole family would have to leave the camp and everyone would lose their material benefits.

Benefits were considerable. In addition to raising the quantity and quality of the food provisioning<sup>37</sup>, the mining company improved the housing facilities of the labourers and their families. The Orenstein blocks and the barracks from the early years of the UMHK in Katanga were written off with a view to switch to a new type of housing: the construction of family houses. To make the workers feel at home, houses were built in accordance with the size of the households<sup>38</sup>. Bathing in a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, the dwellings were invariably characterized by a fenced-off space as a guarantee to privacy. All households had a piece of land to their disposal, where they could lay out a small garden. Hoping that the parcel would become 'the microcosm of a joyful and family-oriented life', the UMHK gave the workers the permission to make decorative wall paintings. Since women did not feel at ease in the communal kitchen, individual kitchens were attached to every house (De Meulder 1996: 86).

As the nuclear household was considered to be the cornerstone of the type of society upheld by the UMHK, it is hardly surprising that alternative forms of living together were discouraged or suppressed altogether. The company's management was opposed to polygamous marriage relationships and continuing contacts with the extended family. Preferably, workers were to sever all links with people in their area of origin. Two reasons accounted for this. The first was practical in nature. It was feared that friends and relatives of the miners would try to benefit from the material gains offered by the mining company. Critical board members of the UMHK warned that the attraction of the camps to the inhabitants of the surrounding zones threatened to bring about serious budgetary consequences. Running a welfare policy was only attainable on the condition that the company could limit itself to taking exclusive care of the direct family members of its employees. The 1947 annual report of the MOI raised the alarm, making mention of parasitic behaviour. Apparently, certain people were staying in the camps, though they had no right to be there. The author of the annual report urged his superiors to set bounds to these practices, as they put the company to great inconvenience:

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<sup>36</sup> From the 1940s onwards, the UMHK punished disobedient women directly by withdrawing their food rations for a certain period of time (Dibwe 2001: pp. 65-66).

<sup>37</sup> Three types of food rations were introduced, including one for men and two for women and children. The first type was accessible to all workers. The ration for women and children was granted to everyone, without any exceptions. A special food ration was put aside for pregnant women, breast-feeding women and children under the age of ten. While men used to receive their rations partly on Tuesdays and partly on Fridays, the other days were reserved to women and people belonging to the category of the M.O.I/S (Mutombo 2004: p. 49).

<sup>38</sup> Some of them had two, three or even four rooms.

Surely, the generous attitude of the Enterprise towards the family of its workers and especially towards the children creates the risk – if we don't pay attention – of attracting natives to the camps whose presence is not justified. More and more often, it is observed that workers try to be accompanied by children of whom they pretend to have the guardianship. It is clear that, if a choice has to be made between two possible guardians, the native will always choose the one with whom he knows life will be easiest, in other words the industrial worker. But if these guardianships are being granted too easily to the workers of Katanga, we will end up damaging customary environments while also imposing charges on the company that it should not be dealing with. Hence, guardianship should only be granted to a worker immigrated to Katanga if there is no other guardian available in the original environment. In the same field of parasitism, one should also react against bigamy. The cases are not yet numerous, but the tendency exists, and one should react against it, if we don't want something which is only a tendency at present to grow bigger and turn into a habit that will be difficult to eradicate. In the process of granting paid leaves, it has been observed that, on the way back to the camp, certain workers have tried to be accompanied by a second wife or by children of whom they pretend – rightfully or unrightfully – to have the guardianship (Annual Report MOI 1947: 20-21).

An additional reason why the UMHK was resistant to the continuation of contacts with the extended family was suspicion against the world outside of the camps, which was associated with underdevelopment and primitiveness. It was assumed that labourers would experience difficulties to assimilate to the principles of the western way of life, if they continued to pay visits to their friends and family members in their native region. The UMHK dreamt of a melting pot, a homogeneous labour community, of which the members would cease to feel affinity with their ethnic roots<sup>39</sup>.

### 2.2.3 The medicalization of motherhood

The third sphere of social life in which the UMHK tried to impose its gender ideology was childbirth. The programme OPEN, an acronym for *Oeuvre de Protection de l'Enfant Noir*, was mounted out of concern over high child mortality rates. As a medical service occupied with everything related to children's health in the mining camps, OPEN offered six types of services: prenatal consultations, a maternity clinic (= 'Hope Town'), postnatal consultations, a canteen for children between the ages of 1 and 5, a primary school for children between the ages of 5 and 15 and, finally, vocational training. The

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<sup>39</sup> In the period before World War II, even geneticists started taking the matter in hand. In the newsletter of the *Institut Royal Colonial Belge*, a certain professor Frateur published a remarkable article on the possible applications of experimental genetics in the colonial context. He pleaded for a radical isolation of the new generation of employees so that they would no longer be exposed to the harmful influences of their original environment. According to Frateur, it was exactly this constant exposure that provoked negative behaviour on the part of the labourers in the camps. In his opinion, the supervisors of the camps were wrongly under the impression that they were dealing with atavism, the recurrence of features associated with earlier generations. Frateur stated that misbehaviour by labourers stemmed from acquired characteristics, which could be eradicated by separating the labourers from the environment in which the characteristics had come into existence (De Meulder 1996 : pp. 105-108).

postnatal consultations were known under the name '*Gouttes de lait*', a reference to the serving-up of milk under controlled circumstances<sup>40</sup>. At regular intervals, mothers had to have their children subjected to medical examination, in order to verify their growth and increase in weight and to check whether they were not carrying any diseases or parasites. Through the awarding of various benefits in kind, the UMHK encouraged mothers to keep the consultation appointments.

There are strong indications that the UMHK used its program '*Gouttes de lait*' to paralyse a local birth spacing mechanism. The practice of lengthy breastfeeding, leading to a temporary fertility reduction and characteristic of many groups in Katangese society, was jeopardized (Hunt 1988: 419). A 1931 publication by Mottoulle indicates that children aged two and upwards were fed twice a day in the canteen. From the age of five, the frequency of the children's visits to the canteen was raised to three times a day. After a while, even one-year-olds were allowed to come to the canteen. The nutrition program was not free of engagement: children's participation was sharply monitored and skipping a session automatically gave rise to an investigation into the reasons for the child's absence. It seems plausible that, through its compulsory postnatal consultations, the UMHK tried to interfere with birth spacing mechanisms previously observed by the labour population, in order to step up the birth rate and to ensure the reproduction of its labour community (De Meulder 1996: 102-111).

Summarizing the main lines of our argument so far, we can say that the introduction of UMHK's stabilization policy gave rise to the establishment of a rigid set of rules regarding gender relations. Most importantly, the company tried to pass on a number of general values to all of its male employees. It encouraged them to adopt a modern life style and emphasized the importance of the male breadwinner ideal. At the same time, however, the company also made a distinction between different categories of labourers. The *main-d'oeuvre indigène* was divided into several classes and each of them was associated with a distinct set of rights and obligations. Undoubtedly, the UMHK used this classification to institutionalize a form of hegemonic masculinity: those who performed best in embodying the masculine ideals promoted by the company were granted the largest number of privileges. In the second part of this article, I will illustrate how the labourers of Hedo dealt with the gender ideology that came into existence during the era of the stabilization policy.

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<sup>40</sup> The Sisters of Charity were involved to take care of this service. They also performed a thorough washing of their visitors (De Meulder, 1996: pp. 108-111).



## 2.3 Gender at work in Hedo's mining community

Armand Hedo was born on 2 November 1902 in the Luxemburg town of Remich, situated close to the place where Luxemburg, France and Germany meet. Although the 1923 treaty of the Belgian-Luxemburg Union provided for the involvement of Luxemburg nationals in the colonial administration<sup>41</sup>, Hedo opted for a business career, operating a dairy farm nearby Likasi and working as a labour contractor for the railway company *Compagnie du Chemin de Fer du Bas-Congo au Katanga (BCK)*. On 27 January 1940, he married the twenty years younger Mathilde Fedora Sturlese, the daughter of Italian expatriates who had established themselves in South Africa after having lived and worked in South West Africa for several years. The marriage between Hedo and Sturlese produced three children, who spent part of their childhood in the Belgian Congo before returning to Luxemburg to continue their studies<sup>42</sup>.

### 2.3.1 Armand Hedo's contract with the UMHK

Hedo started his activities as a labour recruiter for the UMHK at a time when the Katangese industry was vitally important for the war effort of the Allied Forces during the Second World War. While, on the one hand, Katanga was expected to satisfy the growing demand for copper and tungsten steel<sup>43</sup>, on the other hand, it was supposed to give Great Britain renewed access to natural resources, after the Japanese successes in the Pacific had rendered the Dutch East Indies, Malaysia and Burma inaccessible (Helmreich 1983: 253). The intensification and expansion of industrial mining activities in Katanga generated an enormous influx of new labourers, which gave rise to a 30 per cent population increase in the territory of Likasi between 1940 and 1944 (Musas 1974: 39). Working together with two other European entrepreneurs, including his Italian brother-in-law, Hedo recruited 301 workers in Sandoa on 8 May 1942 (Annual Report AIMO 1941, Lualaba district, territory of Sandoa). Later on, these workers were supplemented with other recruits coming from various parts of Katanga. While most members of Hedo's workforce were of Lunda origin, there were also people originating from the Lwena, Sanga, Lamba, Kaonde and Luba ethnic groups.

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<sup>41</sup> The two countries agreed that Luxemburg citizens interested in joining the colonial administration were able to do so under the same conditions as Belgian citizens, namely by training at the Royal Colonial School in Brussels, the Colonial Institute in Antwerp or the Tropical Institute based in the same city. Celebrated cases of Luxemburgers featuring in Belgian colonial history include those of Nicholas Grang, an officer who accompanied Stanley during his exploratory journeys, and Pierre Dupong, who paid a visit to Congo in January 1953, as the head of the Luxemburg government (Wilhelm 2001a; 2001b).

<sup>42</sup> The information on Hedo and his family was obtained from various sources, including the registry offices of Esch-sur-Alzette and Nice and the Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository.

<sup>43</sup> While copper was used for the production of brass shells, tungsten steel served for the production of armour piercing projectiles (Helmreich 1983: 253).

There was considerable variation in the way people reacted to Hedo's recruitment sprees. According to Donatien Kayombo, a Lwena from Dilolo who had already worked for several other European businessmen before being hired by Hedo, the subtle undertone of coercion caused great distress among the population:

They had a list. (...) People were forced to participate. In the old days, many of them did not know *kizungu* (=the white man's place). They were afraid, they said death was there. Then, the whites became determined. They told the chief to catch them. They asked the chiefs to bring people to them. That is how they started bringing *kibalo*. They started carrying off people.

The use of the term *kibalo* is telling. Van Onselen has pointed out that the expressions *isibalo*, *cibalo*, *shibaru* and *chibaru* were widely used by Africans throughout the regional economic system to denote contract labour, forced labour and slavery (van Onselen 1976: 99). Thus, Kayombo's testimony appears to suggest that, as late as the 1940s, the removal of large numbers of labourers from their areas of origin continued to be described in terms of force and coercion, in spite of the fact that the policy makers of the UMHK had already prohibited the use of pressure, for fear that it would lead to a rising number of unmotivated labourers (De Meulder 1996: 81)<sup>44</sup>. However, some of my other informants refuted the assertion that people were forced to participate in the *kibalo* system. Tshikomba Naweej, a labourer of Lunda origin, told me that, in the village where he grew up, *kibalo* was just defined as 'going to work in a far-away place'. He said that those men who decided to join Hedo's labour force did so by their own free will. What is more, according to Naweej, many men of Chokwe and Lunda origin were even proud that Hedo asked them to come along with him, because, in their opinion, this proved that he was convinced of their readiness to work:

People loved the work. They really liked it. When bwana Oscar arrived in a village to look for workers, people gladly accepted his offer to work for him. The chief was asked to supply a number of children (*batoto*). Oscar drove around with a vehicle. In each village, he took a number of children with him.

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<sup>44</sup> It seems plausible that the painful reminiscences of the early stages of the colonization process were so indelibly stamped on the collective memory that the arrival of white employers kept on creating unrest among the population. Mutombo has demonstrated that, until the 1930s, the recruitment expeditions were often accompanied by a considerable amount of violence: compelling men to sign up as labourers by tying up their girls and women, leading recruits away with a rope around their neck and sending out guards to catch those men who tried to escape enrolment by fleeing in the bush were some of the well-known techniques in those days. In addition to the brutality used during the recruitment process, the abominable working conditions in the beginning of the twentieth century also contributed to the image of the UMHK as a man-eater. In the pre-stabilization era, labour was hard and largely manual, mortality was high and, to make things worse, several epidemics swept over the camps. In 1918, the mortality rate rose to a historical high: 201.17 per thousand labourers. Several factors accounted for this: the outburst of pulmonary tuberculosis, pneumonia, tropical sores, bacillary dysentery, typhoid fever and Spanish influenza (Mutombo 2004: 46-47).

People liked it a lot. Oscar did the same kind of work as Hedo. (...) He took away men, Chokwe. There were a lot of Chokwe and Lunda. After all, they really liked to work.

Most of the people I talked to in the course of my research for this chapter confirmed that traditional authorities played a pivotal role in the *kibalo* system. The Belgian colonial administration asked chiefs to supply a fixed number of workers and, in return for this, Armand Hedo gave them various western commodities.

Although the majority of the recruits were young men between the ages of 15 and 25, children and married men were also eligible for enrolment. The latter were allowed to take their wives and children with them to the mining compound, in accordance with the rules of UMHK's stabilization policy. Everyone was asked to sign an initial three-year contract and was given a house as well as a set of personal belongings including a blanket, a saucepan, one pair of trousers and a shirt. Shortly before the expiration of a three-year contract, every person was told to undergo a medical examination carried out by a Belgian doctor in one of the hospitals of the UMHK in the city centre. While those who passed the test were automatically given an extension of their contract, the others had no other option but to return to their area of origin or to look for a job with another colonial company.

It is clear that Armand Hedo's workers, just like all the other employees of the UMHK, were forced to leave the past behind and to start a new life, in which they would all be given equal opportunities to show what they were worth. They were all enrolled in the same manner by the labour recruiter, boarded the same vehicle in order to travel to their workplace, signed the same initial contract, were given the same type of accommodation as well as the same starter kit, and, finally, were forced to pass the same medical test every three years. Following the instructions of his superiors within the UMHK, Armand Hedo organized a kind of 'survival of the fittest', a contest in which all men could prove that they were able-bodied and capable of performing hard labour for years on end without losing their physical strength. Anyone who failed to meet the stringent requirements of the company was rejected relentlessly. It was Hedo's intention to build up a workforce composed of only the strongest and best achieving men.

As a result of the fact that the UMHK was forced to step up production during the Second World War, the pressure of work was incredibly high. Hedo's labourers worked non-stop in the mine from 5 a.m. until 3 p.m. and their movements were closely monitored. After working hours, they were expected to sit still and wait for the delivery of the food packages (*mposho*) at 5 p.m. People who failed to show

up at work twice were immediately arrested by the colonial authorities and transferred to East Africa in order to join the colonial troops (*kazi ya soldat*: work of a soldier)<sup>45</sup>.

Since Hedo's employees went through similar experiences, lived in similar material conditions and were forced into a similar state of liminality by the UMHK, it is not surprising that they gradually developed a 'baseline symmetry of perspectives', as Hannerz (1992: 65-67) would put it. Giving more or less the same meanings to various aspects of life in the mining compound and noticing that the exchange of these meanings became increasingly successful as time went by, they created their own distinctive subculture, characterized by complex mixes of ideas and practices from various origins. In the following sections, I will first describe the dynamics of this subculture and then I will show that some compound-dwellers participated more in this subculture than others.

### **2.3.2 The emergence of a subculture among the members of Hedo's workforce**

After having lived in Miringi for a period of five years, Hedo's entire mining community moved to Kalabi in 1947. In preparation of the arrival of the workers and their families, the Luxembourg entrepreneur had made arrangements for the building of an electricity turbine as well as for the construction of a school, a church, a hospital and a large number of houses equipped with a water tank. One of his strategies to define the compound as a modern space was to familiarize the miners and their families with a European feast calendar. On the occasions of Christmas and New Year, he brought a number of cows from his Likasi farm to Kalabi, where they were slaughtered in public. Together with other types of food like maize meal, beans and rice as well as large quantities of alcohol, the cow meat was distributed among the compound dwellers, who were told to celebrate in the intimacy of their private homes.

Although the Christmas and New Year celebrations were intended as 'performances of domesticity' (Hunt 1999: 22-23) - with the consumption of meat and alcohol serving as modern symbols of material wealth, prosperity and abundance – some members of Hedo's mining community still gave their own interpretations to these festivities, refashioning them to make them fit in with personal concerns not necessarily associated with life in the compound. The story of Patrice Mwesa serves well to illustrate this. In 1949, he was invited by his mother and stepfather to spend New Year's Day together:

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<sup>45</sup> As far as the Second World War is concerned, the military involvement of the Congolese Force Publique in the struggle of the Allied troops in East Africa was relatively limited. Although they knew the British were in dire need of reinforcements, Belgian authorities only gave up on their principle not to be the first to attack on 6 February 1941, when they sent their 11<sup>th</sup> battalion to southern Sudan (Lovens 1975: 13). The Force Publique also participated in the so-called Abyssinia campaign. In April 1941, there were about 6000 Belgian colonial troops in that area, including 190 European officers and non-commissioned officers, 3380 African graduates and soldiers and 2328 African porters (Lovens 1975: 31).

When my mother and her second husband were still living in the mining compound of Kalabi, they were showered with presents by their employer (=Hedo). On the occasion of New Year's Day, every labourer received a crate of beer, together with a '*dame-jeanne*', a bulky bottle of wine in a wicker basket. Since they had been given so much to drink, they invited me to come and celebrate New Year in Lwambo. That is how I lost my left eye: I accidentally stuck my finger in it, while I was trying to close off one of the bottles. By then, we were already completely drunk.

The word '*dame-jeanne*' was part of a 'colonial lexicon', a jargon only known by Africans with privileged access to modernity-related things and events (Hunt 1999: 1-26). By referring to an exotic object like a European wine bottle, Patrice indicates that he was one of the 'happy few' who were lucky enough to come into contact with a Western way of life in a very concrete manner. What is remarkable about this testimony is that it provides evidence of the involvement of an outsider in the social life of Hedo's mining community. In fact, Patrice had never been a member of this community because his childhood had already come to an end by the time his mother went to live in the compound. Following her first husband's death of tuberculosis in 1946, she had tried to earn herself a living by selling *munkoyo*, an alcoholic beverage made of maize and roots, outside her house in Kitumba, a small hamlet situated at approximately 5 kilometres from the mine of Kalabi. It was only when a worker of Hedo had asked her to marry him during a visit to her *munkoyo* bar that she had decided to move to Kalabi, where she had entered a new household composed of her husband and a child from her husband's first marriage. For his part, Patrice had moved to Likasi after his father's death. He had managed to obtain an apprenticeship with a Greek tailor, who was living in the city centre and who had offered him a place to stay in the *boyerie*<sup>46</sup> at the back of his house. Although the gender ideology of the UMHK prescribed that Patrice's mother should celebrate New Year in the company of the members of her new nuclear household in the mining compound, she preferred to invite her estranged son to the event, probably in an attempt to breathe new life into their relationship. This case thus seems to indicate that the boundaries of Hedo's mining community were not as sharp as one would imagine. It also shows that some community members developed creative ways of dealing with aspects of domesticity and modernity during their stay in the compound.

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<sup>46</sup> The term '*boyerie*' is derived from the English word 'boy', which referred to the domestic worker of a white person during Belgian colonialism. Under colonial law, Africans were not allowed to circulate in the city centre after 6 p.m. In order to make sure that this rule did not restrict the mobility of the so-called 'boys' too much, small shacks were built at the back of white people's residences. Located on the outskirts of the plots connected to these residences, the boyeries had more or less the same size as African huts in the countryside. They could be reached by a small path that ran alongside the wall encompassing the plot. As a result, the people living in the main residence were not disturbed by the visitors of their 'boys'. It was quite normal for the latter to stay in the boyerie even after they had got married and were starting to raise a family (O'bweng-Okess 2005: 99-100).

Another indication of the fact that the UMHK project of social engineering did not lead to a cultural tabula rasa but rather to the creation of novel hybrid practices can be found in people's descriptions of certain initiation rites that continued to exist in Hedo's mining compound. According to Ilunga Bembeleshe Déograce, who was born in Kinkondja in 1932 and who established herself in Kalabi in 1947, worker families of Sanga origin attached great importance to the so-called *kisungu*:

The people from our region (=Luba country) did not go on with it. But people originating from this region (=Sanga country) continued to practice what is called the *kisungu*. In fact, *kisungu* and *butanda*<sup>47</sup> are one and the same thing. When a girl reaches the ages of 12, she is taken aside. After that, she waits for a man to marry her.

Muteba Muswala, who was born in the Lunda town of Kafwakumba in 1922 and who joined Hedo's workforce in 1951, points out that the initiation rites were adapted to the setting of the mining compound:

The way we were living here (i.e. in the compound) was different from the way people were living in the village. We were in *kizungu* (i.e. the white man's place) here. A girl would stay in her mother's kitchen. When she left the kitchen, a big party was held. After the party, the girl started her marriage.

The vital importance of the kitchen as an initiation space is also highlighted by Ndola Ayin Kojan, a woman of Lunda descent who was born in Kakanda in 1953:

When a girl was growing up (and reached the onset of puberty), she was taken aside in the kitchen. (...) She would not enter the living room. When things were over, she returned (i.e. she left the initiation space). They prepared her and danced, that day was a day of joy. They prepared beer, *munkoyo*<sup>48</sup>, food (...). A *maman*<sup>49</sup> was chosen to take care of her (i.e. during the time the girl was staying in the kitchen). After the ceremony, the *maman* was paid for her services. If such a *maman* was not available, than the girl's own mother was expected to take care of her.

When Kojan talks about a woman taking care of the initiate during her stay in the kitchen and being paid for her care after the ceremony, she probably refers to the so-called *bimbela* (sing: *kimbela*), female ritual experts who are usually chosen from within the family. Apart from carrying out the main

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<sup>47</sup> Luba initiation practice for girls

<sup>48</sup> An alcoholic beverage made of corn and roots

<sup>49</sup> French word for mother, usually employed to show respect towards a female member of society who is considered mature.

rite and making sure that it takes place in strict accordance with Sanga tradition, the *bimbela* are also responsible for feeding the girl as well as for changing her position four times a day (i.e. twice during the day and twice at night). In exchange for their services, they are granted the right to appropriate all the gifts and money handed over to the initiate at the end of the ceremony (Persons 1990: 159; 171-172; 191). According to the American anthropologist Persons, the Sanga do not have a sacred location for the *kisungu*, although they do have the habit of building an initiation hut or *lusanga* close to the house of the parents or the grandparents of the initiate<sup>50</sup>. Seeing the kitchen's status as a typically female space during the era of UMHK's stabilization policy and considering its architectural separation from the rest of the living quarters (Hanretta 1999: 328-329), it seems logical that certain Sanga members of Hedo's workforce considered it as an ideal space to organize a *lusanga*. This projection of the spatial setup of an initiation ceremony onto the infrastructure of a mining compound constitutes a nice illustration of what is usually described as 'embodied space', that is, the complex intersection and interpenetration between body, space and culture (Munn 1996: 446-465; Duranti 1997: 342-354; de Lame 2005: passim).

The foregoing discussion suggests that Hedo's mining compound was a socio-cultural and economic 'frontier', characterized by a mixing of various cultural ideas and practices (De Boeck 2001; Walsh 2003: 292). Still, in my opinion, Hannerz is right in arguing that members of the same social unit do not necessarily have the same cultural ideas and practices (Hannerz 1992: 1-17). It would be a mistake to assume that all the inhabitants of Hedo's mining compound participated in the aforementioned subculture with the same level of intensity. While some compound-dwellers almost never had to deal with Hedo or his European assistants in a direct manner and therefore had plenty of opportunities to take part in the subculture, others were in close contact with the white management and therefore had to be much more careful in the way they behaved. Marie-Virginie Hedo, who sent me a letter with her personal memories of her childhood years in Katanga, suggested that, notwithstanding the existence of a colour bar in the mining compound, her father still encouraged a select group of African employees to pay regular visits to the house of the Hedo family:

In the village of the workers, which was situated close to the mine, every group was governed by a 'capita'. The 'capita(s)' occupied themselves with the life of the workers in the village, in addition to representing them with my father and even deciding on sanctions when this was necessary. As far as I can remember, part of their salaries was paid in kind (...): flour, rice, groundnuts etc.... (...) Around the village, pieces of land were cultivated by the women, who carried out the traditional chores of fetching

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<sup>50</sup> Usually, a wall of this house is used as one of the sides of the *lusanga*, while the other sides are made of branches covered with long grass or straw and measuring about 10 metres across. Within the enclosure, a smaller room is built which is called the *kambolo* and which is separated from the rest of the *lusanga* by a piece of cloth called the *mpashila* (Persons 1990: 160-164).

water, doing the laundry, pounding cassava, preparing *bukari* (a kind of porridge made of cassava flour) and meals. The household servants were always men: the cook, the gardener... Together with their families, they lived in small huts close to our house: their children were often our playfellows. If one of the women had a problem, she would usually prefer addressing herself to my mother. (Since) most of the Africans did not speak French nor Dutch, we conversed with them in Kiswahili, a language understood by almost all the ethnic groups. Our house was never locked, an unexpected visitor could enter, make himself at home and wait for the return of my parents. For everybody, the working day commenced early, before the heat started; in the afternoon there was a break of a couple of hours allowing people to take a siesta during the heat (it was obligatory for the children, even in school). As far as school is concerned, during the time we were living in Kalabi, we went to religious boarding schools in Jadotville (=Likasi) (...).

Although, at the time of their recruitment, all members of the work force were still on equal footing (cfr. supra), Marie-Virginie Hedo's testimony indicates that the division of labour in the mine and the mining compound eventually gave rise to the emergence of a hierarchy of jobs and a form of social stratification. Armand Hedo carefully selected a limited number of individuals with the idea of entrusting them with special responsibilities and granting them certain privileges. Apart from giving them a number of material benefits, he equally gave them permission to live in relatively large houses close to his personal residence, allowing their children to play with his own children, and authorizing their wives to talk about their personal problems to Mrs. Hedo.

Of course, every medal has two sides. While, on the one hand, the members of the African elite had the advantage of being able to develop a close relationship with their white superiors, on the other hand, they realized that they had to display exemplary behaviour in order to be able to keep their high position in the hierarchy of the mining compound. Sopota Kapamba, who was married to one of Hedo's *capitas*, told me that her husband used to be so concerned about his reputation that he forced her to stay home all day long. By imposing this house arrest on her, he tried to prevent her from misbehaving in public, for he knew that he would be held accountable if she displayed obnoxious behaviour. In order to stay out of trouble, Kapamba made sure to avoid unnecessary contacts with other women in the mining compound:

(...) every woman took care of her own house. You did not walk around and talk nonsense, no. You just lived in your house and took care of your husband. You washed his clothes, ironed them and put them away. You did not go hanging around (*kuwayawaya*). If you left the house, your husband would ask you where you were going. He would reprimand you for hanging around and he would hit you.



Clearly, Sopota Kapamba's husband did not hesitate to use physical violence against her whenever he felt she was jeopardizing his respectability. This shows that the members of the African elite were well aware of the fact that their daily activities were closely monitored, not only by their white bosses, but also by their colleagues. So, from stories told by former members of the elite, it can be gathered that they used the institutionalized form of hegemonic masculinity as a benchmark to evaluate the behaviour of their colleagues, while they also distanced themselves from those compound-dwellers who enacted inferior forms of masculinity.

### **2.3.3 Evidence of a hierarchy of masculinities in Hedo's mining compound (I)**

The first person I interviewed about the hierarchy of masculinities in Hedo's mining compound was Mufwankolo. Although he did not know his exact date of birth, he was probably born shortly after World War I. While his father was a direct descendant of M'siri, the ruler of the Bunkeya-based Yeke Empire, his mother grew up in a modest farmer family in the Sanga village of Ntambo. After their marriage, Mufwankolo's parents successively lived in Lwambo, Bunkeya and Likasi, where his father worked for one of the companies of the well-known British businessman Robert Williams. Placing himself in the service of a Greek fish trader, Mufwankolo got his first professional experience as the steers-man of a boat on the Upemba Lake. After that, he served as a driver for two Italian entrepreneurs, until he was offered a contract by Armand Hedo. When I interviewed Mufwankolo in 2006, he was living in the cité of Likasi, where he occupied a spacious but poorly furnished red-bricked house built by one of his sons who used to be the head of the national railway company SNCC.

In the course of the many conversations I had with him, I discovered that Mufwankolo used to support the hegemonic form of masculinity promoted by the UMHK, but that he never really managed to embody it. Like so many other members of the African elite in Hedo's mining compound, he displayed what Connell would describe as a 'complicit masculinity', that is, he enjoyed the benefits of the patriarchal system developed by the UMHK, but he never succeeded in enacting the form of masculinity promoted by the company (see Connell 2005: 76-81).

Mufwankolo's curriculum vitae indicates that he had a broad Hannerzian horizon. The many travels during his childhood years had enabled him to become familiar with various ways of life, both in the countryside and in the city. Moreover, he had learned to adapt himself to new situations and to make his own choices. From what he told me about the beginning of his professional career, I could gather that he had broken off the relationships with his relatives shortly after his move to 'the white man's place' (*kizungu*). He suggested that he had been forced to suspend his kinship rights and obligations because he had lived and worked too far away from home. As a result of the fact that he did not have

to take into account the expectations of his friends and relatives back home, he was probably faced with less tensions and contradictions than other Katangese men who went to work in the urban areas during the colonial period. Since, in his narratives about the colonial past, Mufwankolo was able to present his actions in a logical and consistent manner, I got the impression that he had managed to retain a coherent sense of self, in other words, that he was capable of organizing his past, present and future into a meaningful whole (see Jameson 1984, quoted in Strauss 1997: 362).

When I asked Mufwankolo where he had met his wife and how he had managed to marry her, he told me that he had taken care of all the marriage arrangements himself. To the family of the Luba woman he fell in love with in Kikondja, he did not pay the traditional bride price but a substantial amount of money. Moreover, instead of asking one (or more) of his relatives to accompany him during the marriage ceremony, as local traditions prescribed, he persuaded one of his colleagues to come along with him. Apparently, Mufwankolo's status as a wage labourer inspired so much confidence that his family-in-law agreed with the improvised marriage ceremony. Mufwankolo was proud of the fact that he had been capable of paying so much money for his wife. Coming from *kizungu* and being engaged in salaried employment, he was not surprised to see special rules, procedures and arrangements designed for him:

It is a very high price (*iko beyi nguvu*). That *buchanga* (=traditional Luba bride price) was the money of the old days. But how would I have been able to come up with that *buchanga*? Therefore, I decided to pay in francs.

Having signed a contract with Hedo, Mufwankolo had taken his wife with him to the mining compound. Just like the rest of his male colleagues, he enjoyed the benefits of the patriarchal system promoted by the UMHK. When I queried if he knew what female compound-dwellers used to do during the day, he said:

They just stayed in the compound. They swept the house clean and cooked meals for their husbands. Around noon, they brought these meals to the workplace.

Apparently, it was customary that the spouses of Hedo's workers came to the entrance of the mine at lunchtime in order to deliver hot meals. This daily ritual confirmed and naturalized the opposition between, on the one hand, the male breadwinner, and, on the other hand, the female homemaker. It served as a recurring reminder of the impact of industrialization on the relationship between gender and work. Just like their counterparts in Western industrialized countries, male members of Hedo's workforce were expected to earn a wage in the public sphere, while their female partners were

supposed to stay within the confines of the private sphere and take care of all the household chores (see Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003: 21-22).

Due to the fact that he acted so self-assured in the early days of his contract with Hedo, Mufwankolo was admired by his fellow workers. His wife told me that he used to be someone who gave instructions to other people:

When *baba* (father = Mufwankolo) was appointed as a driver, he was the most senior person at work (*mkubwa kwa kazi yote*). He told the others how to deal with their work.

While Mufwankolo was one of the few people who already had some experience in the colonial wage labour economy before joining Hedo's labour force, he was also used to dealing with white people. Consequently, he did not find it hard to accompany Hedo when the latter paid a visit to Monsignor de Hemptinne, the head of the Benedictines in Katanga. Furthermore, having accepted to serve as Hedo's personal messenger, he sometimes went to Lubumbashi on his own, in order to hand over letters to the Belgian personnel of the mining directorate (*direction des mines*). Since he was the only employee who knew how to drive, he was also charged with the task of transporting new recruits from their area of origin to Hedo's mining compound.

As one of the most prominent members of the African elite, Mufwankolo used to look down on those members of the workforce who embodied inferior forms of masculinity. I became aware of this when he accompanied me during a visit to Muteba Muswala, another former inhabitant of Armand Hedo's mining compound. Muswala was born in 1922 and grew up in a Chokwe farm household of 8 people in Kafwakumba. Despite the fact that there was a primary school in Kafwakumba, run by Belgian Catholic missionaries, Muswala's parents never allowed him to study, because they did not want him to become involved with white people. Nevertheless, when Hedo paid a visit to Kafwakumba in order to look for new labour recruits, Muswala took the risk of moving to *kizungu*. In September 1951, he took his wife with him to the mining compound of Kakontwe, where Hedo's labourers had started exploiting a new mine, following their departure from the mine of Kalabi. To Muswala's regret, his decision to move from Kafwakumba to Kakontwe had a very negative impact on his marriage. He told me that his wife had left him in 1957. When I asked him for more details about his divorce, the conversation suddenly took an unexpected turn. Muswala was unable to give an elaborate response to my question, because Mufwankolo interrupted him:

**Muswala:** (...) when she revolted, I was away for a while – after that, I came back. I left the compound as if I was fired. I went to work somewhere else. After she had left me, I went back to Hedo in order start working for him again.

**Mufwankolo (interrupts him):** The work with Hedo was heavy; people ran away. They grabbed him and threw him in jail. When he was released, he started working again (...).

In the abovementioned section of the interview, Mufwankolo caught his former colleague lying. He exposed him as someone who had run away from the hard work with Armand Hedo and who had been jailed as a result of it. In the eyes of Mufwankolo, Muswala had enacted a subordinate masculinity during his stay in the mining compound. On the one hand, he had behaved as a cowardly deserter, a person who lacked both the physical and mental capacity to deal with the hard work in the mine, and, on the other hand, he had behaved irresponsibly towards his wife. After all, the female inhabitants of the mining compounds of the UMHK depended on their fathers and husbands for their food rations. When male breadwinners such as Muswala made a serious mistake vis-à-vis their employer, they jeopardized the livelihoods of their families. Moreover, Belgian colonial authorities did not allow single women to stay in the urban areas just like that. All so-called *femmes libres* (literally translated: free women, i.e. available women) were automatically categorized as prostitutes and were forced to pay a single woman's tax (Hunt 1991: 481-483). Thus, by running away from the work in the mine of Kakontwe, Muswala had not only got himself into trouble but also his wife. By making an abrupt corrective intervention in my interview with Muswala, Mufwankolo obviously wanted to indicate that he strongly disapproved of Muswala's behaviour during his stay in Hedo's mining compound.

Mufwankolo admitted that his position in the workforce had gradually become less powerful and influential over the years. After a while, Hedo had picked out a number of other Africans in order to help him out with the management of the mining compound. Though Mufwankolo understood that this was necessary and inevitable, he still doubted whether the new ones had really deserved their promotion. Interestingly, he told me a number of stories in which he criticized his former competitors.

The first story Mufwankolo told me concerned a Lunda man named Jean-Pierre Kasulu, who had been recruited in Sandoa in 1942 (cfr. supra). Shortly after entering Hedo's labour force, Kasulu had been granted the position of compound manager (*chef de camp*), while simultaneously obtaining a nomination as a doctor (*munganga*) in the mining compound. Unfortunately, his luck did not last for long. According to Mufwankolo, Kasulu drowned on a Christmas Eve, somewhere in the 1950s:

It happened on a Friday. The next day was Christmas. They said they would have their Christmas dinner at the farm (of Hedo) and took one box of wine and two crates of beer with them. They said they

would have a bath before the party started (...) It's a heavy matter. (...) It's his wife who killed him, not a man, his wife. She wanted to get rid of him. She was angry: *'I made charms so that you would get your position. They appointed you munganga (=doctor) and changa changa (=chef de camp). And now you dump me. I made charms so that you would become a powerful person.'* (...) (Flash back) Monsieur Hedo did not like arguments. He told me to put Jean-Pierre's wife on the train home (i.e. the train that could take her to her area of origin). The train was due to arrive at 9 o'clock in the evening. We entered the bar of Paul Ngoy. (...) She told me she would come back. If she would ever meet that man again, he would die. (...) (Flash forward) Indeed, he died. Until now, I had never told anyone, not even my own wife. It would cause trouble if people knew that I had prior knowledge of what was going to happen, namely that this person would kill the other one. So I kept it a secret. When it was announced that Maria (=Jean-Pierre's wife) would come to the funeral, Hedo picked her up at the railway station. He brought her to her house (i.e. the house where she had been living together with Jean-Pierre during her stay in the compound). She started crying over her husband's death. (...) We took her into the house, while she kept crying and crying. I went to pick up her husband's body in Panda (=hospital of the UMHK in Likasi). They put the body into the coffin. (...) A snake came out. A snake, a snake, a snake! People burst out in tears. (...) But I have never told anybody the things I talked about with this woman, because I thought it would cause trouble. I have always kept silent. Today is the first time I say something about it.

This story lends itself to multiple interpretations. First, it can be read as a comment on men's attempts to approach the institutionalized form of hegemonic masculinity in the era of the UMHK's stabilization policy. Instead of presenting Kasulu's spectacular promotion as a meritocratic success story, in other words, as an illustration of the perseverance of an African man succeeding in rising from the ranks thanks to his personal qualities and merits, Mufwankolo accounted for his sudden prosperity by referring to his alleged use of magic, which was inconsistent with his image as a modern industrial man. The dramatic final scene, in which a snake crawls out of the burial pit just before the burial, was intended as proof of Jean-Pierre's double life. By telling this story, Mufwankolo criticized the discrepancy between Jean-Pierre's behaviour in public, where he put up an image of himself as a westernized African, and his behaviour in private, where he allegedly resorted to the use of occult techniques to secure his authoritative position in the mining community. Second, the story can also be read as a comment on gender and power. The reader will have noticed that Jean-Pierre's wife was granted a rather ambiguous role in the plot. While she was presented as a supportive spouse prepared to help her husband make a career for himself, she was also portrayed as vindictive and bossy. Mufwankolo suggested there was a strong contrast between Jean-Pierre's overriding position in the public life of the compound and his almost dependent position on the household level, where he was unable to play the role of a dominant male breadwinner. It was insinuated that the man who had been given so much authority by Hedo was being overpowered by his own wife at home. The decision to repudiate her constituted a serious violation of his reciprocity obligations, for which he had to pay

with his life. Thus, it may be argued that we are dealing with a parable about hubris and nemesis: the hero is punished for his haughty failure to appreciate the contribution of his closest companion. The moral of the story seems to be that Jean-Pierre died because he had abused the rights of his wife, who, according to the narrator, should have been allowed to stay with him in the mining compound and who should have had the opportunity to participate in the material benefits associated with his new positions<sup>51</sup>, rather than being subjected to the humiliation of a divorce.

The second story Mufwankolo told me concerned Oscar Ayin, who, just like Jean-Pierre Kasulu, had been recruited in Sandoa in 1942 and who had been awarded the position of *capita* or boss boy shortly before Congolese independence. Mufwankolo told me that a conflict with Oscar had been the cause of his departure from Hedo's mining compound:

One evening, Oscar assembled the other judges, claiming that I had spoken badly of him. The news reached Monsieur Hedo, who sent me a letter. I just went to work as usual, challenging him (=Oscar) to come up with a witness (who could back up his allegations). He failed to do this. After all, he was a hunter who killed people. (...) I told him he was an idiot. First, I had taught him how to drive and now he considered me as somebody without any value.

The 'judges' Mufwankolo was referring to in the abovementioned statement were, in all likelihood, Oscar's fellow *capitas*. As the testimony of Marie-Virginie Hedo has already shown, Hedo had developed his own system of indirect rule in the mining compound, which consisted of delegating several aspects of daily management to *capitas* such as Oscar. They were given the authority to judge their own people and to decide on eventual sanctions. What appears to have happened, is that Oscar suspected Mufwankolo of undermining his authority by gossiping about him. In order to clear things out, he decided a public hearing of Mufwankolo in front of all the *capitas*.

From reading Mufwankolo's statement about Oscar, it is obvious that the former was frustrated about the latter's lack of respect for him following his appointment to the position of *capita*. While, in the beginning, Mufwankolo had been superior to Oscar, a few years later, he was forced to accept that Oscar was bossing him around. The most intriguing reproach that Mufwankolo heaped upon Oscar was that he was a man-hunter or *mutumbula*. In large parts of Central and East Africa, there are stories about Africans capturing other Africans and handing them over to white colonists who wanted to eat their victims or take their blood. Of course, these rumours should not be taken literally: they are to be

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<sup>51</sup> Jean-Pierre Kasulu was entitled to a bigger house than the other inhabitants of the mining compound. In addition to this, he also received a higher salary.

considered as popular tales in which ordinary people voiced their fears and feelings of insecurity about certain aspects of colonial occupation, including unequal power relations, the recruitment of labourers and soldiers and the introduction of modern medicine (White 2000; Ceyskens 1975). Given Hedo's position as a labour recruiter for the UMHK, one of the most important icons of Belgian colonialism, it is not really surprising that he and his collaborators were also suspected of such kidnappings. In Lwambo, I was told the following story about Hedo's alleged involvement in *mutumbula* practices:

One day, he (=Hedo) captured Kipaja, a chief from Bunkeya, whom he locked up in the trunk of his car. While they were driving away, they met Bwana Wilson, a missionary of the church of Garenganze. Hedo stopped his vehicle and they started talking, from white man to white man. When Kipaja heard the voice of the missionary, he started making a lot of noise at the back of the car. (...) Hedo said there were probably people who were trying to disturb him (=Wilson). But Wilson insisted he should open up the trunk. People came out of the church and opened the trunk. They took chief Kipaja out. He (=Wilson) took him (=Kipaja) away from the scene. He was brought to the village in Wilson's car. (...) He (=Hedo) sometimes lived in Likasi, while, at other times, he was staying in the fields. He did not have a normal place to stay because he was a *mutumbula*. His work consisted of driving around at night, while his collaborators were busy capturing people. (...) He built little houses in the vicinity of Kalabi. When he caught somebody, he hid him there. (...) That is the reason why he was called Bwana Matala.

The labour recruiter, the vehicle, the nightly visits to villages nearby the mining sites and the secret hiding places are formulaic elements that pop up in *mutumbula* stories throughout the whole region. As White has pointed out, these are terms and images into which local meanings and details are inserted by the narrators (White 2000: 8-9). Hedo's nickname '*matala*' is a clear case in point. *Matala* is the plural form of the Sanga word '*ditala*', which refers to a cylindrical storage for sorghum, resting on poles and covered by a movable thatched roof<sup>52</sup>. During colonial times, it was rumoured that Hedo's victims were temporarily hidden in *matala* before they were taken away to another location. A second example of the adaptation of a typical *mutumbula* scenario to a local socio-cultural context can be found in the narrator's choice to present a missionary of the Bunkeya-based Church of Garenganze as chief Kipaja's rescuer. Garenganze was created in 1886 by British protestant missionary Frederick Stanley Arnot, who was a member of the Plymouth Brethren. The latter were reputed for rejecting every form of centralized authority and for refusing to help representatives of the colonial administration as well as western businessmen and traders<sup>53</sup>. Taking into account the reputation of

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<sup>52</sup> The roof is only lifted when the harvest needs to be stored away or when it is time to clean the inside of the *ditala*. Through an opening on the upper side of the cylinder, it is possible to take out the spikes needed for daily consumption. The opening can be reached by climbing the pieces of wood supporting the bottom of the *ditala* (Grévisse 1956: 137-138).

<sup>53</sup> Legros 1996: 137, 213. It should be noted there is an element of truth in the depiction of Hedo as a loner without a permanent residence. In fact, Hedo's wife and children did not always stay together with him in the compound, but they spent

Garenganze, it is probably safe to say that Wilson was inserted into the story to play the role of an anti-establishment figure, whose attitude towards the indigenous population contrasted sharply with the one of Hedo, who was believed to embody the negative traits of colonial occupation.

Returning to Mufwankolo's gossip about Oscar, it needs to be asked whether Oscar had any features that made him more vulnerable to *mutumbula* accusations. According to Ceyskens, blacks working directly together with whites, dissociating themselves from their brothers and doing night shifts ran a high risk of being considered as man-hunters by the public opinion (Ceyskens 1975: 493-494). In the eyes of Mufwankolo, Oscar possessed at least two of these three characteristics: he collaborated intensively with his white superior and he alienated himself from the people with whom he had been on an equal footing until the day of his promotion to the position of *capita*<sup>54</sup>. Although, admittedly, the gossip about Oscar does not contain a detailed evaluation of how he behaved and identified himself as a man in the mining community, it does give us an impression of how one important aspect of his masculinity was perceived, namely the way in which he exercised power while being in an intermediary position between a white businessman and a group of African workers. Mufwankolo's statements about Oscar being a *mutumbula* constituted a criticism of the latter's self-chosen marginality, while they also questioned the legitimacy of his powerful position.

### 2.3.4 Evidence of a hierarchy of masculinities in Hedo's mining compound (II)

Alphonse Lusambo was the second informant who informed me about the existence of a hierarchy of masculinities in Hedo's mining compound. Born in Sandoa in 1932 and having lost both of his parents at the age of nine, Lusambo joined Hedo's workforce in 1942. While he was initially employed as a miner, he managed to obtain a position as aspirant cook in 1946, being articled to his boss's Italian mother-in-law who was active in the Katangese hotel business<sup>55</sup>. Already during our first meeting in

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quite some time at their farm (cfr. supra). Consequently, Hedo had no other option but to commute between Kalabi and Likasi. It is probably the combination of his frequent trips and his reputation as an *Einzelgänger* that earned Hedo the label of *mutumbula*. Ceyskens has pointed out that, during the colonial period, not all whites ran an equal risk to be pigeonholed as man-hunters. Those living alone, having few social contacts and regularly withdrawing into a western lifestyle that was difficult to understand by African outsiders were more likely to be stigmatized by the local population (Ceyskens op.cit.: 493-494).

<sup>54</sup> This can be derived from Mufwankolo's indignant remarks about the sneaky way in which Oscar had filed a complaint against him with Hedo as well as from his comments on Oscar's ungratefulness for being taught a prestigious skill such as driving a car.

<sup>55</sup> In the 1940s and 1950s, it was no longer unusual for white women to follow their husbands in the colony. The colonial government was concerned about the supposed promiscuity of male Europeans: it was rumoured that many of them had female African companions, whom they euphemistically described as 'ménagères' or housekeepers. Since it was believed that this licentious lifestyle led to the spread of venereal diseases and infertility – especially among men in the Copperbelt – the authorities strove for the stabilization of the European families in the colony, similarly to the policy pursued with regard to African families in the mining compounds. Special facilities were created to enable white women to raise their children in the colony. In a series of articles published at the end of the 1930s in the bulletin of the *Union des Femmes Congolaise*, white women received assurance that they would be able to find milk and refrigerators even in the most remote areas. They were



2006, I noticed that Lusambo was very proud of his former membership of the so-called *évolués*, an African elite priding itself on being 'detrribalized' and enjoying preferential treatment by the Belgian colonial government. While I was being shown Lusambo's *carte de mérite civique* ("civil merit card") and while I was listening to his stories about him being the first inhabitant of Hedo's compound to be granted the status of *immatriculé* ("enrolled individual") in the 1950s<sup>56</sup>, I could not help being fascinated by the paintings that adorned the walls of his living room: one of them showed a Mami Wata, a kind of mermaid figure known to be associated with modernity, material wealth and male power in West and Central Africa (see chapter 4), whereas the other one referred to the Katangese secession, depicting a train surrounded by Luba warriors and defended by members of the secessionist police force. As Jewsiewicki has suggested in a chapter on Congolese popular culture, these paintings probably gave Lusambo a sense that his social position had been confirmed, since only members of the Congolese petty bourgeoisie were lucky enough to be able to buy a picture and to possess a living room in which they could show it to their visitors (Jewsiewicki 1993: 107).

I noticed that, just like Mufwankolo, Lusambo had enacted a 'complicit masculinity' during his stay in Hedo's mining compound. Although he was satisfied with the advantages of the patriarchal system created by the UMHK and although he agreed that only men capable of embodying the institutionalized form of hegemonic masculinity had the right to occupy the highest positions in the hierarchy of the mining compound, he still realized that he himself was unable to perform this idealized form of masculinity.

Contrary to Mufwankolo, Lusambo had a narrow Hannerzian horizon. Not only did he lack prior experience in the colonial wage labour economy before joining Hedo's workforce, he had also left his area of origin when he was still a teenager. Consequently, he had almost no experience of life and he only knew the Lunda culture of his parents. Even after his move to *kizungu*, he remained tied to his home region. Whereas Mufwankolo stopped seeing his relatives and friends once he had moved to the city, Lusambo made an effort to visit Sandoa every year during his period of paid leave (*congé legal*).

Together with his wife, he travelled to his home village by train, with the intention of spending an entire month there. The annual visit to Sandoa made it possible to catch up with relatives and friends,

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also advised about the ways to prepare and clean baby bottles and to obtain a balance through traders or state posts. Finally, they received tips on feeding schemes and on the different types of artificial milk (Hunt 1988: 410-416).

<sup>56</sup> Since the Belgian authorities expected *évolués* to serve as an example to other Congolese, they took a number of measures to officialize their special status. In 1948, *évolués* were given a *carte de mérite civique*, a token of their subordination, helpfulness and dedication towards the colonizer, and, in 1952, they were awarded the status of *immatriculé*, which gave them access to the same civil rights that were given to Belgian citizens living in the colony (Mutombo 2004: 57; Di Cesare 2002: 993-994).

while it also offered him the opportunity to demonstrate his new standard of living. Lusambo used to spend part of his salary on bicycles, blankets, clothes and other types of prestigious goods for his family members. This habit of gift giving enabled him to show his financial strength and to emphasize his newly acquired status as a wage labourer with privileged access to Western commodities. Yet, it also strengthened his relationships with the people back home and it contributed to his continued exposure to their norms and values. Unlike Mufwankolo, Lusambo found it very difficult to break away from his original social environment and to develop a new lifestyle. From the stories he told me about his colonial experiences, I could gather that he used to have a hard time meeting conflicting sets of expectations and maintaining a coherent sense of self.

Lusambo's feeling of being caught in between two worlds was very strong at the time of his marriage. In the mining compound, he wanted to put up an image of himself as a fully assimilated urbanite, but, in Sandoa, he tried to present himself as someone whose heart and mind were still in the countryside. Attempting to adopt a middle course between being a successful wage labourer and behaving like a dutiful migration labourer remaining in close contact with his friends and relatives on the home-front, he decided to conclude a marriage with the daughter of one of Hedo's workers, who, just like him, belonged to the Lunda ethnic group from Sandoa. Through this strategy, he showed to his colleagues that he found it important to marry a member of the same social class, and he proved to the people in Sandoa that he was proud of his cultural roots.

According to Lusambo, the arrangement with his parents-in-law about the payment of the bride price went as follows:

We reached an agreement with her father and mother. They said: 'Bring us 1000 francs and a bicycle.' After I had delivered those things, I was asked to bring a *coupe costume* for my father-in-law and a piece of cloth for my mother-in-law. Finally, I was also asked to bring two sheets. All of this, I delivered in preparation of my marriage. And Monsieur Hedo helped me out. He brought me the bicycle, the sheets and the *coupe costume*. Personally, I took care of the money.

Remarkably, the bride price consisted of Western luxury items as well as of a substantial sum of money. This shows that the transfer of the bride price was not only meant to legalize the marriage, to legitimize the children issuing from the marriage and to confirm the alliance between two groups of kin (see Stone 2006: 89), but that it was also intended as an opportunity for the groom to demonstrate his wage-earning capacity. Thanks to the help of his colonial employer, Lusambo was able to come up

with enough money to afford a marriage with the daughter of another compound-dweller and to practice both ethnic and class endogamy<sup>57</sup>.

Instead of limiting himself to a traditional marriage ceremony, Lusambo decided to organize a Christian marriage ceremony as well. This created a new dilemma. Lusambo knew that Catholic and Protestant missionaries were competing for the hearts and souls of Hedo's workers. Monsignor de Hemptinne and Pierre Poullens<sup>58</sup> of the Benedictine order faced the competition of John McKendree Springer<sup>59</sup> of the United Methodist Church. Each party tried to attract new converts by building churches inside the mining compound and by organizing leisure activities such as soccer matches (for men) and singing lessons (for women).

Being aware of the fact that Hedo was close friends with the Benedictine missionaries de Hemptinne and Poullens, Lusambo decided to have his marriage solemnized in the Catholic church building inside the mining compound. At the same time, however, he asked a high-ranking compound-dweller belonging to the United Methodist Church to act as his witness. What made the choice of this witness even more special was that the person in question had the same background as Lusambo. In addition to being a Lunda from Sandoa, he was also a member of the African elite in Hedo's mining compound. Thus, there are strong indications that Lusambo developed different kinds of strategies to propitiate his relatives and friends in Sandoa and to maintain his respectability within the mining compound.

Whereas, at the time of his marriage, Lusambo succeeded relatively well in combining his role as a member of the African elite in Hedo's mining compound with his role as a commuting migration labourer, after a while, he found it increasingly difficult to go through with it. Significantly, when one of his daughters reached puberty, he did not allow her to pass through the initiation rites that were still

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<sup>57</sup> It is important to note that Hedo's help with the payment of the bride price was less extraordinary than it may seem. In the section on the gender ideology of the UMHK, I have already pointed out that European officials of the mining company were expected to assist African employees in the conclusion of a monogamous marriage (see 2.2.2).

<sup>58</sup> Pierre Poullens, who would be ordained as father Boniface, was born on 16 March 1895 in the Luxembourg town of Bewisch. At the age of 12, he entered the boarding school of Saint-Andrew (Saint-André), where he followed the Latin section of humanities, graduating in 1913. Following the outbreak of World War I, he was sent to the Oosterhout Abbey, together with his fellow brothers. On 24 November 1917, the theology students would be evacuated to Louvain, where they spent one year of their training at Mont-César. Poullens would eventually spend 56 years in Katanga, successively connected to the mission stations of Lukafu, Bunkeya, Kansenia and Kapolowe. He died on 19 April 1988 in Bruges (source: personal archives of Pierre Poullens, located in the Zevenkerken Abbey in Bruges).

<sup>59</sup> John McKendree Springer played a prominent role in the dissemination of Methodism in Africa. Following his graduation at Northwestern University (1895 and 1899) and the Garrett Biblical Institute (1901), where he obtained a Bachelor of Divinity degree, he was appointed a missionary in 1901. His religious career started in Rhodesia, where he held the position of pastor and superintendent of the Old Umtali Industrial Mission from 1901 to 1906. (source: The General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church: <http://www.gcuh.org/ead/gcah660f.htm>).

being secretly organized in the mining compound (cfr. supra). In Lusambo's view, this custom was incompatible with the modern lifestyle he wanted to teach to his children:

We refused, those are the things of the past (*tulikatala ile iko bintu ya zamani*). When she (=his daughter) grew up, a man came around and they just concluded a marriage. That whole *kisungu* business, I was against it. (...) It is a bad custom (*asiri mubaya*) of people in the past (*ya bantu ya zamani*).

The longer he stayed in the mining compound, the more Lusambo began to dissociate himself from his cultural background. Having decided to stay in *kizungu* for the rest of his life, he tried to present himself as a 'detrIALIZED', God-fearing modern industrial man. He enjoyed the fact that he was able to develop a close relationship with the white management of the mining compound, that he was one of the few African employees whose children were allowed to play with Hedo's children, and that, in his capacity as Hedo's personal cook, he was able to serve dinner to important guests such as Monsignor de Hemptinne. When, in 1960, the Katangese secession made it impossible for Lusambo to travel to Sandoa, he reconciled himself quite easily with the facts. Possibly, he felt relieved because he no longer had to pay attention to the demands and expectations of the people back home.

Adopting a puritan attitude, Lusambo detested the fact that some of his male colleagues were leading a loose life, drinking too much alcohol and having relationships with several women at the same time. He used the expression '*bwana waya waya*' (=mister totter) to describe a man who spent all his money on beer and prostitutes. As could be expected, he believed that members of the African elite had to serve as an example to others. Just like Mufwankolo, he based himself on the institutionalized form of hegemonic masculinity of the UMHK to evaluate the behaviour of those men who occupied the highest positions in the hierarchy of the mining compound.

According to Lusambo, the person who came closest to the perfect embodiment of the masculinity ideal promoted by the mining company was Jean-Pierre Kasulu, who combined the position of compound manager (*chef de camp*) with the position of doctor (*munganga*) (cfr. supra: testimony of Mufwankolo). Lusambo shared Mufwankolo's suspicion that Kasulu's death was caused by witchcraft, but he did not have the same ideas about the murderer's identity. As a matter of fact, he believed it was not Kasulu's wife who was responsible for killing him, but somebody who was jealous of his promotion to the position of *chef de camp*:

He was killed with a fetish. (...) He reached the bridge.... As he had spent his childhood in Sandoa, he was used to (swimming in) the Lulua, a very wide river. They were playing there and Jean-Pierre fell in the water. That is how he died. (...) Jean-Pierre was a Protestant and a very religious man. He was

convinced he had obtained his job because of his intelligence, because he had studied. (He told the person who would ultimately kill him) 'It is not because I die that you will get the position. You are worth nothing, you are poor in spirit. Be aware that you will die as well. You will not be able to continue the work (that I did before you killed me)'. That was the kind of language that Jean-Pierre used. And it was true, too. Shortly after Jean-Pierre's death, his murderer died as well.

According to Lusambo, Kasulu was not only an achiever, a talented individual who was granted a job in accordance with his level of schooling, but also a martyr, someone who was prepared to die for his principles and who refused to lower himself to the level of those who were out for his job. For his part, Hedo's cook had the impression that he was not in the same league as his role model. Though nobody had ever explained to him why he had been selected to work in his boss's kitchen, he was quite sure that it had nothing to do with his level of training, since he had hardly gone to school in his childhood years. In order to compensate for his 'undeserved' promotion, he did his best to live according to the rules imposed by the UMHK. A second form of compensation consisted of personally coming to the rescue of Hedo, when this proved necessary:

Lumumba's people did not like Monsieur Hedo. One evening – it must have been around nine – they stopped by, while Hedo and I were in the house. The house was surrounded: bandits stood by the windows and by the door, armed with a gun. Hedo told me to ask them what they wanted. The bandits responded that they were accompanied by a major. If Hedo was present, they were supposed to call him and ask him to come and talk with the major. I went back into the kitchen and dialled the number of several whites (sums up the names of a couple of Europeans he called). When they arrived, the bandits took off.

Several things can be inferred from this account. First of all, it is obvious that something was brewing in the mining compound at the time of the Katangese secession. In the situation described above, we are not dealing with ordinary banditry, but with a politically inspired attack. As a member of the white business community, Hedo was apparently suspected of sympathizing with Moïse Tshombe, who had proclaimed Katanga's independence on 11 July 1960 and who was faced with a guerrilla war launched by followers of the *Mouvement National Congolais* of Patrice Lumumba and the *Balubakat* of Jason Sendwe, who were in favour of a unitary system of governance in Congo<sup>60</sup>. A second observation that can be made, is that Lusambo visibly loved to put himself on the scene as a reliable bodyguard. It is

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<sup>60</sup> Tshombe was popular with the settlers and especially the UMHK, because, already before Congolese independence, he had openly pleaded for a federal state with a high degree of autonomy for Katanga. The white business community was convinced that a federal polity constituted the best guarantee for the undisturbed continuation of their economic activities after independence. Following the secession of Katanga, followers of the Balubakat party in the regions of North- and Central Katanga started a rebellion against Tshombe's secessionist regime, which gave rise to enormous bloodshed in the whole region (Bustin 1975: 188-191; 201).

striking that the anecdote was related in great detail. In my view, it can be safely assumed that Lusambo consciously used a story like this to highlight his value as a confident of Hedo. He wanted to convey the impression that his boss could even count on him in politically dangerous situations.

Normally, the person who was supposed to take care of Hedo's personal security was Oscar Ayin, a family member of Moïse Tshombe<sup>61</sup> and the compound representative of Tshombe's political party CONAKAT (cfr. supra: testimony of Mufwankolo)<sup>62</sup>. Different statements make it clear that Lusambo had a poor opinion of Ayin, whom he considered inferior to his role model Kasulu:

When Oscar started working, he was still a child. At his workplace, he was faced with various sorts of superiors: the *chef de camp*, the doctor, the head of the hospital, the team leader (at the mining site)... He was an ordinary labourer, just like everybody else. It was only when the other big men (*bakubwa*) died, that Oscar managed to get his promotion. (...) Some people were angry that he got promoted and they were jealous. He owed his promotion to Tshombe. The fact of the matter is that Tshombe was friends with Hedo.

So, in Lusambo's opinion, Ayin was nothing more than a simple stooge of Tshombe. The people envious of him were not put off by his level of education or his skills, but by the fact that he did not really deserve his promotion. To wrap up his argument that Ayin was not a prototypical *capita* of the UMHK, Lusambo made a very suggestive remark about his relationships with women:

(...) In the compound, he only lived together with one woman at a time. He changed. With the woman who came with him (when he was recruited by Hedo) he had three daughters. After that, he married a second wife with whom he fathered a son. He also separated from his second wife. He married another woman, who was called Helena. He stayed together with her and since he was an executive, he married another woman named Sonya. That was how he married. He repudiated one woman and he married another one.

Initially, I thought Lusambo's statements could be explained by taking into account a law against polygamy that was introduced by the Belgian colonial government in 1950. According to Hunt, this law was to eradicate the so-called '*camouflaged polygamy*', a type of relationship associated with the 'literate', such as *capitas* or traders. It was assumed that many of the latter had concluded a religious or civil marriage, while simultaneously entertaining relationships with a number of concubines, whom

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<sup>61</sup> The family link between Tshombe and Ayin was confirmed to me by Ayin's second wife.

<sup>62</sup> CONAKAT stands for *Confédération des associations tribales du Katanga*. The movement was turned into a political party on 11 July 1959 (Bustin op.cit.: ibidem).

they mockingly called their '*supplémentaires*'. Due to its secretive nature, this type of polygamy was viewed as particularly harmful by the colonial government (Hunt 1991: 481-482). Given the moral climate of the 1950s, I thought the most plausible explanation for Lusambo's remark was that he could not stand the idea that somebody in Ayin's position had dared to indulge in camouflaged polygamy.

However, when I had the opportunity to interview two of Ayin's children as well as two of his wives, I discovered that the situation was much more complicated. First, it turned out that Ayin's second wife was born in 1950 and that she had married her husband in 1971, in other words, 21 years after the law on polygamy was introduced and 11 years after Congolese independence. Second, I was informed that Ayin had only divorced his first wife, whereas he had always kept intact his marriage agreements with five other women until his death in 1999. Apparently, he had fathered 18 children with 6 different women. Third, I found out that Ayin was not only a family member of Tshombe but that he was also the son of a Lunda chief in the area of Sandoa. Moreover, both his first and his second wife were also children of Lunda chiefs in the same area. According to his second wife, Ayin's link with the Lunda aristocracy was the main reason why he decided to become officially polygamous after Congolese independence:

He was part of a family of chiefs and he was a chief himself. (...) Chiefs were the ones who married a lot of women. The other men only married two or three women. In the village, you need to have women, because they are the ones who work (on the land). (...) Most of the times, he stayed here (i.e. in the mining compound of Kakontwe). It were rather his family members who came to visit him here. He went once (to Sandoa), namely when somebody of the Tshombe family had died. (In Sandoa) they have a plot (on the cemetery) that is reserved for members of the Tshombe family.

How does one make sense of all of this? The first question that begs to be answered is why Ayin waited until 1971 – when he was already at the age of 50 – to start developing a polygamous lifestyle that appears to have been characteristic of Lunda chiefs in the area of Sandoa. According to Hoover, an American historian who conducted long-term fieldwork in the Lunda heartland during the 1970s, it is important to bear in mind that the area of Sandoa is ethnically very mixed. While, originally, it was mainly uRuund-speaking, things changed in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century due to Chokwe incursions associated with the Atlantic slave trade. From then on, ethnic identities around Sandoa have alternated between Chokwe and Lunda, depending on whether it was more beneficial to belong to a more individualistic, achievement-based society or to a strongly coordinated communal one. Among the Chokwe, who are matrilineal with a political system of strong lineages and weak chiefs, polygyny has historically been a marker of wealth, whereas among the Lunda, who use a bilateral system of kinship with a political structure giving chiefs real power over commoners, polygyny has been a marker of political power (Hoover, pers. comm.). Is it a coincidence that Ayin identified himself as Lunda and became

polygamous when Mobutu was in the middle of developing his doctrine of authenticity (*authenticité*)? As Young and Turner have remarked, the essence of authenticity was a return to the ancestral heritage as a spiritual resource in order to achieve mental decolonization. The implementation of this ideology was coupled with a wide range of measures, including the renaming of localities and streets, the replacement of Christian forenames with African post-names and the renaming of the country (Young & Turner 1985: 211-212). However, the Mobutu regime also took a number of measures that jeopardized the survival of certain aspects of Congolese traditions. Not only did the government try to curtail the influence of traditional chiefs (Young & Turner 1985: 232-240), it also decided to maintain the colonial law on polygamy of 1950 (Pauwels 1974: 819-833) (cfr. supra). Consequently, Ayin's decision to become polygamous and to create a distinct profile of himself as a member of the Lunda aristocracy in Sandoa can hardly have been the result of Mobutu's doctrine of authenticity. It seems more plausible that Hedo's *capita* was preparing a return to his home village after his retirement. As Gugler has demonstrated, urban dwellers like Ayin tend to deal pragmatically with the different identities at their disposal, including their kinship group, their home village, the village group to which it belongs, their region or the speakers of their language. Depending on the situation, a specific aspect or element of one's identity will be underscored and highlighted, most often, of course, the one that is likely to produce material benefits (Gugler 2002: 33).

The second question that needs to be answered is why Lusambo condemned Ayin's lifestyle by implicitly referring to a moral climate that no longer existed when the polygamous relationships occurred. In fact, many Congolese did not feel particularly bothered by the decision of the Mobutu government to preserve the colonial law on polygamy. The women involved in a polygamous relationship were nicknamed '*deuxièmes bureaux*' or '*sous-régions*', ironic references to Mobutu's administrative reforms during the 1960s and 1970s (Kitenge-Ya 1977: 153). In my opinion, Lusambo's attitude can be explained by taking into account issues of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. As Miescher has noted, people reconstitute their individual selves and their lived experiences when they are invited to reflect subjectively about their pasts. At the same time, however, the shape of their account is also influenced by the interview situation. Therefore, a narrative should always be considered as the product of the interaction and desire of understanding between teller and listener (Miescher 2005: 14). In the introduction to this case study, I have already indicated that Lusambo found it very important to emphasize that he had always lived as an *évolué*. Consequently, it seems plausible that his remark about Ayin's polygyny was part of a strategy to draw my attention to the contrast between his own way of dealing with modernity and Ayin's way of dealing with it. Whereas, personally, he had always remained monogamous, Ayin had not hesitated to combine two competing ideals of masculinity.



## 2.4 Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to examine the construction of masculinities among Katangese miners during the colonial period. I have focused on the period in which the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga tried to stabilize part of its labour force through the development of a welfare policy. Interestingly, the implementation of this policy went hand in hand with the creation of a gender ideology that was imposed on all workers and their families. In the first part of the chapter, I have shown that the three components of the company's gender ideology were the institutionalization of a hegemonic form of masculinity, the promotion of monogamous marriages and the medicalization of motherhood. In the second part of the chapter, I have investigated how former employees of Armand Hedo, a Luxembourg subcontractor of the UMHK, came to grips with this gender ideology. I have demonstrated that a 'symmetry of perspectives' among the members of Hedo's workforce gave rise to the emergence of a subculture characterized by porous boundaries and complex processes of hybridization and cultural exchange. Rather than simply obeying UMHK's gender ideology, Hedo's workers and their relatives made creative mixes of ideas and practices of various origins. Still, I have also pointed out that, compared to the other compound-dwellers, the members of the African elite were not really actively involved in the subculture. As a result of the fact that they had to deal with their white superiors on a daily basis, they believed they could not take the risk of deviating too much from the norms and values dictated by the company. Moreover, they realized that, in order to keep their high position in the hierarchy of the mining compound, they had to approach the institutionalized form of hegemonic masculinity as good as possible. The stories of Mufwankolo and Alphonse Lusambo have made it clear that the members of the African elite used the masculinity ideal of the UMHK as a benchmark to evaluate the behaviour of their competitors, while they also looked down on men enacting inferior forms of masculinity.

While there can be no doubt that the welfare policy of the UMHK has strongly influenced local ideas about the relationship between work and masculinity – contemporary Katangese men still feel inclined to idealize salaried employment (*kazi*) – my analysis has shown that, even during the colonial period, there was considerable variation in the ways employees of the company constructed their masculinities. On the one hand, they had a number of characteristics in common so that they were able to define themselves as a separate category of men in Katangese society, but on the other hand, they also tended to emphasize their internal differences. The masculinity model developed by Connell has proved to be a good analytic tool to describe the power relationships between different types of masculinities in the colonial mining compounds of the UMHK.

### 3. The joker and the thief

*'There must be some way out of here  
said the joker to the thief  
there's too much confusion  
I can't get no relief  
businessmen they drink my wine, ploughmen dig my earth  
none of them along the line know what any of it is worth  
No reason to get excited, the thief, he kindly spoke  
there are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke  
but you and I, we've been through that, and this is not our fate,  
so let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late'*

Bob Dylan, 'All along the watchtower'



Changaipondo, Nguz Tshov and John Bestia in the mine of Kalabi

#### 3.1 Introduction

The third chapter is built around the expression '*kupanga kitabu*', which literally means '*to compose a book*'. Contemporary artisanal miners use this expression to describe the habit of working out a financial arrangement with a mineral buyer. The meaning of '*kupanga kitabu*' is compatible with the content of the chapter, because I want to show that money plays a crucial role in the subculture that

has come into existence in the artisanal mining sector in Katanga. As Cornwall has argued, money has the potential of becoming ‘*a driving – and always unpredictable, mercurial – force that can transform not only social relations but people themselves*’ (Cornwall 2002: 967).

Almost half a century after Hedo's labourers relied on their stay in one of the urban centres (*kizungu*: the white man's place) and on their status as wage labourers (*bantu wa kazi*) to obtain material and social benefits for themselves and their families, Katangese men are facing a deep economic crisis (Musharhamina 2004). They are experiencing increasing difficulties to live up to the colonial male breadwinner norm (*baba ni kazi*: father is work) (Dibwe et al. 2004) and are forced to develop new livelihood strategies (*kutafuta maisha*: to look for life) (Petit & Mulumbwa 2005). Whereas, in 1973, 63 per cent of the household revenues in Lubumbashi still originated from salaried work, in 2000, this figure had dropped to 20 per cent (Geschiere 2003: 5).

Still, money is an important marker of masculine status in present-day Katanga (Petit 2003: 43-44)<sup>63</sup>. A man with a good job and plenty of cash to spend on drinks and clothes<sup>64</sup> is treated with a lot of respect (*heshima*). He is usually addressed as ‘*patron*’ or ‘*boss*’ and he is described as a winner (*anawina*: he wins), who is doing well for himself (*anapanda*: he rises) and who is getting a fat belly because he can always eat his fill (*tumbo yake inanza kutoka*: his belly is starting to bulge; *ananenepa*: he is becoming fat). One of the most telling illustrations of the importance of money for the acquisition of male prestige in present-day Katanga is the so-called *péage* or toll collection practice that has become part of wedding ceremonies in some of the *cités* of Lubumbashi. Upon their arrival at the entrance of the house of the bride, relatives of the groom are expected to scatter a large amount of bank notes on waistcloths spread out on the ground by their female in-laws. Since the groom is supposed to cover at least 70 per cent of the total costs of the wedding, he is also the one who should offer his relatives enough cash so that they can find their way past the toll collectors. The *péage* thus offers the groom a good opportunity to demonstrate his financial capacity towards his family-in-law (Kahola, pers.comm.)<sup>65</sup>.

Many Katangese men assume that mining areas are places where a lot of money is circulating and where they can ‘earn that little bit of money’ (*kupata ile ne fût-ce que*) that keeps them afloat. Mining is seen as an income-generating activity that is readily accessible to everyone. According to some

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63 For an overview of money-related expressions in Katanga, see Mulumbwa & Kalonji 2003

64 In one of his songs, Jean Bosco Mwenda wa Bayeke says that the triad of pleasure in the Katangese copper belt is composed of dressing up (*kuvaa*), sleeping (*kulala*) and drinking (*kunywa*) (Bilonda 2002: 190-191).

65 Bearing in mind that quantity is more important than quality, the groom usually prefers to provide his invitees with notes of hundred francs instead of giving them notes with a higher value (Kahola pers.comm.).

observers, this is exactly the reason why diggers are often so insolent and hot-tempered: they consider themselves as 'plain-clothes soldiers' (*militaires civiles*) who fight for their right to exploit minerals and make easy money (*l'argent facile / makuta ya dare dare*). One of my informants told me he had started working as a digger after hearing a message on RCK (*Radio Communautaire du Katanga*) in which work in a certain mine was described as a 'flip-flop job' (*kazi ya mapapa*). By using this expression, the radio-announcer wanted to indicate that mining on that specific location was a piece of cake: anyone taking the effort of digging as deep as the thickness of the sole of a flip-flop could be sure of hitting an ore vein. In a similar vein, another digger informed me he would simply continue his work in the mine until he had saved 100 USD. He was confident that this money would allow him to start a career as a cigarette trader and establish a household in the city.

The relationship between money, migration and masculinity has received a lot of attention in recent scholarship (Moodie 1994; Harries 1994; Lindsay 2003; Brown 2003b; Cornwall 2003). An intriguing study is the one by Osella and Osella (2000) about *gulfans*, young men from Kerala in South India who migrate to one of the Persian Gulf states in order to find a temporary job that gives them the opportunity to make good money prior to the establishment of a household in their society of origin. The authors point out that *gulfans* are forced to find a balance between two conflicting sets of expectations concerning the relationship between money and masculinity: while, on the one hand, their status as migrants with access to 'easy money' forces them to keep up the image of leading a life of luxury, ease and unlimited spending, on the other hand, their status as youngsters on the verge of mature manhood obliges them to promote the well-being of relatives and close friends, while also keeping aside enough money to start building a family after their final return from the Persian Gulf.

In this chapter, I will follow the example of Osella and Osella by investigating how miners in Katanga are using money to develop styles of masculinity that are in line with their complicated ways of life. The focus of my research will be on miners who have maintained contacts with the social environment they are coming from and who have developed strategies to reconcile conflicting expectations about money handling. An important difference between my approach and the one of Osella and Osella concerns the link between migration and the male lifecycle. The aim of this chapter is not to demonstrate that migration to the mines is becoming one of the stages of a culturally acceptable life trajectory for men in Katanga. In other words, I do not want to suggest that the involvement in mining activities is inextricably bound up with a specific and pre-defined life-stage and neither do I want to create the impression that the only males living and working in mining areas are young men who are socially and culturally categorized as youth. Instead, I seek to investigate how men of different ages, generational categories and socio-cultural backgrounds are participating in artisanal mining in order to take their lives back into their own hands and to make a new start.

Before I explain how this chapter is organized, I need to say a few words about household management, a theme that is almost unavoidable for anyone investigating the relationship between money, migration and masculinity. Judging by what has been published on the subject, migrant labour often has an influence on the composition of households, the linkages between households and the ways in which families of migrants manage their household budgets (Francis 1995; Keller 2004; Hampshire 2006). It would lead me too far to discuss the large body of literature on the definition of the notion of household (see i.a. Guyer 1981; Seekings 2003; Bryceson 1995). Suffice it to say that, in this chapter, I will use the term household in the sense of a socializing unit, which also serves as a unit of production and consumption<sup>66</sup>. This definition offers the advantage that it cannot only be used to indicate groups of people who are connected to one another through kinship relationships, who live under the same roof and who pool certain resources, but that it can also serve to designate teams formed by diggers during their work on the mines. Since members of the same digging team very often sleep together in the same tent, work in the same pit, share revenues from the sale of minerals and sit together to eat their meals and consume their daily doses of alcohol and drugs, it seems justified to talk about them in terms of a household. In an article on artisanal mining in the Basidibé region in Mali, Panella has shown that there are strong similarities between the social organization of households in Wasolonka society and the social organization of mining teams (Panella 2007). Nevertheless, it needs to be emphasized that digger households distinguish themselves from ordinary households by their transient nature. Members of a digger household are well aware of the fact that their cooperation is likely to end as soon as one of them moves to another mine or decides to leave the mining business for good<sup>67</sup>.

In the first part of this chapter, I will limit myself to a description of a number of ideas about money and masculinity at the level of the mining subculture. I will show that Katangese artisanal miners often have divergent opinions about money handling but that they nevertheless agree on a number of rules for financial arrangements. In addition to this, I will demonstrate that diggers make a distinction between different types of masculinities by referring to various possible ways of money handling. In the second part of this chapter, I will broaden the scope of my analysis by following the ups and downs of three men who were not only part of a digging team but who were also a member of one or more households outside the mining business. In doing so, I hope to provide the reader with a concrete

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66 This definition of household is close to what Ekejiuba has called a 'hearthhold' (1995: 51). While Ekejiuba (1995) and Henderson et al. (1997) consider the hearthhold as a subunit of a household, personally, I do not intend to use a separate term for the designation of subunits of households.

<sup>67</sup> In an article on artisanal diamond miners in the border area between Angola and the DRC, De Boeck has noted that the small, ad-hoc cooperative units formed by young men are called '*écuries*' or stables (De Boeck 2001: 555). In Katanga, diggers describe similar units as '*équipes*' or teams.

illustration of the types of strategies diggers use to deal with the existence of conflicting expectations regarding the relationship between money and masculinity.

### 3.2 Money and masculinity in the mining subculture

'Boss, give me the no smoking!' When this phrase was shouted at me during one of my first visits to one of the mines close to Lwambo, I interpreted it as a clumsy request for cigarettes, coming from a young digger who probably wanted to see how far he could get with the English he had picked up at the movies. Later on, I started wondering whether playful blows like these were perhaps part of a larger pattern of conduct. I noticed that, whenever diggers appear in public, the attention of other people is fixed on their aberrant behaviour and styles of clothing. In Lwambo, their favourite hang-outs include a couple of bars in the *quartier commercial*, a number of cinemas in the *quartier Mutwila* and the *quartier Kyabu* and, finally, the thatched shelters in front of chief Pande's residence where they can drink ice-cold beer coming from the paramount's refrigerator and sold by his relatives. In *La Tendresse* (the tenderness), a bar-restaurant where *bukari*, fish and vegetables are served in addition to various types of alcoholic drinks, they often spend their evenings watching music videos shown on a large television screen. Having pieced together a personal outfit from a wide range of second-hand or imitation shoes, garments and headgears, they dance to the records of Werrason (*Alerte Générale*), Koffi Olomide (*Monde arabe*) and 50 Cent (*Candy Shop*), while peevisly reacting to the provocations of prostitutes who now and then stand up from their plastic garden chairs to hustle clients for drinks. It is not unusual to see miners moving around with half-full beer bottles on top of their heads, touching the breasts of women with whom they want to spend the night or faking anal sex with each other on the dance floor.

It is tempting – especially if you read American *gangsta* rap sentences like 'Get rich or die'<sup>68</sup> on diggers' t-shirts - to consider the aforementioned deviant types of clothing and behaviour as 'ritual' forms of resistance against norms and values that are dominant in the rest of society (Hall & Jefferson 1975). However, it is not very useful to try to 'decode' or find out the alleged inherent meanings of objects or texts circulating in a subculture on the basis of semiotic methods alone. Not only does this create the risk of ascribing intentions to actors that they may not really have, it can also lead to an underestimation of the differences of opinion within a subculture (MacDonald 2001: 41; Martin 2004: 33). As I have already shown in my discussion of the subculture that came into existence among the workers of Armand Hedo (see chapter 2), Hannerz has rightly argued that members of the same social unit do not automatically share the same ideas (Hannerz 1992: 1-17). Therefore, in the following

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68 'Get rich or die tryin' is the title of an album released by the American rapper 50 Cent in 2003.

sections, I will leave it to the diggers themselves to comment on their ideas about the relationship between money and masculinity.

### 3.2.1 Views on money handling

During their stay in the mining areas, Katangese artisanal miners are in a liminal condition. Both literally and figuratively, they are living on the fringes of society. Not only are they working in places far away from villages and cities, but people outside the mining business also consider them as marginal figures. As a result of this, they tend to define themselves as a separate category of men whose lifestyle is radically different from that of other men in Katangese society.

Diggers describe deviant behaviour vis-à-vis the outside world in terms of impoliteness and delinquency. A person displaying deviant behaviour is called '*impoli*' (impolite) and described as a '*voyou*' (rascal). The umbrella term '*kivoyou*' – which can be translated as 'the style of being deviant or of behaving as a rascal' – refers to an extensive register of acts and types of conduct such as swearing, wearing eccentric or expensive clothes, cross-dressing, drinking excessively, being disrespectful towards senior members of society and using *hindubill*<sup>69</sup> – a kind of tongue-in-cheek 'underworld' slang derived from French, English, Swahili, Lingala, Luba and other African languages. Of course, there is quite some variation in how people take part in *kivoyou*. Those who seem to get most pleasure from posing as 'juvenile delinquents' are men in their teens and twenties aiming to present a youthful image and priding themselves on not being accountable to anyone. One of the diggers, who preferred to be called Johnny Walker as a tribute to the famous whisky brand of the same name, explained his own behaviour as follows:

Mujinga (refers to an older digger standing next to him) will have some consideration for his children. But, personally, I don't bother about that. I need to make a lot of money myself. If I earn a lot, I feel good. He will have compassion on other people and stuff. That's a difference. (...) I will find me a prostitute, dress well, smoke drugs, drink *lutuku* (= artisanal whisky) (laughs). That's all!

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69 De Boeck has pointed out that *hindubill* was originally associated with *billism*, a youth culture that developed in Kinshasa at the end of the 1950s. The cowboys shown in Hollywood westerns served as role models for young inhabitants of the Congolese capital who imitated the former's appearance (blue jeans, checkered shirt, neckerchief, lasso) as well as their ways of behaviour. According to De Boeck, these Congolese cowboys, who were excluded from education, salaried jobs and the world of adults in general, used *Hindubill*, an argot mixing French, Lingala, English and the local vernacular languages, to create their own modes of inclusion and exclusion. Etymologically speaking, it is interesting to note that 'Hindu', the first component of the word *Hindubill*, probably refers to 'Indian', the natural enemies of the cowboys featuring in the abovementioned Hollywood westerns. Additionally, *Hindu* may also refer to the 'Indian' marijuana the youngsters smoked or to the Hindi movies shown in the cinemas in Kinshasa in that same period (De Boeck 2004: 36-39).

Youngsters like Walker jokingly say they are living according to the 'daily rate' (*taux du jour*), a money-changer expression intended to capture the idea of living from day to day. In mining areas where a lot of money (*zakrum*)<sup>70</sup> is circulating, diggers often compete with each other about who has the nicest clothes, who is the biggest spender on alcohol and who can go to the hookers most frequently. Cora, a young digger who spent some time working in the mine of Milele, described his memories of this atmosphere of wasting money (*kuchoma makuta*: to burn money) and being competitive in the following terms:

We got totally absorbed by the *ambiance*, wasting money. You know, there you had *proving*. You saw what another digger was doing, you imitated him and you tried to outdo him. (...). For instance, your friend bought shoes worth 25.000 FC. He wore clothes worth 450 USD. You wanted to show that you surpassed him and so bought clothes worth 650 USD (...).

Although the prices mentioned by Cora obviously need to be taken with a grain of salt – it seems highly unlikely that diggers are actually capable of spending as much money as he claimed – his testimony does give a good impression of the importance given to ostentation in areas like Milele. An interesting synonym for 'proving' – which is derived from the English verb 'to prove' – is the Swahili verb *kuvimba*, which means 'to swell'. According to Papi, who had started working as a miner in 1997, *kuvimba* is to be interpreted as the authoritarian conquest of public space by behaving like a big shot:

You pretend to be very important, although you don't have any money in your pocket. Even if you only have a little money, you will start swelling, you will even knock over other people. You make it clear that you'll spend all the money you have. It's like walking around with the (Congolese) state in your pocket.

Papi's remark that a round of 'proving' can even result in somebody being knocked over is more significant than it may seem. Many diggers believe that money can make you lose control of yourself. They say that money makes people arrogant (*makuta inarendre bantu orgueilleux*), so that they become boastful (*vantard*) and headstrong (*kichwa nguvu*), and are no longer capable of watching their language (*habacontrôlake langage*). There is also a strong conviction that anyone venturing to enter the environment of the diggers runs the risk of falling under the spell of money sooner or later. It is believed that even a prudent family man can get so carried away by the party mood (*ambiance inambamba / inamwingiriria*), that he all of the sudden finds himself revolting against his household

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<sup>70</sup> Several slang expressions refer to money. The most popular ones include *katuba*, *munene*, *moto*, *musipi*, *zakrak* and *mutangila*.



obligations (*anatomboka*) and abandoning his wife and children. While, initially, a rebel (*mtombozi*) like this will still take the trouble of going to a phone booth (*cabine publique*) in order to explain to the people back home why he stays away so long, he will eventually choose to continue working in the mines forever, leaving no trace of himself to his friends and family members (*anapotea*). It is, of course, not a coincidence that Papi associates the boasting of a cash-strapped digger with the Congolese state. While, on the one hand, he wants to make a cynical remark about the situation of the Congolese treasury, on the other hand, he also wants to highlight the necessity of taking part in the mining community's daily festivities to keep up a good front. In Papi's opinion, it is advisable to invest a lot of time and energy in putting up a beautiful façade for yourself, even if you know what a terrible ruin is hidden behind it.

Many people who strongly identify with the style of *kivoyou* try to justify their own squandermania by saying 'my body is my capital' (*maungo yangu ni capital*). This expression does not only serve to indicate that they consider their body as an instrument that helps them earn money whenever they want, but also to point out that they can use their body to put up a certain image of themselves towards the people around them<sup>71</sup>. From this perspective, it is important to take good care of their body and 'make it happy' (*kufurahisha maungo*) by eating a lot, wearing expensive clothes and drinking alcohol to relax one's muscles. Strikingly, both *ndumbas*<sup>72</sup> – women working full-time as a prostitute and being very open about it – and *femmes libres* – single women who occasionally and rather discretely offer sexual services in exchange for money – use an expression that is very similar to the one used by the diggers, namely 'my body is a marketplace' (*maungo yangu njoo soko*). By expressing themselves in this manner, they want to show that they resemble market vendors in wanting to have the final word about how the transaction will take place and in trying to present their merchandise as attractively as possible. Thus, the expressions '*maungo yangu ni capital*' and '*maungo yangu njoo soko*' seem to reveal similarities between diggers and prostitutes: they both consider their bodies as important forms of capital and they both engage in 'extraversion': in selective, creative and sometimes subversive ways, they compose their own repertoires of practices that enable them to approach an imaginary western lifestyle (Fouquet 2007: 104; Bayart 2000). However, the foregoing discussion should not be taken to imply that the two groups show any mutual solidarity. In fact, most of the diggers are very displeased at the autonomous and assertive attitude adopted by prostitutes. Various expressions reflect diggers' views that prostitutes are brutal and unreliable creatures who - just like bats (*mapopo*) - only flutter around at night and whose main goal is to bamboozle money out of them. While the nicknames 'little chief' (*kachief*), 'sister living by herself' (*da kujikalia*) and 'sister suitcase' (*da nduzi*) are meant to

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71 For a theoretical overview of the literature on the use of the body for the construction of the self, see de Lame 2007: 9-22

72 Interestingly, *ndumba* means 'slave' in the Luvale language (Papstein 1978: 13).

criticize the independent and bossy nature of prostitutes, the nicknames 'impoverisher' (*kachombesha*), 'sister thief' (*da mwivi*), 'sister beggar' (*da lombá*), 'buy me-give me-share with me' (*so-pe-ka*)<sup>73</sup>, bird of prey (*kómbékómbé*: black kite) serve to draw a bead on their alleged obtrusiveness and rapacity.

Other men, who only make up a small minority of the digging population, try to dissociate themselves from the abovementioned wastefulness, exerting themselves to live economically and to act responsibly towards their family members at home. Referring to the work of the Congolese musician Reddy Amisi, who often uses his songs to advocate a parsimonious lifestyle, they say it is better 'to eat one part and to put the other part aside for later' (*líya ndámbo, bómbo ndámbo*). Another expression I often recorded from these people is '*kufanya maquis*', which refers to the habit of leaving one's home in the village or the city to move to an outside space in which a capital is to be raised or multiplied within a personally defined time span. Trinita, who left the Mafuta neighbourhood in Likasi in order to establish himself as a miner in Mulungwishi, referred to this expression in the following manner:

I have to go back to the city. I am here for the money. I will only stay in Mulungwishi to do a *maquis*. I will not stay here forever.

Esther, a female mineral buyer from the Chachi neighbourhood in Likasi, clarified the meaning of '*kufanya maquis*' in a similar way:

You leave the *city-centre* (*ville*) and come to the *brousse*, to the *maquis*, in order to work. That is why people speak of the *maquis* (...). Once you have raised a capital, you can go and do something else, maybe another type of work.

From this quote, it can be inferred that the *maquis* is synonymous with the forest or the bush, a space which is opposed to the urban area and which offers opportunities to move on with one's life at times when the bottom is hit financially. The expression '*kufanya maquis*' became really popular in the Mobutu era, when rebels fighting the Kinshasa regime retreated to desolate places to prepare for their coup d'état. The fact that Kabila's troops actually managed to overthrow a long-time dictator, after having spent several years in the bush, gave strength to popularly held ideas about the value of self-discipline and thorough preparation with a view to achieve personally defined goals<sup>74</sup>.

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73 Sopeka is the abbreviation of three imperatives in Lingala: *sómbela ngái, pésa ngái, kabela ngái*.

74 In order to make it clear to people that it was useless to spend their days in the village or the *cité* doing nothing, soldiers in Kabila's army used to sing: '*What use is it to be a burly fellow, mother, when all the youngsters are moving away to the*

For those who consider their involvement in mining activities as a *maquis* – a calculated run-up to a more ambitious life project – it is difficult to understand why many of their colleagues foolishly squander their hard-earned money (*kuaribisha makuta ya mateso*) and refuse to start saving (*kuweka caisse privée*). In their opinion, this is short-sighted because it often happens that a mine is closed because of a deadly mining accident or because private investors want to start an industrial mining project. Since wasteful diggers have nothing to fall back on in cases like that, they are forced to migrate to another mine as soon as possible in order to keep afloat. Diggers trying to live more economically are aware of the dangers involved in keeping large quantities of money in their own possession in environments where there are no banks and where theft is the order of the day. Therefore, they start developing alternative saving strategies such as changing Congolese francs into dollars (in which case it is possible to carry the notes around wherever they go), sending the money home with a messenger, investing their money in things like a television screen or a stereo set (i.e. something that reminds them of the hard work they have done to reach their goal and that can always be resold to someone else in case of an emergency: *souvenir / monument*) or depositing their money with somebody they trust such as a mineral buyer or a restaurant owner. The criterion for determining whether someone is reliable or not is his financial reputation. If the person in question gives the impression of being well-to-do and of having sufficient resources to be able to pay back the money relatively quickly, then he is believed to be trustworthy.

The preceding discussion has shown that, in relation to the people in the outside world, Katangese artisanal miners try to present themselves as a separate category of men by displaying a deviant kind of behaviour, which is known under the name of '*kivoyou*'. Extravagance and ostentation are important characteristics of this *kivoyou* style. Creuseurs often pretend to be top earners who are proud of living in the present and who claim the right to take their financial decisions autonomously, without having to take into account the needs of relatives and friends outside the mining business. Since there is a considerable degree of group pressure to behave as a rascal (*voyou*), it seems appropriate to consider the *kivoyou* style as a cornerstone of the levelling trend in the masculinity practices of artisanal miners. Nevertheless, I have also pointed out that there is quite some variation in the ways that men adopt the *kivoyou* style. Some miners even explicitly dissociate themselves from the wastefulness of their colleagues by cultivating a more parsimonious lifestyle. This shows that, apart

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*bush?*' (*kibonge cha nini, vijana wanahamia musituni mama*). Pupils in the last year of secondary school have started using the expression 'kufanya maquis' to describe the conditions in which they prepare themselves for their final exams (*examen d'état*): they isolate themselves because they believe this has a positive effect on their abilities to concentrate. Finally, soccer players secluding themselves on the eve of an important match tend to describe their preparation in terms of '*kufanya local*': they spend the night together in a remote house and deprive themselves of the pleasure of sexual intercourse with wives or girlfriends, hoping that this self-inflicted deprivation will help them beat their competitors the next day (personal communication with Jerry Kalonji April 2007).

from a levelling trend, there is also a differentiating trend in the construction of masculinities among artisanal miners.

It is important to stress that I do not want to create the impression that, during their time on the mines, people either belong to the category of the 'big spenders' or to the category of the 'big savers', without having or considering the possibility to change sides. To the contrary, I prefer to think of hedonism and frugality as two poles of a continuum, with diggers taking up positions according to the circumstances they are confronted with at different points in their lives. Moreover, it needs to be emphasized that the opposition between hedonism and frugality is by no means the only source of dissension among the diggers. Although the limited space of this chapter does not allow me to go into detail, it should be noted that diggers often hold widely divergent opinions about various sorts of political and religious issues such as the issue of participating in the elections, the advantages and disadvantages of becoming a member of a certain type of church and the benefits and dangers of using fetishes to increase the production of one's mining pit<sup>75</sup>.

As I have already indicated in the first chapter of this dissertation, I agree with Hannerz when he emphasizes the porosity of the boundaries of a subculture. As a matter of fact, some of the abovementioned views on money handling are not restricted to the diggers, but they are also shared by outsiders. People who are hired by farmers to carry out agricultural tasks, for instance, also pride themselves on behaving as '*voyous*' when it comes to dealing with money. Conversely, it has to be borne in mind that miners are, in many respects, influenced by views on money handling originating from outside their subculture. The ideas on spending time in the *maquis* are a good case in point. Although the notion of *maquis* has now become inextricably associated with the economic body of thought of the digger population, it was already being used in more or less the same sense by people operating in other sectors of the informal economy long before the phenomenon of artisanal mining made its first appearance in postcolonial Katanga. Train traffickers travelling into the interior to buy agricultural produce at cheap prices, for instance, have always described their business trips in terms of 'doing a *maquis*' (*kufanya maquis*).

Despite their often conflicting views on money handling, participants in the mining subculture do try to find some sort of common ground within their own group as well as between themselves and other parties involved in the mining business. This is evidenced, amongst other things, by their compliance with a set of informal rules for financial arrangements supplementing the official rules and regulations imposed by the Congolese state.

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75 See chapter 4

### 3.2.2 Rules for financial arrangements

Moodie has proposed to consider a moral economy as a set of '*mutually acceptable rules for resistance within systems of domination and appropriation*' (Moodie 1994: 80-86). I intend to follow this proposition because the working conditions of Katangese artisanal miners are very similar to those of Moodie's South African gold miners: they are faced with asymmetric power relationships, they feel insecure about other people's compliance with certain informal rules of conduct and they develop strategies to fight exaggerated violations of these rules. In the following sections, I will pay attention to the rules that pertain to the interaction between diggers and members of other actor groups. Subsequently, I will discuss the rules that regulate the interaction among diggers themselves<sup>76</sup>.

Undoubtedly, mineral buyers or *négociants* are among the people with whom the diggers interact most frequently during their work in the mines. *Négociants* interested in becoming owners of their own mining pit (*njimu*) have a choice between two options: either they decide to start working on a virgin piece of land or they take over an already productive pit from someone else, in which case they usually have to pay this person a substantial amount of money. Most of the times, diggers and *négociants* conclude a type of agreement that is known by the name of 'divided-by-two' (*divisé-par-deux*). This means that each party is entitled to half of the revenues every time a load of minerals is sold to a buying house (*maison*). Apart from this, a *divisé-par-deux* agreement also implies a number of other things. While the diggers promise to hand over all their minerals to the pit owner or to the supervisor (*superviseur / tinder*) appointed by him, the pit owner agrees to provide his suppliers with various forms of material assistance, such as giving them an advance when preparatory excavation works have to be carried out (*découverte*)<sup>77</sup>, buying them food rations on a regular basis<sup>78</sup> and lending them certain types of tools and clothing<sup>79</sup>.

When diggers own the pit in which they are working, they call themselves 'independents' (*indépendants*). Independents are not bound by a *négociant's* rules and they are not being watched by

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76 Although mining taboos are definitely part of the mining subculture's informal code of conduct as well, they will only receive limited attention here. A detailed analysis of these taboos will be presented in chapter 4.

77 The idea behind this is simple. Knowing that it will still take some time before any minerals can be sold to a buying house and realizing that his workers may get discouraged if they know they still have to wait for a long time before they will get their money, the *négociant* is prepared to give them a bit of financial encouragement.

78 Usually, the food rations consist of a bag of maize flour (*mfuko ya bunga*), a bottle of cooking oil (*chupa ya mafuta*) and salt fish (*bitoyo*). Some *négociants* are kind enough to provide their workers with a number of extras like a daily incentive bonus (*motivation*) and an allowance to cover the costs of transport to and from the mine.

79 Although certain diggers do have some tools of their own - like a flashlight (*kyapela*) or an iron bar (*barre de mine / masse / pointeau*) - they still expect the *négociants* to provide them with the missing material. Usually, diggers are given a sieve (*kaningio*), a water pump to evacuate groundwater from the pit (*pocholo / motopompe*), batteries for their flashlight(s), boots (*kikumba / jombro / godjo*) and raffia bags to put in the minerals.

a supervisor<sup>80</sup>. Usually, they prefer to sell their minerals to a so-called *trotteur*. Lacking funds of his own, a *trotteur* acts under the orders of a buying house that regularly slips him money to collect a certain quantity of minerals. His method of working consists of walking up and down between the pits of independent miners and asking them if they are interested in selling him a couple of mineral bags<sup>81</sup>.

Independent diggers are not the only ones who are satisfied with the presence of *trotteurs* in the mine. When diggers permanently working for the same *négociant* are unable to get by with the money and the food rations given to them in the context of a *divisé-par-deux* agreement, they also attempt to strike a deal with a *trotteur*: if he agrees to lend them some money (*kukongola makuta*), they promise to pay him back in the form of minerals, supplemented with a certain interest<sup>82</sup>.

Négociants are perfectly aware of the fact that many diggers keep a secret stock of minerals in their mine shaft with a view of selling them to *trotteurs*<sup>83</sup>, that they try to mix minerals of good quality with minerals of inferior quality to fraudulently reach the production quota and that they are experts at cooking up excuses for not being able to dig up more minerals<sup>84</sup>. Nevertheless, they often turn a blind eye on these practices because they realize that there may come a time when they themselves will be short of cash and therefore unable to meet their obligations towards the diggers<sup>85</sup>.

Although diggers, *négociants* and *trotteurs* allow each other to commit small offences against the informal rules of behaviour, they do not hesitate to sound the alarm bell when faced with exaggerated violations of the rules. The testimony of Toto Kyansonso Bwalya shows how high feelings can run over such transgressions:

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80 Only when the *indépendants* decide to conclude a *divisé-par-deux* agreement with a *négociant* anyway are they bound to follow his rules.

81 When a *trotteur* succeeds in handing over a load of minerals to a *maison*, he is usually given 1/10 of the selling price of the minerals (i.e. the money earned by the buying house when it sells the minerals to a refinery).

82 When it became obvious that *trotteurs* were doing good business by granting loans to diggers, some pit owners decided to follow suit.

83 Diggers assume that most *négociants* are afraid of going down the mine shaft because of the risk for it to collapse. Consequently, mine shafts are considered safe hiding places for 'secret' stocks of minerals.

84 Diggers often use the expression 'we will put him up a tree (*tutamweka ku mucu*), when they are planning to send their *négociant* off empty-handed.

85 Female mineral buyers, who do not have access to the mine because of a number of mining taboos (see chapter 4) and are therefore forced to buy their minerals with the help of male intermediaries, gratefully welcome the visits of cash-strapped diggers after working hours, because they know that contacts like these might enable them to collect minerals much more quickly than during the day: not only do they have the certainty of being able to inspect the quality of the minerals themselves without having to wait for their male collaborators to come back from the mine, they can also be quite sure that the diggers will not linger over their work, as they are in dire need of cash.

There is this youngster who owes me 120.000 FC. I gave him the money after his pit had collapsed. He has given the money to his diggers. They have worked with it. (For a long time they tried to postpone the reimbursement by saying) '*Découverte, découverte!*'. (...) I have started following him because he did not pay me back. I decided to take him to the *bakubwa* ('the big people', i.e. public servants). The *bakubwa* asked me for money (in exchange for their help). People gave me advice. The debtor asked me to be patient: 'In the course of this week, I will evacuate a load of minerals. Instead of giving you the 120 dollar right away, I will give you minerals'. They have already opened the pit, they are cutting away things already. 'You have already waited for your money for a long time. I will give you minerals so that you can make some profit'.

From this testimony, it can be gathered that Bwalya was so agitated by the fact that he was constantly being given the brush-off that he almost called in the help of public servants. In the end, he abandoned the idea of having his debtors arrested because he realized it would make him suffer a double loss: while, on the one hand, the diggers would probably not be too keen on paying him the money back more quickly if they were subjected to brutal pressure, on the other hand, the public servants would do everything to have their cake and eat it. In gratitude for his willingness to maintain his trust in them and for his decision not to file a complaint, the diggers immediately stopped their delaying tactics and started settling their debt.

While the diggers are more or less on friendly terms with the *négociants* and the *trotteurs*, they prefer to limit their contacts with public servants to a strict minimum. They expect mineral buyers to take care of the taxes associated with the evacuation of minerals and they are only prepared to pay for their membership of EMAK, an organization claiming to defend the interests of all the diggers and mineral buyers involved in the artisanal mining sector, because they think this organization will provide financial assistance in case of a deadly mining accident<sup>86</sup>. Unsurprisingly, confiscations of minerals, lockouts and forced removals<sup>87</sup> are all considered serious violations of the moral economy of the mines that inevitably give rise to collective resistance by the diggers.

A clear example of such resistance occurred when the vice-administrator of the territory of Kambove paid a visit to Lwambo. Although his superior had given him an allowance for travel and hotel expenses, he assumed that he would be able to just pocket the money by living off the local

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86 When a digger dies in a mining accident, EMAK is expected to buy the clothes in which he will be buried. The organization also has to pay for a plot on the cemetery and it has to give the digger's family a considerable amount of money (for more information on EMAK, see chapters 1 and 4).

87 During the past few years, there have been numerous cases of riots as a result of forced removals of artisanal miners. See for instance: '*Katanga: des confrontations sanglantes signalées dans la concession de la société Tenke Fungurume Mining*', Radio Okapi, 28 September 2005; '*Riots hit Congo copper town after police kill miner*', Reuters 6 March 2008; '*Police clash with miners in Congo copper heartland*', Reuters, 1 April 2008

population. Having claimed free board and lodging in hotel Kyandimuna for a period of five days, he asked representatives of public services to meet him in his hotel room where they could discuss their bookkeeping and, if necessary, find a 'solution' for their cooked accounts. As for the diggers and the négociants, they were asked to pay their dues in kind, by handing over a couple of mineral bags to the local manager of the Chinese buying house BGM who would sell them on the international market and give (part of) the money to the vice-administrator. Since the diggers thought it was highly unfair of the vice-administrator to try to enrich himself at their expense, they did not put minerals in the bags they were supposed to deliver to BGM, but ordinary stones. When the manager of BGM found out what had happened, he had no other option but to inform the vice-administrator that his request could not be complied with.

Some time before the incident with the vice-administrator the diggers had already collectively revolted against another case of arbitrary exercise of power. Without telling anyone what he was up to, Kyala, the land chief (*chef de terre*) of Kalabi, had suddenly entered the mine, although this was strictly forbidden to someone in his position<sup>88</sup>. In doing so, he wanted to show his dissatisfaction with the fact that the Bolfast Company, a buying house that employed a large number of trotteurs in Kalabi, had not yet paid him the full amount of the customary tax (*mulàmbù*) he was entitled to. His action made quite a stir. Within ten minutes, an angry crowd of diggers left the mine to march towards the residence of chief Pande, whom they wanted to question about what had happened. Faced with the threatening presence of hundreds of demonstrators armed with shovels and pickaxes, Pande was forced to hold emergency talks with representatives of the public services, delegates of the diggers, chief Kyala and Albert Mabela, the number two of the Bolfast Company. Things only calmed down when Mabela finally agreed to pay the remaining part of the *mulàmbù*. As a result of this move, Kyala was prepared to carry out a purification ceremony at night, which made it possible for the diggers to resume work the next day.

The preceding discussion illustrates that Moodie is right in pointing out that moral economy should not be considered as a common value system, but rather as a set of rules that come into existence through interaction and that can always be contested by the parties involved (Moodie 1994: 86). In all the cases I have presented so far, the rules of behaviour were strategically violated by actors who wanted to check how far they could go beyond the limits of what is acceptable in order to reach their personal goals: the diggers who were in the red with Bwalya wanted to examine how long they could wait with settling their debt, the vice-administrator wanted to see if he could impose a one-shot illicit

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<sup>88</sup> According to Sanga traditions, land chiefs are only allowed to enter a mine in extraordinary circumstances, for instance to carry out an inauguration or a purification ceremony.



tax on the diggers, and the land chief wanted to find out if he could push one defaulter to change his mind by breaking an important mining taboo. Since these were all serious offences against the code of conduct, the reactions of the victims were correspondingly sharp: there was a threat to call in the help of public servants, there was a remarkable joint act of civil disobedience and there was a protest march that almost turned violent.

Apart from the informal rules governing the interaction between diggers and other actor groups, there are also informal rules streamlining the interplay between the diggers themselves. Evariste, a slightly older digger from Lwambo, confirmed the existence of the latter kind of rules in the following manner:

Every pit is like a household (*kila njimu sa ku nyumba*). You have regulations at home, I have them here as well.

First of all, there are rules stipulating how the integration of inexperienced miners (*bapetits / mashariko*) is supposed to take place. Usually, they are expected to go through a kind of trial period during which they have to carry out all sorts of dirty, inferior tasks that earn them the nickname of '*équipers-saliseur*'. Whereas their more experienced colleagues take turns in going down the mine shaft (*kwenda ku bureau*: to go to the office) in order to work as the most forwardly positioned worker (*attaquant*: attacker / *chauffeur*: driver), the novices occupy themselves with the sieving of minerals (*kunyingulula*), the washing<sup>89</sup>, sorting (*kuchakula*) and cleaning of minerals (*kutosha mvumbi*: to take away the dust), the piling up of minerals (*kuweka nkunji*), the bagging up of minerals (*mise en sac*)<sup>90</sup>, the evacuation of waste material (*chawawa / bodj / antuma / stérile / stenkwamba*) by forming a human chain (*faire la chaîne*)<sup>91</sup> and, finally, the cleaning of the mine pit (*kusapisha*: to clean / *kukolopa*: to mop). The hierarchical difference between experienced and inexperienced miners does not only manifest itself at the level of labour division but also at the level of payment: those who are new on the job have to content themselves with less money than diggers who have already spent a long time on the mines. A second set of rules has to do with working discipline. Everyone is expected to give the best of himself during working hours. Diggers who come up too often with the excuse of having to go to the toilet (*kwenda walter*) or who literally fall asleep in the mine shaft make

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89 The minerals are put in a pierced raffia bag (*kuweka mu mfuko ya mantundu*), together with some sand or mud (*bulongo*). Subsequently, the person charged with the task of cleaning the minerals enters the water and starts making wiggling movements with the bag (*kutenkesha*). As a result of this, water is running more quickly through the holes.

90 The 50 kg raffia bags are then put in larger bags called *big bonjo* or *big bags*. In a following step, porters called *bankwanda* put the big bags on the loading platform of a truck.

91 The waste material is first shovelled into a raffia bag. This bag is then thrown from one digger to the next until it reaches the spot where the bag can be emptied.

themselves vulnerable to criticism and run the risk that their teammates withhold part of their money on payment day. A third set of rules refers to contracting and paying off loans. Although every digger is free to handle his personal money as he pleases (*kila muntu na mambo yake*: everyone minds his own business), it is definitely not allowed to contract a loan on behalf of the team without informing one's teammates. As a rule, members of a digging team consult about which *négociant* or *trotteur* they will approach to obtain a loan and how many mineral bags they will offer him as an in-kind reimbursement. When a digger joins a team that has already contracted loans before his arrival, he is obliged to help them pay off their debts by assisting them in the collection of minerals. A digger who wants to leave a team is expected to announce his departure and to make arrangements with his teammates about the settling of all of his remaining debts. A fourth set of rules is aimed at instilling the diggers respect for each other's properties. Working in somebody else's pit is only possible with permission of the owner or of the diggers hired by him. Guest workers dubbed 'mercenaries' (*mercenaires*) always make sure to make clear arrangements with the other diggers in advance as to how long they will work for them, which kinds of tasks they will carry out and which percentage of the revenues they will be able to claim. Every form of theft is strictly forbidden. A thief (*ntifa / zazangi / munina*) who is caught red-handed without a police officer (*kanjikrotcha*) being around to protect him is called a snake (*nyoka*) and is very likely to be beaten severely (*kuchanga grave / kuchanga nsonde ya kuenea*). Some cases of theft even provoke full-blown battles involving entire digging teams, who attack each other with their working instruments or who try to hit each other with stones (*kupika maibwe*). A final set of rules concerns drinking sociability. It is considered an unwritten law that, on payment day, members of the same team must have a few drinks together, because 'the dust has to be washed away' (*kupanguza mvumbi*) and because 'the (temporary) end of suffering' (*mateso inaisha*) calls for a celebration.

Just like informal rules for the interaction between diggers and other actor groups are deliberately violated by some individuals, informal rules governing the interaction between the diggers themselves are also broken quite often. A first example of a dispute caused by the transgression of one of the informal rules of behaviour involves Kabongo, a digger from the Katuba neighbourhood in Lubumbashi who was summoned at the police station in Lwambo (PNC: *Police Nationale Congolaise*) on accusations of having a two-month debt with one of the women in town, whom he had also insulted about her handicap when she had visited him to collect her money. When Kabongo arrived at the mine around noon, he furiously said he had always believed to live together with a group of friends, but that the incident at the police station had made him realize he was spending his days in the company of snakes. During a meeting inside the mine shaft, it became clear that Kabongo had not been the only one who had debts with the woman. One of his colleagues had been given flour on credit, a second one had taken music tapes on credit and a third one had even slept with her on credit. Since Kabongo had been told by the police to not only pay off the debts of his teammates but also the

interests on those debts, he insisted that the négociant with whom they had concluded a *divisé-par-deux* arrangement would reconsider the way in which he would pay the different members of the team. Kabongo also seized the opportunity to criticize the lack of working discipline of some of his colleagues and reminded everyone of the hierarchical differences between experienced and inexperienced miners. In his opinion, those who had been loafing did not have the right to be paid the same amount of money as everybody else and the same held true for diggers who had never gone down the mine shaft.

A second example of the violation of one of the informal rules of behaviour between diggers involves Mukalayi, a young man from the Mafuta neighbourhood in Likasi who was working in a team of independent miners (*indépendants*, cfr. supra). While he tried hard to send money to his wife and three children in Likasi on a regular basis, his teammates thoroughly enjoyed being free from such family obligations. When Mukalayi was informed that his wife was in urgent need of money to pay for the hospital costs of his youngest son, he was able to convince his colleagues to spend one day working a little harder than usual, but he could not avoid a flaming row about how to divide the 4000 FC a *trotteur* had given them for 170 kg of minerals. While Mukalayi claimed that, under the circumstances, it was only natural that he would take most of the money with him to Likasi, the other diggers refused to accept this. Tired of being unable to impose his will, Mukalayi eventually took 2500 FC by force and left the mine in order to visit his family. During his absence, his colleagues produced 400 to 500 kgs a day. However, as they were disappointed about the way Mukalayi had run off to Likasi, they kept all the revenues for themselves without leaving anything for their teammate. When Mukalayi returned a few days later, diggers from neighbouring pits told him they did not agree with how he had been treated by his colleagues.

The cases on Kabongo and Mukalayi show that the rules of behaviour for living and working on the mines do not have a permanent character, but that they are the subject of much debate and negotiation. While, in the Kabongo case, the key question appears to have been whether members of the same digging team also had to give their go-ahead for loans contracted outside the mine, in the Mukalayi case, the discussion centred around the acceptability of using private problems as an argument to justify violations of the usual rules of payment. Mukalayi's teammates seemed to think that the way he had left the mine was a clear example of an arbitrary exercise of power that warranted a financial sanction. Yet, diggers from neighbouring pits were not appalled by Mukalayi's way of leaving but rather by the lack of solidarity shown by his teammates.

From the preceding account, it is clear that diggers recognize the necessity and inevitability of complying with a number of informal rules for financial arrangements during their work on the mines. Using Turner's terminology, one could say that these informal rules testify to the existence of an

atmosphere of '*normative communitas*' (Turner 1969: 132). Although the creuseurs form a community that is only rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated, they still realize that it is necessary to have a code of conduct that helps to improve the organization and mobilization of resources. Whereas there is a certain level of tolerance for minor violations of the aforementioned rules, gross transgressions are often fiercely contested. It should be noted that the abovementioned overview of informal rules of behaviour on the mines is not meant to be exhaustive. Though there is probably a lot to say about rules of behaviour relating to the interaction between other actor groups – for instance, between négociants and buying houses, négociants and government services and négociants and *trotteurs* – I have deliberately chosen to restrict myself to a discussion of the rules that have a direct impact on the lives of the diggers.

In the following section, I will specify in which respects the aforesaid ideas and rules with regard to money handling have an impact on the classification of masculinities within the mining subculture. I will argue that two criteria are used to evaluate a person's behaviour: on the one hand, the position he adopts in the debate between the proponents and opponents of a hedonistic lifestyle and, on the other hand, the ease with which he adapts himself to the rules and insecure living conditions in and around the mines.

### 3.2.3 Mining masculinities associated with money handling

Miners displaying a hedonistic lifestyle are called 'children' (*batoto*) because they do not seem to shoulder the responsibility for the livelihoods of other people: in most cases, they are not married and they do not have any children. A masculinity type often associated with them is that of 'heat-swallower' (*meza moto*). Usually, the term *meza moto* is used to designate a daredevil, someone who is fond of dangerous situations (*mpenda hatari*), who does not mind putting his life at stake (*kuweka maisha yake mu danger*) and who just goes his own way without thinking about the consequences. A *meza moto* does not shrink from asking credits from a large number of négociants or *trotteurs* at the same time, even if he knows perfectly well that he will be unable to settle his debts. Each time he arrives at a mine, he follows the same pattern: first, he wins the confidence of the people he wants to collaborate with, then he pockets their money, and, as soon as he notices he is about to be cornered by his creditors, he just travels to another mine to repeat the same strategy. Victims of a *meza moto* – such as moneylenders failing to recover their capital or ex-teammates saddled with the task of cleaning up the financial mess – realize it is useless to file a complaint against such a swindler (*escroc*), because the authorities lack the capacity to track him down<sup>92</sup>. The term *pomba* - which is considered

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<sup>92</sup> Prostitutes are often called *meza moto* as well, because, just like miners, they receive money from a lot of different people and because they are known for moving from one mine to another as soon as they get into trouble.

synonymous with expressions like 'burly fellow' (*costaud*), 'big digger' (*creuseur munene*) and 'muscleman' (*muntu mwenye nguvu*) - is used to designate someone with great power, dynamism and stamina. It is emphasized that only hard work allows the *pomba* to obtain a good body (*maungo ya bien*) and to swell (*kuvimba*). In order to impress people in his environment with his muscled arms, a *pomba* will often wear a sleeveless shirt called 'broken arm' (*bras cassé*). When a miner has a lot of money and is considered successful, he is called *mubinji* and expected to regularly treat his fellow workers to drinks. If he manages to meet this expectation, people will say that he is a merrymaker (*ambianceur*) and that he behaves like a wrestler (*catcheur*), that is, like a generous person, someone 'who allows his money to see the sunlight' (*yake inaonaka jua*) and 'who fights with open hands'. Apart from standing a round of drinks every now and then, a *mubinji* is also expected to be a *grand sapeur* and to wear nice clothes (*kuvwala kitoko*) like jeans trousers (*mapantalon jean*), jeans suits (*macomplet jean*) and laced boots (*bottes*). Yet, if a *mubinji* selfishly spends all his money on alcohol for personal consumption or on prostitutes, people will say he is a drunk (*kamulewa*), an idiot (*bumbafu / zoba / kiwelele*), an animal (*nyama*) or a whore-hopper (*musharati*: person engaging in illicit sexual acts).

Advocates of a more ascetic lifestyle are called 'adults' (*bakubwa*). The masculinity label they receive most frequently is that of 'person in charge' (*responsable*). A *responsable* typically tries to cut back on the expenses for personal amusement so that he can send his wife and children enough money to buy food rations. He prides himself on not spending money in a disorderly fashion (*kutosha makuta mu désordre*) and on drawing up an estimate of what will be the costs in the near future (*kufanya programme*). People aiming to criticize a *responsable's* lack of generosity, sometimes accuse him of being a *boxeur*, in other words, a miser, somebody who fights with his hands closed. Two terms that serve to highlight the intransigence of a *responsable* are *mubéton* and *mucraquant*. While the first word is intended to evoke the image of somebody made of concrete - unwilling to stand aside for his adversary - the second word refers to the sound of handcuffs: the idea is that the *responsable* is chained to his household obligations and is therefore unable to pay attention to the needs of his colleagues in terms of comradeship and solidarity.

As I have pointed out already, masculinity labels are not only distributed in accordance with a person's position in the debate between proponents and opponents of a hedonistic style of living, but also in accordance with his capacity to juggle with the informal rules for financial arrangements and to adapt himself to the insecure living conditions in the mining sector. A miner who is streetwise (*kuona clair*: to see clearly) and far-sighted (*kuona mbari*: to look far ahead) and who has little trouble coping with unexpected events (*kuwa souple*: to be supple, flexible) is often referred to as a 'skull' (*crâne*). A *crâne* is believed to be very knowledgeable about the mining business (*connaisseur / mujuamingi / mwenyekujua*), because he has visited many different mines and is therefore more experienced than his

co-workers. He is not easily fooled during negotiations, stands up for his rights when necessary and also possesses a good assessment capacity (*raisonneur*). Thanks to this latter capacity, he is able to warn his colleagues about certain imminent dangers, of which they are usually not aware themselves. A miner who is able to find a solution for every problem that presents itself in the mine is given the name of *bouliste*. Typical characteristics of a *bouliste* are that he is able to hold his ground in negotiations with mineral buyers and members of government services and that he is capable of obtaining a better arrangement than the one originally proposed to him. Just like a *crâne*, a *bouliste* thinks a lot about the best way to organize his personal activities. Instead of placing all his bets on the mining sector, he also tries to generate revenues through other activities in the informal economy. In order to prevent other people from stealing his ideas (*kumwiba akiri*), he prefers not to talk about these activities in public. Finally, a digger behaving in exactly the opposite way as a *crâne* or a *bouliste* is called a novice (*bleu*), an apprentice (*apprenti*) or an ignorant peasant (*marimi*). It is believed that such a person runs a high risk of being fooled by other people in the mining business because he does not have any experience as a miner or because he is rather timid by nature.

The existence of such a wide variety of labels throws into relief the differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese artisanal miners. While, on the one hand, creuseurs tend to behave like a special group of men with a number of shared characteristics, on the other hand, they are also conscious of their internal differences. Being aware of various ways of being a man in the mining areas, they distinguish between different types of masculinity, associating each of these types with a fixed configuration of practices. One gets the impression that miners use these masculinity types as templates or models to construct their own masculine identities.

Having said this, it is important to make the necessary differentiations. First of all, it should be noted that creuseurs do not necessarily adopt all the components of a certain type of masculinity. Quite often, for instance, someone tries to behave like a *mubinji* by limiting himself to being generous towards his colleagues, instead of also spending a lot of money on his outfit. Second, it is important to bear in mind that creuseurs may combine practices of different types of masculinity. For instance, a cash-strapped digger identifying with the *mubinji* ideal may decide to copy certain practices of the *meza moto* in order to be able to maintain his old standard of living. Third, it needs to be emphasized that, in the course of their career, creuseurs may identify with different types of masculinity, depending on the situations they find themselves in and depending on their interests and priorities at specific moments in their lives. It is possible, for instance, that a *responsable* temporarily acts like a *mubinji*, because he has just started working in a new mine and because he wants to make himself popular with the members of his new digging team. Finally, I would like to underline that the abovementioned masculinity labels do not refer to total ways of being. Instead, they only relate to two

specific dimensions of manhood, namely the way a man handles his money and the way he copes with unexpected events during his stay in the mining areas.

Of course, the various masculinity types are not all on equal footing. As I have already shown in the first and the second chapter of this dissertation, it is possible to pinpoint the power relationships between coexisting masculinities by making use of Connell's theoretical model. As far as money handling is concerned, there can be no doubt that the *mubinji* occupies the hegemonic position in the hierarchy of masculinities. This means that most of the creuseurs have great admiration for men who display their wealth in an ostentatious manner and who share their affluence with others. A man succeeding in embodying the *mubinji* ideal will certainly enjoy a great deal of prestige with his colleagues. As generosity is highly valued within the mining community, it is not really surprising that stinginess is strongly condemned. Miners who only think of the financial needs of their relatives and friends back home and who never go out for drinks with their colleagues are treated with contempt. The same goes for miners who openly condemn the licentious behaviour of their fellow workers: they are also given the cold shoulder. Thus, it seems justified to classify the *responsable* as a subordinate masculinity. In my opinion, the *pomba* and the *meza moto* belong to the category of complicit masculinities. Both types of masculinity are displayed by men who support the *mubinji* ideal but who fail to embody it. A *pomba* is a person who does not have enough money to buy expensive clothing nor to treat his friends to drinks on a regular basis, but who draws courage from the slogan '*maungo yangu ni capital*' ('my body is my capital', cfr. supra). Basically, he tries to impress other people by developing a strong and muscled body. The *meza moto* resembles the *pomba* in that he does not earn enough money to be able to live in great style. However, through cunning and guile, he is capable of occasionally presenting himself as a top earner and a big spender. Both the *pomba* and the *meza moto* draw benefit from the hegemony of the *mubinji*. By imitating him, they are able to gain some prestige among the other creuseurs.

As far as the capacity to deal with unexpected events in the mine is concerned, the *crâne* is the hegemonic masculinity type. The majority of the diggers stand in awe for a man who remains cool-headed whatever the circumstances and who appears to be in control of his own life trajectory. They really like the idea that such a man is capable of making the right the decisions simply by relying on his experience of life and his common sense. Conversely, most creuseurs speak disparagingly about men who act like naïve beginners. Therefore, the *bleu*, the *apprenti* and the *marimi* should be categorized as subordinate masculinities. Although the *bouliste* masculinity type is very close to the *crâne*, in my opinion, it should be considered as a complicit masculinity rather than as a hegemonic masculinity. After all, a man behaving like a *bouliste* lacks the far-sightedness that is so characteristic of a *crâne*. Nevertheless, a *bouliste* is still treated with a lot of respect by his colleagues due to his experience of life and his imperturbability.

From the preceding discussion, it should be remembered that Katangese artisanal miners are not 'one big happy family united in its views and attitudes' (MacDonald 2001: 163). An important source of internal dissent is the existence of conflicting views on money handling. While some diggers lean towards a hedonistic lifestyle, others are more inclined to develop a frugal style of living. Still, these differences of opinion on the level of money handling do not prevent a search for common ground. Using Moodie's definition of moral economy, I have shown that there are a number of informal rules of behaviour regulating financial interactions between diggers and other actor groups as well as between diggers themselves. It was found that, on the one hand, there are constant attempts to bend the rules, while, on the other hand, there are also mechanisms and strategies to keep exaggerated violations of the rules in check. Finally, it has been observed that subcultural masculinities are classified on the basis of people's position in the money handling debate and on the basis of their ability to cope with the rules and the insecure living conditions in and around the mines.

So far, I have only looked at the nexus between money and masculinity on the level of the mining subculture. In the next part of this chapter, I take my analysis one step further by concentrating on the interface between the mining subculture and the outside world. This will be done through a detailed case study of a money dispute that occurred at the Kalabi mine in March 2006. The dispute did not only have consequences for the diggers themselves but also for the relatives with whom they maintained household connections outside the mining business. The case study will allow me to paint a colourful picture of the complex conditions in which the protagonists experimented with new ways of being a man. I will show that the construction of their masculinities was shaped by a wide range of factors, including their socio-cultural background, their experience of life, their relationships with men, their relationships with women, their family situation, their age, and, finally, their position in the mining subculture.

### **3.3 Lessons from a deal gone awry**

Before I describe how the money dispute originated, I will first say a few words about the backgrounds of the players involved. This information should help the reader understand why these people decided to form a digging team and which factors influenced their ideas about the relationship between money and masculinity.

#### **3.3.1 Background information about the members of the digging team**

The first member of the digging team was Jean or 'John' Bestia Tshinyama, a digger of Luvale origin who was born in a hospital of Gécamines in Kolwezi in 1963. While Tshinyama was admired by his fellow workers for his *pomba* characteristics – he was very strong and muscled – he preferred to put



up an image of himself as someone who was an expert in evaluating risks and who therefore deserved to be called a *crâne*. On strangers like me, Tshinyama tried to make a good impression by speaking Swahili Bora, the standardized, Tanzanian version of Swahili. According to his own account, Tshinyama owed his command of languages to his relatively high level of schooling. Encouraged by his father, who had never had the opportunity to continue his studies beyond the level of primary school, Tshinyama spent six years studying in Kasumbalesa before going to the *Ecole Technique Industrielle 'Manika'* in Kolwezi, where he obtained a degree in mechanics. After having failed to obtain a permanent job with Gécamines - in spite of having worked as an intern in the company's 'Atelier de l'Ouest' - Tshinyama thought it was time to try his luck somewhere else. From Kolwezi he travelled to the Lualaba district, close to the border between Congo and Angola, in order to become a gold digger. In a mining camp near the village of Kamangala, he fell in love with a vegetable seller who turned out to be the daughter of Mabila, one of the leaders of the Katangese gendarmes, who were living in exile in Angola during the Mobutu era<sup>93</sup>. Tshinyama married the girl and had a daughter with her two years later. Everything went well until his father-in-law was told that Mobutu was prepared to show him mercy. While his wife followed Mabila to Kinshasa, Tshinyama continued to work in the gold mine of Mutoshi. He lost contact with his family, realized he was on his own again and migrated to the gold mine of Kipese, situated 35 kilometres west of Likasi, where he met Mami Ngoy wa Kasongo, one of the 12 children of a Luba father who worked for the electricity company SNEL and a Tetela mother who grew up in a military camp close to Kinshasa. Mami shared Tshinyama's good nose for business and they soon agreed that it was wiser to spread risks. Rather than letting everything depend on Tshinyama's activities as a gold digger, they invested part of his revenues in the creation of restaurants in the mining camps of Kipese and Mubambe, and in the sale of women's clothing (*manguo ya banamuke*), children's clothing (*manguo ya batoto*), and so-called 'luxury clothing' (*vêtements de luxe*), a category of clothes comprising shirts, blouses, trousers and belts sold to retailers per piece and known to be more expensive than second-hand clothing or *nkombo*. Tshinyama and Mami were doing good business until they were faced with two major setbacks within a short space of time. First, they lost all the furniture of their restaurant when the authorities unexpectedly closed the mine of Mubambe and chased away the inhabitants of Mubambe's mining camp, and then they were unsuccessful in changing a large stock of luxury clothing for buckets of maize<sup>94</sup>. Seeing that they had

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93 In 1977 and 1978, the Katangese gendarmes – former members of Tshombe's police force during the Katangese secession – invaded Katanga from Angolan territory. Following their defeat, they were forced to go into exile in Angola once again (see preface).

94 Many people in Katanga gamble in maize. Shortly after the harvest in May, they purchase a supply of maize largely exceeding the needed quantity for personal use. The idea is then to bring the surplus bags back on the market between November and January, when the combination of high demand and low level supply makes the prices skyrocket. Unfortunately for Tshinyama and Mami, this price-rise failed to materialize in 2003. They were unable to make enough profits through the sale of the 750 buckets of maize they had obtained in Bunkeya and were therefore unable to re-engage in the selling of 'vêtements de luxe'.

lost a significant part of their capital as a result of these two events and that it did not seem like a good idea to raise their children in a mining camp, Tshinyama and Mami had no other option but to reorganize their economic activities. While Tshinyama moved to the mine of Kalabi to work as an artisanal miner, Mami stayed at home, looking after the children and trying to make some extra money by distilling *lutuku*, a type of whisky which she sold to her friend Jolie, the manager of a neighbouring *nganda*<sup>95</sup>.

The second member of the digging team was Nguz Tshov, a shy chain smoker with bushy hair and a straggly beard who was born in 1954 in a Lunda-Ndembu family of four children in Kasaji, 200 kilometres away from the Lunda capital Kapanga. While his father worked for a Greek businessman and invested part of his revenues in small stock breeding and in the opening of a little kiosk, his mother took care of organizing the family's agricultural activities selling groundnuts and cassava to white traders who regularly visited Kasaji to stock up on vegetables. Tshov had to help his mother with her work on the land, but was nevertheless allowed to attend the local primary school that had been established by Belgian missionaries of the Franciscan order. When his father died prematurely, Tshov was forced to quit school. He became a member of the Katangese gendarmes (cfr. supra), spent a couple of months in an Angolan training camp and participated in one of the two Kisangani wars that took place in the 1960s<sup>96</sup>. In the beginning of the 1970s, he went to live with his elder sister who had an affair with a Belgian wagon welder working for Gécamines and who stayed in a residential neighbourhood in Kolwezi. During this period, Tshov married Mujinga, a Ndembu woman from Muchacha who bore him four daughters and five sons. When he noticed that the affair between his sister and his Belgian 'brother-in-law' was beginning to show signs of wear, he realized it was time to fend for himself. He successively worked as an ordinary labourer for a brick company in Kolwezi and

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95 *Nganda* are often situated close to workplaces or marketplaces. Sometimes people decide to establish a *nganda* in their own house. Apart from various industrially produced drinks originating from the Lubumbashi-based *Brasseries Simba*, home brewed spirits are served as well. In addition to drinks, customers can also order small snacks. According to some sources, the *nganda* came into existence in 1980, after Mobutu's return from an official visit to China. On that occasion, the president is said to have delivered a speech in which he encouraged the population to show dedication while carrying out the *salongo* (=collective manual labour) and in which he told his audience that people in China always had something to eat when they were drinking alcohol. Zairians were encouraged to follow the example of the Chinese: every *nganda* was expected to have its own kitchen and security agents were sent out to monitor Zairians' compliance with the new drinking regulations. The remarkable success of the *nganda* may be due to the fact that many ordinary bars were infested with security agents at the time of the Mobutu regime (Kakudji 2005: 240-242).

96 Tshov was never really clear about this period in his life, so it is hard to tell whether he participated in the war of 1964, the war of 1967 or in both. In all likelihood, the vagueness of Tshov's stories about the Kisangani wars had a lot to do with his age at that time and with the fact that the political situation in the 1960s was extremely complex. Having been invited to lead a 'government of national interest' in Kinshasa in 1964, Tshombe had made special plans for his troops on Angolan territory. He instructed them to quash an insurrection against the Kinshasa regime launched by members of the Lumumbist *Conseil National de Libération* (CNL), who had established the Congolese People's Republic in Kisangani in September 1964. Supported by American and Belgian paratroopers as well as by Congolese government forces, the Katangese gendarmes succeeded in chasing the CNL rebels (also known as Simbas) from Kisangani on 24 November 1964. Three years later, in 1967, Kisangani was once again invaded by certain units of the Katangese gendarmes who rose against the Mobutu regime (Zinzen 2004: 89-120).

as a housekeeper (*boy*) in Kakanda and then decided to move to Lwambo. Having spent some time living in the 'strangers' hamlet' Sumba<sup>97</sup>, he finally established himself in the Mutwila neighbourhood, close to the town centre. He got his wife a piece of farming land nearby the source of the Lwambo river and was persuaded by his mother's new husband, a pastor in the local Methodist church, to join the JMPR, the youth movement of Mobutu's *Mouvement Populaire pour la Révolution* (Schatzberg 1978). This turned out to be a smart move, because it was thanks to his colleagues of the JMPR that he was able to participate in the illicit but very lucrative exploitation of malachite<sup>98</sup>. In addition to this, his friends of the JMPR also helped him become the personal bodyguard of chief Pande. Tshov was very pleased with the prestige associated with his new job. In 1997, he started a relationship with Mujinga, a namesake of his first wife, who was the daughter of a Tshokwe mother and a Lunda father employed by the national railway company. Although Tshov fathered two daughters on her, he failed to officialise the marriage by paying the bride price. As a result of a heavy argument with the Pande family at the end of the 1990s, Tshov had to give up his job as a bodyguard. Lacking other sources of income, he started working as an artisanal miner in the mine of Kalabi. In his interactions with fellow miners, Tshov adopted the attitude of a *mubinji* – a man who was capable of buying his friends a few bottles of artisanal whisky every now and then.

A third member of the digging team, whom I have followed far less systematically, was 12 years younger than Tshov and 3 years older than Tshinyama. He was rather skinny and had a deep bass, big hands, broad shoulders and piercing eyes. In the mine, he usually worked stripped to the waist, wearing a baseball cap with the visor turned backwards. Well aware of the fact that a lot of rumours were being told about him, he did almost nothing to contradict them. To the contrary, it seemed as if he took pleasure in having his name bandied about. To anyone who was prepared to listen, he would tell long and wild stories about his career as a boxer, bragging about the fact that he used to be feared for the number of punches he could throw his opponents per minute. He was also proud of his nickname *Changaipondo*<sup>99</sup>, which, according to him, referred to his habit of mixing different types of alcoholic drinks and to the fact that he had once tried to seduce both a mother and her daughter during

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97 Sumba was created by a group of Kaonde immigrants who were involved in a dispute with Sanga youngsters living in Kitumba, Lwambo's predecessor. On the recommendation of Pande Pemba Moto, the then *chef coutumier* of the Sanga, the Kaonde left Kitumba in order to create a new village on the other side of the river in 1952.

98 Malachite is used for the production of art objects. During the 1970s, its exploitation in Kalabi was prohibited, because the mine was owned by Gécamines. Traders buying malachite in Lwambo came from various places, including Lubumbashi, Kolwezi and Zambia.

99 The Swahili verb '*kuchanga*' means 'to mix'. During colonial times, it was used in the context of the housing policy of the UMHK (see chapter 2). This policy was based on the deliberate mixing of people from different ethnic origins, in hopes that this would prevent ethnic tensions from cropping up in the mining compounds. In the current context of artisanal mining, *kuchanga* refers to the mixing of minerals. *Pondo* may be derived from the Luba verb *kuhonda* / *kuponda* which is usually translated as 'to crush' or 'to pound'. The expression '*kube bihondakanya*' means 'you have failed in what you were doing because you have mixed reality with lies' or 'because you have tried to combine two different things (Kalonji, pers.comm.).

one of his evenings out in the centre of Lwambo. Strikingly, he was a lot less talkative when people tried to find out more about his past. Initially, he introduced himself to me as a Lunda from Kapanga, but later on he changed his story, claiming that he was the son of a former bookkeeper of the *Union Zairoise des Banques* and that he had spent most of his childhood in the quartier Golf, one of the richest neighbourhoods in Lubumbashi<sup>100</sup>. Furthermore, he said he had worked for the Solo butter factory, which was also based in the Katangese capital. When his first marriage came to an end, Changaipondo left his first wife and his three children and moved to the region of Tshikapa, close to the border between Congo and Angola, with a view to starting a career as a diamond miner (see De Boeck 1998). It was Tshinyama who convinced him to enter the mining business in Kalabi. Shortly after his arrival in Lwambo, Changaipondo married a Sanga woman who had recently gone through a divorce and who felt so relieved that she had rid herself of the social stigma associated with the status of a divorcée that she was prepared to single-handedly till a piece of land given to her by her new husband. Changaipondo loved to play the role of a *meza moto*, a daredevil who had debts with a large number of people but was too lazy to run away from them by moving to another mine.

On the basis of the abovementioned information about the life trajectories of the three key players, it can be suspected that their decision to collaborate was based on the fact that they had a lot of things in common. All three of them had lived in urban areas, they saw their involvement in artisanal mining as a full-time activity, they spoke Lunda and they considered themselves as adult men who were in charge of their own households. Yet, in spite of this symmetry in perspectives, there were also several important differences between them. First, each of the three miners identified with a different type of masculinity at the level of the mining subculture. Tshinyama identified himself with the masculinity ideal of the *crâne*, Tshov with the ideal of the *mubinji* and Changaipondo with the ideal of the *meza moto*. Second, they each had a different Hannerzian horizon. The miner with the broadest Hannerzian horizon was probably Tshinyama. Compared to his two colleagues, he had a much higher level of schooling, and, through his experiences in different sectors of the informal economy, he had learned to spread risks by diversifying his economic activities: he knew that it was not very smart to put all his eggs in one basket. Tshov, for his part, had gone through much hardship when he had left home as a young boy to fight with the Katangese gendarmes, but after that he had soon tried to find a fixed abode where he could develop a stable network of social contacts. For as long as he could, he had hung on to his Belgian brother-in-law and in Lwambo he had always spent most of his time with the people he knew through his membership of the MPR. Changaipondo's evolution was opposite to Tshov's. While his life appears to have been rather stable during his childhood and the first years of his marriage, he

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100 The quartier Golf is known to be a residential neighbourhood, where a lot of wealthy politicians, businessmen and expatriates are living (Petit 2003: 113).

had accumulated new experiences as an artisanal miner after his divorce. In the course of his stay as a diamond miner in the border area with Angola, he had learnt to stand up for himself and to deal with issues such as competition and deceit.

Now that we know a little more about the social and cultural profile of the three main characters, we can focus our attention on how they worked and lived together in the mine of Kalabi. I will describe how they started collaborating, how they split up, which consequences their separation had for the members of their respective households, which strategies they developed to keep up a certain image of themselves as men, and how they struggled to maintain a coherent sense of self while trying to reconcile conflicting sets of expectations concerning money handling. I will concentrate mainly on the experiences of Tshov and Tshinyama, because they were the people I was able to follow most closely for this chapter.

### **3.3.2 The agreement with Eugène Kasongo**

In the beginning of 2006, the Kalabi mine witnessed a massive influx of new diggers and négociants. In large part, this was due to the closure of several major Katangese mining concessions. Apart from the famous concession of Tenke Fungurume – which is considered the largest undeveloped copper and cobalt deposit in the world – the concessions of Kamfunda, Shanguruwe, Di Giovanni and Kateketa were also declared inaccessible to artisanal miners due to a number of industrial mining projects that were about to begin. As some of the expelled creuseurs found shelter in Kalabi, it is no surprise that several négociants decided to follow their example. A second factor accounting for the attraction of Kalabi was the spectacular rise of the copper prices on the international market and the concomitant demand for large quantities of unprocessed copper ore in Zambia, which explains why even low-grade copper ore of the kind that could be found in places like Kalabi was suddenly becoming increasingly popular<sup>101</sup>. Finally, Kalabi's popularity was also linked to the repair of the road between Likasi and Kolwezi. While remote concessions like Milele were hard to reach during the rainy season, trucks could easily get to Kalabi, which offered the additional advantage of being close to Likasi where numerous trading houses had their offices and warehouses.

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101 In a report that was published in July 2006, the British NGO Global Witness indicated that most of the minerals leaving Katanga were still exported in their raw form, despite the fact that such exports were only permitted with a written authorisation from the Congolese Minister of Mines. Pointing out that the only viable export route out of Katanga was through Zambia, Global Witness reported that a significant proportion of the Congolese ore was processed at numerous newly-built smelters situated alongside the Zambian side of the border. The growing smelter capacity in the Zambian part of the Copperbelt was attributed to the fact that more and more companies decided to establish themselves in that area because they considered it to be a safer operating environment than Katanga. In addition to this, they were also attracted by the special incentives of the Zambian government in terms of tax benefits (Global Witness 2006: 41-47; Tack & De Putter: pers.comm.; see also the preface to this dissertation).

One of the people who arrived in Kalabi in the beginning of 2006 was 34-year old Eugène Kasongo from the Ruashi neighbourhood in Lubumbashi, a négociant with a distinguished fringe of beard and an engaging personality. As he was accustomed to spending his days in the seclusion of isolated mining camps far away from Lubumbashi, Kasongo did not mind living close to the Kalabi mine, where he knew he would be absorbed by the 'concentration of the maquis' and where he would be less distracted by what he described as 'worldly temptations such as alcohol and sex'. Following a few months of cohabiting with other mineral buyers, he decided to have his own house built, consisting of only one room, which was filled with a makeshift mosquito-netted bed, wooden racks to store away personal belongings and a couple of yellow jerry-cans containing clean drinking water.

Kasongo had made a habit of listening in to the conversations of people passing his mine pit while sitting in a wooden armchair (*papa yambi*) and supervising the activities of the diggers he supported financially. It was during one of those eavesdropping sessions that he heard Tshov and his teammates complain about their problems with rising groundwater. Because he knew they did not have the money to buy a water pump themselves, Kasongo decided to lend them a hand. He said he would help them pump away the water from their pit on condition they would conclude a fifty-fifty agreement with him. Additionally, they would have to be prepared to connect their pit with his and they would have to join hands with the diggers he had already recruited himself. Once Tshov and his teammates had given their go-ahead, Kasongo gave each of them 15.000 FC so that they could buy food rations during the time they would be establishing the connection between the two pits (*découverte*).

In accordance with a well-established mining custom, the members of Tshov's digging team used a substantial part of the advance they had been given by Kasongo to organize a joint pub-crawl (cfr. supra, *kutasha mvumbi*). Tshov and Changaipondo successively went to the bar of *commandant* Freddy, a former soldier of the *Forces Armées Zairoises* who was always happy to play some of his old Franco records<sup>102</sup>, then to the bar of Shambuyi, a Sanga from Lwambo who was so proud of being the father of twins that he had painted the slogan '*6600 Volt-moto mingi*' (very hot) on the façade of his pub<sup>103</sup>, and, finally, to *Jenga Mwili*, which offered a nice view on Lwambo's central vegetable market and of which the blue walls were decorated with yellow musical notes. The only one who was absent during the pub-crawl was Tshinyama. While his teammates spent the whole night drinking artisanal whisky (*lutuku*), Tshinyama stayed behind in the mining camp of Kalabi.

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102 Franco or François Luambo Makiadi was one of the founders of OK Jazz, a Congolese rumba band created in the 1950s.

103 A man who has engendered twins is called *shyababidi* in Kisanga. Among the Sanga, the birth of twins is coupled with the use of obscene insults and the singing of obscene songs, in which the virility of the *shyababidi* is praised. For his part, the *shyababidi* is allowed to use obscene insults towards the people who are in his house when they come to visit his newly born children (Hadelin Roland 1963: 122-125).

This scene shows how individual creuseurs conform to the moral economy of their subculture. The rule of *kutosha mvumbi* (to wash away the dust) is intended to promote the atmosphere of *normative communitas* at the micro-level, that is, at the level of the digger household. Members of such a household are expected to develop a sense of communion, not only during their work in the mine, but also during their leisure time. They are supposed to express their support of the *kivoyou* style by spending at least part of their money on alcohol that is to be consumed collectively. In doing so, they contribute to the glorification of instant consumerism, which is one of the key characteristics of their collective social identity as artisanal miners. They want to show to people outside the mining business that they are free to use their money at their own discretion, without having to bother about the financial needs of their relatives and friends. It is telling that in *lutuku* bars a bottle of whisky is always served with only one glass. Creuseurs drink from the same glass because they want to highlight their equality. Just like they use the same instruments during their work in the mine, they also use the same instrument to create conviviality after working hours. Although the fact that someone does not comply with the rule of *kutosha mvumbi* can mean many different things, it is often interpreted as a sign that something is wrong at the level of the digger household. It is believed that the person in question either has an argument with his fellow workers or that he is planning to move to another mine<sup>104</sup>. As I will show in the following sections, Tshinyama's decision not to participate in the joint pub-crawl signalled his intention to leave the mine of Kalabi in the near future.

### 3.3.3 Tshinyama's departure from Kalabi

Hardly two days after his team had concluded a deal with Kasongo, Tshinyama left Kalabi like a thief in the night. While his teammates condemned this departure as the typical behaviour of a *meza moto* – he left them with a large number of unpaid debts – Tshinyama reckoned that the problems of his household members in Likasi were so serious that he had no other option but to interrupt his work in the mine immediately. What was the matter? His elder brother had come to Kalabi to inform him that his wife Mami would not be able to pay that month's rent. To make things worse, the landlord had made Mami an indecent proposal: he had told her he was willing to forget about the rent if she accepted to have sex with him.

There were various reasons why the news about the rent issue came as a real bomb shell. First of all, Tshinyama was afraid that he would die in case his wife committed adultery. He shared the widespread belief in Central Africa that adulterous women are dangerously 'hot' and that their

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<sup>104</sup> In the concluding chapter of his famous book *'The Gift'*, Mauss suggests that accepting an invitation to a party is very important, even in Western societies, because it is part of the dynamics of gift-exchange: *'Scarcely fifty years ago, and perhaps more recently in some parts of France and Germany, the whole village would take part in a wedding feast; if anyone held away it was an indication of jealousy and at the same time a fateful omen'* (Mauss 1970: 64; my emphasis).

infidelity can cause the death of their husbands when the latter are involved in dangerous activities such as forging iron, hunting or mining (Herbert 1993: 118). The second reason why Tshinyama was so upset was that he was shocked by his landlord's behaviour. As a matter of fact, the landlord was also a pastor in the *Eglise Pentecôtiste du Saint-Esprit*, a Pentecostal church of which Tshinyama and his wife were members. The idea that someone with such an exemplary function had cunningly tried to take advantage of his absence filled him with disgust and powerlessness. On the one hand, Tshinyama wanted to teach the pastor a lesson by publicly denouncing his behaviour, but, on the other hand, he also knew that this would create the risk of losing both his house and his church. The third reason why Tshinyama was so disturbed by his brother's news was that he knew he did not earn enough money in Kalabi to rent another house for his family. The deposit for a rented house in one of the *cités* of Likasi amounted to something between 100 and 150 dollar and Tshinyama realized that it would still take him a long time before he would be able to save up that amount of money, especially since his team in Kalabi was still in the middle of the *découverte*<sup>105</sup>.

The difficulties Tshinyama was confronted with during his time in Kalabi are the classic problems of married migrant labourers who see the meaning of their marriage change as a result of their protracted absence from home. While, on the one hand, they have problems proving themselves as reliable male breadwinners who send remittances to their household members at regular intervals, on the other hand, they are worried about the fact that they have lost control of their wives' sexuality (Lovett 2001: 49-50). Instead of going home every day and leading a normal family life, they are staying in the mining areas for weeks on end, either because they have the impression that they have not yet earned enough money to be able to return with pride and dignity or because they have become accustomed to spending their days without having to worry about household obligations.

The women staying behind are forced to develop survival strategies. They have the choice between moving in with their parents<sup>106</sup> (a strategy mockingly described as a '*repli stratégique*' because it makes one think of the tactical withdrawal of an army), organizing informal saving mechanisms with other women (*kinkurimba*<sup>107</sup>), generating their own revenues through the development of small-scale trading activities, prostituting themselves, or looking for help by joining solidarity networks such as

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105 According to the agreement with Kasongo, Tshinyama and his team mates had to connect their pit with his. Since these works would probably take several weeks, Tshinyama realized that, if he stayed in Kalabi, he would probably need more than a month to save the money for the deposit.

106 De Herdt has observed that in Kinshasa single mothers frequently move back in with their parents. In Kinsenso, a poor neighbourhood outside the Congolese capital, almost one third of all children grow up without a father (De Herdt 2007: 13).

107 *Kinkurimba* means 'basket' in Shaba Swahili. The practice designated by the word *kinkurimba* in Katanga is known under the name of *tontine* in other parts of Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa. The participants in a *tontine* system are expected to put a fixed sum of money in a cashbox at frequent intervals. Taking turns, each of them once in a while is allowed to take all the money deposited in the cashbox (Guichaoua 2007; Tchuindjo 2000; Gomez 1994).



churches and NGOs<sup>108</sup>. As Johnson has pointed out, survival strategies are not only based on individual action and behaviour, but also on relationships between individuals and households, and on forms of group solidarity. The reason why these networks of solidarity are so important for women is that their earning power is generally lower than that of men, while they also have to shoulder the responsibility for childcare and for the welfare of their households (Johnson 1992: 149-150).

The *Eglise Pentecôtiste du Saint-Esprit*, the church of which Tshinyama and his wife were members, is one of the many Pentecostal churches that have been settling in Katanga since the time of the Zairianisation in 1973. According to a survey carried out by the Observatoire du Changement Urbain in 2004, 79 % of all churches in Lubumbashi are Protestant, while 78,2 % of this Protestant wing is taken up by Pentecostal churches. One of the factors accounting for the latter's popularity in Katanga is their status as islands of solidarity in a period of deep economic crisis. It has become common practice for many Katangese to leave a church as soon as they notice there is a lack of material assistance amongst its members. Churches of this kind are criticized through the use of expressions such as '*habangalianake*' (literally: they do not look after one another) (Zambeze & Mutombo 2001: 12; 33; 56).

Living at the cost of the church community, leaders of Pentecostal churches are not only expected to take care of the spiritual well-being of their followers but also to play a mediating role in the distribution of material resources. A Pentecostal pastor who succeeds in presenting himself as a reliable service-provider is likely to gain more recognition. As Marshall-Fratani has pointed out with regard to Nigeria, the spiritual directors of Pentecostal churches have become new figures of social success and power, epitomizing wealth and social prestige (Marshall-Fratani 2001: 24-44). For Tshinyama, it must have been humiliating to find out that his wife had almost been seduced by a Pentecostal pastor, a man having an occupation associated with success and prestige. It confronted him with his own failure to find a respectable job that allowed him to be a trustworthy male breadwinner.

Nevertheless, faithful to his reputation as a *crâne*, Tshinyama made efforts to develop a long-term strategy. For the first part of his strategy, he drew inspiration from the advice of his brother, who, during his visit to Kalabi, had suggested he could move to the mine of Mbola, which is situated in the territoire of Kipushi, at approximately 90 kilometres from Lubumbashi and 9.5 kilometres from Luishia, and where ore extraction takes place on two different locations: Hewa Bora, which is known for its cobalt production, and Mbola, which attracts large crowds of copper diggers. As far as its size

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<sup>108</sup> In Likasi, for instance, the Catholic NGO Shalamo tries to assist women in the development of agricultural activities. In exchange for an annual fee, they are given their own piece of land as well as a couple of bags filled with fertilizers.

goes, Mbola contrasts sharply with Kalabi. Whereas Kalabi has only 500 diggers, the mining camp of Mbola boasts a population between 15.000 and 30.000 people, in addition to harbouring a wide range of hotels, restaurants, infirmaries, small shops, cinemas and even three or four parabolic reflector antennas (Le Potentiel 21 June 2006). Tshinyama was positive that the work in Mbola would allow him to find the money he needed for the deposit of a new house because he would join the team of his brother so that he would probably not be faced with problems of adaptation when he arrived in his new environment. As he realized, nevertheless, that it was of vital importance to take his wife and children out of the sphere of influence of the Pentecostal landlord, he also inserted a second component in his long-term strategy. Since he knew that his parents-in-law had a separate building for guests in their compound, he asked them if Mami and the children could move in with them for a while.

It would be wrong to think that Tshinyama developed his strategy without having any doubts about what he was doing. To begin with, he felt uncomfortable knowing that he had just abandoned Tshov and Changaipondo without letting them know what he was up to. He knew his flight had been a serious violation of the informal code of conduct among the diggers (cfr. supra) and he was conscious that he would never again be able to meet with his old teammates without running the risk of getting a severe beating. Two days after his departure, he sent a messenger to Kalabi with the idea of inviting Tshov and Changaipondo to move to Mbola as well. Although he knew they would probably reject his proposal, he found it important to create the impression that he was willing to help – this made it possible for him to appease his conscience. A second element that was a matter of serious concern to Tshinyama was the fact that his family's stay with Mami's parents was incompatible with certain cultural values he had been taught as a child:

Staying with my parents-in-law does not correspond with our tradition and with the respect I want to show. The toilet is for general use – that makes it hard to be respectful. I'm living here now, but it's only a temporary solution. Normally, this is only possible in extraordinary circumstances, for instance during a trip. They give you a room and you stay there for just one night. If my father in Kasumbalesa would hear I'm staying with my parents-in-law, he would be very disappointed. He would say I'm forgetting about our cultural values.

Although Tshinyama had always been forced into the role of a highly educated urbanite by his father, he had also been told to maintain a number of cultural customs. Knowing that the post-marital residence pattern of the Luvale is virilocal (Papstein 1978: 12-13), he found it hard to send his wife back to her parents, especially because he suspected that his relatives and friends in Likasi and Kasumbalesa would take it as evidence of his failure as a family provider.

Still, it should not be excluded that Tshinyama deliberately violated the Luvale virilocality rule, because he wanted to avoid interferences on the part of his father. As a matter of fact, his father had tried to convince his son to start working on a farm he had established in Kasumbalesa. When I asked Tshinyama's father what he thought about his son's activities as an artisanal miner, he told me:

I advised Jean (=John Bestia Tshinyama) to stop doing that kind of work (as a digger) and come back (to Kasumbalesa), because I'm getting old. I will die and he will remain. It would be good if he stayed with his family. His brothers love him. He should get to know the *évolution* (i.e. the procedure, the way of handling things): the place where I go to get my sowing seed, the way I work... (...) Because the thing with the mining concessions... If the country is back on its feet, it (=artisanal mining) will cease to exist.

Tshinyama's father thought that artisanal mining was granted only a short life. The way he saw it, Congo would soon reach an acceptable level of political and economic stability, which would encourage large industrial mining companies to reclaim their concessions in Katanga and which would leave no space for people like Tshinyama to continue their activities. He considered it to be part of his paternal duty to provide material assistance to his sons during their preparations for the formation of independent households. In addition to paying their bride wealth, he also wanted to give them the opportunity to earn a living through an involvement in farming activities, which he coordinated himself.

Possibly, Tshinyama believed that moving to Kasumbalesa and submitting himself to his father's authority constituted an even greater threat to his respectability as an adult married man than sending his wife back to her parents. As Murphy has shown, young husbands who are unable to support their own household and who have the choice between living with their own parents and living with their parents-in-law will often go for the latter option. The reason for this is that they are more likely to be treated as fully-fledged adults by their fathers-in-law than by their own fathers (Murphy 1983: 660).

### 3.3.4 The rise and fall of Tshinyama in Mbola

Hopeful because he would finally be able to start again with a clean slate, but also nervous because he wanted to evacuate his wife and children from the compound of his parents-in-law as soon as possible, Tshinyama moved to Mbola in the beginning of April, settling in the Kenya neighbourhood<sup>109</sup>. Just

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109 Since this area is characterized by the presence of a large number of hotels and by the 24-hour blaring of loud music, it is nicknamed *Ngwasuma*, a reference to the song 'Pelisa Ngwasuma' by JB Mpiana. Other neighbourhoods in the mining camp of Mbola include the Golf calme, the quartier Kipushi and the lower situated quartier Soko, where there is a marketplace and where all *chefs de quartier* are staying.

like he had done on the occasion of visits to other Katangese mines, he made efforts to become integrated in his new environment by showing that he was familiar with the informal code of conduct strengthening the atmosphere of *normative communitas* among the participants in the mining subculture. He knew that a newcomer was expected to prove that he was willing to treat his fellow workers as equals and that he was prepared to display the kind of behaviour that distinguished artisanal miners from other men in Katangese society. Apart from joining his new teammates in their nightclubbing<sup>110</sup>, he also helped them pay off a debt they had incurred at the mine of Shanguruwe<sup>111</sup>. In exchange for these efforts, he was given the opportunity to insert himself into a well-functioning team of independent miners without having to pay some kind of contribution and without having to lower himself to the level of the *mercenaires*. In addition to this, he was also given the guarantee of a daily meal, since his teammates had managed to conclude a *divisé-par-deux* agreement with a négociant who was prepared to start paying for their rations from the first day of the *découverte* onwards.

Nevertheless, Tshinyama's confidence in a new future for himself and his family took a terrible blow when, on 29 April 2006, hardly one month after his arrival in Mbola, the barrier at the entry of the mine was closed on orders from Mwamba Kabasele, the owner of the Lubumbashi-based buying house MK. Claiming to have signed a special agreement that made him the new owner of the mine, Kabasele prohibited any further evacuation of minerals from Mbola, forcing all négociants to sell him their products at a price that was lower than the one offered by other maisons in Likasi and Lubumbashi. Given the fact that Kabasele's selling conditions met with almost unanimous opposition from the négociants and that nobody seemed to be willing to buy new loads of minerals from the diggers, it looked as if the mine was going to stop functioning.

As he got ready to move to another destination in case Mbola's artisanal mining business would indeed cease to exist, Tshinyama decided to transfer a large amount of cash to his wife. For her part, Mami did everything in her power to take the opportunities she was offered in terms of giving her career as a trader a new boost: on the one hand, she found herself temporarily relieved from the burden of childcare because of the help she received from her mother and her sisters, and, on the other hand, she suddenly had a starting capital which allowed her to purchase a new stock of goods. Thus, having

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110 Bars are important meeting points for diggers and négociants seeking to set up mining deals or to compose digging teams. Moreover, for newcomers like Tshinyama, they are also convenient places to look for old friends, that is, people with whom they have become acquainted through their work in other mines or as a result of the fact that their families are staying in the same urban area or in the same village.

111 Two of his teammates had concluded a credit arrangement of 1 ton with a négociant called Bwana Seeking. Following the closure of Shanguruwe, all three of them had moved to Mbola. The two diggers decided to pay back their debt to Seeking, because he had always treated them well during the time they had stayed together in Shanguruwe.

bought a carton of Thomson fish at the price of 13.000 FC in the Likasi-based shop of the Greek trader Psarommatis, she proceeded to Mbola where she succeeded in reselling it at 17.000 FC. She repeated the same sales strategy a couple of times until she noticed it was impossible for her to compete with fish traders from Lubumbashi, who were able to sell their Thomson at much lower prices<sup>112</sup>.

Mami's quick reaction to the events in Mbola illustrates the spirit of enterprise of Katangese women trying to make ends meet by developing all sorts of unofficial economic activities. As MacGaffey has pointed out, the involvement of women in the Congolese informal economy has dramatically increased from the 1970s and the 1980s onwards. Due to the fact that men's wages in the formal economy are too low to provide for minimum living requirements, women are forced to secure the survival of their households by finding alternative sources of income. From a series of household surveys in Kinshasa – carried out in 1969, 1975 and 1986 – it can be gathered that the percentage of household income represented by salaries in the formal economy has gradually diminished, whereas the percentage of household income generated in the informal economy has increased (MacGaffey 1991: 34-35). According to a study by De Herdt and Marysse, the informal sector accounted for as much as 50 per cent of urban income by the mid 1990s (De Herdt & Marysse 1996: 13, quoted in Shapiro & Tambashe 2003: 247).

In Katanga, enterprising women like Mami have given themselves the honorary nickname of '*femmes d'affaires*' (businesswomen). Just like their counterparts in Ghana (Clark 1994), Zimbabwe (Horn 1994) and Nigeria (Cornwall 2001), they use their trading activities to obtain greater financial autonomy and to gain a better bargaining position vis-à-vis their husbands. They speak belittlingly about women who restrict themselves to domestic duties and who expect their husbands to support them financially. Criticizing these housewives' lack of initiative and their inability to wear nice clothes, they sometimes describe them as '*pareseuses*' (lazy women) or '*maskini*' (beggars).

The majority of the *femmes d'affaires* are able to work as traders thanks to a starting capital provided by their husbands or their parents. They specialize in commodities and operate in places that are in accordance with their financial means, mobility and level of trading experience. The most frequently traded goods include foodstuffs<sup>113</sup>, clothes<sup>114</sup>, beauty products, shoes, household utensils, knickknack

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112 The first time Thomson was sold on the markets of Lubumbashi was after the take-over by the AFDL. Euphoric about the fact that Kabila's rise to power seemed to herald a new era of prosperity, the Lushois use the Swahili word for freedom to designate Thomson: '*uhuru*' (Dibwe et al. 2004: 74).

<sup>113</sup> Among the foodstuffs one finds cassava, groundnuts, caterpillars, bread rolls, various types of fish, palm oil, maize, salt, sugar, tomatoes, beans, rice and fritters.

<sup>114</sup> There are three types of clothing: luxury clothing, second-hand clothing and waistclothes.

items<sup>115</sup>, artisanal whisky and music tapes. These goods are transported by train, truck, minibus or bicycle and sold or bartered on markets in border towns such as Kasumbalesa and Kipushi, major cities such as Lubumbashi, Likasi and Kolwezi, trading towns in the interior such as Lwambo and Mulungwishi, and mining camps such as Milele and Mbola.

There are two reasons why Mami liked the idea of selling fish in Mbola. First of all, it gave her the opportunity to keep a close watch on Tshinyama's mining revenues. Every time she paid a visit to the mining camp, she had the opportunity to remind him of his household obligations and to make sure that he did not use too much money for his own amusement. Second, she was very enthusiastic about the profit margins and the volume of the trade in Mbola. Mining camps constitute new urban centres where thousands of men, women and children need to be fed and dressed. Moreover, boomtowns like these are also places where a lot of money is circulating and where there is a strong mentality of instant consumerism. As I have already shown earlier on in this chapter, most camp-dwellers tend to live from day to day, using all their revenues to satisfy their daily needs (cfr. supra: 3.2.1).

What makes the fish trade so lucrative is that fish has turned into one of the main components of the Katangese diet (Petit 2002). Due to the economic crisis of the past few decades, meat has become scarce and expensive. Thomson, the type of fish that Mami tried to sell in the mining camp of Mbola, is popular because it contains relatively few bones and because its meat is remarkably tender. It is also called *mpiodi* or *chinchard* and ranks first on the list of frozen sea-fish imported from abroad (Malu Malu 2002: 285). In 2003, the imports of Thomson were estimated at 200.000 tons (Tollens 2003: 6). Since a number of Lubumbashi-based companies have established a practice of buying large quantities of cheap Thomson in countries such as South Africa and Tanzania and then selling them at clearance prices on Katangese markets, individual economic operators are often unable to compete with them (Kennes 2002b). This explains why Mami was forced to abandon her fish trading activities in the mining camp of Mbola.

Fortunately for Tshinyama, living conditions in Mbola seemed to be taking a turn for the better a few days after the Kabasele incident. In large part, this was due to the intervention of Moïse Katumbi, one of the leading figures of Kabila's PPRD party in Katanga who was in the middle of mounting his campaign in preparation of the elections of July 2006. Attending a public meeting between the diggers and a group of EMAK representatives on 6 June 2006, he encouraged the population 'to recover their goods', a call that led to the looting of Kabasele's warehouse in Mbola. In the end, things cooled down

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<sup>115</sup> This category of goods is usually described with the term '*divers*'. It includes mirrors, torches, batteries, matchboxes and plates.

thanks to a meeting organized by Urbain Kisula Ngoy, the then governor of Katanga, who called upon all the parties involved not to politicize an economic conflict<sup>116</sup>.

Capitalizing on the fact that, shortly after the Kabasele crisis, a lot of money began to circulate in Mbola, Tshinyama started completing one personal project after the other. First, because he was tired of having to deal with Mami's inquiries about his financial situation every time she came to the mining camp, he decided to buy her a Motorola so that they could talk about their money issues over the phone:

Weeks could pass without me calling her. What happened then was that she would borrow money from somebody to come to Mbola, which came as a surprise to me. Now that I have bought her a cell phone, she does not have to move around anymore. It was due to a lack of a means of communication that she used to commute (between Likasi and Mbola). She said she would only stay for one day, but she ended up staying for three days. I have decided that she can only come when I give her the permission to do so.

Tshinyama forbade Mami to travel to the mining camp again, saying he would invite her to come to the neighbouring town of Luishia each time he wanted to hand over a sum of money. In addition to this, he warned her he was going to become much more selective in his financial contributions, limiting his money transfers to those instances when she was really broke or when there were urgent payments to be carried out. The second item on Tshinyama's priority list was the transfer of his household members from the house of his parents-in-law to another house for which he would pay the rent. On 17 July, he hired a barrow-man to have his household goods transported to a corner house at the Avenue Majani, close to where Mami's friend Jolie was living. He did not tarry in settling the debts he had made to pay the deposit of his new house: 22.500 FC to Mami's elder brother, 25.000 FC to that elder brother's father-in-law and an unknown but rather small amount of money to his own younger brother. Finally, the third item on Tshinyama's list of priorities was the acquisition of a '*souvenir*' or '*monument*', in other words, an expensive electric machine that could be resold by his household members in case they would be confronted with heavy financial problems. In the second half of July, he received the opportunity to buy a freezer thanks to the sale of a cargo of minerals to a Chinese buying house in Lubumbashi. Having installed the freezer in his living room in Likasi, he told

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116 Kabasele, a businessman from the Kasai region, filed a complaint at the Kipushi court, accusing the looters of having stolen 400 tons of minerals and 320.000 USD, among other things. What made the complaint particularly explosive, was the fact that it also contained strong allegations against Katumbi, who was charged with having stirred up anti-Kasai feelings among the diggers. Since the turmoil of the beginning of the 1990s was still fresh in the memory of many Katangese, Kabasele's legal action became a matter of much debate inside and outside Mbola (sources: '*Cinq questions à Michel Tshibanda par Willy Kabwe*'; '*Un domaine minier pillé par des creuseurs artisanaux*'; '*Les creuseurs de Karuano se constituent prisonniers à la place de Moïse Katumbi*'; '*Une journée dans la carrière de Mbola*', Le Potentiel, June 2006).

Mami to keep a stock of soft drinks in it so that she could sell them to visiting customers while taking care of the children.

For a couple of months, Tshinyama thought he had managed to reconcile two opposite sets of expectations concerning the relationship between money and masculinity. Towards his wife and his family-in-law, he presented himself as a responsible male breadwinner with a deep respect for Luvale cultural traditions. He proved that he found it important to comply with the principle of virilocality and that he was capable of taking care of certain fixed expenses like food rations, the tuition of his children and the rent of his house in Likasi. Moreover, by offering Mami expensive gifts such as a mobile phone and a freezer, he demonstrated that his work on the mines allowed him to earn enough money to make sure that his household members could lead a life of ease and luxury. As far as his reputation among his fellow workers was concerned, he succeeded in creating a distinct profile for himself as a *crâne*. He showed that he knew what he was doing and that he had a very good idea of which decisions he had to take in order to reach the goals he had set for himself. Furthermore, he proved he could participate freely in the social life of the mining camp without having to explain to his wife how he was handling the revenues from his mining activities.

The balance Tshinyama had managed to achieve was disturbed by the enormous rainfall in the beginning of January 2007<sup>117</sup>. Every other day, Tshinyama and his teammates were faced with the collapse of their mine shaft, so that they ended up investing more time and energy in carrying out restoration works than in digging up minerals. The consequence of falling production levels was that they were making a lot less money than during the dry season and that they had no other choice but to ask *trotteurs* for credits in order to keep their stomachs filled. As could be expected in conditions like these, Tshinyama hardly had any money left to give to his wife. His contribution to the household budget quickly dropped from 100 dollar per month to less than 10 dollar per month. When Tshinyama was so heavily indebted that the situation had become unbearable, he left the Mbola mine to move back to Likasi.

Mami, who was extremely annoyed that her endeavours to reach a higher degree of financial autonomy had been curtailed between the beginning of August and the end of December, tried hard not to lose her head due to bottled-up frustrations. Focusing on the survival of her household, she started distilling artisanal whisky which she sold to her friend Jolie, she borrowed 30.000 FC from her

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117 In the area around Likasi, it is possible to distinguish three seasons. The rainy season, which lasts from mid-October until mid-April, is characterized by cloudiness and heavy showers. During the first three months of the dry season, between mid-April and mid-July, the light is very blazing and the nights are cold, while the days are hot. The last three months of the dry season, between mid-July and mid-October, are very dusty and dry (Kyantubu 2006: 36).



elder brother<sup>118</sup> in order to buy food and to pay the outstanding tuition of the children and she broke into the reserves of maize that she and Tshinyama had stored away at the time when things were still going in the right direction in Mbola<sup>119</sup>. One part of the maize was used to prepare the daily portions of *bukari* and the other part was sold in order to pay the rent during the critical months of January and February. It was only after the rainy season, in April 2007, that Tshinyama regained his capacity to contribute to the household budget. He migrated to Kabutshimba, a new mine close to Kilelabalanda, where he joined a new digging team with fresh courage.

From the preceding account, it is clear that Tshinyama did a lot of thinking about how to handle his money in order to be considered a successful man in two different social environments. First, it is obvious he paid attention to his reputation among his friends and relatives in Likasi and Kasumbalesa. His sudden flight from Kalabi shows his concern about what was being said about him at home. When he was informed about the rent issue, he knew he had to rush to Likasi as quickly as possible, otherwise he would lose his good name as a responsible family provider. At the same time, he also made efforts to maintain a good reputation among his fellow workers. When he moved to Mbola, he immediately showed to his colleagues that he was familiar with the atmosphere of *normative communitas* among artisanal miners. While he respected the informal code of conduct by helping his new team mates to pay off an old debt, he also expressed his support to the *kivoyou* style by going out for drinks every once in a while. Realizing that it would not make him very popular if he behaved too openly as a *responsable*, which constituted a subordinate type of masculinity within the mining subculture, he tried to keep his wife away from the mine as much as possible, for fear that his teammates would make fun of his concern for his household obligations outside the mining business. In order to gain prestige among his colleagues in the mine, he tried to enact the hegemonic masculinity of the *crâne*, a man who is able to look a long way ahead thanks to extensive experience of life. Remarkably, when he had the impression of being in a dead-end situation in Kalabi, he borrowed a practice from a masculinity type that he did not normally identify with, namely that of the *meza moto*. Consequently, the Tshinyama case shows that Katangese artisanal miners construct their masculinities by making their own creative mix of practices from various origins. Furthermore, it suggests that they change their attitude towards ideals of masculinity according to the interests they are pursuing at particular moments in their lives.

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118 Mami's brother worked for the electricity company SNEL. The money was to be paid back after a month with an interest of 50 per cent.

119 In July and August 2006, Tshinyama and his wife bought 300 buckets of maize flour, which had a value of 90.000 FC. The maize was stored away in a warehouse in the Quartier Mission in Likasi.

Though Tshinyama sometimes had difficulties reconciling two conflicting sets of expectations concerning the relationship between money and masculinity, he always succeeded in maintaining a coherent sense of self. It was evident that he reflected a lot on who he wanted to be and how he could survive in various situations by convincingly performing certain roles and displaying certain kinds of behaviour. I had the impression that he selected a number of characteristics that he considered to be the essence or core of his personality. No matter where he was or whom he was dealing with, he always tried to behave as a cool-headed and far-sighted individual, someone who knew what he was doing and what he was going to do in the near future.

A second observation that can be made on the basis of Tshinyama's experiences is that he tried to use a successful period as a miner to consolidate his position as the head of his household in Likasi. It was as if a rise of his revenues suddenly gave him the necessary legitimacy to behave as a dominant male breadwinner, forcing his wife to submission and claiming full control over the household budget. Still, it should be noted that Tshinyama's burst of male dominance was only temporary and that it was ultimately thanks to Mami's sang-froid that Tshinyama's household was able to survive the rainy season without suffering from hunger.

This reminds us of the fact that a man's masculinities are not only shaped through his relationships with other men but also through his relationships with women (Müller 2007: 427). As Connell has rightly pointed out, 'no masculinity arises except in a system of gender relations' (Connell 2005: 71). In order to understand what it means to be a man in contemporary Katangese society, the power relations between men and women need to be considered. The evolution in the interactions between Tshinyama and Mami during the former's stay in the mining camps of Kalabi and Mbola makes it clear that these power relations are not static, but that they are subject to constant change. In a volume entitled "*Wicked* women and the reconfiguration of gender in Africa', Hodgson and McCurdy have highlighted the dynamic nature of marriage rights, roles and obligations. The meanings of being a wife and being a husband are negotiated and renegotiated at the level of the household (Hodgson & McCurdy 2001: 6-7).

Of course, one should be careful not to romanticize female agency. There may be opportunities that make it possible for women to challenge and transform restrictive gender norms. However, at the same time, there are also factors that limit women's manoeuvring space (Hodgson & McCurdy 2001: 14-16). During the Mobutu era, Congolese society was male-dominated, while its formal institutional structure was designed to limit women's economic activities<sup>120</sup>. The assumption of power by Laurent-

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<sup>120</sup> This was evidenced by the fact that a woman could not take out a trading licence or open a bank account without her husband's permission. Furthermore, a woman did not have the sole right to her earnings if her husband had made a

Désiré Kabila in May 1997 did not give rise to an improvement of the position of women. Significantly, one of the first measures introduced by Mobutu's successor was a ban on miniskirts and tight pants. Kabila used his soldiers to punish and humiliate women who dared to continue wearing these types of clothing (Hodgson & McCurdy 2001: 17, footnote 14). Even today, four years after the adoption of a new and less discriminatory Congolese constitution, women continue to suffer from oppression<sup>121</sup>.

In sum, the case about Tshinyama and Mami illustrates the concern of Katangese men about the growing financial independence of women who obtain their own sources of income through their involvement in the informal economy. The participation of Katangese women in informal economic activities has an important impact on gender relations, as it undermines the patriarchal system. Increasingly, the male breadwinner ideal is being subverted. Katangese men experience more and more difficulties to maintain and legitimate their dominance at the household level. By becoming active in the business of artisanal mining, they give a new interpretation to the relationship between work and masculinity, in an attempt to come to grips with the decline of the formal economy. Ironically, however, their involvement in mining labour creates new challenges as well: not only do they have problems reconciling conflicting sets of expectations concerning the relationship between money and masculinity (cfr. supra), but they are also faced with increasing levels of independence and mobility of their female partners.

A third observation that can be made on the basis of the case I have just described is that Tshinyama dealt very pragmatically with his social contacts in the mine. Both in Kalabi and in Mbola he only continued to collaborate with his teammates as long as he felt that this cooperation was beneficial for him. As soon as he noticed that production fell into a decline or that he was forced to contract too many debts to keep afloat, he simply took off and went to another mine. This raises questions about the role of trust within the Katangese mining subculture. There is something puzzling about the fact that, on the one hand, creuseurs emphasize the atmosphere of '*normative communitas*' by using expressions such as '*kazi ya creusage ni mapendo*' ('digging is a matter of love') or '*creuseur na masta wake habaachanake, banapendaka sana*' ('a digger and his buddy do not abandon each other, they love each other very much'), while, on the other hand, they regularly complain about the

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contribution to her business in terms of goods or capital. If her husband objected to her taking a job, it was almost impossible for her to carry on with it. It was enough for the man to send a letter to the employer to break up the employment contract (MacGaffey 1991: 34).

<sup>121</sup> According to Mantuba-Ngoma, Congolese women continue to fight for the abolishment of a number of discriminatory dispositions in Congolese legislation, while they are also attempting to improve their working rights (Mantuba-Ngoma s.d.: 3) In his dissertation on transborder trade on the Congolese-Ugandan frontier, Raeymaekers has noted that female traders tend to be more vulnerable to the pressure of family obligations. Moreover, they sometimes fall victim to harassment and detention by government officials (Raeymaekers 2007: 52-57).

deceptive behaviour of their colleagues, expressing their disappointment about it in phrases such as '*hii kazi ni kazi ya bwizi*' ('this work is a work of thievery') or '*bacreuseurs beko bongo*' ('creuseurs are full of crap'). Likewise, it is a little odd that creuseurs adore altruistic generosity and selfish craftiness at the same time. As I have already shown earlier on in this chapter (cfr. supra 3.2.3), creuseurs do not only admire men who share their money with others in a unselfish manner, but they also look up to men who cunningly succeed in taking advantage of others. Hence, the world of artisanal mining is not one of 'peace, love and understanding', but rather one of nerve-racking ambiguity, in which people constantly walk a thin line between loyalty and betrayal, honesty and deceit.

This leads one to wonder why artisanal miners are still prepared to cooperate, in spite of the fact that they run the risk of getting cheated or abandoned by their fellow workers. As Gambetta has pointed out, '*when we say we trust someone or that someone is trustworthy, we implicitly mean that the probability that he will perform an action that is beneficial or at least not detrimental to us is high enough for us to consider engaging in some form of cooperation with him*' (Gambetta 1988: 217). Trust is a vital social resource because it facilitates informal cooperation as well as coordinated social interactions (Williams 2001: 377). In a study on migrants from north-east Ghana living in the slums of Ghana's capital city Accra, Hart has demonstrated that trust plays a prominent role in those areas of social life where people engage in free-floating relationships formed on the basis of affection and shared experience rather than on the basis of blood ties or legal obligations. When social actors do business with one another in the knowledge that there is only a limited level of state regulation and that there are no strong enforcement agencies monitoring people's compliance with economic rules, they do so because they think they can trust each other (Hart 1988: 178). According to Good, trust is remarkably robust. Even when people operate in an environment where fraud is widespread, they still take the risk of putting their trust in certain people (Good 1988: 46). The decision whether or not to cooperate with someone else is usually based on an evaluation of the latter's reputation. One tries to form an opinion of the other person's track record by gathering information on his personal background, his activities in the past and his motives to participate in the deal. However, since this information is inevitably incomplete, the risk of deception persists (Dasgupta 1988: 54).

In Katanga, the notion of trust is referred to by the Swahili word '*imani*'. If someone puts his trust in someone else, he uses the expression '*kuwa na imani*', which can be translated as 'to have trust' or 'to have faith' in another person. Two creuseurs who know each other well and who want to confirm their trust in one another often exchange greetings by holding out a clenched fist and mumbling the French word '*sûr*', which means 'sure' or 'certain'. Conversely, if a creuseur suspects that he is being distrusted by one of his colleagues, he will try to dispel the mistrustful atmosphere between them by asking the question '*hauna sûr na miye?*', which means 'are you not sure of me?'. Although most of

the artisanal miners are sooner or later confronted with a defector like Tshinyama, they still realize that, all things considered, it is more advantageous to work together in a spirit of trust than in a spirit of distrust. To make sure that the division of labour in the mine runs smoothly and to avoid lengthy and troublesome financial negotiations, members of a digging team are inclined to grant each other *imani*. Just like the Benin gold traders studied by Grätz (2004) or the *cambistes* examined by De Herdt and Marysse (1999), they use a trial-and-error method for the conclusion of cooperation agreements. Keeping in mind the experiences they have had with other diggers in the past, they draw up a list for themselves with criteria for the composition of a digging team.

Having discussed how Tshinyama dealt with the relationship between money and masculinity, I will now focus my attention on his former teammates in Kalabi.

### **3.3.5 A sensational arrest in Kalabi**

What had become of Tshinyama's former teammates in Kalabi? Tshov could not stop complaining to other miners about Tshinyama's unannounced departure and the huge pile of unpaid debts he had left behind. An additional source of stress was the execution of the contract with Kasongo. It weighed heavily on Tshov that he had to collaborate with Kasongo's diggers who identified themselves with the style of *kivoyou* and who were constantly looking for opportunities to rile mining officials. Personally, Tshov absolutely wanted to avoid antagonizing these people because some of his creditors had already threatened to jail him if he did not hurry up with the settling of his debts.

The tensions between Tshov's digging team and Kasongo's came to a head due to a remarkable incident almost a month after Tshinyama's departure from Kalabi. It all began with a nocturnal bar fight in Jenga Mwili between two mineral buyers fancying the same prostitute. What had first been an ordinary but noisy argument between two hot-headed individuals had eventually degenerated into a serious scuffle, involving almost everyone who was present in the bar that night. Since some hooligans had gone as far as throwing chairs and tables at each other, the general expectation was that the owners of the bar would call in the help of the *Police Nationale Congolaise* (PNC) to have some of the fighters arrested and make them pay for the damage.

The next day there was a warrant out for the arrest of Antoine, a tall and rather short-tempered *trotteur* from Lubumbashi. Pretending as if nothing had happened, the suspect left his hotel early in the morning to go and buy minerals in the mine of Kalabi. When he saw two agents of the PNC arrive at the entrance of Kalabi, he retreated to the most inaccessible part of the mine, nearby the pitches where

diggers could buy fritters (*bitumbula*) and 'tea' (*chai*)<sup>122</sup>. After hiding in a mine pit a while in order to give himself some time to think, he suddenly popped up again, getting ready to fly at his attackers: he took off his shirt, left his hiding place stripped to the waist and hared towards the agents of the PNC in order to make it clear to them that he was not planning to surrender without striking a blow. Yet, after he had shouted a few insults at the agents, he was pulled backwards by two *trotteur* friends who guided him towards a clump of bushes and trees at the extremity of the mining site. Following a game of hide and seek of about 20 minutes, the PNC agents were finally able to arrest him.

The arrest caused quite a stir in Kalabi. Here and there, diggers voiced their indignation over the fact that Antoine had been apprehended during working hours. Two diggers from the team of Kasongo took advantage of the situation to present themselves as 'voyous' (cfr. supra). When they witnessed how one of their protesting colleagues was pushed so hard that he almost fell in a mine pit of several metres deep, they started shovelling sand on the PNC agents, while singing the protest song '*policier eza civil*'<sup>123</sup> (the police(man) is a civilian) in order to incite the mining population to resist.

Tshov, who did not want to end up behind bars, tried to silence his rebellious teammates by addressing them as '*petits*' (little ones), thereby reminding them of their junior status and their obligation to obey an elder like him. His intervention was to no avail, however, as the two youngsters kept on singing and shovelling sand on the PNC agents until they noticed that their example was not followed by enough diggers to create a general mining revolt<sup>124</sup>. The incident sparked off by Antoine's arrest made Tshov face the facts: although he was 52 years old, he was unable to command respect of two diggers who were even younger than his own children. It annoyed him that they found it more important to brush up their image in the mining community than to show solidarity with their co-workers by keeping a low *profile* and by helping to pay off the debts left behind by Tshinyama. When he found out, a couple of months later, that they were planning to move to another mine, he said he was glad to be relieved of those 'hash-smokers' (*fumeurs de chanvre*), who did nothing but making noise (*kufanya makelele*) and getting into arguments (*bugomvi*) with other people.

The events described above shed an interesting light on the relationship between masculinity and age among Katangese artisanal miners. We are dealing with a man in his early fifties who learns by bitter experience that, as a participant in a youth culture, he cannot command respect on the basis of his

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122 In Katanga, the word *chai* refers to a wide variety of hot drinks. However, tea in the English sense of the word is only available in western-style supermarkets in the big urban centres.

123 According to one of my informants, this song is often sung by protesters who want to enter into an open confrontation with the police. He gave the example of the riots that took place in the Kenya neighbourhood in Lubumbashi on the occasion of *opération pirate*.

124 In the end, the case was resolved quite quickly. Antoine was released after paying a fine of 7500 FC.

seniority. In the world of artisanal mining, age does not yield any benefits. To the contrary: elder men who choose to work in the mines have to keep a low profile. If they want to avoid becoming the object of derision, they have to accept their degradation. They need to come to terms with the fact that they are on equal footing with adolescents who, in normal circumstances, would owe them respect. Thus, Miescher is right in suggesting that the status of elder can not only be gained but that it can also be lost (Miescher 1997: 490-491, quoted in Mann 2003: 75).

Katangese artisanal miners of an advanced age are not only faced with the loss of respectability, but also with the loss of their corporal fitness. Due to their physical decline, they are in a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis their fellow workers who are usually much younger than they are. Mining labour is very exhausting. Furthermore, as I have already shown earlier on in this chapter, having a muscled body and great stamina is one of the characteristics that is highly valued in the Katangese mining subculture. Consequently, even though they know that physical prowess is an important signifier of masculinity among artisanal miners, ageing men like Tshov have no other option but to accept '*the changing nature of their bodies and not being able to do the physical acts that they once could perform as younger men*' (Drummond 2007: 11).

### 3.3.6 The masculinity ideals of a Lunda-Ndembu migrant

While Tshov had been living in Lwambo for over thirty years, he continued to think of himself as a Lunda-Ndembu. This was evidenced, amongst other things, by the fact that he continued to fantasize about sending his youngest son to an initiation camp (*mukanda*) in his native village Kasaji and by the fact that he subtly tried to minimize the power of chief Pande – of whom he had been the personal bodyguard – by referring to his *cipangula*, a headdress which was said to symbolize Pande's inferiority to the Mwaant Yaav, the leader of the Lunda empire (van Bockhaven, pers. comm.).

According to the American anthropologist Pritchett, the prestige of Lunda-Ndembu men used to increase with aging. As they grew older, they had more access to the labour of children and other dependents and they could generate more agricultural surplus. A man who proved he could take care of himself and other people in his environment was called a 'rich man' (*mukwakuheta*) and a 'helper of others' (*mukwakwashi*). A *mukwakwashi* earned respect (*kavumbi*) from people who materially depended on him. When he succeeded in leaving a good impression with a lot of people, he stood a good chance of being remembered as a 'big man' (*iyala muneni*) after his death. Still, in contemporary Lunda-Ndembu society, it is not only elder men who can obtain the status of *mukwakwashi*. Young men with access to lucrative economic activities can accumulate wealth more rapidly than before. When they share this wealth with people around them, they can also gain the status of *mukwakwashi*. Another recent evolution in Lunda-Ndembu society is that a male elder (*mukulumpi*) who does not try

hard enough to share his wealth runs the risk of being treated as a child by a man who is normally his junior (*kansi*) (Pritchett 2001: 123-153).

Pritchett's observations are useful to understand Tshov's view on the relationship between money and masculinity. Tshov had come very close to the *mukwakwashi* ideal during his time as a bodyguard of chief Pande. By always accompanying the chief during public meetings, he had obtained the reputation of someone with whom it was better not to start an argument because he belonged to the local ruler's inner circle. Nevertheless, Tshov had taken care not to adopt an air of superiority and not to abuse his powerful position. People arrested for minor offences knew they just had to show remorse in order to be released. By behaving in this manner, Tshov had earned a lot of respect, not only from people he had let off the hook, but also from other inhabitants of Lwambo, who found it comforting to have a reliable ally in the entourage of chief Pande. Agriculture was another field in which Tshov had managed to gather a group of dependents around him. With the money he earned as a bodyguard, he had hired contract labourers (*bacontrats*) who, in exchange for financial or material rewards, assisted his wife and children in their agricultural work. The number of contract labourers had risen spectacularly in the course of the 1980s and the 1990s due to a massive migration wave from Likasi to neighbouring rural zones as a result of rising food prices in the city<sup>125</sup>.

Following his dismissal as one of chief Pande's bodyguards, Tshov had to develop a new strategy to achieve the *mukwakwashi* ideal. He thought the mining business offered good perspectives. Just like all the other men who went to work on the mines, he would do his best to make money as quickly as possible. After that, he would use the money to employ contract labourers on his own piece of farming land as well as on the ones of his wives and children. Unfortunately, there was a yawning gap between theory and practice. The first handicap Tshov had to cope with was his lack of mobility. While other diggers could easily move to another mine from one day to the next, Tshov was doomed to pass the rest of his days in Lwambo. In the beginning of his career as a digger, he had tried to stay in the mining camp of Milele for a period of two months without going home, but he had soon discovered he

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125 Contract labour has a long history in Katanga. According to some of my informants, contract labourers were compensated with maize prior to the monetization of the economy. Nowadays, payments are usually made in cash. Landowners' need for contract labour is characterized by seasonal fluctuations. Generally speaking, it is hard to find contract labourers in November and December, because almost everybody is busy working his own land and therefore does not have the time to take on other activities. In Lwambo, there is a gentleman's agreement that local farmers should refrain from stealing each other's labourers by offering them a higher remuneration. Some observers maintain that the current shortage of contract labourers is due to the popularity of artisanal mining. It is claimed that people's unwillingness to work the land is inspired by their awareness of the wage difference between agriculture and mining: it proves to be a lot more rewarding to work in a mine for a few days or weeks than to spend the same amount of time working as a contract labourer. Contract labourers do not specialize in a specific type of vegetable but rather in a specific type of land. Since irrigation agriculture is considered a heavier type of work, it is also better remunerated. Similarly to the situation witnessed in the mines, landowners employing contract labourers are often faced with desertion: since there is a habit of paying people in advance, many of them take off without finishing their job. Some of them go as far as asking their sponsors for an additional payment when they have not even completed their initial task.



could not be missed by his relatives: one of his daughters had fallen so sick that he had been obliged to return to Lwambo immediately. The second handicap Tshov was facing was the fact that his relationship with his second wife had cast a cloud upon his relationships with his first wife and her daughters. They were afraid that Tshov would desert them and they openly cast doubts on the way in which he divided his mining revenues between his two households. In an attempt to put a stop to the endless discussions about which part of his agricultural produce he gave to his second wife, Tshov divided his farming land in two equal parts: one for him and one for his first wife. This made it possible for both parties to decide autonomously what they would do with their part of the harvest. Tshov's third and final handicap was the peculiar marital situation of two of his daughters. Both of them had been made pregnant by men lacking the financial means to pay the bride price. Therefore, they had continued to live in the compound of Tshov and his first wife. Tshov thought it was his duty to pay for their daily living expenses, even though they did make some money of their own thanks to their involvement in various types of trading activities such as the selling of maize.

The preceding account has shown that Tshov stayed focused on the same ideal of masculinity all his life, though he repeatedly had to invent new strategies in order to be able to live up to that ideal. As a migrant he tenaciously tried to hold on to the cultural norms and values of his region of origin, yet he could not avoid becoming a different type of man than his father and grandfather. In his book *'Masculine migrations'* (1998), Coleman has suggested that masculinity styles tend to alter when the people enacting them move to a different cultural environment. Coleman compares these 'migrating performances of gender' with straws that appear to bend when they are being immersed in a liquid or with sound waves that appear to change pitch when they are moving from cool to warm air. Although the codes of masculinity change as they relocate across cultures, they do not become completely unrecognisable (Coleman 1998, discussed in Corr 2007: 139).

While, on the one hand, it is important to recognize the specificity and idiosyncrasy of Tshov's construction of masculinity as a migrant, on the other hand, it is also remarkable that the masculinity ideal pursued by him – that of the *mukwakwashi* – bears strong resemblance to the so-called "big man ideal", which is spread all over Sub-Saharan Africa and which already exists for several centuries. Miescher and Lindsay have noted that *'the African "big man" provides perhaps the most enduring image of African masculinity'* (Miescher & Lindsay 2003: 3). In many places across the African continent, ambitious men have tried to expand their households and to use their social network in order to make progress both materially and politically. According to Iliffe, the complex household of a big man, composed of his wives, married or unmarried sons, younger brothers, children and dependents, formed the most important colonising group in West and Central Africa in ancient times (Iliffe 1995: 94, quoted in Miescher & Lindsay 2003: 3). Consequently, it is fair to say that Tshov's construction of masculinity shows signs of both change and continuity.

### 3.3.7 Things fall apart

When Tshov had recovered from the humiliating '*policier eza civil*' incident, he started thinking of a plan to pay off his debts, making use of the social capital he had at his disposal both inside and outside the world of artisanal mining. The first step of his debt settlement plan was to obtain money from two sources: on the one hand, he convinced his second wife to hand over a portion of maize to him so that he could sell it on the market in Lwambo, and, on the other hand, he borrowed some money from his second wife's brother. The second step was to use this money to buy minerals in Kalabi with the idea of handing them over as an in-kind reimbursement to his creditors, supplemented with minerals extracted from his own pit. Finally, the third step consisted in asking for new credits from *trotteurs*, whom he promised to give minerals in exchange for money that was paid to him in advance. This enabled him to give at least some financial support to his two households, even when he himself was experiencing great difficulties to come to grips with the crisis caused by Tshinyama's departure.

The execution of the abovementioned debt settlement plan was hampered by a series of events in the mine. First of all, Tshov came into collision with his *négociant* Kasongo. Shortly after the teams of Tshov and Kasongo had started working together, Kasongo's water pump had broken down and had been taken to Likasi to be fixed. Tshov was highly indignant that Kasongo tried to pass the costs of the repairs on to him and Changaipondo, even though they had hardly been able to use it and though the initial agreement about the use of the pump had involved eight diggers instead of two<sup>126</sup>. Another issue about which Tshov and Kasongo had differing opinions was the way in which minerals were to be presented to buying houses (*maisons*). For Kasongo, the best way to do this was to give buying houses the opportunity to take a sample and have it analyzed in a laboratory. In his opinion, this procedure offered the advantage that a *négociant* like him would not only be remunerated for one type of metal (for instance copper or cobalt), but also for a number of other metals that were present in the sample and in which buying houses might show an interest (like iron or tin). For his part, Tshov had serious doubts about the advantages of the procedure proposed by Kasongo. According to him, it was better to sell minerals according to the so-called '*estimation*' system. This implied that, in his capacity as *négociant*, Kasongo would be paid instantly by a representative of a buying house who would base himself on a rough and on-the-spot assessment of the ore content (i.e. in the mine of Kalabi). Tshov argued that the *estimation* system was to the advantage of the *négociant* because he could be sure he would be paid immediately, without having to wait for the results of the sample analysis. Just like

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126 In other words, it seemed unfair to Tshov that two diggers had to pay for costs that would have normally been split with six other diggers. Tshov was furious that he was being punished, while people like Tshinyama had just left without being called to account for their unwillingness to carry out the contract concluded with Kasongo.

many other miners, Tshov suspected that buying houses often falsified the results of a sample analysis so that they could pay *négociants* less than they deserved<sup>127</sup>.

The second factor that made it difficult for Tshov to carry out his debt settlement plan was the behaviour of his teammate Changaipondo. Ever since Tshinyama had left Kalabi, Changaipondo had adopted the air of a real *meza moto*, a desperado who had nothing left to lose and who thought he could afford making all sorts of undertakings without knowing whether he would be able to comply with them or not. The thing that annoyed Tshov most was that Changaipondo had stopped conferring with him about his credit plans. He simply addressed *trotteurs* at random and rarely checked if Tshov agreed with his choices. Given Changaipondo's tendency to act like a *cavalier seul*, Tshov did not really feel sorry for him when he got arrested because one of his creditors had become tired of waiting for his money. Informed about his teammate's arrest, he said Changaipondo would have to take care of himself, since he had never bothered about telling him about this particular credit in the first place.

As time went by, Tshov gradually lost his optimism and turned into a real puzzle-head. Realizing the *creusage* did not allow him to achieve the *mukwakwashi* ideal, he did not know what to do with himself anymore. While, previously, he had visited *lutuku* bars to put on his *mubinji* act and to demonstrate his generosity towards his fellow miners, he now went there first and foremost to drown his sorrows. Usually, he sat by himself at a separate table, staring aimlessly, puffing his cigarette and gulping down a few glasses of whisky. The only thing that seemed to cheer him up a little was the company of Barthélémy, a digger who was born and raised in Lwambo and who was fifteen years his junior. It relieved Tshov that, despite all his bad luck, he was still capable of attracting at least one dependent. Grateful for the opportunity to play the role of an experienced old man (*mukulumpi*), he listened to Barthélémy's questions about how to solve a household crisis or how to organize his agricultural activities<sup>128</sup>. He also greatly appreciated Barthélémy's efforts to escort him to the house of one of his two wives every night, regardless of whether he was drunk or not<sup>129</sup>.

The members of Tshov's two households were less patient with him than Barthélémy. Although Tshov was never openly criticized for developing a drinking problem and for failing to hire contract labourers, he could tell from small details that his family had stopped taking him seriously. First, he noticed that one of his sons was no longer willing to lend him money. This came as a shock to Tshov,

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127 Basically, Tshov feared that he would be paid a ridiculously low amount of money by Kasongo if the latter failed to sell his minerals at a decent price to the *maison*.

128 Tshov was pleased he had managed to convince Barthélémy to apply himself exclusively to mining. Just like Tshov, Barthélémy had decided to hire contract labourers for the work on the land, whom he was planning to pay with the money he earned through his mining activities.

129 According to his own account, Tshov spent five consecutive nights with each wife.

because, according to Lunda-Ndemba traditions, he was entitled to various forms of assistance from his children and from other young people he had taken care of in the past (see Pritchett 2001: 123-126). Although he sensed that his son considered him a failure, he tried to hide his disappointment about this by suggesting that his son's attitude was probably caused by the stinginess of his daughter-in-law (i.e. his son's wife). In order to prove to Barthélémy that he could still get presents from his children, he often took him to a grocery shop (*alimentation*) in the centre of Lwambo that was owned by one of his other sons. Speaking with authority, he usually asked the latter for a couple of free cigarettes or some plastic bags of whisky<sup>130</sup>.

A second indication of Tshov's declining reputation was that his opinion about certain family issues did not get the same recognition as in the past. When his eldest son caught his wife in adultery, for instance, Tshov took a very combative stand: he said he would take the matter to court, that he would 'get back' his grandson (i.e. take the child away from his mother) and that he would find a new wife for his son. Yet, when he found out how much it would actually cost to start a court case, he started singing a different tune. While he maintained he would recover his grandson as soon as the latter no longer needed to be breast-fed, he stopped talking about the possibility of a court case and he did not breathe a word about finding a new wife for his son anymore.

Another family crisis in which Tshov cut a sorry figure revolved around Irene, one of the two daughters who were still living in the compound of his first wife (cfr. supra). Irene was the third wife of Mega, a *mufumu*<sup>131</sup> who often went on healing trips for months on end without returning to Lwambo to see how his family was doing. During one of his absences, Irene had slept with a man who turned out to be the brother of a lieutenant of the Congolese military intelligence service. When the lieutenant found out that his brother was in trouble because he had been having an affair with a married woman, he organized a series of informal hearings in his hotel so that the matter could be settled out of court<sup>132</sup>. Tshov, who also attended the hearings, agreed with the lieutenant's suggestion that it would be best for everybody if Irene stayed with Mega. However, when she finally got the opportunity to testify, Irene struck a completely different note. Flanked by her mother and taking advantage of the fact that her father was way too drunk to make himself understood, she said she did not want to continue her marriage with Mega because he had terribly neglected her and her children in

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130 These bags are called '*lolly ya bakubwa*' or 'lollipops for grown-ups', because you have to suck out the alcohol after tearing off one of the bags' angles.

131 A *mufumu* is expected to improve the situation of his clients by calling in the help of supernatural powers. He drives out evil spirits, investigates witchcraft cases and cures victims of witchcraft cases. He is usually paid for his services with a chicken, with a waistcloth or with money (Mulumbwa et al. 2003: 249).

132 The lieutenant succeeded in convincing everybody to participate in the hearings by arguing that an official procedure in a real court of law would be a lot more expensive. The complex relationships between Katangese citizens and members of public services has been described and analyzed in Trefon (2007).

the past. In the days following the hearings, Irene had several conversations with the lieutenant's wife, hoping that talks like these might have a positive influence on her case. When she noticed the lieutenant was planning to postpone his final judgement indefinitely, she did not call in the help of her father but of one of her brothers. For Tshov, this was the second time in less than a year that he was unable to have a decisive influence on the way a critical family issue was handled.

A third and final indication of Tshov's failure as a *mukwakwashi* at the family level was that none of his two wives continued to ask him for contract labourers. Even during the first months of the rainy season, when they had a hard time coping with all the work involved in preparing land and planting maize, groundnuts and cassava, they preferred to look after themselves instead of trying to get money out of Tshov. The members of Tshov's first household, who were tired of having to walk 7 kilometres to their compound in the Mutwila neighbourhood every evening, decided to spend their nights in a hut next to their farming land. This was not an easy choice since the roof of their hut was leaking and the quality of the food they were having was rather bad. While other farming families were able to eat maize *bukari* during their stay in the bush between November and January, Tshov's family members had to content themselves with *bukari* made of cassava<sup>133</sup>. As far as Tshov's second wife was concerned, she worked independently during most of the year, although she did receive some help from the two daughters Tshov had fathered on her (both younger than ten years old). The farmland where she worked most frequently was located 3 kilometres away from where she was living, in the village of Ntambo, close to the mine of Kalabi. Since she combined her farming activities with the sale of *munkoyo* - a local alcoholic beverage - she had no other option but to shuttle between her residence and her farming plot on a daily basis, even during the rainy season.

From the preceding account, it can be concluded that Tshov developed his own strategies to reconcile two opposite sets of expectations concerning the relationship between money and masculinity. While, in his interactions with other miners, he tried to behave like a *mubinji*, a merrymaker who spent all his money on having a good time with his colleagues and friends, in his contacts with people outside the mining business, he tried to act like a *mukwakwashi*, a Lunda-Ndembu 'big man' who used his financial resources to support the livelihoods of as many dependents as possible. According to Tshov, the best way to combine these two ideals of masculinity was to spend part of his mining revenues on contract labourers while using the other part to engage in social drinking with his fellow miners.

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<sup>133</sup>*Bukari* on the basis of maize flour has a higher nutritional value than *bukari* on the basis of cassava flour. Only people who have been able to save some maize from the harvest of the previous year can continue to eat the best type of *bukari* during the rainy season.

Although there can be no doubt that the *mubinji* and the *mukwakwashi* are two opposite ideals of masculinity, there was more consistency in Tshov's behaviour than one would think. Upon closer examination, it is obvious that he was always preoccupied with only one thing, namely to gain 'wealth in people'. Tshov did not pursue material wealth as such, but he tried to convert it into followers (see Guyer & Belinga 1995: 106). By investing a lot of time and energy in the development of a network of dependents, he attempted to create a distinct profile for himself as an honourable person, someone who made his mark by showing largesse to his acquaintances. Using Guyer's terminology, one could say that Tshov used his 'wealth in people' to achieve the goal of 'self-realization', that is, to become recognized as a 'real person', a man who was in control of his own life and who stood out because he was capable of manifesting his personal power despite the many setbacks he was confronted with (Guyer 1993: 246; 255).

A second observation that can be made is that the construction of Tshov's masculinity was not only shaped by his relationships with men but also by his relationships with women. As far as the issue of gender relations among the Lunda-Ndembu is concerned, it should be noted that it is very common for men and women to remain distant from one another (*chaambu*: distance). Men do not interfere with the way women organize their time and, very often, they do not have a clear idea about their spouses' revenues and expenses. It is also completely normal for women to farm their own land without their husbands having any rights to their agricultural produce (Pritchett 2001: 169-204; Turner 1957: 22). From this perspective, it was not that unusual for Tshov's spouses and daughters to go their own way with the organization of their agricultural activities. Nevertheless, although the Lunda-Ndembu gender configuration is such that it naturalizes the economic autonomy of women and that it forces them to develop a strong ability to cope for themselves, there are indications that, in the case of Tshov and his female relatives, the ordinary division of labour was distorted. The discontinuation of Tshov's payments for the hiring of contract labourers heralded a significant change in the organization of the budgets of his two households, for it meant that the link between his own economic activities and those of his household members ceased to exist. Tshov was no longer considered as a reliable family provider, but as an unpredictable and sad alcoholic. Needless to say, his reputation as a *mukwakwashi* was severely damaged by the fact that he became redundant at the household level.

A third observation that can be made on the basis of Tshov's experiences is that he had ambivalent feelings about the Katangese mining subculture. He was fond of the atmosphere of conviviality, revelry, solidarity and physical toughness that pervaded life in the mines. Yet, at the same time, he was also annoyed that his younger colleagues showed little respect for seniority and authority. He could not understand why they took so much pleasure in displaying deviant behaviour and challenging the established order. In his opinion, it was ridiculous that his teammates had almost got themselves into serious trouble by singing a rebellious digger song and provoking a couple of police officers.

Since Tshov had difficulties accepting the *kivoyou* style that was so characteristic of the Katangese mining subculture, it is hardly surprising that he also found it hard to embrace one type of mining masculinity unquestioningly. Tshov did his best to act like a *mubinji*, a hegemonic type of masculinity within the mining subculture, but he gave his personal interpretation to it. As opposed to other *babinji*, he always went to the same bars, he exclusively spent his money on drinks (and not on expensive clothing) and he did not only hang out with artisanal miners, but also with other men in Lwambo (i.e. with outsiders, men who did not participate in the mining subculture). Moreover, he did not hesitate to borrow a practice from a lower-ranked type of masculinity when he felt compelled to do so by the circumstances. For example, when Tshinyama left him with a large amount of unpaid debts, he started begging several *trotteurs* for credits, in spite of the fact that this kind of behaviour was associated with the *meza moto*, a masculinity type he strongly disapproved of. So, in the process of constructing his masculinity among his fellow workers, Tshov made his own personal mix of practices, which was in accordance with his peculiar position within the mining subculture. Due to his age, his limited level of mobility and his attachment to the town of Lwambo, where the mine of Kalabi was situated, he felt a little like the ‘odd man out’, someone who was familiar with the norms and values of artisanal miners but who did not identify with the mining subculture in an uninhibited manner.

A fourth and final observation that can be made is that Tshov had a limited Hannerzian horizon, which probably explains why he was not very creative in finding solutions for the problems he was faced with. The strategy he developed for settling Tshinyama's debts was exactly the type of strategy one would expect from someone who has lived in the same town for more than three decades and who has only managed to build up a rather narrow working experience. Tshov never played with the idea of moving to another mine and neither did he ever consider the possibility of investing part of his revenues in economic activities outside the field of agriculture. This lack of creativity explains why he eventually got stuck. He had no other choice but to continue his work as a digger and to hope that his debts would finally get settled so that he would win back the capacity to hire contract labourers for his two wives.

### 3.4 Conclusions

The principal aim of this chapter was to examine how Katangese artisanal miners are using money to construct their masculinities. I have focused my attention on the strategies miners are developing to reconcile conflicting sets of expectations concerning the relationship between money and masculinity. In the first part of the chapter, I have discussed a number of ideas about money and masculinity in the mining subculture. I have argued that creuseurs emphasize their liminal position in Katangese society by displaying a deviant kind of behaviour called ‘*kivoyou*’. Spending money in a wasteful fashion is

an important aspect of this *kivoyou* style. Since there is a lot of pressure on artisanal miners to act as 'voyous', it is fair to say that the *kivoyou* style is an important catalyst in the levelling trend that can be observed in their masculinity practices. However, I have pointed out that there is also a differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of artisanal miners. In the course of this chapter, it has become clear that it is possible to make a distinction between different types of masculinities and to classify these masculinities in a hierarchical manner. Two criteria often used to make such a ranking of masculinities are the way in which men handle their money and the way in which they cope with unexpected events in the mines. Despite the considerable degree of variation in the ideas about money handling, artisanal miners still exert themselves to respect an informal code of conduct, a set of rules that points to the existence of an atmosphere of '*normative communitas*'. In the second part of the chapter, I have analyzed the experiences of men who were not only part of a digging team but also of one or more households outside the world of mining. The attention was mainly fixed on the experiences of Tshinyama, a miner from Likasi, and Tshov, a miner from Lwambo. It was found that both diggers developed strategies to keep up a certain masculine reputation among their fellow miners as well as among their friends and relatives outside the mining business. I have shown that, in the process of constructing their masculinities, both miners were influenced by their socio-cultural background, their experience of life, their family situation, their relationships with men and women, their age and their position within the mining subculture. However, it was clear that Tshinyama was a lot more creative in developing his strategy than Tshov, while he also appeared to be more capable of long-term thinking. In a way, then, one could say that Tshov behaved a bit like the joker in Dylan's song '*All along the watchtower*' (cfr. introduction of this chapter): he complained a lot about the unfairness of his situation and the fact that he was not being taken seriously by the people in his environment, but he was unable to 'find his way out', that is, to develop long-term solutions for his problems. As for Tshinyama, he acted rather like the thief in the abovementioned Dylan song: instead of getting depressed by the insecurity of life on the mines or allowing himself to be influenced by the party mood of some of his colleagues, he did his best to stay focused on his personal list of priorities, making use of the whole range of survival skills within his reach.

The research findings in this chapter indicate that it is wrong to assume that all participants in the mining subculture have the same views on money handling and that they all deal with their money in more or less the same ways. It is closer to the truth to say that every individual miner makes his own considerations about the best ways to use his money in order to be considered as a successful man. Apart from this, my research also shows that the mining business in Katanga does not only exert an attraction on men who are socially and culturally categorized as youth, but also on men belonging to other generational categories. Strikingly, some Katangese men do not think of their involvement in artisanal mining as something temporary, but rather as a way of life: they have no intention of leaving the mining business any time soon. Finally, the research presented in this chapter suggests that



artisanal miners are worried about changing gender relations in Katangese society and, more specifically, about the growing financial autonomy of women succeeding in generating independent sources of income through their involvement in different sectors of the informal economy.

## 4. Stories about female mining spirits

*“If anyone unwarily draws in too close and hears the singing of the Sirens, his wife and children will never welcome him home again, for they sit in a green field and warble him to death with the sweetness of their song. There is a great heap of dead men’s bones lying all around, with the flesh still rotting off them.”*

‘The Odyssey’, Homer and Samuel Butler (2007): p. 148



The lake near the mine of Kalabi

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter was centred round the expression ‘*kupanga kitabu*’ (‘to compose a book’), because I wanted to show that money plays a key role in the Katangese mining subculture. Faced with the collapse of the formal economy and the concomitant decline of the colonial male breadwinner ideal, many men have started considering the mining areas as a kind of Eldorado: they are convinced that they will be able to make a lot of money there, even if they only stay around for a short period of time. Furthermore, creuseurs use money to construct their masculinities. On the one hand, they like to create a distinct profile for themselves as liminal figures living on the fringes of society and handling

their money in an unconventional manner (cfr. the *kivoyou* style). On the other hand, they try to distinguish themselves from each other by enacting one of the many money-related ideals of masculinity within the mining subculture.

The present chapter revolves around the expression '*kufwata filon*', which can be translated as 'to follow an ore vein'. After having dug a pit (*kufanya découverture*) and having concluded a financial agreement with a mineral buyer (*kupanga kitabu*), artisanal miners move on to the construction of a mineshaft and the excavation of minerals. These subterranean excavation works are very dangerous. To satisfy their hunger for money, creuseurs have to put their lives at stake. Therefore, it is not surprising that both death and money are a real obsession for them. Money and death are looked upon as two sides of the same coin. The general conviction is that one cannot have one without the other. Performing perilous work is seen as the price one has to pay for obtaining mineral wealth. In the course of this chapter, I will show that creuseurs have the impression that they make up a special category of men because they live and work in circumstances unknown to outsiders. While, in chapter 3, I have dealt with both the levelling and the differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of creuseurs, in chapter 4, I will focus my attention mainly on the levelling trend.

One of the ways in which creuseurs come to grips with their living and working conditions is by telling each other imaginative stories (*hadithi*) about female mining spirits (*mijimu banamuke*: female spirits). Many scholars have pointed out that members of subordinate or marginalized groups show a remarkable tendency to convey their thoughts on globalization processes in stories about female water spirits<sup>134</sup>. In large parts of West and Central Africa, there is a lot of talk of Mami Wata ('mother water'), a spirit described as a beautiful, fair-skinned woman with big compelling eyes and long hair. Sometimes, she is portrayed as a mermaid, but she can also be depicted as an elegant lady with high-heeled shoes, dressed in the latest fashion of Lagos or Kinshasa. As far as her character is concerned, she is said to be two-faced: on the one hand, she promises her victims all kinds of luxury goods, while, on the other hand, she makes them sick or even kills them when they fail to comply with the rules she imposes on them. Most observers agree that Mami Wata should be considered as a mediating figure between the local and the global. Her hybrid appearance is assumed to symbolize the ambiguous feelings of indigenous groups with regard to the advantages and disadvantages of rapid wealth accumulation and changing kinship and gender relations in the context of an increasing incorporation into the modern capitalist world economy (Frank 1995; Meyer 1999; Bastian 1997; Jewsiewicki 2003; Ellis & Ter Haar 2004; Pype 2008; Drewal 2008; Davies 1998).

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<sup>134</sup> Among the Bolivian tin miners described by Taussig (1980), there is a strong belief in a female earth spirit called Pachamama. This spirit is associated with agriculture. It is the male spirit Tio who is believed to look after the mineral wealth hidden in the mountains (discussed in Marcus & Fischer 1986: 89).

In their stories about female mining spirits, to whom they ascribe characteristics similar to the ones of Mami Wata, Katangese diggers do not only try to come to terms with their dangerous working conditions but also with the changing gender relations in their society. As I have pointed out in chapter 3, many miners feel insecure because of their inability to achieve the male breadwinner ideal and because of the growing economic independence of women. The massive presence of prostitutes in the mining camps gives them mixed feelings. Although they certainly welcome the possibility to act out their sexuality without having to take into account the usual rules in the domain of male-female relationships, the attitude of sex workers also makes them feel a little uncomfortable: they are not used to dealing with women who adopt such an independent and demanding attitude, who openly question the principle of male dominance, and who encourage them to spend large amounts of money outside the family circle.

In an article on gold mining in Papua New Guinea, Clark (1993) has noted that miners on Mount Kare find the presence of prostitutes nearby their workplace disturbing, because they believe them to be 'out of place' and because they suspect them of polluting the mining environment (Clark 1993: 745-746)<sup>135</sup>. In making this observation, Clark refers to Douglas's argument that pollution beliefs often serve as analogies for expressing a general view of the social order. When people are making statements about the necessity of separating pure things from impure things and about the dangers of crossing the dividing line between the two, they actually voice their fears and uncertainties about anomalies and ambiguities in the social structure. By developing pollution ideas, they are trying to create order and to define boundaries in places where these boundaries have become unclear or where they are being threatened (Douglas 2006 (1966): 4-5). According to Douglas, it is quite normal that marginalized groups such as artisanal miners worry about pollution, because they typically live in ill-defined, ambiguous social situations and, therefore, they run a higher risk of being confronted with transgressive behaviour than other people in society (Douglas 2006 (1966): 118-119; Bergesen 1978: 1015).

In this chapter, I will show that the situation in Katanga is similar to the one observed by Clark in Papua New Guinea. Because Katangese creuseurs work and live in environments characterized by a general disrespect for conventional rules in various spheres of social life, including male-female relationships, they start developing ideas about '*separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions (...) to impose system on an inherently untidy experience* (Douglas 2006 (1966): 5). Creuseurs believe that female mining spirits impose taboos on them in order to create a sharp

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<sup>135</sup> Clark describes the pollution beliefs of the miners as follows: '*Women, especially prostitutes who have the smell and secretions of sex on their bodies, pan for gold in the streams and contaminate the metal. This gold then has the power to cause illness (...)*' (Clark 1993: 745).

distinction between two spaces: on the one hand, the 'pure' space of the mine, where miners are supposed to act concentrated and disciplined, and, on the other hand, the 'impure' space of the mining camp or the bars in the city centre, where they are allowed to let off steam after working hours, even in the company of prostitutes. It seems plausible that the pollution ideas of Katangese creuseurs arise from an urge to secure the mine as an exclusively male space, where they can defend their pride by taking risks and by performing harsh physical labour.

In order to understand why the diggers believe that female mining spirits are the ones imposing taboos on them and why they insist so much on maintaining a clear-cut distinction between the mine and the area outside of the mine, it is necessary to consider the ways in which they conceptualize their own working conditions. In the course of this chapter, I will make it clear that creuseurs feel as if they are constantly floating in a twilight zone between life and death. In an attempt to give meaning to this predicament they draw inspiration from funerary rituals. In fact, they seem to compare themselves to widowers, who have a liminal status similar to their own, who are directly and intensely confronted with death and who have to observe a wide range of taboos, at least during the mourning period. While widowers scrupulously obey a number of funerary taboos out of fear for the spirits of their deceased spouses, creuseurs meticulously observe a series of mining taboos because they are afraid of female mining spirits. And while widowers celebrate the end of the mourning period, diggers celebrate their daily victory over death in one of the bars near the mine.

The stories analyzed in this chapter are part of a genre that, in my opinion, has not been given an appropriate name yet. If I had to pick an existing term to designate the stories on Katangese mining spirits, I would probably choose Thoden Van Velzen's 'collective fantasies', which refers to '*persistent sets of speculations*' that '*lay dormant for considerable time until gifted individuals, under pressure from economic hardship or seduced by affluence, arouse them from their slumber*' (Thoden Van Velzen 1995: 722). According to Thoden Van Velzen's definition, 'collective fantasies' should be understood as attempts to understand and manipulate the world, to bring about an interaction between the imagined and the given, and to create an imaginary space specific to a particular social group (ibidem: 722-724).

Although I fully endorse Thoden Van Velzen's call to pay close attention to the relationship between fantasies and social groups as well as to the continuous recycling of fantasy elements in the course of time, I find it a little disappointing that he has tailored his entire theory to the narratives of only one group and, what is more, a group with a well-documented historical record, namely the Ndyuka in Surinam. In my opinion, it would have been more useful to develop a theory that also takes into account the role that fantasy stories may play in the emergence of new social groups such as the creuseurs in Katanga.

Another problematic aspect of Thoden van Velzen's concept of 'collective fantasies' is that it is rooted in Freudian psychoanalytic thinking. Generally speaking, psychoanalytic anthropology can be said to start from the assumption that unconscious thoughts, feelings and impulses have a profound impact on people's lives (Paul 1989: 177). Geschiere has suggested that Thoden van Velzen is right in arguing that anthropologists should pay more attention to emotional aspects if they want to understand why certain fantasies can turn into a real obsession for a whole group of people. However, he has also remarked that the use of Freudian psychoanalytic theories and concepts in non-Western contexts can give rise to an underestimation of cultural specificities. Furthermore, he has pointed out that Thoden van Velzen creates the impression that 'collective fantasies' are rationalizations, in other words, psychological defence mechanisms that people use to conceal the true motivations for their actions, thoughts and feelings. From reading Thoden van Velzen's work, Geschiere writes, one erroneously gets the impression that, just like psychiatrists, anthropologists possess a kind of special knowledge and analytic expertise that allows them to discover the hidden coherence in people's utterances (Geschiere 1991: 299-304).

As an alternative to Thoden van Velzen's concept of 'collective fantasies', I would like to coin the concept of 'fantastic border tales'. Fantastic border tales can be defined as narratives with multiple layers of meaning, occurring chiefly in complex cross-cultural social spaces or border zones (see Spyer 1998; Pietz 1987) and referring to an imaginary world. It should be noted that the narrators themselves do not consider their stories as fictitious but as very real. Consequently, they find it important that listeners take their stories seriously (see De Boeck & Plissart 2004: 59; Meyer 1995: 237). As opposed to myths, 'fantastic border tales' are not meant to offer an explanation for the development of something, but they are intended to express a form of agency: the narrators describe 'new ways of acting in the world' (Wardlow 2004: 63), in other words, they want to demonstrate their capability to get a grip on the difficult circumstances in which they live, and they claim to be able to do this in an active, original and personal manner. While 'fantastic border tales' are mainly intended to highlight the agency of individual social actors, they are also collective, in the sense that they are told by people living in more or less the same circumstances and sharing a number of experiences. An additional reason to qualify 'fantastic border tales' as collective is that they contain images known and used by a large group of people, such as the participants in the Katangese mining subculture.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I will describe an essential feature of the context in which the fantastic border tales on female mining spirits come into existence, namely the omnipresence of death. I will show that creuseurs consider themselves as liminal figures constantly hovering between life and death. In the second part, I will argue that creuseurs express their ambivalent feelings about changing gender relations in Katangese society by telling each other fantastic border tales about female mining spirits.

## 4.2 Living on the edge: artisanal miners between life and death

Undoubtedly, digging for copper and cobalt ores is an extremely risky activity. Creuseurs often dig mineshafts tens of metres under the ground without wearing helmets or other types of protective gear and without having the necessary equipment to shore up their tunnels. Moreover, in many cases, several digging teams are working very close to one another, following ore veins without paying much attention to each other's activities<sup>136</sup>. From this perspective, it is hardly surprising that accidents occur quite frequently, usually with disastrous consequences. According to an article in the French newspaper *La Libération*, published in July 2006, Katanga witnessed an average of ten deadly mining accidents per month<sup>137</sup>. At some point, there were so many accidents in the *Mine de l'Etoile*, situated in Ruashi, one of the municipalities of Lubumbashi, that local diggers decided to join a private health service (*mutualité*), so that their families would be able to pay for their hospitalization or for their funeral<sup>138</sup>.

### 4.2.1 Mortal fear in the mine shaft

Creuseurs consider the mine as a 'place of danger' (*fwashi ya danger*), where they stare death in the face (*mbele ni lufu*: death is in front). They call themselves 'condemned men' (*condamnés à mort*) and encourage each other to be courageous (*kuwa na roho nguvu*: to have a strong heart) and to put their lives at stake (*kuweka maisha yako mu danger*: to put your life in danger). In order to chase away fear (*kutosha boka*) and to forget to which dangers they are exposing themselves (*kujisabwisha*: literally: to forget oneself), some diggers retire to a place at some distance from their own mine pit to pray to God or to their ancestors for protection, while others take drugs or reach for the bottle to clear their heads. A mineral buyer in Kalabi, who calls himself 'Beleji' (Belgian) because he thinks he is the bastard son

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<sup>136</sup> According to the British NGO Global Witness, the dangerous working conditions in the artisanal mining sector in Katanga are due to 'lack of official control and oversight of artisanal mines, lack of training and basic information on safety for artisanal miners; absence of protective clothing and equipment for the miners; absence of solid supporting structures for the mineshafts; failure of local officials present at the mines to intervene to assist miners, to advise them on risks or to prevent accidents; failure of the government to take responsibility for the safety of miners and to enforce laws and regulations; failure of the authorities to close mineshafts which have recently collapsed or sections of mines known to be unsafe; (and) the willingness of trading companies to continue buying products in these conditions without taking responsibility for the welfare of workers' (Global Witness 2006: 27).

<sup>137</sup> 'Au Katanga, au sud du Congo-Kinshasa, le pillage des minerais de la Gécamines s'accélère depuis la chute de Mobutu', *La Libération*, 26 July 2006.

<sup>138</sup> 'Manoeuvres spéculatives dans un Katanga en reconstruction', *Le Monde diplomatique*, July 2008.

of the notorious Belgian mercenary Jean Schramme<sup>139</sup>. distributes free bottles of artisanal whisky among his diggers in order to help them chase their feelings of terror.

Yet, despite taking drugs, drinking alcohol and saying prayers, creuseurs are still very much aware of the fact that their lives are hanging by a thread. One digger described his emotions upon going down the mineshaft as follows:

When we go down into the mine shaft, it is as if we are already dead. We don't know if we will be able to get out again.

As a result of the threatening lack of oxygen, the penetrating smells of sweat and soil and the flickering light of candles, the atmosphere inside the mineshaft is very charged. Creuseurs know they might be digging their own graves and they are convinced that their chances of survival depend, to a large extent, on their own preparedness to work together as good as possible. An expression often used in this context is '*kazi ya creusage ni mapendo*' or 'the work of digging is (a matter of) love'. In the narrow, subterranean space of the mineshaft, there is no room for disagreement, only for perfect harmony. According to an unwritten rule, members of a digging team are not allowed to talk about their internal problems while performing excavation activities. If in any way possible, they have to save these issues for later discussion, preferably outside the mineshaft and after working hours.

The most important reason why so many diggers are prepared to put their lives at stake day after day is that they do not know of any other economic activity that is so accessible and that gives people such faith in their own ability to get rid of their money troubles. A creuseur from Likasi explained the attraction of mining as follows:

(...) you know there is no other way to make money. We, the diggers, find it very easy to go down (the mine shaft), knowing that all the troubles we are struggling with can be over, once we get out.

When diggers leave the mineshaft, they say they feel 'cured' (*minapona*: I am cured). The reason why they use this expression is that they consider the performance of harsh and dangerous mining labour as a kind of therapy that heals them from the disease of being cash-strapped. While they know they run the risk of having an accident, they draw comfort from the idea that anyone who has the courage to follow the therapy stands a very good chance of recovering from his 'illness', at least temporarily.

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<sup>139</sup> Jean Schramme was a French-speaking inhabitant of the city of Bruges. During the colonial period, he worked as a planter. At the time of the Katangese secession, he was in charge of the Leopard battalion (Zinzen 2004: 114).



Miners who are lucky enough to leave the mineshaft alive are paid for their labour by their mineral buyer, so they normally have enough money to settle (part of) their debts and buy new things. Going down a mineshaft is believed to be a mind-altering activity. It is generally accepted that a shaft worker who has just left the underground is not really approachable, because he is still too concentrated. It is believed to be normal for such a person to insult people at random, 'because his head is troubled' (*kichwa yake iko trouble*).

Katangese artisanal miners engage in risk-taking behaviour in order to define themselves as masculine. They know that, by displaying bravado and behaving stoically in dangerous circumstances, they can earn respect from their fellow workers (see also Meadows 2007: 538-539). Hoping to avoid being considered as weaklings by their colleagues, creuseurs do their utmost to suppress feelings of fear and anxiety. Just like grief and shame, fear is seen as a vulnerable feeling that should be hidden from others (see also Scheff 2007: 16-17). The pressure to behave bravely in the face of death testifies to the existence of a levelling trend in the masculinity practices of creuseurs. As a matter of fact, all miners feel obliged to meet a certain standard of courage. They realize that failing to live up to that norm may seriously undermine their position within their mining team.

#### 4.2.2 The ecstatic joys of survivorship

Since creuseurs manage to defy and defeat death, they feel they have the right to throw a good party after working hours. One of them described this desire for release as follows:

You are facing a certain death, but still you return. That should be celebrated with kaolin (*iko sa muntu unaenda ku lufu, mais unarudia, uko bien. Il faut umwange pemba*).

Throughout Katanga, kaolin is a symbol of joy, growth and prosperity (Persons 1990: 150). Many diggers go to the hookers to let off steam. While they pay 1500 FC for a quickie (*coup pressé*), they cough up 2500 FC for a whole night of sexual intercourse (*veiller*: to stay awake). Judging by the terms they use to stress the attractiveness of certain female body parts, they seem to associate going to a brothel with material well-being and modernity. While the terms for breasts refer to expensive imported dry milk powder (*kerigol* > Kerry Gold; *makawbel* > Cowbell) or to the headlights of a car (*maphares ya bien*: good headlights; *maphares ya cent metres*: headlights shining as far as 100 metres), the term for buttocks refers to the loudspeakers (*mabaffles*) of a stereo set, one of the luxury

goods diggers buy to prove to their family and friends that they are making good money<sup>140</sup>. As I have already explained in chapter 3, spending money in an ostentatious manner is an important aspect of the *kivoyou* style, a deviant kind of behaviour characteristic of Katangese artisanal miners. Because it is difficult to save money in an environment where there are no banks and where there is a lot of theft, some creuseurs invest their money in ‘*souvenirs*’ or ‘*monuments*’, that is, in expensive goods that remind them of their hard work in the mine and that can be resold in case of an emergency.

Although the elation of the creuseurs after work contrasts sharply with their concentration during working hours, there are still a number of constants in their behaviour. Both in their dealings with prostitutes and in their work in the mineshaft, they strive for speed and aggression. Of course, this is not a coincidence. There are several indications that, in their perception, there are strong parallels between mining and sexuality. Not only do they use the same word to designate an ore vein and to describe the male genital organ (*kiboorboor*), they also use the same verbs to talk about sexual intercourse and about the excavation of minerals (*kukata*: to cut; *kufrapper*: to hit). Falon, a 26 year old woman from Likasi who started a career as a sex worker after having been impregnated against her will by a soldier of the Congolese army, confirmed that creuseurs often misbehaved during their visits to brothels, suggesting that they are using physical violence whenever they feel like it:

The creuseurs are behaving foolishly (*bacreaseurs banajicomportaka bêtément*). (...) They are not behaving well (*habajicomportake bien*).

Another indication of the fact that creuseurs associate digging with sexual behaviour is that they sometimes designate the female genital organ with terms that are normally used for minerals. When I went out to see the movie ‘*No dead heroes*’ (1987)<sup>141</sup> in one of Lwambo’s cinemas, I heard people shout ‘*remblais!*’ and ‘*salaka te!*’ during a scene in which a woman was violently raped by a military official. ‘*Remblais*’ and ‘*salaka te*’ are normally used to indicate the waste material produced in the process of industrial mining. Remarkably, the diggers watching the movie ‘*No dead heroes*’ used the same expressions to refer to the vagina of the woman who was being raped.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I already explained that rituals and symbols associated with mining and metallurgy are often sexually charged, because the excavation and processing of minerals are seen as two stages in a process of fertilization. From this perspective, it is not surprising that

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<sup>140</sup> Some creuseurs are wise enough to use a condom (*bottine* : boot ; *cornet*: horn; *mupila*: sweater), but others prefer to have unsafe sex (*ngozi kwa ngozi*: skin to skin).

<sup>141</sup> The movie ‘*No dead heroes*’ (1987) deals with the Cold war era. The story is about an American war hero who falls into the hands of the Soviets. After the Soviets have put a micro-chip into his brain, he carries out all their orders like a slave.

contemporary artisanal miners draw explicit parallels between mining and sexual intercourse. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that many diggers adopt an aggressive attitude in their dealings with prostitutes. Although there are several possible explanations for this, and although I certainly do not want to imply that, in their sex life, men always behave in accordance with culturally prescribed sexual scripts, it still seems that, in most cases, the sexual aggression of Katangese creuseurs against sex workers is due to two factors: on the one hand, the fact that prostitution gives rise to the sexual objectification of the women involved in it<sup>142</sup>, and, on the other hand, the fact that the sexuality of prostitutes is experienced as uncontrollable and threatening<sup>143</sup>. Prostitutes working in mining areas run a great risk of falling victim to sexual violence, because they are generally viewed as capricious instruments of pleasure that are difficult to handle and that therefore need to be kept in check in an aggressive manner.

### 4.2.3 The cathartic effects of deadly mining accidents

The rhythmic alternation between concentration and distraction, tension and relaxation, and discipline and abandon is sometimes brusquely interrupted by the collapse of a mineshaft (*éboulement*). In situations like these, time seems to come to a complete standstill. Suddenly, all people working in the mine are shaken up and brutally reminded of the fact that it could also have been their turn to die in a mining accident. First, a limited group of diggers tries to rescue the victims from underneath the rubble (*kusaka*), while the onlookers start singing religious songs (*mimbo ya Mungu*: songs of God) in order to pray for a positive outcome. When the rescue operation fails, the atmosphere quickly turns riotous and chaotic. While some diggers, described as 'madmen' (*bafous*) by their colleagues, start singing and marching through the mine, others take advantage of the confusion to loot the mineral stocks of their competitors.

Very often, a deadly mining accident gives rise to eruptions of violence (*fujo*: riots). Feelings of discontent, which were already been latently present, abruptly come to the surface. One digger, who used to work in the Milele mine, described the dynamics of such outbursts of violence in the following manner:

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<sup>142</sup> Creuseurs visiting brothels seem convinced that prostitutes owe them complete sexual submission. They feel they have the right to unilaterally impose their sexual desires on them, because they have paid for their sexual services. In some cases, they even dehumanize the prostitutes they are dealing with. When one day I was interviewing a prostitute in the hotel room in which she usually received her clients, I was surprised to see a creuseur burst into the room saying he did not understand why it took so long before he was served. My fieldwork assistant tried to explain we were having a conversation with the woman about her life as a prostitute, but that did not make a big impression on him. He said he could not imagine that she could possibly have anything interesting to tell us, since she was a *ndumba* (prostitute) and not a *muntu* (human being).

<sup>143</sup> Many creuseurs behave aggressively towards prostitutes because they think a prostitute's sexuality constitutes a threat to their male superiority. They are not used to dealing with women who make no secret of having several sexual partners at the same time and who offer their bodies for sale. Significantly, some of my informants told me they absolutely did not want to have a woman on top of them during sexual intercourse, because that would mean they are being dominated by them.

Take the example of a creuseur who goes down into his pit to dig for minerals – the New Year's eve celebrations are approaching<sup>144</sup>. He manages to collect ten bags of minerals but these are taken away from him by the mining police. He will tell it to other people and it will lead to trouble (*désordre*). When he goes down the pit again (i.e. for the second time, to make up for his losses), everything collapses and he dies. His friends will be very angry with the mining police who had confiscated the first load of minerals. We have already experienced a similar situation (*ile film*: literally: that movie) in Milele, where people were digging for cobalt.

As I have already explained in chapter 3, the confiscation of minerals by members of public services is considered as a serious violation of the moral economy of the mines. The diggers in Milele seized the opportunity of a deadly mining accident to express their dissatisfaction with earlier cases of power abuse by public servants operating in the mine<sup>145</sup>.

After a deadly mining accident, diggers usually interrupt their work for a couple of days. They have the habit of doing a little fund-raising (*côtisation*) amongst each other with the aim of handing over the money to the family of the deceased as a token of their sympathies<sup>146</sup>. When the victim is a member of EMAK<sup>147</sup>, that organization is expected to take care of a substantial part of the funeral's practical organization. EMAK is supposed to evacuate the dead body from the mine, hand over a sum of money to the family of the deceased, buy a piece of land on the graveyard where the body is to be buried and, finally, buy the clothes the victim is expected to wear in his coffin.

People count so much on EMAK's support for the organization of the funeral because of the economic crisis. For the family of the deceased, it is not easy to get things ready for the mourning (*kirio*). One of the most difficult issues is buying a coffin (*sanduku*). The price of a coffin for an adult person ranges between 25 and 100 USD, an amount of money that most people find very hard to come up with on their own. Another element that turns the organization of the mourning into a difficult affair is that, very often, the family members of the deceased lack the necessary financial means to pay for the food of a large number of visitors, especially if these visitors stay around for a while. In some cases, youngsters from the neighbourhood of the deceased raise money to cover these costs, while a group of

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<sup>144</sup> This interview took place in December 2007, very close to the end of year celebrations.

<sup>145</sup> It is important to note that the mining accident gave rise to the rousing of public sentiment. The news about the misbehaviour of the members of the mining police was deliberately spread by the digger who felt he had been treated unfairly so that everybody would know that these officials deserved to get a good hiding next time somebody died in a mining accident.

<sup>146</sup> When, after a deadly mining accident, nobody shows up to claim the corpse (for instance, because the victim has been working as a digger for a very long time and has become completely alienated from his friends and family members), it is usually buried right next to the mine where the accident occurred.

<sup>147</sup> For more information about EMAK, see the preface to this dissertation.

women from the same neighbourhood go from door to door to collect all sorts of gifts that are supposed to render the organization of the mourning a little easier (Mwilambwe & Osako 2005: 198-199).

Deadly mining accidents can be characterized as moments of catharsis, as they trigger off a 'periodic expression of intense emotions' (Wellenkamp 1988: 494), a collective release of accumulated feelings of anger and despair about the difficulties of life in the mining areas. Creuseurs seize upon these occasions to ventilate bottled-up grievances. In Gluckman's terms, one could say that the turbulent events following a deadly mining accident serve as 'safety valves' through which underlying tensions among artisanal miners and between artisanal miners and members of other actor groups can escape without really challenging the established social order (Gluckman 1956, discussed in Eriksen & Nielsen 2001: 88). Riots following deadly mining accidents are relatively harmless because they almost never give rise to large-scale uprisings against the authorities supervising the artisanal mining sector.

#### **4.2.4 Celebrating liminality**

On the day the body is transferred from the morgue to the cemetery, both diggers and prostitutes massively take to the streets in order to join the funeral procession. They have the habit of singing a series of songs, filled with lewd remarks (*matouches*) and described as 'fetish songs' (*chansons fétiches*), 'impolite songs' (*mimbo ya kiimpoli*), 'rascal songs' (*mimbo ya kivoyou*) or 'riot songs' (*mimbo ya fujo*). From the names of these songs, it can be gathered that they are meant to rattle ordinary people attending the funeral. In fact, the funeral procession is a unique opportunity for the participants in the Katangese mining subculture to present themselves as a distinctive group of people, living together in isolated places and sharing a wide range of ideas, experiences and practices. Creuseurs bearing the body of their deceased colleague to its final resting-place are overcome by what Turner has called 'spontaneous communitas', that is, a strong and immediate sense of togetherness. They want to show to the outside world that, due to their 'betwixt-and-betweenness' and their status as 'liminaries' or 'edgemen' (Turner 1969, 1992), they are free to indulge in a deviant kind of behaviour called '*kivoyou*' (see chapter 3).

It should be noted that the excessive behaviour of creuseurs and prostitutes during funerals is less exceptional than one would think. Several authors have pointed out that, during funerals, people in Sub-Saharan Africa do not have to obey the rules and regulations that apply in daily social life. In a book on funerary rituals among the Akan in Ghana, de Witte has noted that during funerals certain things can occur that are not acceptable in normal life, such as excessive drinking, conspicuous display of wealth, public wailing or rolling on the ground (de Witte 2001: 12-13). De Boeck has suggested

that young people in Kinshasa make use of the acceptability of anti-structural behaviour during funerals to challenge the existing political order and the existing power structures as well as to criticize the deep socio-economic crisis (De Boeck 2008: 297).

As Werthmann has pointed out in an article on the activities of women in a gold-mining camp in Burkina Faso, songs can be a valuable source of information about social life in the mining areas. Mostly, these songs are based on existing songs and the inhabitants of the mining camps do little more than change their lyrics and melodies (Werthmann 2009: 20). The first remarkable thing about the funeral songs of artisanal miners in Katanga is that they often explicitly refer to sex and drugs. Creuseurs want to create the impression that they are leading a loose life and that they are thoroughly enjoying the possibility to escape from the social control of members of older generations. Furthermore, they want to make it clear that they consider mining areas as environments where the principle of male dominance should not be called into question, especially as far as sexuality is concerned. Whenever they talk about women in their funeral songs, they always reduce them to sex objects, weak-willed creatures whose only reason for existence is to offer men a good time in bed:

*Ndumba ye ule Katombesha!	That is a hooker Someone who makes people fuck!
*Mayanga, Mayanga! Tombesha!	Mayanga (=name of a prostitute)! Make people fuck!
Tombesha! Tombesha! Ah! Bunga! Creuseurs ho!	Make people fuck! Make people fuck! Amazement! Diggers ho!
*Leta bangé (4x)	Bring hash! (4x)

A second theme popping up in diggers' funeral songs is individualism. Creuseurs resist the obligation to share their mining revenues with family members and friends, claiming the right to pursue their own self-interest without having to worry about the needs of other people back home:

*ile yote inabakia paka yangu, unipe! Unipe! Nipate! Nipate! Nipate nguvu ya kutafuta ingine!	All of that remains mine, give me! Give me! May I get! May I get! May I get the strength to look for other things (probably other minerals)
Creuseurs ho!	Creuseurs ho!

A third theme to be found in diggers' funeral songs is the erosion of kinship relationships as a result of migrant labour. Although creuseurs probably realize they are running the risk of becoming alienated from their family members when they stay in the mining areas for months or even for years without giving any sign of life, they still make sure never to show any bad feelings about this. On the contrary, on the road to the graveyard, they insult their family members and minimize the importance of family relationships:

*kama nikufwa nikufwe	If I die, I die
batazala bengine	They will produce other ones (=children)
mama na baba mukitombe	Mother and father, when you fuck
mutazala bengine	you will produce other ones

The fourth and final theme that can be identified in diggers' funeral songs is the theme of witchcraft. Creuseurs suggest that deadly mining accidents result from the jealousy of family members who stayed behind (i.e. in the diggers' home areas) and who cannot stand the idea that they are making money for themselves, without sharing it with people outside the mining business. When creuseurs join a funeral procession, they insult the witch whom they suspect of being responsible for the death of their colleague:

*mujondo lele, mujondo ya baloji	The anus, the anus of witches
*tálá kaminyé kabansumé ika mámbo	Look, the scorpion has stung me, there is a problem <sup>148</sup>

The reference to the anus of witches can be explained by the fact that, in many cultures, bodily margins are associated with power and danger. Douglas has noted that witches are often believed to use bodily refuse to reach their evil goals (Douglas 2006 (1966): 147-150). Among the Luba, a mother is believed to be able to curse her child by bending over and showing her anus. This act is known as *kufúlama* and is considered as extremely provocative and offensive. As far as the scorpion is concerned, it is only logical that this animal should be associated with witchcraft. Just like witches, scorpions are known to be mainly active during the night and to use poison to kill their victims.

At first sight, it may seem a little odd that, on the one hand, creuseurs want to dissociate themselves from their family members, while, on the other hand, they are afraid of being bewitched by them.

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148 Among the Sanga, the scorpion is associated with witchcraft. It often pops up in mining areas. Some miners say a scorpion sting is more painful than a snakebite.

However, Geschiere has pointed out that even in modern contexts, for instance in big cities, '*witchcraft is the dark side of kinship (...) the frightening realization that there is jealousy and therefore aggression within the family, where there should only be trust and solidarity*' (Geschiere 1997: 11). Everywhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is assumed that witchcraft arises from the intimacy of the family and the home. It is almost unthinkable that someone could be bewitched by people he does not have a family relationship with (Geschiere 1997: *ibidem*). So, although many Katangese men decide to start mining because they want to get away from the pressure and control of their families, they still fear that death will be the price to pay for their desire to become more independent. According to a digger from Lwambo, mining accidents are automatically associated with witchcraft:

When somebody dies, we immediately think of witchcraft. We do not even consider the possibility that it might be an accident. When the person dies, we think that it is his grandparent or his father who has caused his death. We insult the witch when we go out to bury the dead man.

When colleagues of a dead digger suspect one of the latter's relatives of being a witch, they do not hesitate to beat him (or her) up during the funeral.

It is important to bear in mind that the opposite phenomenon exists as well. Sometimes diggers are the ones accused of witchcraft by their family members. It is believed that people working in the mines are capable of sacrificing one of their relatives in order to increase the production of their mine pit. During my fieldwork, I witnessed the case of a young man from a polygamous household who was accused of wanting to kill his father with the aim of enriching himself. What made him particularly suspicious in the eyes of his family members was the fact that, for a very long time, he had been complaining that his mother, a French teacher in one of Lwambo's secondary schools, was neglected by his father, a senior official in Kapolowe. Although, for a considerable period of time, the creuseur's mother had been able to obtain a fair share of her husband's revenues, eventually, she had fallen into disgrace with him, due to a persistent alcohol problem on her part. The official's relatives suspected the creuseur of wanting to take revenge on his father for having stopped giving money to his mother. In the end, a big family gathering was held to settle the matter amicably. To avoid falling victim to a witchcraft attack from his son, the official promised to build a new house for the creuseur's mother. This case shows that the link between the creuseur and his family was, in a way, reactivated by a witchcraft accusation. Geschiere seems to be right when he says that the witchcraft discourse can serve to dynamize kinship in modern contexts in present-day Africa (Geschiere 1997: 24-25).

In the preceding account, I have shown that creuseurs are real 'liminaries' in the Turnerian sense of the word, for they are permanently living in a kind of twilight zone between life and death. As a result of the fact that they are faced with extremely dangerous working conditions, they develop a kind of



coping strategy, which makes life more bearable and more structured. While, during working hours, they do their best to act concentrated and disciplined, after working hours, they allow themselves to go out and do whatever they need to take their mind off things and relax. Now and then, this collective 'danse macabre' is interrupted by a deadly mining accident. Funerals are an opportunity for creuseurs to express their ambiguous feelings about their living conditions. My analysis of a number of funeral songs has indicated that, by glorifying the freedom of sex, the unlimited use of drugs and alcohol and the individualistic accumulation of wealth, creuseurs try to dissociate themselves from the norms and values of the environment from which they originate. Still, they are worried about the possibility of witchcraft attacks launched by dissatisfied and jealous relatives. There are strong indications that they are very well aware of the ambiguity of their situation. While hoping that their activities in the mining business will enable them to acquire a higher degree of personal freedom, they realize they will never be able to completely disconnect themselves from their friends and family members back home.

### **4.3 Female mining spirits and changing gender relations**

How do creuseurs make sense of this permanent condition of liminality and of the cyclic alternation between self-control and unrestrainedness? And which impact does their liminal condition have on their views about changing gender relations in Katangese society? In the following sections, I will discuss four stories about a female mining spirit, told by three diggers and one mineral trader from the Kalabi mine. The analysis of these stories will show that creuseurs recycle old ideas about mining, gender and death and adapt them to a new socio-economic situation. Worried about the growing economic independence of women, the loss of control of female sexuality and the dangers of working in profound mineshafts, but hopeful about the possibility to experiment freely with new ideals of masculinity and alternative forms of sexuality, they base themselves on existing mining taboos, ideas about punishing supernatural beings and mourning rituals to conceptualize the distinction between the space of the mine and the space outside the mine. They seem to compare themselves to widowers who, just like themselves, have a liminal status, are afraid of a female spirit, are directly confronted with death, have to observe a number of sexual taboos and are allowed to celebrate at the end of the mourning period. It will become evident that the stories about the female mining spirit of Kalabi deserve to be called 'fantastic border tales' as they contain multiple layers of meaning, as they are circulating in complex cross-cultural social spaces, as they are situated in an imaginary world but are still presented as very real, as they express a form of agency, and, finally, as they have a collective side to them.

### 4.3.1 Rising groundwater and the grudge of a female mining spirit

The first fantastic border tale about the female mining spirit of Kalabi was told to me by Robert Masangu, an 18-year old creuseur from Lwambo. Being the son of a Sanga father and a Luba mother who were both earning a living through agriculture, he had gone in search of adventure by starting a career as an artisanal miner in the mines of Kamfunda, Milele and Kipese. In Kalabi, he was part of a digging team of four people who owned their own mining pit and who did not have a fixed mineral buyer. When I asked him if he could explain who the mining spirit of Kalabi exactly was, he responded:

Her name is Madame Jeanne and she is a woman. Her bad characteristic? If you sleep with a woman, you should not go down into the mine pit. If you do, you won't come out alive. Wait one day and the next day you can go back to work (...) that woman is a white person (...) she has long hair (...) she does not have a tail like *mamba muntu*, she is an ordinary human being (...) she does not have a daughter. She is alone and she also does not have a husband. We think she used to be a man. If a woman enters the mine, it will lead to a lot of trouble. If she enters, not a single pit will produce anything. (...) The lake is very deep, about 2000 metres (...). At the bottom (of the lake), there is plenty of malachite. If you (addresses the author of the dissertation) would pump away the water, then we would be able to obtain the malachite. (...) If (...) you (=creuseurs) behave and you don't sleep with any women, the water will not return (...). However, if you do sleep with a lot of women, there will be a lot of water again. She (=the spirit) likes to hang around with men at her place (...) the taboos (*bijila*) we know of... if you sleep with a woman, you should not go in the next day, but only the day after that. Those are her taboos. (...) If a pot is black, you should not use it to draw water (from the lake) inside the mine (...) if you draw water (with a black pot), you run the risk of being carried away on the water by something you can't see.

What immediately strikes the eye when we look at the abovementioned story, is that it refers to *bijila* (sing. *kijila*), in other words, to taboos that mark the boundary between the space of the mine and the space outside the mine. Creuseurs know they have to observe these *bijila* whenever they enter the mine. Most *bijila* pertain to persons, substances and objects that are not allowed to enter the mine as well as to activities that are not permitted inside the mine. In Kalabi, it is strictly forbidden to give women access to the mine, especially if they are having their period. Even the smell of a woman is not supposed to enter the mine. Creuseurs who have had sexual intercourse during the night are expected to stay away from work for one day or to wash thoroughly in order to remove the smell of the woman they slept with. A second series of *bijila* has to do with human secretions. Creuseurs are not allowed to defecate or urinate inside the mine. Furthermore, they have to prevent blood from entering the mine by avoiding heavy fighting. A third series of *bijila* concerns cooking and eating. It is an absolute taboo to cook food inside the mine and to bring in black pots. Finally, the fourth series of taboos pertains to the

lake next to the mine. Creuseurs know it is forbidden for them to swim in the lake: they describe the water as 'evil' (*mayi mbaya*: bad water).

According to the diggers, these *bijila* are imposed by a female spirit (*mujimu mwanamuke*), who is the owner of the minerals and who does not like her territory to be polluted (*ule mujimu hasipende buchafu*: that spirit does not like dirt). She is usually given a European name – Madame Jeanne or Madame Hélène – and is also said to have European looks. People claiming to have seen her with their own eyes say that, apart from having a white skin, she also has long hair and she is wearing a watch and a bracelet (*lukano*). In addition to this, they say, she sometimes rises from the water, showing only the upper part of her body and covering her breasts with a bra. Although Robert Masangu, the narrator of the abovementioned story, was convinced there was a clear difference between the looks of a mining spirit and those of a mermaid, some of my other informants contradicted this, saying that the lower part of the mining spirit's body was indeed that of a fish while the upper part was that of a female human being. Because of her mermaid-like characteristics, they called her 'mamba muntu' or 'crocodile person'. Everyone agrees she is quite difficult to deal with. Not only is she known to be very arrogant, she also has a reputation of being extremely demanding and jealous (*anakalaka na bwivu*: she is jealous). When she notices creuseurs are not following the rules, she creates havoc and devastation. She is believed to be capable of making ore veins disappear, mineshafts collapse and groundwater rise. Furthermore, rumour has it that she can inflict serious injuries on creuseurs. Women who dare to enter the mine despite the rule that says they are not allowed to do this under any circumstances run the risk of continuing to menstruate for the rest of their lives.

Now and then, incidents occur that strengthen creuseurs' belief in the mining spirit. For instance, one night, a creuseur was arrested in a hotel in the centre of Lwambo, because the hotel owner thought he had made too much noise while having sex with a prostitute. After he had been brought to prison, the creuseur dug a tunnel in the floor of his cell through which he and all his fellow inmates were able to escape. Following his escape from prison, he decided to hide himself from the police in the Kalabi mining camp. When, shortly afterwards, he went out for a swim on the fringes of the lake, he drowned. His body floated around for three days before it could be taken out of the water. Excited diggers showed me pictures of the dead body, saying that fish had eaten the victim's eyes. They interpreted the mining accident as a punishment by the mining spirit who was believed to be angry because of the violation of one of the mining taboos, namely the ban on swimming in the lake of Kalabi.

As I already pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, Douglas has convincingly shown that taboos are meant to produce order out of chaos. When people start separating pure from impure things, they actually express their need for more rules and boundaries. Through the development of pollution

ideas they ventilate their concerns about anomalies and ambiguities in the social structure (Douglas 2006 (1966): 4-5). In my opinion, Douglas's arguments certainly hold true for Katangese artisanal miners. When the latter indicate they consider certain things as 'dirt' (*buchafu*), they express their need for more order in their social environment.

One could say that there is a paradox in the attitude of Katangese creuseurs: while, on the one hand, they try to distinguish themselves from the rest of society by displaying deviant behaviour (*kivoyou*), on the other hand, they do their best to create order and structure in their workplace. The explanation for this paradox is that, although creuseurs are opposed to the established social order in Katanga, they do not want to work and live in a situation of complete chaos, an atmosphere of disarray, which they themselves usually designate with the term '*désordre*'. Instead, they try to create an alternative social order by living together in a spirit of what Turner has called 'normative communitas'. Although communities of diggers are rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated, it was demonstrated in chapter 3 that social life in these communities is regulated by an extensive set of rules that contribute to the organization and mobilization of resources (Turner 1969: 132). The taboos that Masungu refers to in his story about the female mining spirit are obviously part of the rules that govern people's daily activities in the mining areas.

Still, it is not enough to just explain the existence of pollution ideas per se. It is also necessary to find an explanation for the fact that certain things are allowed inside the space of the mine, while other things are not. To study taboos is to study symbolic systems (Douglas 2006 (1966): 43). When certain persons, things and substances are banned from a given space, it is not because of their material characteristics, but because of what they symbolize. So, by studying the logic behind a set of taboos, one can learn a lot about the dynamics of the social and cultural environment in which they occur.

In my opinion, there are two possible reasons why men's blood is considered a polluting liquid. First, as Rowlands and Warnier have argued, blood may be viewed as a symbol of violence that needs to be kept away from places where people used to engage in metallurgical activities in a spirit of peacefulness and concentration (Rowlands & Warnier 1988, quoted in Herbert 1993: 89). In Kalabi, on the site where artisanal miners are currently digging for copper and cobalt ores, there used to be several indigenous smelting furnaces during pre-colonial times (see chapter 1). Given the long history of metalworking in the region, it cannot be excluded that the current taboo on blood spilling has roots in that pre-colonial era. The hypothesis about blood as a symbol of violence is also in accordance with evidence on red-white symbolism in this part of Central Africa. As Turner has pointed out in his discussion of colour symbolism among the Ndembu, red '*nearly always has explicit reference to violence, to killing, and, at its most general level of meaning, to breach, both in the social and natural orders*' (Turner 1967: 41). A second possible explanation for the ban on men's blood in Kalabi is that

it is associated with the loss of physical force and virility. Just like sperm, blood is seen as an important life force (Schoepf 1988: 638; De Boeck 1994: 271-272; White 1993: 762). When a man loses blood through a wound, he finds himself in a vulnerable position. Not only does he suffer the loss of a vital body fluid, he also has to deal with the opening up of a new body orifice. As Douglas has noted, orifices are the most vulnerable parts of the human body (Douglas 2006 (1966): 147-150).

The reasons for keeping menstruation blood out of the mine are different from those that justify the exclusion of men's blood. Herbert has shown that the rules concerning the exclusion of women from the mining process came into existence during pre-colonial times. In pre-colonial metallurgy, the heat of female sexuality was considered a threat to the heat of the smelting process. In order to prevent the smelting process from failing, women were kept at a distance (Herbert 1993: 78-125). Thanks to an article by De Hemptinne (1926) on pre-colonial mining and smelting activities in Kalabi, we know that local workers used to be very much preoccupied by the analogies between metallurgy and giving birth. One of the songs recorded by De Hemptinne went as follows:

On the summit of Kalabi rises a high furnace  
 A high furnace with a large womb  
 The heritage of our father Lupadila  
 A high furnace where copper trickles and billows  
 O my mother! O my mother!

The lyrics of this song clearly show that a smelting furnace used to be compared to a female womb, while the process of smelting used to be compared to parturition (Herbert 1984: 39-40). In his description of pre-colonial copper working in the Katanga region, Ladame has noted that men working at a smelting place were not allowed to have sexual intercourse during the mining season. If they violated this taboo, they were obliged to take a good bath and to stay away from the furnace for a period of two days (Ladame 1921, quoted in Cline 1937: 120). It seems plausible that the current rule according to which artisanal miners have to refrain from mining activities and have to take a good bath after sleeping with a woman is to a large extent based on the pollution beliefs of pre-colonial metallurgists whose activities and rituals have been described by De Hemptinne and Ladame. The parallels between cooking and smelting – both heat-mediated processes of transformation – probably explain why cooking pots had to be kept away from the smelting furnaces and why they are still not allowed inside the mine of Kalabi today (Herbert 1993: 78-125).

With regard to the ban on menstruation blood in the mine of Kalabi, it is also necessary to say a few words about the bracelet (*lukano*) the female mining spirit is believed to wear. Many Central African groups use metal bracelets as insignia of chieftainship and kingship (Bisson 1975: 279-280; Van der

Velde & Reeve 1985: 507). The Lunda myth of origin describes how princess Ruweej gave the *rukan* to Chibind Yirung, a foreign hunter who gratefully accepted this symbol of power and whose son became the founder of a monarchy among the Lunda (Palmeirim 2006: 52)<sup>149</sup>. For their part, Luba groups have equally started using the *rukan* as an insignia of royal power, though they have changed its name into *lukano* (Herbert 1984: 253). Among the Sanga, the *lukano* is also an important symbol of power. Chiefs are supposed to wear it on their left hand, which is the hand associated with femininity<sup>150</sup>. Thus, the bracelet designated by the terms *rukan* and *lukano* draws our attention to the relationship between metallurgy, gender and power in Central Africa. The stories about female ancestors handing over bracelets to male ancestors should probably be interpreted as allegories for men's struggle to gain complete control over the metallurgical process. While, on the one hand, men did their best to keep women away from the smelting furnaces because they feared the negative effects of women's ambiguous and unpredictable sexuality, on the other hand, men were aware of the fact that they needed women's creative powers to bring their metallurgical activities to a favourable conclusion. As Herbert has rightly pointed out, men solved this dilemma by appropriating female creative powers through rituals (Herbert 1993: 5). If today's artisanal miners describe the female mining spirit as a woman wearing a metal bracelet, it is probably because they respect her authority as the custodian of the mineral resources hidden in the underground<sup>151</sup>.

In the preceding discussion, I have argued that the rule according to which contemporary artisanal miners are expected to wash thoroughly after having sex with a woman probably has its origins in the long-standing fear of female sexuality in the world of artisanal mining. Still, it needs to be explained

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<sup>149</sup> The Lunda myth of genesis makes mention of two sons killing their father, who is the king and whose power is transmitted to Ruweej, the sister of the two murderers. Later on, Chibind Yirung arrives on the scene, a Luba hunter who comes from the east. Yirung introduces royal manners that are more refined than the ones of the autochthonous population. Subsequently, he seduces Ruweej, marries her and seizes power. Disappointed about the fact that they were unable to seize power themselves, Ruweej's brothers leave the area. Chibind Yirung does not succeed in fathering children on Ruweej, who turns out to be sterile. In the end, he gets married to another autochthonous woman, who becomes the mother of the first Lunda ruler or Mwaant Yaav, the founder of a new dynasty and of a more civilized political order (Legros 1996: 172).

<sup>150</sup> The Sanga believe that all power used to be in the hands of a female ancestor called Ina Kiluba. It is assumed that she lost power during an unexpected visit by a Lunda hunter. Ina Kiluba wanted to sleep with the hunter, but then she remembered she was in her menstrual period so that she was not allowed to wear her power symbols during the night. Apparently, the Lunda hunter took advantage of this situation to steal the *lukano* from Ina Kiluba. When Ina Kiluba's brothers found out about their sister's mistake, they decided it would no longer be possible for a woman to occupy the position of chief, although power would still be passed on matrilineally.

<sup>151</sup> It should be noted that, among the Sanga, the predominant group in the area around the Kalabi mine, mining is not the only field of social activity in which menstruation blood is considered polluting. During pre-colonial and colonial times, menstruating Sanga women had the habit of leaving the village until the end of their menstrual period. Today, Sanga women having their period are not allowed to prepare drinks for or serve meals to men. Furthermore, they are also not allowed to sleep in the same bed as their husbands. When they are involved in the cultivation of groundnuts, they cannot enter the field during their menstruation period. It is forbidden for menstruating Sanga women to participate in conversations between hunters and to visit places where men are preparing themselves for hunting activities. If they violate this taboo, hunting trips are doomed to fail. Finally, menstruating women are expected to avoid approaching infants who are being breastfed, because their presence is believed to be detrimental to the babies' health. It seems plausible that menstruation blood is viewed as threatening among the Sanga because it is associated with waste, failure and loss of life (see Herbert 1993: 88).

why a woman's scent is believed to be able to provoke the rage of a female mining spirit. In my opinion, this belief may very well stem from ideas associated with funerary rites in Katanga. As Siegel (2008) has demonstrated, the matrilineal peoples of Eastern Central Africa have several cultural ideas and practices in common. One of these ideas is that a widower initially finds himself stuck with the spirit of his deceased wife (*muufu*). This spirit is assumed to be very jealous and to haunt the widower in order to make sure that he does not have sexual intercourse with other women before the end of the mourning period. Since the widower is temporarily contaminated with death, he has to avoid sexual contacts during the mourning period in order to prevent his sexual partners from dying. At the end of the mourning period, there is a purification ceremony called '*kutengeneza muntu*' ('to prepare the human being'). The widower is expected to spend the night with one of his in-laws before being ritually cleansed with water. It is believed that the water with which the widower is cleansed prevents the female spirit (*muufu*) from pursuing her victim (Grévisse 1957: 123-136). Even Christians continue to practice this ritual, though they limit themselves to taking a bath at the end of the mourning period and they do not engage in sexual intercourse with one of their female in-laws (Mwilambwe & Osako 2005: 212-213). Given the importance of death in Katangese artisanal mines and the continuing significance of the abovementioned purification ceremony among the matrilineal peoples of eastern Central Africa, it cannot be purely accidental that there are so many similarities between widowers and creuseurs. Both are faced with the proximity of death and both have to wash thoroughly in order to avoid a heavy punishment from a female spirit.

In my opinion, there are two possible explanations for the fact that creuseurs describe the water of the Kalabi Lake as dangerous. First, it seems plausible that they are inspired by the widespread set of ideas and beliefs about Mami Wata in West and Central Africa. Bastian has shown that, among the Igbo in Southeastern Nigeria, people can enter into an alliance with the Mami Wata spirit by 'marrying her in the water'. This means that men and women can become the spouses of Mami Wata after having seen her in a vision or a dream. Water marriages are known to be asymmetrical in nature. While human beings may receive various types of gifts from Mami Wata, they can never demand obedience from her. To the contrary, Mami Wata is the one calling the shots, forcing her human partners to make sacrifices to her. Therefore, a water marriage is viewed as tempting but dangerous. Very often, human beings taking the risk of marrying in the water are unhappy and frustrated because they are unable to meet the expectations of their spiritual relationship and their earthly marriage at the same time (Bastian 1997: 123-130). In Congolese popular painting, Mami Wata is almost always presented as a white woman sitting by the side of the water and displaying a fish tail (Biaya 1988: 98). Given the widespread ideas about the dangers of concluding a water marriage with Mami Wata and given the ways in which Congolese artists usually depict Mami Wata in their paintings, it is not really surprising that creuseurs in Kalabi think that swimming in the water should definitely be avoided. A second possible explanation for the fact that artisanal miners consider the water of the Kalabi Lake as

dangerous is that oral traditions of the Sanga ethnic group (cfr. supra) contain a story about a large group of ancestors committing suicide by throwing themselves into a lake. According to this story, members of the ‘elephant children’ (*Bena Nzovu*), the most dominant clan among the Sanga, were so fed up with the attacks of neighbouring Lunda groups that they formed a queue, connected themselves to a rope and then stepped into a lake called Kiziba Pande<sup>152</sup>. Since this story still circulates among the Sanga today and since the Kiziba lake lies close to the Kalabi mine, it cannot be excluded that the story has influenced the ideas of Kalabi’s creuseurs about the female mining spirit living in the lake and imposing taboos on them.

Finally, as far as the taboo on excrement (*mavi*) and urine (*mikoyo*) is concerned, it is useful to bear in mind Douglas’ observation that substances like these are often considered as potentially dangerous because they are associated with the margins of the human body (Douglas 2006 (1966)). In my analysis of creuseurs’ funeral songs (cfr. supra: 4.2.4), I have argued that bodily margins are viewed as powerful and dangerous in Katanga. Generally speaking, it is absolutely forbidden to relieve oneself in public<sup>153</sup>. When someone violates this rule, he or she is automatically suspected of being a witch. An expression often used in this context is ‘*anatuloka*’, which means ‘he/she bewitches us’. It happens quite frequently that people tell each other stories about shit being used for occult purposes. One digger told me that his brother, a geologist who had managed to obtain a high position with the Gécamines branch in Kolwezi, had been killed in a witchcraft incident involving the use of faeces. Another digger informed me that he had found faeces in the mineshaft he was working in. In his opinion, this was a clear sign that jealous colleagues of his were trying to kill him through witchcraft. So, obviously, bodily refuse is banned from the space of the mine, because it is believed to be very destructive, especially if it is used by people with evil intentions.

The preceding analysis of the most important taboos observed by Katangese artisanal miners has shown that the Katangese mining subculture has not appeared out of thin air. Old mining-related ideas and practices have been given new meanings and a new subculture has been able to come into

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<sup>152</sup> Reportedly, all Bena Nzovu drowned except for three survivors, namely Ina Kiluba - the first (female) chief of the Bena Nzovu – her daughter Kikushi and her son-in-law Makululu. Makululu is said to have made the escape possible by cutting the end of the rope with a knife (Grévisse 1956: 83-85).

<sup>153</sup> It is important to note that there is no ethnographic evidence of scatological obsessions in Katanga. In Lwambo, where I did most of my fieldwork, it is very common to see occupants of different houses sharing the same toilet, usually a hole in the ground surrounded by a small quadrangular brick shack of approximately 1.60 metres high, carrying no roof. In the hotel where I was staying, people were accustomed to using the toilet shack for their daily showers, that is, one in the morning, before starting their daily activities, and one in the afternoon, after coming back from work. In spite of the fact that the hotel manager had put up a sign asking customers to wash away their faeces after defecating, his call for cleanliness was not always obeyed. To my great surprise, nobody ever complained about this. Apparently, hotel-dwellers were used to cleaning up the mess of other people before taking a shower (*kunawa*) in the toilet shack. Another indication of the fact that people in Katanga do not take special precautions to protect themselves against faecal pollution is that, in European-style public toilets, such as those of the Xaverian secondary school in Likasi, rubbish bins standing next to toilet seats are always filled to the top with used toilet paper.



existence thanks to the successful exchange of these meanings between people with a 'symmetry of perspectives' (Hannerz 1992: 65-67; 70-72). Groups of people living in the same material conditions and facing more or less the same challenges have started looking for ways to make sense of their joint predicament and, in the process of doing so, they have borrowed elements from various cultural sources, putting these together into a new hybrid mix.

It should be noted that the abovementioned mining taboos are not the only elements from local cultural traditions that are being recycled by creuseurs. The image of a punishing supernatural being also has a long genealogy. In all likelihood, it dates back to pre-colonial times. During a visit to Kalabi in the beginning of the 1880s, Hermenegildo Capello and Roberto Ivens, two Portuguese explorers sent out by the Portuguese king to do an overview of all natural resources in the area between the coast of Angola and the coast of Mozambique, noticed that all activities in the mine had come to a complete standstill. When they asked local people about the reasons for this work stoppage, they were told a remarkable story:

Kalabi was deserted when we visited it, as a result of, so we were told, a collapse that had occurred two years earlier and that had made a lot of victims. The owner of the mine is a woman, whom we met later on – (she was) called Inafumo – and it appears that the exploration in specific areas of the mine took place on the basis of certain dreams of this woman. She was the one, who, in a nightmare, saw the ore vein, or the mineral deposit, or whatever it was, that caused the abovementioned disaster. And therefore, still upset by the fact that she had caused so much sorrow, the woman did not want that place to be touched anywhere (Capello & Ivens 1886: 69-70).

The woman who was called 'Inafumo' in the abovementioned quote and who was described as the owner of the mine was probably *inamfumu*<sup>154</sup>, a ritual specialist assisting the *mwine ntanda* or clan chief. According to Ivens and Capello, *inamfumu* had received a vision two years prior to their visit, which had made it clear to her that a terrible accident was about to happen in the Kalabi mine, which would claim a lot of casualties. When her prophecy proved to be true, she no longer allowed people to work in the mine until she would get a dream that was a little more positive.

During the colonial period, people also talked about the presence of a punishing supernatural being in Kalabi. The former workers of Armand Hedou, who were involved in an industrial mining project in the second half of the 1940s (see chapter 2), told me they were forced to put a stop to their activities

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<sup>154</sup> *Inamfumu* was a ritual specialist embodying the autochthonous aspect of power and symbolizing the matrilineal system of succession among the Sanga. The person chosen to become the clan chief's *inamfumu* was always a relative but never his mother. She was actively involved in the selection and inauguration of new chiefs and was also expected to preserve the regalia (Legros 1996: 177).

due to problems with rising groundwater. They suspected this was a punishment from God, who was no longer willing to hand over his minerals to human beings and who wanted them to leave the Kalabi mine. In addition to this, they said, God had an assistant in Kalabi, whose name was Sormon. Sormon was portrayed as an angel, wearing a two-piece suit and constantly taking notes. Hedo's former employees believed that, during colonial times, the whites regularly held a ceremony in honour of Sormon, involving a coffin that was left behind in the mine. It was rumoured that Sormon travelled all around the Copperbelt until he reached the Zambian town of Ndola, where he disappeared under the ground.

So, whereas Capello and Ivens did not give a specific name to the punishing supernatural being in Kalabi, limiting themselves to the suggestion that this invisible entity had passed on some information to 'Inafumo', the alleged female owner of the mine, Hedo's workers called it Sormon, a name which probably referred to the Solomoni snake, one of the two different water beings in the folklore of the Lamba-speaking peoples in the Central African Copperbelt. According to American anthropologist Siegel, Lamba informants claim that the Solomoni or Nsanguini snake is responsible for the floodings in the Zambian mines of Mufulire and Roan Antelope in the first half of the twentieth century (Siegel 2000: 5; 10, footnote 4). Given the fact that the problems with rising groundwater in the mine of Kalabi are similar to the ones in the mines of Mufulire and Roan Antelope, and considering the large distribution of the term 'Solomoni', both in the Zambian and the Congolese part of the Copperbelt, there can hardly be any doubt that Hedo's workers were inspired by the water snake Solomoni when they were using the term Sormon<sup>155</sup>.

Another major source of inspiration for the stories of Hedo's workers about the punishing supernatural being in Kalabi was the Bible. When they described the rising of the groundwater as a punishment from God, they referred to the famous Biblical story about the Flood, in which it is stated that Jahwe is so disappointed about the bad behaviour of the human race that he lets it rain for forty days. The rising water does not only cover the mountains, but everything on earth (Genesis, chapters 3 to 8). It is

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<sup>155</sup> Instead of the name Sormon, some people used the name Pumina. In Coupez's dictionary *Kisanga-Français*, Pumina is described as an imaginary fat-tailed snake, moving extremely slowly and living inside mountain caves. The snake is believed to be dangerous: it tends to destroy all the plants it finds on its way and it uses its breath to kill everyone it meets (Coupez 1976: 228). According to Siegel, Mpumina, just like Kilumba, is of Luba origin. He identifies Mpumina as a huge snake with multiple tails, which lives in the lakes of Boya and Bupemba, amongst other places. It is believed that people who get to see Mpumina immediately die on the spot (Siegel 2000: 4). In the *Vocabulary of the town of Elisabethville*, a document found in 1966 by the American historian Fetter and constituting a fascinating example of popular history in a written form, there is one story in which the names of Mpumina and Somon are used as synonyms. The story relates how, in 1928, a French engineer descended into a deep pit with the intention of pulling Mpumina or Somon to the surface with a rope. Mpumina refused to be pulled up, because the whites had made him go from one place to another way too often. He told the French engineer he was only prepared to move if the engineer would sacrifice thousands of Whites to him, adding that he had become tired of receiving Blacks as a sacrifice, 'without there being a reason for it' (Fabian 1990: 112-113). Finally, several of my own informants described Pumina as 'tremblement de la terre', a subterranean snake causing earthquakes.

difficult to say which Bible section Hedo's workers had in mind when they depicted Sormon as an angel disappearing under the ground. Possibly, they referred to the Book of Revelations, of which the twelfth chapter contains a story about angels, who – just like Sormon – descend from Heaven on earth to disappear eventually<sup>156</sup>.

Whatever may be the Bible section Hedo's workers were alluding to, the important thing to remember is that they considered him as an evil angel, who had the same name as a local water spirit and who demanded human sacrifices. That they portrayed him as a person in a two-piece snit taking notes is not a coincidence: they were convinced that both in terms of behaviour and in terms of clothing style he looked very much like their white superiors and that he probably conspired with them. In their stories about Sormon, Hedo's workers expressed criticism on the circumstances in which they had to live and work during the colonial period. They held Whites responsible for all the mining accidents they had to cope with and suspected them of having killed black labourers through deadly mining accidents in order to increase the production of their mines.

One may wonder what has been the main cause of the changing representations of the punishing supernatural being supervising Kalabi's mineral wealth. In his book *'The devil and commodity fetishism in South America'* (1980), Taussig has argued that the introduction of a capitalist mode of production in pre-capitalist Bolivia has been responsible for several changes in local beliefs about mining spirits. According to Taussig, the Spanish decision to turn mining into a cornerstone of the colonial economy has given rise to a new conceptualization of a local figure called Tio (uncle). Today, Bolivian miners have ambivalent feelings towards Tio: they not only fear him, but they also hate and serve him. Tio is seen as the spirit owner of the mine and the embodiment of evil. In Taussig's view, the replacement of the pre-capitalist mode of production by a capitalist mode of production has created feelings of alienation among the Bolivian mining population, which explains why Tio has gradually changed into a diabolic figure claiming human victims (Taussig 1980, discussed in Godoy 1985: 209 and Appadurai 1986: 53).

To a certain extent, a similar process can be said to have taken place in Katanga. The second chapter of this dissertation has made it clear that the living and working conditions of Katangese miners in the

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<sup>156</sup> The story starts with a scene in which a woman, who is about to give birth to a son, is being threatened by the Devil, who has taken the shape of a Dragon and who wants to devour the woman's unborn child. However, God comes to the woman's rescue: he evacuates the child and gives the woman the opportunity to escape to the desert. In the second scene of the story, a war breaks out in Heaven between, on the one hand, Michael and his angels, and, on the other hand, the Devil and his angels. The latter are defeated: they are chased from Heaven and cast on earth. In the third scene, it is described how the Devil continues his attempts to catch her. Still in the shape of a dragon, he starts pursuing her, spitting a stream of water from his mouth in hopes that the woman will be carried away by the water. This time it is the earth that comes to the woman's rescue: it opens its mouth and swallows the stream of water spit out by the devilish dragon. The story ends with the withdrawal of the Devil, who is determined to harass other God-fearing people as long as he can (Book of Revelations 12: 1-18).

early years of the existence of the *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* were very harsh. The colonial mining company was regarded as a real man-eater, because many people died as a result of diseases and heavy mining accidents. From this perspective, it is not really surprising that employees of the UMHK portrayed Sormon as an evil angel in the same way as Bolivian miners presented Tio as a devilish figure. Having said this, I disagree with Taussig's suggestion that the introduction of a capitalism mode of production is the only factor that can be held responsible for the transformation of people's ideas and beliefs about mining spirits. In Katanga, changing gender relations have also had an important impact on the representation of female mining spirits. If today's artisanal miners present mining spirits as jealous, bossy and vindictive women, this is definitely due to their anxieties about the growing economic independence of women and the subversion of the patriarchal system in Katangese society (see chapter 3).

The important thing to remember is that, just like the taboos mentioned earlier on in the text, the image of a punishing supernatural being is very old. Diggers like Masangu recycle these elements, reinterpret them and adapt them to new socio-economic conditions. When we examine Masangu's story, we notice that he comes up with a creative mix of different ideas about the relationship between mining and gender that have come into existence in the course of history. From his story, it can be gathered that creuseurs still see female sexuality as a threat to the mining process, but that they conceptualize this threat in a different manner. While, previously, the smelting furnace was associated with female fertility and was therefore often given feminine features, it is now the whole mine that is associated with female fertility and believed to be supervised by a female owner, to whom characteristics are ascribed that are similar to the ones of Mami Wata, to those of the spirit of a deceased spouse (*muufu*) and to those of local water spirits. While, previously, sexuality was considered a threat to the result of the smelting process (i.e. the metal), sexual intercourse is now viewed as a threat to the lives of the diggers themselves. And while in the old days the risk of pollution was believed to be relatively small, it is now seen as quite big. Creuseurs have the impression that certain categories of women such as prostitutes and female mineral buyers are deliberately circling around the mining camp, intent on polluting the mine with their presence. It is as if the female mining spirit calls the creuseurs to order, reminding them of the fact that they have come to the mine to prove their male pride by doing a dangerous job and by taking risks, not by partying all the time. The spirit requires that the mine remains an exclusively male space and she demands absolute fidelity from all the miners during working hours. The motive of the flood, which already popped up in the stories of Armand Hedo's former workers, is raked up again by Masangu and his colleagues to establish a connection between the promiscuity of creuseurs and problems with rising groundwater.

### 4.3.2 Lovers in the twilight zone

The second 'fantastic border tale' about the female mining spirit of Kalabi was told to me by a creuseur by the name of Chizo Trinita Bush Fiston. He was in his early thirties and presented himself as the son of a Ndembo father and a Chokwe mother. When, after the death of his father, his mother remarried with a man from Likasi, he was the only child she took with her. Most of Trinita's family members were living in Likasi, Kolwezi, Dilolo and Muchacha, where they were employed by the national railway company SNCC. Trinita had not finished secondary school and he had been working as an artisanal miner since the beginning of the 1990s. In Lwambo, he was part of a digging team composed only of followers of the Rastafarian movement (see chapter 5). His story about the female mining spirit went as follows:

It is forbidden for women to enter the mine. It is very much forbidden. In this type of work... the hill that we climb belongs to a woman. Even if you are sleeping around. Before you climb the hill, you have a wash with water. All those things disappear (i.e. the things that remind one of the woman the creuseur has slept with). If you climb the hill, you will work well. But if a woman climbs the hill, it is as if she goes there to tread on those things. After all, a female mining spirit is jealous. How does that jealousy work? She will not accept that I, as a man... because the spirit in the underground loves me. The way I go in, she loves me (...). There can be a problem and you (= the author) will die. But me down there – since the spirit loves me already, I can't die. I will get out (...). Even after a week, I will get out. After all, she loves me, the way I work. And I respect her during my work down there (...). She said she didn't like to see her female congener again. 'I don't want you to bring me dirt – like going to the toilet, don't do it in there'. (...) 'You go out (=outside the mine), you make money, you get drunk of all the beer you drink, you can't tell anyone.' And some people perish. Sometimes you are sleeping and the woman from the hill comes to you at night, she makes you dream: 'Don't go!' And you won't go. If you listen, you won't go. And if you don't listen and you still go, you might break your foot or die. If you die, it's your body here that dies. In the place you are going to, you are together with the spirit, according to the way she loved you. (...) You are participating in all the things in the (invisible) world. (...) If you were a compassionate person, you can watch: this person enters the mine in a bad way, he isn't washing with water, he isn't doing this or that. He's sleeping with other women, he doesn't have a wash with water. I want to take him along so that he can help his companions with their production. If you are there (alongside the spirit), you can give your go-ahead and say: 'Let this person come'. (...) Maybe they don't succeed in taking you out. You stay behind in the ground. At that point, you have already changed into raw material. The ones who are opening things up again<sup>157</sup> are hacking away that raw material. They may find your body, they will find it there. They will take it out, but you have already died. They must reproduce you, so that you are like raw material, according to how the spirit will change you.

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<sup>157</sup> Trinita is talking about the people who are re-opening a pit after the collapse of a mine shaft. They do this by starting a new operation of *découverte*.

Clearly, Trinita's story has a lot of things in common with Masungu's: there are references to a number of taboos that are supposed to prevent the pollution of the mine, there are suggestions that women constitute the most important source of pollution and that, therefore, they have to be kept away from the mine, it is recognized that violations of the mining taboos can have far-reaching consequences and it is remarked that the female mining spirit is the owner of the minerals as well as the supervisor of mining taboos.

Despite the similarities between the two stories, there are also a number of differences. First of all, contrary to Masungu, Trinita dwells extensively on the issue of death, trying to form an idea of what happens to creuseurs who die in a mining accident. Of course, his reflections on 'the great beyond' are not coincidental. As I have already pointed out in the first part of this chapter, creuseurs have the impression they are constantly floating between life and death. For his part, Trinita is convinced there is a distinction between body and soul. He suggests that the souls of deceased miners are controlled by the female mining spirit, while their bodies are transformed into minerals. Furthermore, he believes that what creuseurs are bringing to the surface in the course of the mining process are actually the remains of dead colleagues. It seems likely that this idea of human remains transformed into minerals is a variation on the old idea of human sacrifices as a *conditio sine qua non* for a fruitful mining production (cfr. *supra*: the story of Hedo's workers about Sormon).

Apart from this, Trinita also distinguishes himself from Masungu by paying a lot of attention to the interplay between the visible and the invisible. Instead of just making mention of the female mining spirit's capacity of inflicting disciplinary punishment on creuseurs, he gives a lengthy description of a possible post-punishment scenario, in other words, of the things that may happen in the aftermath of the mining spirit's punishments. De Boeck has pointed out that, in Kinshasa, there is a lot of interaction between the invisible and the visible world. In his opinion, the invisible world has started to dominate the visible one and the distinction between the two is becoming more and more blurry (De Boeck & Plissart 2004: 56-58). Judging by Trinita's story, a similar situation can be observed in the Katangese mines. Creuseurs are under the impression that female mining spirits actively try to manipulate things in the visible world. However, though people like Trinita willingly accept the dominance of invisible supernatural beings, they still like to think that they are able to keep some form of agency. This explains why they fantasize about secretly cheating on the female mining spirit by sleeping with prostitutes and why they continue to dream about assisting the female mining spirit in monitoring creuseurs' compliance with the mining taboos (by giving her advice about which creuseurs deserve punishment for their misbehaviour).

The third difference between Masungu's story and Trinita's story has to do with the way in which the relationship between the creuseurs and the mining spirit is portrayed. Masungu creates the impression

that all creuseurs are on equal terms as far as their dealings with the mining spirit are concerned, but Trinita suggests that a few of them are lucky enough to enter into a kind of love affair with the spirit, after seeing her in a dream<sup>158</sup>. As a matter of fact, he insinuates that these men are involved in a polyandric relationship: they all have an affair with the same woman, to whom they have to surrender in order to obtain minerals. This looks a lot like the situation of creuseurs in the visible world, in the sense that creuseurs are customers of a small number of prostitutes, to whom they have to pay money in exchange for sex. Consequently, it seems plausible that Trinita uses his story about the female mining spirit first and foremost to express his feelings about the advantages and disadvantages of alternative forms of sexuality in the mining areas.

Conventional rules in terms of the interaction between men and women in Katangese society make it increasingly difficult for young people to build up a serious relationship. When a man wants to start a relationship with a woman, he finds himself caught in a kind of catch-22 situation: on the one hand, he is forced to marry her officially in order to protect both his and her respectability, but, on the other hand, due to the economic crisis, he is often unable to pay off the entire bride price (*mari*) straight away, in which case there continues to be a shadow of illegality about the marriage. Men concluding marriages without paying off the full amount of the bride price instantly tend to varnish over their shortcomings by saying 'at the in-laws is at the rubbish dump' (*ku buko ni ku buchafu*). By using this expression, they want to indicate that they consider the money of the bride price as wasted money, for they can no longer use it to satisfy their personal needs. For this reason, they think it is absolutely acceptable for them to take all the time they need to complete the payment of the bride price.

One of the only ways to live together with a woman without concluding an official marriage is by using the strategy of 'entering through the window' (*kuingia pa fenêtre*)<sup>159</sup>. When a man does not relish the prospect of having to spend a long time collecting money for the bride price, he can choose to make his partner pregnant right away. By opting for this strategy, he confronts his parents-in-law with a *fait accompli*, forcing them to give him custody of their daughter. After all, according to local traditions, it is standard practice to leave a girl at the doorstep of her impregnator in case of a pre-marital pregnancy. The expression '*kuingia pa fenêtre*' indicates that this type of short-cut marriage is considered as a form of theft: the man involved in it is accused of having entered the home of his in-

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<sup>158</sup> Stories like these – of people claiming to have a family relationship with a spirit – also occur in West Africa. In an article on the Igbo in Southeastern Nigeria, Bastian has described how Mami Wata is believed to have daughters and husbands among members of the human race. These people think that their family link with Mami Wata helps them to obtain a privileged access to money and material goods (Bastian 1997: 124-126).

<sup>159</sup> The same strategy also exists in other parts of Congo. In Kinshasa, it is called a '*mariage raccourci*' (De Boeck & Plissart 2004: 194-195). According to Pype, the economic crisis and the inflation of the bride price account for the rise of the average age at which people currently get married in the Congolese capital (Pype 2008: 303).

laws like a burglar and of having encouraged his partner to rise up against her rightful guardians (*kutombosha mtoto wa benyewe*: inciting the owners' child to revolt). A man refusing to pay the bride price is usually accused of performing an antisocial act, as he jeopardizes the establishment of a permanent connection and a relationship of reciprocity between two families. By disregarding conventional marriage procedures, he gives the impression that he makes little of the rights and obligations associated with a normal marital alliance. He seems to suggest that he does not want to compensate his family-in-law for the loss of a family member, that he refuses to take responsibility for securing the livelihoods of his (future) household members, and that he does not find it important to obtain rights over children issuing from the relationship.

Whereas, in the rest of Katangese society, relationships between men and women are governed by a number of strict rules and regulations, in the mining areas, there is a relatively high level of permissiveness in this respect. Basically, creuseurs can freely act out their sexuality and experiment with alternative forms of cohabitation without having to bother about other people's opinions. Within the mining community, going to the hookers is viewed as common practice, while living together with a woman without even thinking about a long-term commitment is seen as a very natural thing to do. The latter form of cohabitation is described with the French term '*hébergement*' (i.e. accommodation) and the woman involved is called a '*habala*', which is the Swahili word for mistress. For a creuseur, the main advantages of hooking up with a *habala* are that, in return for free board and lodging, she offers him free sexual services and relieves him of household chores like cooking, doing the dishes and doing the laundry.

Throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, mine marriages are generally characterized by a high degree of informality, ephemerality and down-to-earthness. There are no marriage rites, there is no marriage contract and both parties know that their alliance will probably cease to exist as soon as one of them moves to another mine. Still, very often there are striking parallels between mine marriages and marriages outside the world of mining (Moodie et al. 1988; Parpart 1994; Epprecht 2001; Werthmann 2009). In Katanga, the gender roles and power relations within mine marriages strongly resemble those within ordinary marriages. While men are convinced it is their right and duty to go to an outside space (i.e. the mine) in order to earn themselves a living, women know they are expected to stay inside the mining camp and do the housekeeping. Moreover, men occupy dominant positions, take the final decisions with regard to the household budget and claim absolute obedience and faithfulness from their partners, at least for as long as they are together and living under the same roof.

Although creuseurs really enjoy their sexual freedom during their stay in the mining areas, they know that the generalized state of permissiveness creates a number of disadvantages as well. First of all, they realize they are losing control over female sexuality. Normally, in Katanga, marriage forces women



into a subordinate position vis-à-vis their spouses. The irreversibility of this state of submissiveness is highlighted by the expression '*mwanamuke ku bukweri iko sa mbuji banaisha kufunga kambo mu shingo*', which can be translated as '*a married woman is like a goat with a rope around its neck*'. The idea is that, just like a tethered goat can only go where its master wants it to go, the personal freedom of a married woman is entirely at the discretion of the man who has paid her bride price. As creuseurs concluding mine marriages do not pay a bride price for the women they are making love to or living together with, however, they are unable to assert any rights over them. Should these women decide to swap them for other partners, there is nothing they can do about it. Furthermore, they are unable to prevent them from having several lovers at the same time. This overtly adulterous behaviour on the part of women does not only constitute an attack on the sexual dominance of creuseurs, it is also an assault on their sense of security. As I have already shown in chapter 3, it is generally believed that women can provoke the collapse of mineshafts if they are having illicit sexual intercourse while their partners are working in the mine (see Herbert 1993: 118).

The second disadvantage of the sexual permissiveness in the mining areas is that it can provoke very negative reactions from people outside the mining subculture. For instance, *habalas* who deliberately go after married creuseurs run the risk of being assaulted by the legal spouses of their lovers (*bibi wa ku mlango*: the spouse at the door (of one's house) / *petit maman*: little mother / *maman wa chumba*: mother of the room / *chef d'état-major*: Chief-of-Staff), who accuse them of committing 'debauchery' (*makoji*). In fact, the spectacular boom of artisanal mining has given rise to a real *makoji* psychosis in Katanga. Many women are afraid that their husbands, once they have moved to one of the mining areas, will start spending most of their money on their mistresses, which, of course, will have a negative effect on their willingness to send remittances. In addition to this, women fear that their husbands will lose their heads over these *habalas* and perhaps even go as far as abandoning their families altogether. For women who entirely depend on their husband's income for their daily survival, this is a real nightmare. While some of them decide to tolerate the eccentricities of their husbands, convincing themselves that it will not make any difference whether they raise a protest or not - an attitude described as 'persisting in marriage' (*kuvumiria bukweri*) - others pugnaciously travel to their husbands' workplaces with the intention of causing a dreadful scene there. Well aware of the existence of a double sexual standard - according to which sexual misbehaviour by men is condoned whereas sexual misbehaviour by women is held up to scorn - they do not attack their husbands directly but

they throw themselves at the women who try to steal their husbands away from them (*kuiba bwana*: to steal a husband)<sup>160</sup>.

The third disadvantage of the sexual permissiveness in the mining areas is that a creuseur can get into serious trouble if his *habala* dies. Since he has not paid a bride price and has therefore remained a complete stranger to the *habala*'s family members, there is no way he can be invited to undergo the traditional purification ceremony called '*kutengeneza muntu*'. As I have explained earlier on in this chapter, the ceremony of '*kutengeneza muntu*' (to prepare the human being) is held to mark the end of the mourning period and is meant to relieve the widower from the spirit of his deceased wife (*muufu*). A man who is not ritually cleansed after the death of his partner is believed to be exposed to extreme danger. As a matter of fact, he has every chance that the *muufu* will stay with him (*atambakiria*), follow him around (*atamfwata*) and manifest itself all the time. Furthermore, he runs the risk of falling prey to witchcraft (*bulozi*). In Katanga, there is a widespread belief that people with bad intentions can make the spirits of the deceased work for them (*kutumikisha*) and that they can easily unleash them to their enemies, if they desire to do so.

The story of Trinita shows that creuseurs have ambiguous feelings about the alternative forms of sexuality in the mining areas. On the one hand, they consider unbridled sex to be part and parcel of the process of being released after a long day of hard work in the mine, but, on the other hand, they are worried about the consequences of their unconventional sexual behaviour. Trinita and his colleagues wonder whether the mining process will still be safe and they are worried about how their family members and friends will react if they find out about their lawless behaviour. Just like Masangu, Trinita creates the impression that the female mining spirit forces creuseurs to stay alert and prevents them from going off the rails completely.

### 4.3.3 Musalaba and Madame Hélène

Mwenzé Ngoy, who had not yet reached the age of 20, was the narrator of the third 'fantastic border tale' about the female mining spirit of Kalabi. According to his own account, he was the son of a mother from Likasi and a father from the Equateur province. As a result of the fact that his father had been transferred many times in the course of his career as a professional soldier, Ngoy had spent his

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<sup>160</sup> Creuseurs are not the only ones getting involved in *makoji* incidents. The same thing also happens to *négociants*. At a certain point in my fieldwork, there was an incident in hotel Kyandimuna in Lwambo which involved the president of the committee of *négociants* in Kalabi. He shared his hotel room with his 18 year old mistress, whom he had forbidden to walk around the streets of Lwambo on her own, because he was afraid his wife in Likasi would find out he was cheating on her. When, eventually, the news on his love affair did leak out, his wife came to the hotel in order to beat up the young girl. Nevertheless, the *habala* managed to escape from the hotel thanks to a swift intervention by the *négociant*, who gave his wife a beating in front of all the other hotel guests in order to punish her for causing such an embarrassing scene.

youth on different locations, leaving school in the first year of the *Cycle d'Orientation* (C.O.). After spending a couple of years selling clothes on the market of the Kikula neighbourhood in Likasi, he had accepted an invitation by friends of his to continue his activities as a trader in the mining camp of Shinkolobwe, a mine which had then just been declared accessible to artisanal miners by the Congolese government. While, during the day, he worked as a creuseur in the mine, in the evenings, he tried to make some extra money by selling clothes. According to Ngoy, both the mine of Shinkolobwe and the mine of Kalabi were supervised by Madame H  l  ne, a white spirit who punished the creuseurs severely every time they dared to violate her taboos. Ngoy told me that Madame H  l  ne had been responsible for his own departure from Shinkolobwe:

The thing that made us leave Kalabi was the collapse of a mineshaft. When the collapse occurred, we went to the hill for three days in order to do the *d  couverture* (i.e. to evacuate the victims from underneath the rubble). We managed to bring 19 people to the surface, two of whom were still alive: a child and an old man. (...) But the things the child said when he came out! (...) He (=the child) was still very young, he was in the second year of primary school. During the holidays, he heard all sorts of stories about Shinko. He decided to go and work there as a porter (*nkwanda*). When the mineshaft collapsed, the child found himself trapped. The old man (who was stuck in the collapsed mineshaft, together with the child) was thirsty, so he prayed: 'Madame H  l  ne, give me something to drink, give me some water.' The child heard a voice, but he didn't see anybody. The people (outside the mineshaft) were mourning, they were crying. We were trying to get them out, but we didn't know there were people down there talking (...) The child yelled: 'Come on, Musalaba, I am thirsty too, how can I get some water?' He (=the old man) said: 'My little one, that is just a small problem'. He said: 'Give him something to drink as well.' As soon as he had stopped talking, the child was holding a mug in his hands and he was being poured out some water. All he could see was a white silhouette. He was drinking, he was very thirsty. On the second day, we didn't find anything. On the third day, we evacuated 19 people. He... him alone, the pit collapsed, bof! (imitates the sound of a collapse). The people were amazed! Another collapse! (...) 'Old Musalaba, is that you?' 'Yes, it's me, don't be afraid of me, get me out.' We got him out. He said: 'Take the little one out as well, he's still down there'. (...) We found the child, he was completely covered with rubble. We got him out and we were very surprised, telling ourselves it must have been (the result of) fetishes. Then the old man asked: 'Why have all of you gathered together here?' We were very numerous and we asked him: 'Don't you know what happened?' He asked: 'What happened here?' We told him: 'Do you realize we got you out?' He didn't believe it and said: 'Well, little one, I'm off'. And he went off to his village, his wife was already mourning. She didn't know anything and people had come to tell her: 'Don't hope for Musalaba (i.e. don't expect to see him back again), he was working at the far end of the tableau'. She (=the wife of the old man) saw her husband return, she interrupted the mourning, she thought he was a *muufu* (i.e. erring spirit of a dead person) and that is how their marriage ended, they got divorced.

Madame Hélène.... Let's say.... Those were the powers he (=the old man Musalaba) was already carrying. How did it go then.... When he worked in a pit.... Before he entered.... One *kijila* (i.e. taboo) of the pit had to do with wearing a belt. He was wearing a rope. When you saw him, he was wearing a rope or *mutoro* around his waist. He lowered his polo shirt (so that the rope was not visible to outsiders). At a certain point, you could hear him tell his team mates: 'Let's go up to the surface to have a cigarette'. The tobacco tasted sweet (i.e. like sugar) when we were smoking underground. If we wanted to smoke good tobacco, we had to do it on the surface. As soon as we had made it to the surface, the pit collapsed. We thought we owed it to God. But he knew better than that. And all the others (=creuseurs) dropped by, saying: 'Give it (i.e. occult powers) to us as well.' And he replied: 'What shall I do?' After that, they said: 'If you don't give anything, we will take you instead (i.e. we will kill you).' He went to Likasi, left Likasi and came back to Shinko. (imitates the enthusiasm of people who are glad that the old man has come back to Shinko). 'Oh, Musalaba has come, oh, Musalaba has come!' He arrived in the company of a *négociant* (i.e. a mineral buyer). The *négociant* had money in his pocket. They were walking together and he said: 'Team mates, come over here! Tomorrow you will cut minerals. How many tonnes will you cut?' They replied: 'Ah Musalaba, you know how it is. The ore vein is simply (visible at the) tableau, but the collapse is bad stuff (*l'éboul iko faux*), as you know.' And so he said: 'Little one, that's just the way things are, where death is around, that is where the money is coming from. There is no money coming from safe places, only from places where death is around.' He took out some money and distributed it (among the creuseurs). They went down his pit and worked there for three days. The load (of minerals) was taken away. On the fourth or the sixth day, there was a collapse. He (=the old man) went to COM (*Cour d'Ordre Militaire*, court-martial), (...) identified himself and said that there had been a collapse in his pit. By that time, he had already mobilized his special powers. Should they take him to prison, then he would immediately know how to escape. Whatever they did, he already knew how to get out. He offered money for the mourning (*kirio*) (of the deceased miners): 'You will organize the mourning the way it ought to be done. I know the homes of my *équipiers*.' He lied. When six miners had died, he said that only three of them had died. COM said that it was necessary to show him the red card (=indication that his pit had to be closed for security reasons). He retorted that that was fine by him. They showed him the red card. After a week, he went in with money (*anaingia na zakrum*). He arrived at COM and took out his money: 'Let them open my pit'. He (=the COM official) gave him a couple of soldiers, whom he (=the old man) took with him to Shinko. 'Okay, this pit should be opened, it belongs to the captain of COM. Where are the *équipiers*?' The *découverte* (i.e. preparatory excavation works) stepped off. After a while, he arrived once again at the things (*pa bintu* > the place where all the mineral bags were piled up and where government officials were keeping an eye on things). The soldiers returned (and asked:) 'Your supervisor?' (The diggers replied) 'Old Musalaba, the pit is his'. (The soldiers shouted) 'Things will come to the surface there! Things will come to the surface there!' (i.e. the diggers will reach a good production level soon) They (=the soldiers) asked him once again for things (=bribes). (The old man Musalaba said) 'No, no, it's been enough. I've had it with this pit. I don't mind that you're making money. But I've already spent a lot. Each day, I spend 100.000 FC on COM'. He gave it some thinking and said: 'Little one, if you want to work with me, then come to Milele'.

Ngoy's story bears several similarities with the ones of the two other narrators. First, it refers to the existence of a number of taboos imposed by a female mining spirit, who is capable of causing accidents. Ngoy uses his anecdotes about Musalaba to show that the creuseurs cannot violate the spirit's taboos with impunity. Apparently, the accidents in Shinkolobwe were so terrifying and claimed so many victims that Ngoy and his team mates decided to move to another mine.

Second, Ngoy's story once again illustrates the ambiguity of the relationship between the creuseurs and the female mining spirit. On the one hand, Musalaba benefits from his relationship with Madame H  l  ne, in the sense that she offers him something to drink when he is stuck in a mineshaft, that she helps him survive mining accidents and that she helps him get promoted from the level of creuseur to the level of mineral trader, but, on the other hand, he is also faced with the disadvantages of this relationship, namely the fact that he cannot stop his wife from getting a divorce and the fact that he is forced to kill several team mates in a mining accident (in order to satisfy Madame H  l  ne's hunger for human sacrifices).

Third, just like the stories of Masangu and Trinita, Ngoy's refers to the liminal condition of creuseurs permanently stuck in a twilight zone between life and death. Musalaba's statement that money generally comes from places where death is around provides a very clear illustration of the state of mind of people involved in artisanal mining in Katanga. Creuseurs like Masangu, Trinita and Ngoy are very well aware of the fact that their lives are trembling in the balance, but they are still prepared to go down into the mineshaft every day, because they reckon it is one of the only ways to make money. They believe their willingness to take risks will eventually yield the desired result, that, in the end, they will get what they deserved. In a way, they also take the risky nature of artisanal mining as an advantage: it gives them the opportunity to keep up their male pride and to show to the outside world that, despite the economic crisis, they are not planning on throwing in the towel.

It is interesting to have a closer look at Ngoy's remark that Musalaba is wearing a *mutoro* around his waist. In fact, this element supports my hypothesis that creuseurs try to make sense of their own liminal condition by comparing themselves with widowers. *Mutoro* refers to the Luba word *mut  lo*, which means 'mourning cord'. *Mut  lo* is synonymous with *kasak  * and *kason  *. Among the Luba, this cord is worn by the widow or the widower for the entire duration of the mourning period (*disubi*), in order to show that he or she is the spouse of the deceased (widower or husband of the deceased: *mul  me wa muf  *; widow or wife of the deceased: *muk  zi wa muf  *), and that, as a result of this, he or she has to observe a wide range of taboos. During the *disubi*, it is strictly forbidden for widows and widowers to have sexual intercourse. If they violate this taboo, they arouse the anger of their deceased partner. At the end of the mourning, the liminal condition of the widow or widower is ended through the ceremony of *kusubuka luf  *: another person, who has also already lost his partner, takes away the

*mutòlo*. By doing this, he takes away the mourning (*wàmupà lufù*) and he makes it possible for the widow(er) to remarry without having to fear the jealousy of the *mufù* of the deceased (Van Avermaet & Mbuyà 1954: 560, 641; Theuws 1960: 154-163).

So, when Ngoy says that Musalaba is wearing a *mutoro*, he suggests that this creuseur is comparable to a widower, in other words, to the 'husband of a spirit' (*mulùme wa mufù*), someone who carries death with him, who has to take into account various taboos and who has to go through some form of ritual cleansing in order to avoid inciting the wrath of the female spirit watching over him. The *mutoro* is a nice example of an old symbol that is lifted out of its original context and then inserted into the context of artisanal mining, an economic activity characterized by a daily fight with death.

Apart from the similarities between the stories of Masangu, Trinita and Ngoy, there are also a number of differences. Ngoy distinguishes himself from the two other storytellers by not being completely fixated on the decline of the male breadwinner ideal and the dangers associated with men's loss of control over female sexuality. In comparison with Masangu and Trinita, Ngoy pays more attention to the potentially positive effects of staying in a mining area on men's search for new styles of masculinity in times of economic crisis (see chapter 3). He portrays Musalaba as someone who is fond of dangerous situations (*meza moto*), who is able to think ahead (*crâne*), who is able to come up with a solution for all sorts of problems (*bouliste*), who spends a lot of money (*mubinji*) and, finally, who is married and is therefore ascribed a higher level of maturity than his younger colleagues (*mkubwa*). Obviously, Ngoy looks upon Musalaba as a kind of role model. He is a great admirer of men who, despite being enmeshed in a depressing climate of danger, violence, clientelism and asymmetric power relationships, succeed in rising from the ranks thanks to their own shrewdness, insight and guts. Musalaba embodies everything Ngoy wants to be: a real daredevil, well-beloved among his colleagues, living beyond his means and adopting a fearless attitude in his confrontations with death and with cases of power abuse by public servants.

The second way in which Ngoy distinguishes himself from the other two narrators is by creating a very realistic setting for his story. Instead of suggesting that the Musalaba incident took place in an imaginary place, he claims that it occurred in an environment that is easily recognizable to all artisanal miners in Katanga. It is quite significant that he makes mention of the *Cour d'Ordre Militaire* (COM)<sup>161</sup>, an institution epitomizing the malfunctioning of the state in the eyes of many Congolese.

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<sup>161</sup> The *Cour d'Ordre Militaire* (COM) was established by Laurent-Désiré Kabila. While, originally, COM was only allowed to try cases involving members of the Congolese army, its jurisdiction was expanded after the outbreak of the second Congo war in August 1998. According to Amnesty International, COM has 'tried and imprisoned dozens of civilians, including political prisoners and human rights defenders, after unfair trials'. It is unclear whether COM still exists today. In November

Whereas, normally, the COM is only operational in times of war, when it is authorized to deal with military cases and police issues, in reality, ordinary citizens such as Musalaba can also be forced to appear before this court, even in peacetime. People who have to make their appearance before the COM are usually very scared, because the court has a very bad reputation in terms of human rights violations (Amnesty International 2003, United Nations 2003, Human Rights Watch 2008). There are rumours that some people get convicted without being heard, while others are subjected to corporal punishments. Just like so many other government institutions, COM is also notorious for its illegal involvement in the artisanal mining sector.

In addition to the power abuse by COM, the narrator also refers to another characteristic of the political economy of resource exploitation in Katanga, namely the extortion of artisanal miners and mineral buyers by officials responsible for public order. It happens quite frequently that individuals like Musalaba are faced with demands for bribes by soldiers or police officers seeking to supplement their meagre and irregularly paid salaries. Exactions usually take place at road blocks. Only creuseurs and négociants willing to pay illegal taxes are granted passage. In January 2007, 700 creuseurs working in the Kamatanda mine close to Likasi expressed their indignation over recurrent harassments by members of the military. Apparently, creuseurs were forced to hand over half of their minerals to groups of soldiers, who sometimes went as far as robbing them of all their belongings<sup>162</sup>. When abuses like these occur too often, they tend to provoke violent protest. In September 2007, artisanal miners from the Kapata neighbourhood in Kolwezi, who disagreed with the creation of roadblocks by the industrial guard of the mining parastatal Gécamines, went into battle against the police in the centre of Kolwezi. While 11 police officers were badly wounded by stones thrown by demonstrators, 2 creuseurs were hit by police bullets<sup>163</sup>. In spite of promises by the Katangese provincial authorities to clamp down on extortion in the artisanal mining sector, the phenomenon has continued to exist. In the uranium mine of Shinkolobwe, where mining has been officially forbidden since 2004, creuseurs currently pay bribes to the military in order to be able to continue their activities and evacuate their minerals (de Koning 2009).

In all likelihood, Ngoy inserts references to the political economy into his story in order to encourage listeners to identify with the protagonist. All people living and working in artisanal mines know what it feels like to be constantly confronted with insecurity and uncertainty. Therefore, the narrator can be sure that his audience will sympathize with Musalaba, a roguish character trained in outsmarting his

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and December 2002, two decrees were passed that seemed to prepare its complete and immediate abolition (Amnesty International 2003).

<sup>162</sup> 'Katanga: près de 700 creuseurs victimes de tracasseries à Kamatanda', Radio Okapi, 11 January 2007.

<sup>163</sup> 'Kolwezi: affrontement sanglant entre creuseurs et policiers', Radio Okapi, 27 September 2007.

powerful and corrupt opponents. Ngoy's picaresque story is meant to put courage into creuseurs who feel disheartened by the unfair living and working conditions in the mines. Musalaba's experiences are intended to show that one can survive hardship by embracing the *kivoyou* lifestyle that is so characteristic of the Katangese mining subculture (see chapter 3). The moral of the story seems to be that, by behaving as rascals (*voyous*), obeying the orders of the female mining spirit, and learning how to play the 'resource game' in a skilful fashion, creuseurs can overcome even the greatest obstacles in their everyday lives.

The third way in which Ngoy distinguishes himself from the two other narrators is by throwing a new light on Madame Héléne's influence on the lives and practices of the creuseurs. Although he acknowledges her ownership of the minerals as well as her status as the mine's guardian and gatekeeper, he also suggests that she is merely one of the many supernatural beings enabling Musalaba to reach a higher level of material wealth. Put differently: Ngoy locates Madame Héléne in a larger configuration of supernatural powers, giving the impression that she is not the only one creuseurs can address themselves to when they want to find a solution for their problems.

As Ellis and Ter Haar have noted, throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, popular literature, rumours and stories are rife with references to individuals acquiring material wealth by making payments to spiritual beings. However, what appears to be a fairly new phenomenon is that people no longer seem to be sure which spiritual being they should get in touch with in order to have the best chances to be successful in their endeavours. It is as if the general uncertainty and unpredictability of social life in Sub-Saharan Africa have an impact on people's perception of the spiritual world. When people are in need of spiritual support, they can ask advice to a wide range of spiritual experts, including prophets, diviners and healers (Ellis & Ter Haar 2004: 123; 139-140).

Sanders has remarked that '*since the market is now more vocally translocal and "freer" than ever before, so, too, are the possibilities for (...) the exchange of occult powers*' (Sanders 2001: 177). In other words, trade liberalization has gone hand in hand with an increasing marketing of occult forces on a global scale. Since trading the occult has become big business, occult practitioners have turned into genuine travelling salesmen moving from one place to another in order to sell their products. Like all other commodities available on the free market, occult forces appear to be instantly available to everyone who has enough money to afford them (ibidem: 175-177).

In contemporary Katanga, there appears to be a kind of spiritual shopping culture. Similarly to people outside the world of mining, creuseurs like Ngoy are trying to find their way in an imaginary supermarket, filling their shopping trollies with a large number of items in hopes that they will be mutually compatible and will bring them the luck they need. However, the fact that they visit several



spiritual experts and are trying out different strategies should not be taken as evidence that they are not taking the whole issue of supernatural beings very seriously. On the contrary, it is precisely because they are so unsure of their capacity to stay in command of their own lives and because they are so convinced of being at the mercy of higher forces that they try out different combinations of getting in touch with the spiritual world, hoping that it might help them to cope with the vicissitudes of life on the mines.

Spirit mediums or *mifumu* are generally assumed to play a crucial role in negotiations with the invisible world. These *mifumu* are believed to have the capacity to get directly in touch with supernatural beings and to ask them which conditions have to be met in order to reach particular goals. In return for money, *mifumu* pass the instructions on to their clients. It should be noted that *mifumu* are not the only ones acting as brokers between the visible and the invisible world. Wrestlers or *catcheurs* do pretty much the same thing. Undoubtedly, this has to do with the fact that, in their matches against opponents, *catcheurs* frequently use fetishes to gain the upper hand, a practice characteristic of Congolese catch<sup>164</sup>. The number of fetishes available in catch competitions is so large that *catcheurs* refer to them as numbers (*numéros*) (Kabeke 2005: 264-271). Just like other people can form a number on their cell phone to have a long-distance conversation with somebody else, *catcheurs* are able to use one of their many numbers to call in the help of a supernatural being. Some *catcheurs*, like Samson and Matembele, who are very popular in Likasi, are involved in the Katangese mineral business themselves and make no secret of selling fetishes to creuseurs in their environment.

There are a lot of rumours about people having succeeded in digging up more minerals or in making more money thanks to their use of occult techniques. Creuseurs use fetishes (*madawa: medicines*, sing: *dawa*) for various purposes: to steal other people's property (*kujendula*)<sup>165</sup>, to take away other people's luck, to protect themselves against collapses of mineshafts, to increase the ore content or the quantity of a load of minerals, to thicken ore veins or to cause harm to their competitors. As it is usually the case with fetishes, users have to meet a number of conditions. They may be asked to sacrifice their own fertility, to kill one or more of their blood relatives, to spend all their money at

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164 Catch was introduced in Katanga in the beginning of the 1970s. Over the years, it became a very popular sport. Competitions organized at the big football stadiums of Lubumbashi and Likasi always attracted huge crowds of spectators (Kabeke 2005: 260-261).

165 *Kujendula* or the act of making things disappear such as money or ore veins is seen as part of *majende*, Indian magic. When something has disappeared, the intransitive verb *kujenduka* is used (Kalonji, pers. comm.). According to Meyer, Indian magic also occurs among the Ewe in Ghana. The Ewe believe that, through the use of a wide variety of items such as oil and incense, magical handkerchiefs, magical cloths, magical mirrors, talismans and cowries, one can learn how to travel through time, predict the future, steal money from the bank, win fights against enemies, and escape from prison (Meyer 1999: 197-198).

once or to spend it all on alcohol and prostitutes. When they fail to meet these conditions, they run the risk of dying or going insane.

The belief that occult-driven money-making takes a heavy toll is widespread. In many parts of the world, there is a strong conviction that people have to make sacrifices if they want to become successful through the use of magic (White 2007; Geschiere 1997; Smith 2001; Scheper-Hughes 2004; Taussig 1980). Individuals involved in 'occult economies' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999) are assumed to have no other option but to conclude a kind of Faustian contract with the evil force that is guiding them in their search for power and wealth. In exchange for special favours and benefits granted to them by the evil force, they promise to give up things that have a special value to them. Meyer has suggested that these sacrifices usually '*boil down to neglect of the family and the assertion of individual interest above that of the family*' (Meyer 1995: 246). People using magical means for material ends are believed to be forced into committing anti-social acts such as sacrificing their own capacity to reproduce, physically eliminating one of their relatives or consuming all their ill-gotten wealth instantly instead of investing (part of) it in the well-being of their community (Taussig 1980, Walsh 2003, Werthmann 2003). The main reason why there are so many rumours about Katangese creuseurs getting rich through the use of magic is probably that instant consumerism and the individualistic pursuit of wealth are glorified within the local mining subculture (cfr. supra: 3.2.1, 4.2.4). Consequently, participants in the mining subculture can very well imagine that some of their colleagues are so much obsessed by the search for monetary gain that they are even prepared to make sacrifices at the expense of their own family members.

As far as the classification of the different types of magic is concerned, it should be noted that Katangese creuseurs usually make a distinction between *magie ya kyeushi* and *magie ya kizungu*. *Magie ya kyeushi* is translated in French as '*magie noire*', which means black magic. Creuseurs associate it with African cultures and consider it as something very old: they assume it is a form of knowledge that has been passed on from one generation to the next. Conversely, *magie ya kizungu* is translated in French as '*magie blanche*', which means white magic. Creuseurs associate it with foreign cultures such as the European and Asian ones, the influences of which only started penetrating the African continent in colonial times. Both *magie ya kizungu* and *magie ya kyeushi* are believed to be highly ambiguous: on the one hand, they can be used for productive purposes – to achieve certain goals and to make progress – but, on the other hand, they can also be used for destructive purposes – to destroy things or to harm people.

Fetishes associated with *magie ya kizungu* include things like white baby dolls, coffins, bottles of beauty products (*lotions de beauté*)<sup>166</sup>, various perfumes<sup>167</sup>, white handkerchiefs (*mouchoirs blancs*) and red candles (*bougies rouges*)<sup>168</sup>. *Magie ya kyeushi* is associated with items such as *poudre jaune*<sup>169</sup> - a yellowish powder believed to increase the sexual potency of men – *nkishi* – a traditional ancestral statue of the Luba – and *risaku* – a traditional fetish of the Sanga<sup>170</sup>.

Creuseurs believe that, apart from the visible or 'first world' (*premier monde*), there are two other worlds that cannot be observed with the naked eye. While supernatural powers associated with *magie ya kyeushi* are generally considered to be part of the 'second world' (*deuxième monde*), supernatural powers linked with *magie ya kizungu* are viewed as part of the 'third world' (*troisième monde*). The 'second world' (*deuxième monde*) is the world of the ancestors (Swahili: *bankambo*), in other words, the world of individuals who died a long time ago and who are held in high esteem because of the things they have accomplished for their own cultural group. The 'third world' (*troisième monde*), however, is believed to be a world inhabited by new occult figures, individuals who appeared on the scene at a much later stage in history. It is believed that figures belonging to the 'third world' sometimes encourage their clients to go to a cemetery (*cimetière*), where they are expected to awaken the spirits of dead people who have not yet been appeased (*baafu*: wandering spirits; *esprits fantômes*: phantom spirits; *cadavres*: corpses).

While the 'second world' is filled with traditional ancestral spirits of the Luba such as *Kiboko*, *Simba* and *Mukalayi*, the 'third world' is inhabited by characters like *Lucifer* (=the Devil), *Johnny Walker* (=the spirit of strong alcohol), the money-vomiting snake (*nyoka*) and the so-called *dragons*, firebrakes that sometimes take the shape of two-headed snakes and that can help people make progress in different spheres of their lives<sup>171</sup>. There are also forces that some creuseurs consider as part of the

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166 In most of the cases, these beauty products belong to the trade-mark 'Princesse'. It is believed that the faces of white women displayed on the Princesse bottles possess special powers.

167 Cobra is one of the perfumes mentioned in connection with *magie ya kizungu*.

168 In Katanga, the burning of candles is associated with Catholicism. Members of Pentecostal churches considered it as a very suspicious ritual activity.

169 A collective noun to designate sexual stimulants of local origin is *mijiji*, which literally means 'herbs'.

170 The *risaku* is a kind of powder, composed of pounded tree roots and bone meal of dead human beings. When *risaku* is thrown into a river, it can contaminate a large number of people simultaneously. People struck by *risaku* are said to suffer from distensions and accumulations of body fluids. Every attempt to stop the distensions is doomed to fail. The most vital organ that eventually gets hit by the *risaku* is the heart. People believe that a heart contaminated by *risaku* gradually becomes hotter and hotter. Not matter what efforts are made to cool it down, it continues to keep its temperature.

171 Some creuseurs have the image of a dragon tattooed on their upper arm. Others wear t-shirts with the image of a dragon and the caption 'Opération Dragon', a reference to an album by the popular singer Werrason, who is rumoured of manipulating the forces of the occult to get ahead in life (for an interesting analysis of the rumours about the use of occult techniques by Congolese musicians see White 2007). Interestingly, 'Opération Dragon Rouge' is also the name of a military operation that took place in 1964, at the time of the secessionist movement in Stanleyville (i.e. Kisangani). During this

'second world', while others see them as part of the 'third world'. Apart from female mining spirits such as Madame Hélène or Madame Jeanne, the so-called *tunzunzi* (sing: *kanzunzi*) are also part of the latter category. *Tunzunzi* are small figures described as midgets or pygmies. One of the most typical characteristics of the *tunzunzi* is that their feet are pointing in the wrong direction, that is, opposite to the direction in which they are walking. The owner of the *tunzunzi* can send them out to do different kinds of jobs for him, such as collecting money<sup>172</sup>.

The distinction between, on the one hand, '*magie ya kizungu*' or '*magie blanche*', and, on the other hand, '*magie ya kyeushi*' or '*magie noire*' is an echo of the old-school structural-functionalist distinction between '*white magic*' and '*black magic*'. Having examined the functions of magic in non-Western societies, Malinowski (1961) and Evans-Pritchard (1937) argued that '*white magic*' was used for productive or protective purposes, while '*black magic*' was used for destructive purposes. Given the strong impact of these authors' work on westerners' perceptions of the occult in Sub-Saharan Africa (Pels 1998; Moore & Sanders 2001; Geschiere 2001), it seems reasonable to assume that administrators, missionaries and other representatives of the Belgian colonial regime started using '*magie blanche*' and '*magie noire*', the French equivalents of the English expressions '*white magic*' and '*black magic*', for the description of magical practices in Belgian Congo. From this perspective, it is easy to understand how '*magie blanche*' and '*magie noire*' got introduced in Katanga and how they found their way into Shaba Swahili, the Katangese vernacular, in the form of the expressions '*magie ya kizungu*' and '*magie ya kyeushi*'.

Having said this, it still needs to be explained why both '*magie ya kizungu*' and '*magie ya kyeushi*' are believed to have ambiguous effects in Katanga. This belief appears to be in contradiction with the argument of structural-functionalists about the unequivocally positive effects of '*white magic*' and the negative effects of '*black magic*'. Another issue that requires a word of explanation is the racial labelling of the two categories of magic. Why is it that '*magie ya kizungu*' is defined as '*magic of the white people*', while '*magie ya kyeushi*' is presented as '*magic of the black people*'?

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operation, Belgian paratroopers liberated several hostages held by communist rebels and transported them to the American embassy in Leopoldville (i.e. Kinshasa) (Hoyt 2000).

172 Possibly, the *tunzunzi* have something to do with the Luba myth of origin. The latter myth describes how the hunter Mbidi Kiluwe met a group of red dwarves, whom he considers as the veritable autochthonous inhabitants of the region (Legros 1996: 183). According to the Luba dictionary composed by Van Avermaet and Mbuyà (1954), the *nzunzi* (diminutive: *kanzunzi*) is a fetish (*bwanga*) reserved for men. The fetish is composed of the material remains of a little animal called *nzunzi* in the area in which it occurs, namely the region of Mato-Kabinda. The *nzunzi* is not bigger than a rat and lives in tree holes. It has almost no hair and its colour is a palish pink. Due to its similarities with a Luba newborn, the *nzunzi* is sometimes described as a *kantu* or dwarf. Although the *nzunzi* an sich is not necessarily a fetish, people are still afraid of playing with the animal, because they think it might very well be a *bwanga* that has escaped from its owner. Van Avermaet and Mbuyà have pointed out that the *nzunzi-bwanga* is very expensive. The owner has to observe certain rules (*bizila*), if he wants the *nzunzi-bwanga* to be effective. When the owner of the *nzunzi-bwanga* dies, the fetish loses its power completely: it changes into an innocent little animal called *mukulukuta* (Van Avermaet & Mbuyà 1954: 837-838).

According to Geschiere, structural-functionalists have been so preoccupied with the need to identify 'dysfunctional' and 'functional' aspects of indigenous societies and with the necessity of classifying their data into clear-cut categories, that they have completely ignored the inherently ambiguous character of occult forces in Sub-Saharan Africa. In his opinion, the opposition between '*white magic*' and '*black magic*' is too radical, while it also underplays the complexity of people's ideas about occult phenomena (Geschiere 2001: 648). If there is any truth in Geschiere's observations, we should not be surprised about the ambiguous nature of '*magie ya kizungu*' and '*magie ya kyeushi*' in Katanga: this ambiguity appears to be perfectly in line with what can be observed in other parts of the African subcontinent.

The explanation for the racial labelling of the two principal categories of magic in Katanga is that, in the opinion of many Katangese, Whites have their own occult techniques, which are more powerful than those of Blacks. Whites' superior mastery of occult forces is believed to be at the root of their higher material wealth. In an article on popular narratives about Katanga's post-colonial history, Rubbers has noted that Whites are suspected of having usurped Blacks' invisible world. It is assumed that Whites deliberately violated the rules of spiritual forces watching over Katanga's natural wealth in order to make these forces work for them. In addition to this, Whites are believed to have imposed a ban on ancestral rituals and visits to spirit mediums because they wanted to sever people's links to the invisible world. According to Rubbers, there is a widespread belief in Katanga that '*Whites' opulence derives from the power of their spirits – a power demonstrated by the extraordinary goods imported from the West – and from their capacity to master the spirits in Africa*' (Rubbers 2009: 278).

The tendency of artisanal miners to fetishize typically western goods such as baby dolls, bottles of beauty products and perfumes can be interpreted as an example of what Frazer has called 'sympathetic magic', that is, magic on the basis of similarity or contact. While magic on the basis of similarity is based on the assumption that copies can acquire the properties of the original, magic on the basis of contact hinges on the presupposition that '*things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed*' (Frazer 1911: 52, quoted in Taussig 1993: 47). By performing magical acts on western goods, that is, things that have been manufactured by (and thus have passed through the hands of) Whites, artisanal miners hope to appropriate some of the latter's creative powers and knowledge. As Taussig has remarked, '*the wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power*' (Taussig 1993: xiii).

In sum, the preceding account has shown that Ngoy discusses several themes in his story about Madame Hélène. To begin with, he follows the example of Masangu and Trinita by commenting on changing gender relations in Katangese society. Judging by the great importance he attaches to

people's compliance with mining taboos, the ambiguous picture he paints of the female mining spirit and the parallels he suggests between creuseurs and widowers, it is clear that he shares his colleagues' concerns about the dangers of an uncontrollable female sexuality and about the necessity of safeguarding mines as exclusively male spaces. It should be noted that, compared to the two other narrators, Ngoy puts his story in a more realistic setting while he also draws a more positive picture of the ways in which men come to grips with the issue of masculinity during their stay in mining areas. He uses the character of Musalaba to demonstrate that, for men participating in the mining subculture, there is considerable room to create and cultivate new ideals of masculinity. Another topic treated by Ngoy in his story about Madame H el ene concerns the relationship between the uncertainties of life on the mines and people's inclination to indulge in what I have called 'spiritual shopping'. Although most of the people working in the mine agree that the female mining spirit is the one guarding the minerals and imposing taboos on them, some creuseurs still try to get in touch with other supernatural beings as well, either on their own initiative, or through the agency of mediators such as the *mifumu* or the *catcheurs*. They entertain the hope that an alliance with one of these forces will create better opportunities for them in terms of obtaining material wealth, power and success, and in terms of keeping their head above water when faced with the many challenges of life in the mines.

#### 4.3.4 Van Damme's near-death experience

The fourth 'fantastic border tale' about the female mining spirit of Kalabi was told to me by a mineral trader who was nicknamed Van Damme after the famous Belgian actor Jean-Claude Van Damme. Van Damme was in his mid-forties and originated from the Bel-Air neighbourhood in Lubumbashi. Together with 5 other mineral traders who were all working for the same buying house near Kakontwe, he stayed in hotel Kyandimuna in the centre of Lwambo. By working as a mineral trader in the mine of Kalabi, Van Damme tried to earn enough money to pay for the school fees of his children in Lubumbashi.

As will become obvious in the following sections, Van Damme's story about the female mining spirit demonstrates the significant impact of Pentecostalism on the ideas of creuseurs about female mining spirits. In Katanga, Pentecostal churches appeared on the scene in the beginning of the 1970s, but it took them until the beginning of the 1990s to become really popular. In all likelihood, this rise in popularity was due to the profound political and economic crisis marking the last years of the Mobutu regime (Mutombo 2005: 217-218)<sup>173</sup>.

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<sup>173</sup> Although Pentecostalism reached Sub-Saharan Africa as early as the 1920s, it was not until the second half of the 1970s that it really started spreading on a wide scale. While, initially, it took root in former British colonies with a long history of

Just like the urban centres in Katanga, mining camps are faced with the mushrooming growth of Pentecostal churches. In most cases, these churches are run by individuals trying to combine a job as négociant or creuseur with a religious mission. Using branches (*mici*), leaves (*majani*) and raffia bags (*masacs*) as building materials, they create make-shift church buildings (*makanisa*), where they celebrate mass on a regular basis. In their opinion, it is their duty as servants of God (*batumishi wa Mungu*) – even during their stay in the mining areas – to lead people away from evil (*kutosha bantu ku bubaya*) and to bring them to God (*kupeleka bantu kwa Mungu*)<sup>174</sup>. Although they realize that many of those involved in artisanal mining love to drink (*kunywa*), smoke (*kuvuta*) and lead a wanton life (*kusharatika*), they still hope that, one day, these people will leave the path of Satan (*njia ya Shetani*) and of dishonesty (*njia ya udanganyifu*) in order to follow the path of God (*njia ya Mungu*) and of justice (*njia ya haki*).

As could be expected, pastors of Pentecostal churches are appalled by the fact that so many creuseurs consult *mifumu* and try to form alliances with non-Christian supernatural beings. They do their best to persuade them into subjecting themselves to a deliverance (*délivrance*), which involves the chasing away of all diabolic spirits (*kutosha mapapo*: the chasing of spirits). When someone wants to be converted, he has to live in seclusion for a couple of days and engage in continuous prayers without eating or drinking (*kuingia mu jeûne de prière*: to enter a session of fasting and praying). Following the exorcism, he has to get rid of all his household goods, because it is believed that this will prevent the spirits from coming back to him.

With regard to my line of argument, it is important to note that Pentecostalism has an influence on the ideas members of the mining community are forming of female mining spirits. This can be gathered from an incident I witnessed during my second stay in the field. One night, the mineral trader Van

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Protestant dominance, such as Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia and South Africa, from the second half of the 1990s onwards, it also started getting around in French-speaking countries with a long history of Catholic dominance, such as Ivory Coast, Benin, Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The second half of the 1980s witnessed a remarkable shift in the discourse of Pentecostal churches. Whereas, previously, the accent had been on the necessity of being 'born again', that is, on the need to start a new life by refraining from worldly pleasures, by breaking with one's past and by putting a stop to one's relationships with non-believers, the emphasis was now on the miracles of 'prosperity' and 'immediate well-being'. In their sermons, pastors emphasized that every convert could rest assured that he or she would receive spiritual and material benefits from God. Furthermore, they encouraged churchgoers to get involved in a kind of spiritual war, urging them to dissociate themselves from the colonial and postcolonial past as well as from all sorts of cultural practices, which were believed to be diabolic. People were stimulated to look for new, successful ways of life, adopting an independent attitude in relation to their communities of origin, drawing their inspiration from the Holy Spirit and not allowing themselves to be distracted by the material and moral chaos around them. Finally, pentecostal churches developed new conversion strategies. They invested a lot of time and energy in maintaining contacts with other churches all over the world and they started relying on mass media to spread the word of God (Marshall 2007: 198-201).

174 Pype has pointed out that the Pentecostal pastor is one of the dominant ideals of masculinity in Kinshasa. In the Congolese capital, the pastor is conceived of as a strong man (*moto ya makasi*), who resembles politicians and musicians in that he is successful and has a privileged access to western consumer goods, who offers protection against invisible forces and who finds himself in the same position as boxers, wrestlers and street fighters, in the sense that he pulls off a daily fight with his diabolic opponents (Pype 2008: 93).

Damme entered his hotel in panic, whining loudly about his misfortune. According to his own account, he had met a very bizarre woman in one of the bars in the centre of Lwambo, who had first taken him to the local cemetery and had then disappeared completely. The thing that had made Van Damme lose his head was that, on the cemetery, he had almost entered a grave, an act which he believed could have caused his death. He swore he would never drink any alcohol again and would stop letting down his wife in Lubumbashi. In addition to this, he told his colleague, who had left his hotel room to see what was going on, that he suspected his sister-in-law of having something to do with the incident. In fact, before encountering the weird woman who had taken him to the cemetery, Van Damme had been involved in a heavy argument with his sister-in-law who had threatened to cut off his genitals with a knife. Having been informed about what had happened to Van Damme, his colleague said he had already advised him to put a stop to his sexual misbehaviour, namely when he had seen a prostitute asking him to pay an unsettled debt. A few days after his near-death experience, Van Damme asked the pastor of the *5ième Communauté Pentecôtiste*, who had built a church in the mining camp of Kalabi, to pray for him and to exorcize the evil spirit.

The content and form of Van Damme's testimony become a little more comprehensible when we take into account the ways in which Pentecostal churches have started using the media. It is well-known that the success of Pentecostalism in Sub-Sahara Africa has been coupled with the dissemination of Pentecostal television serials and so-called *karishika* movies, that is, pictures in which the opposition between good and bad is elucidated<sup>175</sup>. Pentecostal churches have started using these television serials and movies to preach the gospel and to comment on social evolutions considered to be negative and diabolic. As Pype has shown with regard to Kinshasa, the issue of changing gender relations is one of the most debated themes in the serials. The subthemes most frequently talked about include the choice of the right person to marry, the clothing styles of young women, erotic dreams and adultery. By redefining issues such as 'deviant sexual behaviour' (Ling: *kindumba*) and incest (Ling: *ekobo*), Pentecostal churches attempt to adjust and regulate the ideas and practices of the inhabitants of Kinshasa in terms of gender relations and sexuality (Pype 2008: 299-353).

In Katanga, *karishika* movies are very popular. In every mining camp and every town or village in the vicinity of a big mine, there are numerous cinemas where people can watch them on a daily basis. From this perspective, it is hardly surprising that Van Damme's story contain several elements that call

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<sup>175</sup> *Karishika* is the name of a Nigerian movie directed by Ifeanyi Ipoenyi. It was released in 1998 and featured Becky N. Okorie as the leading actress. The story is about a young girl, Karishika, who is the queen of demons. The end of time is near. Since everybody is praying in charismatic churches, Satan is worried that hell will soon be empty. Therefore, he sends out Karishika to make converts for him and to destroy the whole world. Karishika carries out the Devil's instructions by seducing men, but she does this in such a brutal and dangerous manner that she arouses the anger of God, who decides to launch a counter-attack (De Boeck & Plissart 2004: 186-187).



to mind the scenario of a typical *Karishika* movie. First, he meets an attractive woman who appears to be absolutely normal at first sight. Then, this woman lures him into committing adultery and takes him to the cemetery with the idea of killing him and taking him with her to the satanic world to which she belongs. Finally, Van Damme, just like an actor in a *Karishika* movie, is remorseful for his sinful behaviour and asks a Pentecostal pastor to release him from the Diabolic spirit who has taken possession of him<sup>176</sup>.

The anecdote about Van Damme shows that the presence of Pentecostalism and of *karishika* movies in Katanga has an impact on the ways in which people involved in artisanal mining conceptualize their dealings with the invisible world. It can hardly be a coincidence that many of the characteristics ascribed to female mining spirits are almost identical with those of *karishika* actresses: in both cases, they are jealous, vindictive ladies who are capable of killing when they feel their rights are being abused or insufficiently respected by their male partners<sup>177</sup>. Undoubtedly, *karishika* movies touch a string with men like Van Damme. As I have pointed out in the course of this chapter, typical *karishika* themes such as changing gender relations, the loss of male control over female sexuality, the proximity of death and the use of occult means to obtain wealth and prosperity very strongly occupies the hearts and minds of men working and living in mining areas. From this perspective, it is not really surprising that ingredients of *karishika* movies get mixed up in the potpourri of these people's ideas about the supernatural.

The stories about the female mining spirit of Kalabi certainly correspond to the definition of 'fantastic border tales' formulated in the introduction to this chapter. First, they are all stories with different layers of meaning. When we look at the characteristics attributed to the female mining spirit by the four narrators, we notice that they originate from a wide variety of sources, including ideas about

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176 One might add that Van Damme's accusation vis-à-vis his sister-in-law can just as well have been part of a *karishika* movie. Pentecostals were convinced that Satan was capable of recruiting a person's family members with the intention of making life extremely difficult for him.

177 One of the movies I saw in the company of a couple of creuseurs in Lwambo was the Nigerian picture 'Omereme', which revolves around the slogan 'Never make a promise you can't fulfil, it may cost you dearly'. The main character is a businessman who has an office in Lagos and who rushes into a marriage with a fellow townswoman. In the beginning, things are looking bright. The opening scene shows the couple during its honeymoon, sharing a glass of orange juice and sitting back on a comfortable couch in a spacious living room. When the man is about to leave the room to go to work, his wife kisses him goodbye. But then things start to go wrong. When the businessman's spouse finds out her husband is cheating on her with his secretary, she does everything she can to take revenge on him. Adopting the identity of a witch with a devilish laugh, she uses special powers to attack her adulterous husband. At night, she enters his bedroom, has sex with him and then vanishes into the air, leaving him on his own, confronted with the incomprehension of his mistress, who is sleeping right next to him. Confused about what is happening to her, the mistress goes to see a witch doctor, who informs her that the man she has fallen in love with is guided by evil forces. Moreover, the businessman's jealous spouse also maintains contacts with a satanic world, where women in black dresses are singing and dancing around defenceless victims. Even the witch doctor seems incapable of defending himself against the laser beams flashing out of the hands of the businessman's spouse. In the end, it is the adulterous husband who gains the upper hand. Just before his wife is going to kidnap him and take him to the satanic world, his mistress informs him of the advice the witch doctor has given to her: the solution is to urinate on the witch, as this will make her disappear.

Mami Wata, local water spirits, ancestral spirits, biblical figures, spirits of deceased spouses and female characters in *karishika* movies. As for the pollution ideas of the creuseurs, they also constitute a mix of elements from different sources. The taboos aimed at protecting the space of the mine against the tainting influences of women are based on prohibitions drawn from precolonial metallurgy, mourning rituals and Mami Wata marriages<sup>178</sup>.

The second reason why it seems justified to label the aforementioned stories about the female mining spirit of Kalabi as 'fantastic border tales' is that they are circulating in a complex cross-cultural social space and that they allow visitors to this space to share a number of experiences and concerns with one another. In the course of this dissertation, I have already pointed out repeatedly that environments like the mine of Kalabi are characterized by a high degree of pluralism and diversity. Mines are meeting points for people with different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and widely divergent motives and goals. Miners do not form a well-defined group of like-minded people, but rather a very variable, heterogeneous assembly of men who get acquainted with one another due to a concurrence of circumstances and who therefore have to search for common ground, for things they have in common, for ideas and practices they can share with each other. I have tried to show that a shared fear for death and a shared concern about changing gender relations in Katangese society are at the root of the development of stories about female mining spirits. These stories are an important component of the mining subculture, for they constitute a genre that enables creuseurs to communicate with each other in spite of their differences, which are often substantial.

The third reason why I think the stories about the female mining spirit of Kalabi deserve to be called 'fantastic border tales' is that, although they are situated in an imaginary world, they are still considered as an account of real events by the narrators themselves. Creuseurs really believe the female spirit of Kalabi can intervene in daily reality and they consider her as an important ally in their struggle against the threatening pollution of the mine by female influences. They are convinced that, during their work in the mine, they have to reckon with forces they cannot control, and they feel that what is happening in the visible world is determined – to a very large extent – by decisions taken in the invisible world.

The fourth and last reason why I want to designate the stories about the female mining spirit of Kalabi as 'fantastic border tales' is that they express a form of agency. Although creuseurs feel they are at the

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178 For instance, the rule stipulating that creuseurs, whenever they had had sexual intercourse, had to wash with water before entering the mine was not only inspired by the precolonial obsession to protect the melting furnaces against the 'heat' of women, but also by the obligation of widowers to pass through a form of ritual cleansing at the end of the mourning period and by the prohibition for human husbands of Mami Wata to be overly thoughtful towards women on earth, lest Mami Wata be jealous and vengeful.

mercy of forces more powerful than themselves, they use stories like these to convey their ideas about 'new ways of acting in the world' (Wardlow 2004: 63), in other words, about the development of original strategies to get a firmer grip on the circumstances in which they have to live and work. The narrators whose stories I analyzed in this chapter fantasize about negotiating with the female mining spirit and about the possibility of acquiring a stronger position in the local political economy through the use of occult resources.

#### **4.4 Conclusions**

In this chapter, I have shown that creuseurs give voice to their feelings about changing gender relations in Katangese society by relating 'fantastic border tales' about female mining spirits, ambivalent figures believed to watch over mineral resources. In the first part of the discussion, I indicated that these 'fantastic border tales' are told in environments characterized by the ubiquity of death. As a result of the fact that creuseurs are constantly exposing themselves to terrible hazards during their work in the mineshafts, they feel stuck in a twilight zone between life and death. While, during working hours, they act very concentrated, after working hours, they indulge in alcohol and licentious sex, celebrating the victory of life over death. This cyclic alternation between self-control and unrestrainedness is now and then interrupted by deadly mining accidents, incidents giving rise to collective outbursts of grief and violence. When they attend funerals of deceased colleagues, creuseurs have the habit of singing shocking songs in which they express their ambiguous feelings about life in the mines. On the one hand, they glorify the pleasures of participating in the mining subculture, but, on the other hand, they also express their concerns about the possibility of witchcraft attacks launched by jealous family members. In the second part of the discussion, I explained that creuseurs use 'fantastic border tales' about female mining spirits to make sense of their permanent state of liminality, the sharp opposition between their behaviour in and outside the mine and their attitude towards changing gender relations. By examining the testimonies of Masangu, Trinita, Ngoy and Van Damme, I have demonstrated that they recycle and reinterpret old ideas about the nexus between mining, gender and death in the light of their own socio-economic situation. There are strong indications that they compare themselves to widowers, with whom they have several things in common: the nearness of death, the fear of a jealous female spirit, the obligation to comply with strict sexual prescriptions and to subject themselves to a form of ritual cleansing and the permission to celebrate the victory of life over death after a period of modesty, composure and concentration.

My research has shown that 'fantastic border tales' have an important role to play in the emergence of new social groups like the Katangese creuseurs. I have demonstrated that, by telling each other stories, people from different backgrounds actively search for common ground, in other words, for ideas and

practices that connect them with each other and give them a sense of concordance. Since creuseurs use 'fantastic border tales' to emphasize a number of shared concerns and characteristics in terms of masculinity, it seems justified to consider them as an expression of the levelling trend in their masculinity practices. Furthermore, my research has also made it clear that scholars studying Mami Wata should not limit themselves to the observation that she is a transnational, modernity-related figure. They should equally pay attention to the ways in which her general characteristics blend with the characteristics of local supernatural beings. The creuseurs whose fantasies about female mining spirits I scrutinized in this chapter do far more than simply reproducing a ready-made representation of Mami Wata. They develop their own ideas about female mining spirits, combining elements from various cultural sources and trying to make sense of the apparent involvement of the aforementioned spiritual beings in their everyday lives in the artisanal mines of Katanga. Finally, my research has demonstrated that one should be careful not to take a static view on pollution ideas. It is not because both in precolonial metallurgy and in the contemporary era of artisanal mining women are considered as polluting that ideas about pollution should be seen as unaltered. Men operating smelting furnaces in precolonial times had different reasons to perceive female sexuality as threatening than men digging for copper and cobalt ores with shovels and pickaxes.

Before I move on to the next chapter, I still need to say a few words about an issue I raised in the introduction, namely the disadvantages of adopting a Freudian approach for the interpretation of creuseurs' stories about female mining spirits. What would a Freudian analysis of these stories look like and what would be the shortcomings of such an analysis? It seems to me that analysts seeking to read creuseurs' stories through a Freudian lens would probably draw inspiration from Freud's dream theory, which starts from the assumption that dreams contain unique information about dreamers' psychic lives. It is believed to be the psychiatrist's task to discover latent meanings in dreams in order to give dreamers access to hidden regions of their psyches (Rand & Torok 1993: 573-574).

As Duparc has noted, Freudian psychoanalysis is greatly interested in Greek myths about Sirens, female sea demons believed to have lived on an island in the Mediterranean and assumed to have attracted passing sailors with their singing. This interest is due to the fact that Siren stories deal with the issues of sexuality, anxiety and violence, themes that rank high on the Freudian priority list (Duparc 1986: 697).

Given the availability of Freudian analyses of Siren stories and taking into account the similarities between Sirens and Mami Wata figures, it is not surprising that some scholars studying Mami Wata beliefs in Sub-Saharan Africa have relied on Freudian insights to make sense of their own fieldwork data. Ogrizek, who studied Mami Wata beliefs among the Tsangui in the Republic of Congo, has suggested that, just like the Sirens in Greek mythology, Mami Wata figures should be analyzed in

relation to deep-seated castration anxieties (Ogrizek 1982: 441). In a similar vein, Phillpotts has written that Mami Wata is the '*personification of the hidden desires of the sexual subconscious, symbolizing primitive castration anxieties and the urge to return to the amniotic waters of the womb*' (Phillpotts 1980: 66).

Thus, according to Ogrizek and Phillpotts, Mami Wata represents what Freud has called the 'castrated mother'. The image of the 'castrated mother' is believed to come into being during the phase in which a boy stops identifying with his mother and starts defining himself as a man. When the boy notices that his mother does not have a penis, he is horrified because he believes she has been castrated for her misbehaviour, a punishment he thinks might also be inflicted on him one day. Yet, although he is appalled by the sight of his 'castrated mother', he is also filled with a sense of victory, for he has the impression that, being equipped with a penis, he is now superior to the woman that used to dominate him during his childhood (Pietzcker 2001: 134-135).

According to Freudian psychoanalytic thinking, males are likely to experience ambivalent feelings during the transition from boyhood to manhood. While, on the one hand, they are eager to become independent vis-à-vis their previously omnipotent mothers, on the other hand, they are anxious about the loss of maternal care, protection and intimacy. It is assumed that these ambivalent feelings may have implications for men's interactions with other women. As Pietzcker has remarked, '*as long as the adult man remains bound to the image of an omnipotent, yet also castrated, mother, he will seek triumph over women as successor to the mother. He must always prove his phallacity anew, narcissistically overcompensate for the threat, and devalue women whom he experiences and threatening*' (Pietzcker 2001: 134-135).

So, following the example of the abovementioned Mami Wata scholars, one could argue that the stories about female mining spirits testify to the castration anxieties of Katangese artisanal miners. One could contend that the majority of the creuseurs are young men on the verge of adulthood who appear to have difficulties defining themselves as independent and grown-up men and who therefore continue to dream about their omnipotent but castrated mothers. Creuseurs' condescending attitude towards women staying in mining areas could be attributed to their inability to escape from their mother's dominant influence, an incapacity that supposedly pushes them to continually '*prove their phallacity anew*', as Pietzcker would put it.

Having said this, there are several reasons why I have chosen not to adopt a Freudian approach in my analysis of stories about female mining spirits among artisanal miners in Katanga. First of all, I disagree with Freud's belief in the existence of a universal symbolic system. As opposed to Freud, I do not think that the same symbols can be found everywhere in the world and neither do I take the view

that symbols have stable and fixed meanings. For instance, whereas Freud has insisted that the images of people falling into or coming out of the water need to be interpreted as symbols of giving birth and being born (Freud 1975: 145), I have shown that, in Katanga, water does not (primarily) serve as a symbol of amniotic fluid. In my opinion, it is wrong to assume that it is possible to draw up one single list of symbols and to work out a number of keys with which the latter can be interpreted, regardless of the socio-cultural context they are used in.

Second, unlike Freud, I do not believe that psychosexual and symbolic structures remain unaltered throughout history. In her book *'The subject of anthropology: gender, symbolism and psychoanalysis'* (2007) Moore has convincingly demonstrated the instability of sexual difference and the cultural and historical variability of symbolic structures. According to Moore, Freudian psychoanalysis is right in underlining the importance of a child's relationship with its educators for the development of its sexed subjectivity, but, in her opinion, it is a grave mistake to take for granted the immutability of the categories male/female and paternal/maternal as well as the constancy of an individual's positioning towards these categories (Moore 2007, discussed in Andrijasevic 2009: 436-437). Following Moore, I am convinced that, even within one and the same cultural setting, such as that of the Sanga in Katanga, the definition of the categories male/female and paternal/maternal can change in the course of history, just like the attribution of meaning to sexual difference can go through a number of changes as time goes by.

The third and final reason why I have preferred not to adopt a Freudian approach in my analysis of stories about female mining spirits is that I wanted to avoid limiting myself to the identification of hidden meanings and motives associated with sexuality and gender. Although I have argued that the stories discussed in this chapter should first and foremost be interpreted as commentaries on changing gender relationships in Katangese society, I have also shown that the stories equally provide us access to people's views on death and the afterlife as well as on the existence of unequal power relations in the Katangese mining business.

## 5. Rastaman goes mining

*On a le diamant à ciel ouvert*

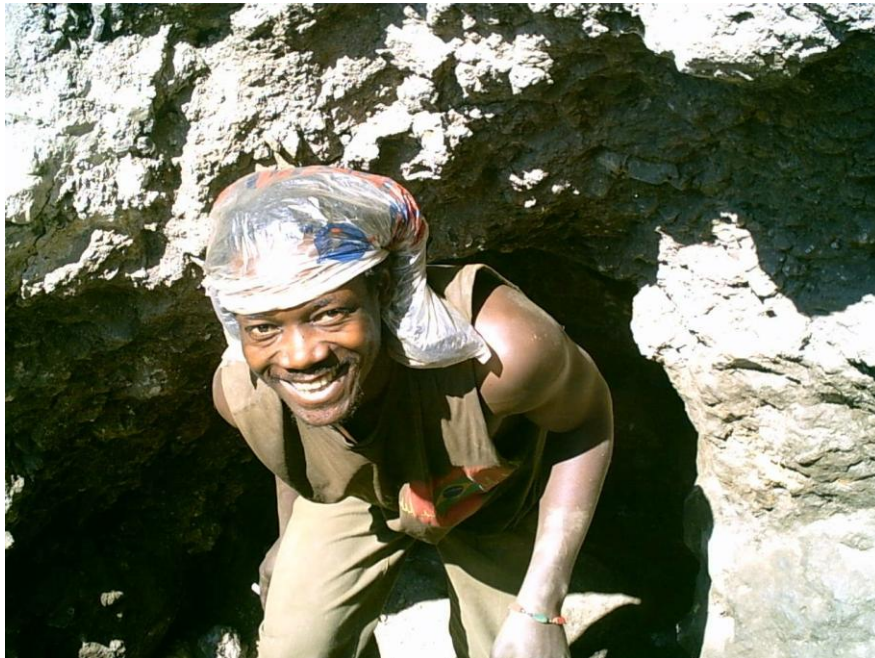
*On a le cuivre à ciel ouvert*

*On a l'or à ciel ouvert*

*Mais pourquoi la méchanceté?*

*Tout change, tout évolue, seuls les imbéciles ne changent pas!*

Alpha Blondy, 'Les imbéciles', in an adapted version created by Katangese Rastafarians



Rastafarian digger leaving a mineshaft in the mine of Nimura

### 5.1 Introduction

The fifth chapter is built around the expression '*kuangaria tableau*', which means '*to look at the blackboard*'. Artisanal miners use this expression to refer to the habit of studying the ore wall before striking a new vein. I believe it is appropriate to take this phrase as the point of departure for the present chapter, because it is devoted to an analysis of the construction of masculinities among men taking part in two subcultures at the same time: the subculture of artisanal miners and the subculture of Rastafarians. Similarly to the way diggers hope to make new discoveries by switching their attention from one ore vein to another, I hope to gain new insights into the construction of masculinities in the

world of artisanal mining by exploring the experiences of a group of men with a slightly different outlook on life in the mining areas than their fellow workers.

In previous chapters, I used Turner's notion of 'normative communitas' to make sense of the levelling trend in artisanal miners' masculinity practices. 'Normative communitas' refers to the tendency of people in a liminal condition to interact in a spirit of spontaneity, friendliness and equality while at the same time creating a basic form of social control in order to improve the organization and mobilization of resources (Turner 1992: 138; Turner 1969: 132). I explained that artisanal miners like to think of themselves as a distinctive group of men, because they share the experiences of facing the decline of the colonial male breadwinner ideal and the growing economic independence of women, leaving their homes and families, living in isolated places, performing hard and dangerous labour in pursuit of monetary gain, and floating around in a twilight zone between life and death. While creuseurs have the habit of treating each other as equals and living together in relatively undifferentiated communities with rudimentary structures, they also develop their own sets of rules with regard to the division of labour, financial arrangements and pollution avoidance, amongst other things. I pointed out that they try to create a sense of togetherness and solidarity by jointly cultivating a deviant style of behaviour called '*kivoyou*', and by telling each other imaginative stories about female mining spirits, in which they express their ambiguous feelings about life in the mines.

Having said this, at several instances in this dissertation, I also paid attention to the considerable variation in the ways artisanal miners participate in the atmosphere of 'normative communitas', identify with the style of '*kivoyou*', and give meaning to their precarious working and living conditions. Drawing inspiration from Hannerz' "distributive understanding of culture", a theory that breaks away from the assumption that members of the same social unit automatically share the same ideas, modes of thought and overt forms of culture (Hannerz 1992: 1-17), I did my best to describe how the mining subculture is spread over the digging population. Moreover, I showed that artisanal miners are well aware of their internal differences, including their dissimilarities in terms of the construction of masculinities. I demonstrated that creuseurs do not only distinguish between different types of masculinities, but that they also recognize and take into account the power relations between them. Therefore, I argued, it is justified to say that, apart from a levelling trend, there is also a differentiating trend in their masculinity practices.

In this chapter, my analytical focus will be on the masculinity practices of creuseurs participating in the activities of the *Mouvement de Rastafarisme au Congo* (MRFCO), the Katangese Rastafarian movement. The MRFCO emerged in the second half of the 1990s, when marginalized youngsters of the Kenya neighbourhood in Lubumbashi created their own design for a better society on the basis of a reinterpretation of Jamaican Rastafarianism and a wide range of local cultural ideas, practices and



symbols. In the decade following the 1990s, the MRFCO ideology gradually spread from Lubumbashi to the interior, exerting a special attraction on young men searching for new ways to give meaning to their predicament and to obtain access to solidarity networks in times of deep economic crisis.

As this chapter will show, the subculture of Rastafarianism resembles the subculture of artisanal mining in that there is both a levelling and a differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of its members. As far as the levelling trend is concerned, it should be noted that, just like artisanal miners, Rastafarians are under the impression that they make up a separate category of men because they have several masculine features in common. They present themselves as fringe figures opting out of society, living in a permanent state of liminality, spending time with each other in a spirit of harmony and solidarity, treating each other as equals, and respecting a number of taboos with regard to the consumption of food and alcohol. Furthermore, they do their best to behave in accordance with a form of 'ideological communitas'. As I already explained in the first chapter of this dissertation, the concept of 'ideological communitas' refers to the *'formulation of remembered attributes of the 'communitas' experience as a utopian blueprint for the reform of society'* (Turner 1992: 59). It will become evident that Katangese Rastafarians have tried to safeguard and perpetuate feelings of harmony and communion by creating a written code of conduct for themselves, to which they claim to adhere strictly. The differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese Rastafarians manifests itself in the existence of a hierarchy of different types of masculinities. To use Connell's terminology, Rastafarians make a distinction between 'hegemonic', 'complicit' and 'subordinate' masculinities (Connell 2005: 76-81).

Since Rastafarian diggers stand at the crossroads of two subcultures that each have their own hierarchy of masculinities, it is of crucial importance to investigate in what respects the construction of their masculine identities differs from that of their colleagues. Given their double subcultural membership, it needs to be asked how Rastafarian diggers deal with the fact that, in the process of constructing their identities, they are forced to take into consideration two different sets of standards for masculine behaviour: on the one hand, the set of standards employed by artisanal miners, and, on the other hand, the set of standards employed by Rastafarians. Does this mean that Rastafarian diggers constantly shift back and forth between different ways of being a man? Or is it still possible to distinguish certain constants in their masculine behaviour?

In order to clarify my views on this matter, I first need to briefly return to the anthropological scholarship on migrant labour in Southern Africa between the beginning of the 1930s and the end of the 1950s. As I already pointed out in the first chapter of this dissertation (see 1.1.2), scholars like Richards (1932), Read (1942), Schapera (1947), Powdermaker (1962) and Epstein (1958) were intrigued by the apparent ease with which migrant labourers in Southern Africa adapted themselves to

the 'modern' way of living in the mining areas. They had the impression that African men working in the mines had little difficulties tailoring their masculine behaviour to the situations they encountered and the people they met. While, during their stay in the mining areas, migrant labourers appeared to present themselves as 'detrribalized' urbanites, during their time in the home areas, they seemed to shake off their 'modern' lifestyle in order to switch back to the 'traditional' lifestyle characteristic of the countryside.

Ferguson has rejected the latter representation of migrant labourers' behavioural adaptability. In *'Expectations of modernity'* (1999), a book about the harsh living conditions in the Zambian Copperbelt at the end of the twentieth century, he has noted that *'(...) situational shifting of style is possible only to a limited degree. Like linguistic dialect or accent, cultural style tends to stick with a person; a style requires not simply a situational motive but an internalized capacity that can only be acquired over time'* (Ferguson 1999: 95-96). So, according to Ferguson, it is a mistake to assume that every migrant labourer is automatically capable of adjusting his masculine behaviour to the needs of the situations he is going through. Instead, he writes, it is better to consider a person's ability to perform the right acts at the right moments as a form of 'performative competence', in other words, as a skill that can only be learned through exercise over time (ibidem: 95-97).

There are three reasons why Ferguson's notion of 'performative competence' proves to be very useful for the analysis of the construction of masculinities among Rastafarian artisanal miners. First of all, the concept of 'performative competence' draws our attention to the performative nature of the construction of gender identities. It reminds us of the fact that the masculinity practices of Rastafarian diggers should not be seen as mere expressions of pre-existing masculine identities. Ferguson urges us to consider these practices rather as part of an ongoing and never-ending process of identity construction. Second, the concept of 'performative competence' prevents us from assuming that all Rastafarian diggers automatically know how to behave in the wide variety of situations they are faced with. The concept makes us realize that it is not because people have joined a subculture that they know how to act as convincing members of that subculture. Just like boys who have joined a soccer team never stop learning how to become skilful soccer players, Katangese men who have joined the subcultures of artisanal mining and Rastafarianism never stop learning how to become good diggers and Rastafarians. And just like it is possible to make a distinction between boys who have a real talent for soccer and others who will never be good at it (no matter how hard they try), it is also possible to distinguish between Rastafarian diggers who have a real talent for acting as persuasive members of two subcultures and others who will never make a good job of it. The third and final reason why Ferguson's concept of 'performative competence' is useful for the purposes of the present chapter is that it makes us pay attention to the lasting effects of learning certain styles of behaviour. Contrary to the abovementioned anthropologists of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Ferguson is convinced that

styles are not like clothes that one can take off once they have become redundant. In his opinion, *'style[s] tend[s] to stick with a person'* (Ferguson 1999: 95-96), and therefore they can be expected to have a notable effect on a person's identity construction in the long run. In other words, even if someone decides to leave the subculture he used to be part of, the behavioural styles he acquired during the period he was still a member will not disappear. Instead, the styles will continue to be part of his repertoire of practices, and he will always have the possibility to fall back on them should this prove necessary or appropriate.

Unfortunately, in spite of all its merits, Ferguson's theory on 'performative competence' also has one major shortcoming. Critical reviewers of Ferguson's work such as Hansen (2001), Nyamnjoh (2001), Parpart (2001) and Sichone (2001) have pointed out that the author is so much fixated on demonstrating the importance of learning a series of behavioural skills that he tends to underplay the significance of individual creativity. In the opinion of his critics, Ferguson is mistaken in claiming that there are only two styles (i.e. sets of practices) available to people in the Zambian Copperbelt, namely a *'localist style'* and a *'cosmopolitan style'*. By working with this dichotomous model, they say, Ferguson has missed the chance to engage in a detailed investigation of the complex mixing of cultural practices at the micro-level of Zambian society<sup>179</sup>.

In order to avoid the pitfall highlighted by Hansen, Nyamnjoh, Parpart and Sichone, I intend to combine Ferguson's theory on 'performative competence' with Foucault's theory on 'technologies of the self'. As Danaher, Schirato and Webb have pointed out in their discussion of Foucault's work, *'technologies of the self are a series of techniques that allow individuals to work on themselves by regulating their bodies, their thoughts and their conduct'* (Danaher, Schirato & Webb 2000: 128). According to Foucault, individuals have the possibility of creatively 'crafting' their identities by developing their own forms of self-discipline and by consciously performing operations of 'self-stylization' or 'self-fashioning' on themselves. 'Technologies of the self' are always aimed at promoting self-knowledge, because self-knowledge is considered to be a *conditio sine qua non* for reaching a higher level of happiness, purity and wisdom (Thapan 1995: 43; McNay 1999: 96).

The combination of Ferguson's insights with those of Foucault offers several advantages. First of all, the concept of 'technologies of the self' makes it possible to highlight the creativity of Rastafarian

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<sup>179</sup> According to Parpart, Ferguson would have probably come up with a more sophisticated analysis if he had worked with a larger group of informants during his stay in the field: *'I suspect that if he had spent more time interviewing women and some of the more successful Africans living on the Copperbelt, he might have found a more fluid and mixed bundle of strategies'* (Parpart 2001: 95). So, although Ferguson's critics do not dispute his argument about the importance of 'performative competence', they do question his suggestion that people in the Zambian Copperbelt are focused on only two styles of behaviour. It would have been wiser, in their view, to argue that genuine 'performative competence' expresses itself in the ability to successfully mix different types of practices in a convincing manner.

diggers occupied with the construction of masculine identities. I will show that Rastafarian diggers do not restrict themselves to simply learning, rehearsing and performing a series of preconceived and clear-cut masculinity styles, but that they go one step further by building up a personal repertoire of practices emanating from a wide variety of masculinity types. One gets the impression that, although Rastafarian diggers use the theoretical configuration of masculinity types as a frame of reference for the construction of their own masculine identities, they certainly do not follow it in a rigid manner. A second advantage of the use of the concept 'technologies of the self' is that it allows me to examine the strategies of Rastafarian diggers to develop a form of 'self-constancy' (Ricoeur, discussed in Atkins 2005: 220-223). In the course of this chapter, I will demonstrate that, on average, Rastafarian diggers distinguish themselves from their fellow workers by their higher levels of self-awareness and self-knowledge. By actively keeping track of what is going on in their minds and what is moving them at different points in their lives, they try to achieve a better understanding of their own evolution as human beings, while at the same time they also attempt to stay on the path they have carved out for themselves. Through the use of 'technologies of the self', Rastafarian diggers do their best to 'remain themselves' regardless of the circumstances they end up in, the temptations they are exposed to and the challenges they are faced with. Although, to a certain degree, Rastafarian diggers certainly adapt themselves to the situations they are going through, they nevertheless try to make sure that their behaviour is in conformity with the key principles of Katangese Rastafarianism. Consequently, one could say that they use the ideology of Rastafarianism as an instrument to maintain a coherent sense of self, that is, *'to organize their past, present and future into a meaningful whole'* (Jameson 1984, quoted in Strauss 1997: 362). A third and final advantage of the notion of 'technologies of the self' is that it can be used for the description of the broad range of operations Rastafarian diggers perform on themselves in order to 'craft' their masculine identities. I will show that Rastafarian diggers apply these operations of 'self-fashioning' and 'self-stylization' not only to their conduct, but also to their thoughts and bodies.

Put briefly, my argument in this chapter is twofold. First, I want to argue that there is both a levelling and a differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese Rastafarians. While the levelling trend will be clarified through the use of the concepts of 'liminality' and 'ideological communitas', the differentiating trend will be elucidated through the use of Connell's masculinity model. Second, I want to contend that Rastafarian diggers generally construct their masculine identities in a conscious and well-considered manner. Although their double subcultural membership puts them in the unenviable position of having to meet two different standards of masculine behaviour, they often succeed in doing this relatively smoothly thanks to a strongly developed capacity to perform the right masculinity practices at the right time. In my opinion, the strength of this 'performative competence' can be explained by taking into account the inherent qualities of Katangese Rastafarianism, an ideology that

encourages its followers to stay in control of the construction of their masculine identities by applying various 'technologies of the self' on their thoughts, bodies and conduct.

The chapter is organized as follows. In the first part, I will provide a general description of the characteristics of Katangese Rastafarianism, paying special attention to the impact of this ideology on the construction of masculinities. In the second part, I will illustrate the ways in which people cope with the masculinity-related requirements of a double subcultural membership by presenting a number of case studies on a group of Rastafarian diggers whom I have been able to follow from the beginning of my fieldwork in April 2005 until the end of my fieldwork in December 2007.

## **5.2 Rastafarians in search of law and order**

While there is a massive body of literature on Jamaican Rastafarianism (see e.g. Campbell 1985, 1988; Murrell et al. 1998; Erskine 2005; Johnson-Hill 1995; Kebede & Knottnerus 1998; Zips 2001, 2006), Rastafarian movements in Sub-Saharan Africa have largely been ignored. The few studies available refer to East-, West- and Southern Africa and contain analyses of the factors contributing to the spread of Rastafarianism (Savishinsky 1994a), discussions of how elements from Jamaican Rastafarianism have mixed with elements from African cultures and traditions (Savishinsky 1994b, 1998; Kroll 2006) and studies about the ways in which marginalized people like youngsters or women have used Rastafarianism and reggae music as sources of inspiration for the creation of alternative realities (Turner 1991; Moyer 2005; Morgan 2000; McNee 2002).

As existing studies on Rastafarian movements in Sub-Saharan Africa have paid only scant attention to the relationship between Rastafarianism and gender, I would like to make a contribution to the filling of this research gap by showing that the Katangese version of Rastafarianism can have a significant impact on the construction of masculine identities among Katangese men in general, and among Katangese artisanal miners in particular.

### **5.2.1 Soldiers of love: the emergence of the Katangese Rastafarian movement**

The person who came up with the idea of creating a Rastafarian movement in Katanga was Johnny Mukanya, a photographer running a studio called 'Express' on the Avenue Kyubo in Katuba 3, one of the municipalities of Lubumbashi. Already during the Mobutu era, Mukanya started collecting information about Jamaican Rastafarianism, asking youngsters to come to his home and encouraging them to listen to reggae music and learn more about Rastafarian ideology. In February 1995, Mukanya

created the *Mouvement de Rastafarisme au Congo* (MRFCO), which was officially registered as a non-profit organization in June 2005 (ASBL: *association sans but lucratif*)<sup>180</sup>. Following the official registration of the MRFCO, Moïse Lweta Kapenga, a driver from Lubumbashi's municipality Katuba 2, was appointed as the movement's president<sup>181</sup>.

The MRFCO has its headquarters on the Avenue Kolwezi in Kenya<sup>182</sup>, a municipality of Lubumbashi that is nicknamed '*commune rouge*' (=red municipality) because of its high crime rate and the violent behaviour of its youth. Undoubtedly, Kenya's rowdy reputation is also due to the presence of numerous bars, hotels and brothels, three markets<sup>183</sup> and a slum area called 'Tumbototo' or 'Brondo'. According to public opinion in Lubumbashi, Kenya is a bulwark of crooks and cannabis smokers (Dibwe & Mutabusha 2005: 53-58). The municipality is also known for its sports stadium '*Stade de la Kenya*', which can host 20.000 spectators and which is home to TP Mazembe, a successful and very popular soccer team presided by the Katangese governor Moïse Katumbi Chapwe (Kibambe 2008: 76).

Two factors help to explain why the MRFCO originated in Kenya rather than in one of the other municipalities of Lubumbashi. First, as a result of the fact that Kenya harbours three markets, it does not only attract an incredible amount of goods, but also thousands of visitors who constantly bring in new ideas and practices. Hence, the inhabitants of the Kenya neighbourhood find themselves in a privileged position when it comes to getting access to foreign influences and following the latest transnational fashion trends. Second, the creation of the MRFCO should probably be interpreted as a response to the climate of disorder and insecurity in the Kenya area. Local youngsters are so fed up

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<sup>180</sup> The preamble to the articles of association explicitly refers to Jamaican Rastafarianism as the MRFCO's source of inspiration. It states: 'Rastafarianism is an a-political movement with a cultural and social nature, created in 1912 by Marcus Garvey and Haille Selacie (= Haile Selassie): the slogan of the movement: '*One God, one goal, one destiny*'.

<sup>181</sup> I was told that the membership of the MRFCO has grown significantly since the time of its creation. Unfortunately, I was unable to find any exact figures. According to the leaders of the MRFCO, there are approximately 10.500 Rastafarians for the entire province of Katanga (source: personal communication with the MRFCO leadership, December 2007).

<sup>182</sup> Kenya's predecessor was a neighbourhood called *nyasi*. It owed its name to the fact that its houses were covered with thatches. Nyasi was created at the end of the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s, when Elisabethville was confronted with the massive influx of new labourers in the context of Katanga's war effort (see chapter 2). It changed its name into Kenya during the Second World War, when large groups of Katangese soldiers returned from the war in East Africa and were looking for a place to settle down (Dibwe, Kahola, Sapato & Kasandji 2008: 95).

<sup>183</sup> Kenya's central market (*marché central*) has two stops for taxis and buses going towards the centre of the Katangese capital as well as to the municipality of Katuba (Kibambe 2008: 75). Of all three markets, it is definitely the most accessible one, while it is also the biggest and most visited one. Though its official opening hours are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., traders usually continue operating until 9 p.m. in the avenues close to the market place. It should be noted that the *marché central* has a relatively good infrastructure. To a large extent, this is due to a recent rehabilitation effort funded by USAID, the governor's office, the office of Lubumbashi's mayor, the municipality of Kenya and, finally, the market-users themselves. Thanks to the financial efforts of these different parties, it has been possible to construct wooden and nicely lined up market stalls on a concrete soil. The commodities traded on the *marché central* include different types of foodstuffs, household utensils, watches, beauty products, medication and spare parts (Kibambe 2008: 76).

with their precarious living conditions that they are very susceptible to ideologies such as Rastafarianism, which allow them to reflect on the creation of alternative realities.

Strikingly, members of the MRFCO like to think of themselves as peaceful soldiers. They call themselves 'fighters for non-violence' (*combattants de la non-violence*) or 'rasta soldiers' (*rasta soldiers*) and wear parts of military uniforms such as combat shoes, army shirts or berets. The structure of the movement is reminiscent of an army as well. Both on the district level and on the local level, the movement is led by a brigade (*brigade*), composed of a head commander (*kamanda titulaire / président*), a vice-commander (*vice-commandant*), an administrative secretary (*secrétaire administrative*), a treasurer (*trésorier*), an adviser (*conseiller*), an inspector (*inspecteur*), a disciplinary commander (*commandant de discipline / police-man / papa discipline*) and a brigadier-messenger (*brigadier-messenger*). The mandate of MRFCO officials is valid indefinitely. Unless they are removed from office for reasons of mismanagement or unless they leave their position on their own initiative, officials are free to carry on with their activities for as long as they want<sup>184</sup>.

The MRFCO has good reasons to employ an army-like structure and a military discourse. As Wadham has pointed out, '*armies (...) are literally and symbolically masculinist* (Wadham 2007: 24). Apart from the fact that armies are predominantly composed of men, they are also believed to represent and uphold typically male values such as domination, rationality, discipline, comradeship and heroism (ibidem: 24-25). By joining an army, men get the opportunity to prove their manhood, to fight for the values they believe in, and to stand up for the people they want to protect (Nagel 2007: 626-627). Moreover, as Gill has remarked in an article on the Bolivian army, men from the lower classes in society often consider military service as an opportunity '*to assert a dignified sense of masculinity that serves as a counterpoint to the degradation experienced from more dominant males and an economic system that assigns them to the least desirable occupations*' (Gill 1997: 527-528).

By presenting the MRFCO as an army and portraying themselves as soldiers, Katangese Rastafarians underline the levelling trend in their masculinity practices. They highlight their ambition to behave as a 'band of brothers', subscribing to the same masculine values and fighting for the same cause, namely calling a halt to chaos and disorder. While, on the one hand, they seek to create a distinct profile for themselves as a group of harmless peace activists, drawing inspiration from the peaceful ideology of Jamaican Rastafarianism, on the other hand, they know that the military outlook of their movement is

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<sup>184</sup> Officials have the habit of legitimizing their powerful position by saying that 'all authority comes from God' (*toute autorité vient de Dieu*). When I asked them why they never made any plans for the organization of elections, they said that an election campaign would divide the movement internally. Whenever there was a new position available in the hierarchy of the movement, they tried to appoint one of their protégés.

of vital importance to maintain a certain level of visibility and credibility vis-à-vis the outside world. Given the climate of 'militarism' in Congolese society, an atmosphere characterized by '*the pervasiveness (...) of symbols, values and discourse validating military power and preparation of war*' (Luckham 1994: 24), Rastafarians realize they have a better chance of being noticed and accepted by the public when they act as a group of disciplined soldiers than when they act as a group of loosely affiliated and marginalized individuals occasionally getting together to smoke a few joints. They deliberately pose as 'army men' because they hope to gain some of the respect and prestige that normally accrue to members of the Congolese military, the official exemplars of military masculinity.

Since Katangese Rastafarians find it very important to come across as a harmonious unit, made up of like-minded 'soldiers' fighting for the same cause, they do their best to avoid internal discord. Because they are afraid that the movement may one day become divided over political issues, they maintain that they are a-political and therefore unwilling to go to the polls (*hatuvotake*: we do not have the habit of voting). The only politician they really appear to appreciate is the late Laurent-Désiré Kabila. They thank him for having paved the way for the official recognition of the MRFCO (through a ministerial decree) and admire him for having succeeded in toppling the Mobutu regime and 'breathing new life into Congolese society'.

Laurent-Désiré Kabila's popularity among Katangese Rastafarians is primarily due to his reputation as a liberator. He is considered a modern Messiah who freed his people from Mobutu's dictatorship and died the death of a martyr. Because Rastafarians are impressed by Kabila's ability to change the course of Congolese history through a personal intervention and because they believe he gave his life for the freedom of his people, they tend to put him on a par with charismatic liberation figures such as Haile Selassie, Patrice Lumumba, Moses and Jesus. The second reason why Laurent-Désiré Kabila is very popular among Katangese Rastafarians is that he appeared to have plans for a radical transformation of Congolese society. Kabila's revolutionary ideas<sup>185</sup> fire the imagination of Rastafarians, who share his dream of creating alternative realities.

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<sup>185</sup> At the end of the 1990s, Kabila took a number of measures that appeared to be borrowed from a revolutionary handbook. First of all, shortly after the beginning of the second Congo war in August 1998, he encouraged ordinary citizens to become members of armed groups like the *Forces d'Autodéfense Populaire* (FAP) and the *Mayi Mayi*. These movements received a limited military training, were sent small arms and ammunition by the authorities in Kinshasa and assisted the Congolese army in keeping the army base in Kamina out of the hands of the Rwandan army (International Crisis Group 2006a: 7). Another Kabila measure that did not go by unnoticed concerned the creation, on 22 March 1999, of the *Comités du Pouvoir Populaire*, popular movements expected to prepare the country for a new tradition of democracy at the grassroots level. Apparently, the idea for the creation of the CPP came from the Libyan president Khadafi, with whom Kabila was on friendly terms. The CPP were organized according to a pyramidal structure, which, on the national level, was led by a board of directors presided by Kabila himself. The CPP dealt with a wide variety of issues, including problems in the fields of healthcare, infrastructure and education (Jeune Afrique (1999), *Requiem pour l'AFDL*).



All the Rastafarians I interviewed in the course of my fieldwork agreed that Kabila's take-over in 1997 had given rise to a change of mentality within the Katangese Rastafarian movement. The new generation of Rastafarians accuse their predecessors of being ignorant of the history and ideology of the movement, of failing to organize meetings on a regular basis, of operating without an internal code of conduct and of behaving in a disorderly fashion. A creuseur in the mine of Mandumbwila explained the difference between Rastafarians of the Mobutu era and Rastafarians of the Kabila era as follows:

(...) during the Mobutu era Rastafarians were a disorderly pack of people (*badésordonnés*). There were different kinds of Rastafarians. Only a small number of them really followed Rastafarianism. They did not have that spirit of Jah (=God). They were wearing dreads (=dreadlocks), but they were behaving like crooks (*voyous*). They did all sorts of things: stealing, banditry... It is for that reason that Rastafarianism (*kirasta*) got divided. But the Rastafarians who are born now, are born with the spirit of God (*na esprit ya Mungu*). A contemporary Rastafarian works for God with one heart.

Clearly, this interviewee blames Rastafarians of the Mobutu era for giving Rastafarianism a bad name. He believes they are responsible for the fact that many people in Katanga think of the MRFCO as a bunch of crooks (*bavoyous*), cannabis-smokers (*bafutabangue*) and hooligans (*bantu wa désordre*).

The fierceness with which 'new' Katangese Rastafarians dissociate themselves from the lifestyle of their predecessors and the ardour with which they advocate a moral revival are not unique. Having compared several groups of young radicals in the Middle East, the United States and Scandinavia, Kimmel has argued that more and more men are inclined to embrace reactionary views on gender issues because they feel 'emasculated' by globalization. According to Kimmel, the young men in question are afraid that the increasing spread of 'pernicious' Western values such as gender equality tends to undermine male dignity and supremacy. To stop this from happening, they do their utmost to restore 'traditional' masculine values. For this reason, Kimmel prefers to describe these groups as 'movements of restoration' rather than as 'movements of revolution': *'These movements look backward, nostalgically, to a time when they (...) were able to assume the places in society to which they believed themselves entitled. They seek to restore that unquestioned entitlement, both in the domestic and in the public sphere'* (Kimmel 2003: 605).

Just like the angry young men participating in the radical movements analyzed by Kimmel, 'new' Katangese Rastafarians define their collective identity by reacting sharply against the licentious way of life of their predecessors. Fearing that 'old' Katangese Rastafarians have jeopardized the respectability of Rastafarian manhood by concentrating only on outward appearances and neglecting the basic tenets of Rastafarian ideology, 'new' Katangese Rastafarians do everything they can to make a clear break with the Mobutu era. Going back to what they believe to be the foundations of

Rastafarianism, they exert themselves to cultivate a joint attitude of orthodoxy, radicalism and determination, thereby emphasizing the levelling trend in their masculinity practices. They force themselves to follow a new line of conduct and, in doing so, they hope to be able to reclaim part of their masculine dignity.

### 5.2.2 The doctrine of Katangese Rastafarianism

The most important initiative the MRFCO leadership has taken to improve the reputation of Rastafarians with the Katangese public concerns the organization of ideological instruction (*kufundisha kirasta*: to teach Rastafarianism). It is believed to be of vital importance that all members acquire a basic knowledge of the ideology of Rastafarianism, so that they can become 'people of wisdom' (*bantu wa akiri*). The weekly meetings of a Rastafarian group (*nkunji*) are called '*Ecole Jah*' (literally: school of Jah). As far as their structure, prayers and songs are concerned, they resemble the gatherings of Pentecostal churches<sup>186</sup>. The speakers, who base themselves on French texts taken from the Internet, try to keep the attention of their listeners by asking them to take notes of the lectures in an exercise book.

It should be noted that, apart from using the *Ecole Jah* meetings to turn the Rastafarian movement into a disciplined and respectable army of 'peaceful soldiers', the MRFCO leadership also uses these gatherings to achieve two other goals. First of all, the leaders of the MRFCO seek to transmit their views on 'ideological communitas' to their members. Because they are very enthusiastic about the atmosphere of harmony, communion and egalitarianism they have been able to experience during their own time with the Rastafarian movement, they do their best to preserve this atmosphere. It is the intention of the MRFCO leadership to give all Katangese Rastafarians the opportunity to regularly immerse themselves in an ambiance of togetherness ('communitas'), to help them address various existential problems and to assist them in avoiding bad behaviour. During the meetings of the *Ecole Jah*, members of the Rastafarian movement are told that they are all stuck in the same condition of 'liminality', and they are given advice on how to give meaning to that state of 'betwixt-and-betweenness'. The second goal the MRFCO tries to achieve through the organization of *Ecole Jah* meetings is to provide information about what Foucault has described as 'technologies of the self'. Katangese Rastafarians are encouraged to rebuild their masculine identities while using the tenets of Rastafarian ideology as their guiding principles. Furthermore, they are stimulated to increase their

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<sup>186</sup> A gathering of the *Ecole Jah* is usually divided into 6 parts: a first part in which an opening prayer is said, a second part in which the basic principles of Rastafarianism are being discussed, a third part in which practical issues are being debated, a fourth part in which religious songs are sung, a fifth part in which sanctions are imposed on those who failed to respect the internal code of conduct and a sixth part in which a closing prayer is said. Most of the prayers are said in Swahili bora and pronounced while everybody is standing in a circle and holding each other's hands. During the singing sessions, people are standing in a circle and clapping their hands.

levels of self-mastery by performing a series of operations on their thoughts, bodies and conduct. The rationale behind the regular repetition of these operations of 'self-fashioning' and 'self-stylization' is that it helps members of the MRFCO to act as convincing Rastafarians vis-à-vis the outside world. It is believed that aspirant Rastafarians can only acquire the necessary 'performative competence' by rehearsing the Rastafarian style of behaviour over and over again, until it becomes a very natural thing to do.

The basic principles of the Katangese Rastafarian doctrine are summed up in three slogans that are repeatedly shouted during Ecole Jah meetings, namely (1) *rasta tête*, (2) *rasta créateur* and (3) *no violence*. The following sections will show that each of the three slogans is connected with a number of 'technologies of the self'.

### 5.2.2.1 'Rasta tête': the need for introspection, self-knowledge and concentration

'*Rasta tête*' (=rasta head), the first slogan regularly shouted during meetings of the Ecole Jah, is meant as an exhortation to concentrate as good as possible, with a view to retaining a minimal degree of self-determination, even when being faced with oppression. In the context of this call for concentration, Rastafarians often talk about the themes of slavery and exile. While, on the one hand, they compare themselves to African slaves, who were shipped away to perform hard labour on foreign plantations, on the other hand, they equally feel affinity with the old Israelites, who were forced to work for the Egyptian Pharaoh, until Mozes led them away to the Promised Land. Rastafarians say they are living in exile as well (*tuko mu exile*: we are in exile), so that they need to have the courage to travel around (*courage ya kutembea*) in order to be able to earn their livelihoods. They say that they know no bounds (*hatuna na frontières / tunakalaka no frontières*: we have no boundaries) and that they are constantly looking for quiet spots (*tunatafuta salama*: we are looking for peace; *tunatafuta fwashi pasipo makelele*: we are looking for a place without any noise), where they can reflect on their predicament without being disturbed by other people. The consumption of cannabis (*ganja / chanvre / bange / best / djamba / dagga*) is seen as one of the most effective techniques to bring oneself into a state of deep concentration<sup>187</sup>. Building on a long tradition of ritual cannabis consumption in Central Africa<sup>188</sup> and referring to the high importance of cannabis consumption in Jamaican Rastafarianism,

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<sup>187</sup> In Lwambo, cannabis is freely available on the market. In June 2005, a ball of cannabis cost 50 FC, while a whole bucket of cannabis cost 2000 FC.

<sup>188</sup> According to du Toit, cannabis was brought to Central Africa by traders coming from the East African coast (du Toit 1976: 28). From travelling documents and ethnographies, it can be gathered that, by the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century, the consumption of cannabis was socially accepted on several places in Central Africa (ibidem: 19). The earliest reference to the ritual consumption of cannabis can be found in the writings of the German explorer von Wissmann, who, in 1881, paid a visit to Kalamba Mukenge, the chief of the Bashilenge, a subgroup of the Luba who had established themselves in the vicinity of the Lulua and Kasai rivers (Maes 1939: 7539). Von Wissmann wrote that the followers of Kalamba Mukenge called themselves

they describe the cannabis plant as a 'sacred tree' (*arbre sacré*), which allows them to get directly in touch with God.

Katangese Rastafarians view dreadlocks as a reminder of the oppression their ancestors were confronted with (*symbole ya kukumbuka esclavagisme*: a symbol to commemorate slavery). They believe the latter lacked the time to have their hair done properly and therefore decided to let it go wild. By imitating (what they believe to have been) their ancestors' haircut, Rastafarians want to indicate they are still being faced with slavish living and working conditions, even though they are living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To highlight the intensity of their affliction, they sometimes describe their dreadlocks as '*nywele ya mateso*' (hairs of suffering), an expression used throughout Katanga by people who deliberately neglect their hair because they are in mourning after the death of a relative or a close friend<sup>189</sup>. A Rastafarian from the Katuba neighbourhood in Lubumbashi expressed his views on the symbolic meaning of dreadlocks as follows:

A Rastafarian is a prisoner (*mufungwa*). When I grow dreadlocks (*ile wakati minafunga nywele yangu*: when I close my hair), I concentrate my spirit (*minaconcentrer esprit yangu*). I take my whole life in my hands (*minabeba maisha yangu yote, minabeba miye mwenyewe mu mikono*). That is how I will evolve. As soon as I lose myself a little bit, I throw away my life (*nikijiperdre kiloko, minapotesha vie yangu*). As soon as I succeed in my plans, I have the choice: either I have my hair cut, or I let it grow (*nikiweze mambo yangu, minaenda kukata nywele yangu ou bien minaenda kuiacha*).

So, according to this interviewee, a concentrated state of mind is a necessary condition for deliverance. People who lose control of themselves are beyond redemption. Given the high symbolic value of dreadlocks, Rastafarians handle them with great care, hiding them under a headgear and only displaying them during meetings of the Ecole Jah on Sunday, a habit justified through the use of the expression '*nywele ya rasta ni nywele ya kijila*' or 'a Rastafarian's hair is under taboo'<sup>190</sup>.

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the 'Bene Riamba' or the 'children of cannabis' and that cannabis consumption appeared to be part of a real cult led by Sangula Meta, Kalamba Mukenge's sister (De Clercq 1928: 504; Maes 1939: 7539). Fabian has pointed out that certain reports of early European visitors to Central Africa refer to the consumption of cannabis by traditional authorities in Katanga. The Portuguese explorers Capello and Ivens, for instance, have claimed that people in the environment of the Lunda ruler Mwaant Yaav were smoking tobacco through long pipes and were inhaling '*liamba*' (=cannabis) from so-called *a-topas*. For his part, the German explorer Richard Böhm said that, in the village of Mpala, on the western shore of Lake Tanganyika, he had met with a local chief who was smoking cannabis from a waterpipe (Fabian 2000: 161-162).

<sup>189</sup> When somebody passes away, it is common practice for the family members and closest friends of the deceased to neglect their hair completely. They will not go to the hairdresser's until after the funeral (Mayanga 1979: 280).

<sup>190</sup> The great care with which Katangese Rastafarians handle their dreadlocks probably has something to do with local ideas about hair. In an article about Luba who went to live in a so-called *Centre Extra-Coutumier* during the colonial period, Makonga has noted that, at the end of the mourning period, during the ceremony of *kusubuka*, a special monument was created in which the deceased's hair was kept, because it was believed to possess special powers (Makonga 1951: 76).

The preceding account has shown that Katangese Rastafarians consider themselves as ‘liminaries’ or ‘edgemen’ (Turner 1969: 95; 106-107). They are very well aware of the fact that they are living on the fringes of society and that most people tend to pigeon-hole them as outsiders or mavericks. Yet, instead of simply accepting their exclusion or indulging in self-pity, they try to make the best of their situation. They encourage each other to consider their condition of ‘liminality’ as a period of reflection, in other words, as a temporary break that allows them to think about who they are and what they want to do with the rest of their lives. Through the use of hyperbolic metaphors borrowed from Jamaican Rastafarianism and the Bible, they highlight the intensity of their emotions. They want to indicate that, just like slaves or exiles, they impatiently look forward to the moment they will finally be able to start a more prosperous phase in their lives. Furthermore, they want to emphasize their firm belief in the fact that one day all their suffering will come to an end.

The second observation that can be made on the basis of the preceding account is that there are four ‘technologies of the self’ connected to the slogan ‘*rasta tête*’, namely travelling around, going into retreat, smoking cannabis and growing dreadlocks. While the first three ‘technologies’ are intended to make the individual engage in introspection and reach a higher level of self-knowledge, the fourth technology is meant to make the individual attain a higher level of concentration, so that he can act more consciously and purposively. Despite their differences, the four ‘technologies’ also have one thing in common: they are all aimed at assisting the individual in achieving a higher degree of self-mastery and ‘crafting’ his identity in an active manner. During the *Ecole Jah* meetings, Katangese Rastafarians are told that they should take their fate into their own hands, work on themselves and only count on themselves for liberation: they should not expect anybody else to rescue them from their predicament.

The third observation that can be made on the basis of the foregoing discussion is that hair is a very important component of the construction of masculinities among Katangese Rastafarians. Judging by the testimony of the man from the Katuba neighbourhood in Lubumbashi, it seems that the identity of a Rastafarian stands or falls with his dreadlocks. For a Rastafarian man, it is of vital importance to grow dreadlocks in order to be recognized as a full member of his community. Dreadlocks are the most important indication of the fact that Rastafarianism is ‘written’ onto the bodies of its followers, as Foucault would put it (Foucault, quoted in Danaher, Schirato & Webb 2000: 46). Just like some men have themselves tattooed in order to show that they are part of a street gang or a motorcycle club (Sullivan 2007: 592-593), Rastafarians let their hair grow long in order to identify themselves as

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Among the Baluba Shankadji, elders never touched their hair with their hands. If they wanted to scratch it, they either used a wooden thorn or a prickle of a porcupine (Sendwe 1954: 92-93).

followers of Rastafarianism. Hence, growing dreadlocks should be interpreted as a form of subcultural body modification, which '*facilitate[s] individual self-expression, fulfill[s] identity needs, and mark[s] one's (...) rejection of mainstream culture*' (Pitts 2000: 445).

### 5.2.2.2 'Rasta créateur': the need for altruism and creativity

'*Rasta créateur*' (=Rastafarian creator), the second slogan regularly shouted during meetings of the Ecole Jah, is intended as a call to make a creative contribution to the improvement of the standard of life in Katanga. While, on the one hand, Rastafarians identify themselves with their ancestors (*bankambo*), who, just like them, were forced to spend their lives in misery, on the other hand, they think it is time to stand up and do something about it. Just like their role model Marcus Garvey<sup>191</sup> – whose name they transform into *Marquis d'Erveil*, *Marquis Gerveil* or *Marquis Carvère* – they say they are prepared to dedicate themselves to the 'improvement of the living conditions of Blacks' (*amélioration des conditions de vie des Noirs*). One of my Rastafarian informants, who ran a small grocery in the mining camp of Kalabi, regretted that so many young Katangese are just sitting back doing nothing:

In the (Rastafarian) movement we like development. We like black Africans to wake up. With regard to various issues, blacks are at a very low level. In everyday life in Congo, everyone has to look after himself (*kujidébrouiller*). There are things that can be done, even if education is poorly developed. Many youngsters give up their studies, because they start working in order to earn a little money.

Rastafarians pride themselves on the chores they were doing for the benefit of the community, a habit they describe as '*salongo*', the name for compulsory collective labour during the Mobutu era<sup>192</sup>. They

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<sup>191</sup> Marcus Mosiah Garvey, who was born in Jamaica on 17 August 1887, was one of the most fervent and influential advocates of African emancipation in the early twentieth century (Erskine 2005: 30-38). In 1914, he established the '*Universal Negro Improvement Association*' (UNIA), a movement that spread from Jamaica to the United States after World War I, and that became the largest Pan-Africanist movement of the early 1920s (Lewis 1998: 146). Referring to the Biblical section Psalm 68: 31 - '*Princes shall come out of Egypt. Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God*' - Garvey predicted that Africans living in oppression would soon be released from their suffering by a black messiah. In his view, this black messiah would enable 'Africa's exiled sons and daughters in Jamaica' to emancipate themselves and to return to their African motherland (James 2001: 128-131). When Ras Tafari Makonnen was enthroned as the new emperor of Ethiopia on 2 November 1930, marginalized Jamaicans took this as the fulfilment of Garvey's prophecy (James 2001: 129), because Ethiopia was the only African state that was still independent at that time, apart from Liberia (Shillington 1995: 364).

<sup>192</sup> After a visit to China, where he witnessed how Mao Zedong forced the population to do various types of jobs to promote national development, Mobutu decided to apply the same system in Zaire. He gave orders to show the Chinese propaganda movie '*Esprit de Yukung*' on national television and made provisions for the creation of the Zairian television series '*Esprit de Salongo*' which was meant to illustrate the virtues of *salongo*. As Pype has pointed out, the exact origin of the word *salongo* is unclear. According to Hulstaert, *salongo* is derived from the Mongo expression '*is'a longo*', which means '*father of the hoe*'. It appears that, at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, school children in Boteko, a place in the Equatorial Province, had the habit of singing a Lingala song which included the expression '*is'a longo*'. The lyrics of this song referred to a colonial official using a hoe to punish the prisoners he was expected to supervise (Pype 2008: 59-60).

present themselves as volunteers (*bavolontaires*), who refuse to be paid for their activities. Amongst other things, they occupy themselves with repairing roads, painting buildings, transporting bricks and refurbishing monuments<sup>193</sup>.

Clearly, Katangese Rastafarians tend to associate the slogan '*rasta créateur*' with only one type of activity, namely taking part in community service. In my opinion, it is appropriate to label this activity as a 'technology of the self', for it is through their participation in community service that members of the MRFCO learn how to efface themselves and suppress egoistic reflexes. They practise altruism by regularly carrying out activities that only serve the interests of others and that are of no direct use to them. By voluntarily submitting to this 'technology of the self', Katangese Rastafarians try to mould themselves into a group of enterprising men who put their inventiveness at the service of the common good. For Katangese Rastafarians, performing community service is a necessary condition for the creation of an alternative reality. They are convinced that a better Katangese society can only come into being when people at the grassroots level are brave enough to take initiatives that have the potential of bringing about social change.

Although, at first sight, it may not be entirely clear in what respects this 'technology of the self' has an impact on the ways Katangese Rastafarians build up their masculine identities, there really is a connection between community service and gender identity construction. It is not a coincidence that Rastafarians focus on those types of community service that yield visible results. They deliberately concentrate on improving Katanga's infrastructure because they know that this will enable them to leave their mark on the landscape. When they help to repair a road, for instance, they know that this will catch the attention of the public. They are well aware of the fact that people in Katanga tend to show a lot of appreciation and admiration for men who succeed in improving the general wellbeing through projects with tangible results. Rastafarians are eager to demonstrate that they are capable of accomplishing things that the Congolese state is unable to achieve. They want to indicate that creativity and promptness of action are among the most important characteristics of their collective masculine identity. Just like members of the Boy Scouts try to perform their daily 'good deed' because the public sees this as a key component of their way of being a man (or a boy), members of the MRFCO regularly take part in community service because they hope that the Katangese public opinion will associate this form of altruism with the Rastafarian way of being a man.

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<sup>193</sup> Thanks to their willingness to work for free for the benefit of their communities, Rastafarians are sometimes granted special benefits by the Congolese authorities. In Likasi, the city council has given them an office where they can organize their meetings. Furthermore, they are allowed to meet with the mayor without having to make an appointment and are given 'laissez passer' signs for their vehicles, so that they can pass through roadblocks without having to pay.

One may ask why, on the one hand, Katangese Rastafarians dissociate themselves from everything that brings back memories of the Mobutu era, whereas, on the other hand, they attach great importance to the *salongo*, a practice that clearly bears the stamp of Mobutism. As Freund has pointed out, the Zairian police and army forcefully imposed the *salongo* practice on the population during the time of Mobutu's dictatorship (Freund 2009: 4). Therefore, it seems strange that Rastafarians describe their community service with a term that used to have the connotation of oppression and coercion. In all likelihood, the explanation for this paradox lies in the fact that a generalized system of compulsory collective labour no longer exists (except in some rebel-controlled areas in Eastern DRC). Though some public servants, customary chiefs and pastors of Pentecostal churches still ask people to perform *salongo*, they never use violence as a means of persuasion. In contemporary Katanga, the term *salongo* is only used to designate voluntary community service. Katangese Rastafarians do not experience *salongo* as something that is imposed on them from above. To the contrary, they like to pride themselves on their willingness to do things for free for the general benefit of the population, without the authorities asking them for it.

### 5.2.2.3 'No violence': the need for solidarity and self-discipline

'No violence', the third and final slogan shouted during meetings of the Ecole Jah, is mainly intended as a call for peacefulness and solidarity. Citing Bob Marley's song 'One love' as an important source of inspiration, Katangese Rastafarians exert themselves to approach all human beings with the same spirit of love (*mapendo*). To prevent the MRFCO's reputation from getting damaged, they do their best never to get involved in any fights or riots. If a Rastafarian has an argument with somebody who is not a member of the MRFCO and if he has the impression the argument might turn violent at some point, he will always ask other Rastafarians to step in and solve the matter peacefully.

Thinking back to the beginning of the 1990s, when immigrants from the Kasai region fell victim to a xenophobic hate campaign<sup>194</sup>, Rastafarians say they are all part of the same tribe (*barasta beko kabila moja*: Rastafarians are one tribe), thereby suggesting that they will never discriminate on the basis of ethnic origin. The solidarity mechanisms of the MRFCO are accessible to all members. According to an unwritten rule, every Rastafarian arriving at an unknown destination has the right to call upon the hospitality of local Rastafarians even if he has never met them before. Furthermore, the various local divisions of the MRFCO make efforts to raise money (*côtisations*), which they keep in a joint Rastafarian cashbox (*caisse rasta*) and which they use to help Rastafarians faced with an emergency, such as a bereavement in the family or a hospitalization. It is the responsibility of the *brigadier*-

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<sup>194</sup> For more information about this sad period in Katangese history, see the preface of this dissertation.



*messenger* (cfr. supra) to gather information about these cases of emergency and to notify his fellow-Rastafarians<sup>195</sup>.

Aiming to emphasize their feelings of harmony and concordance, Rastafarians have the habit of addressing each other with kinship terms. Describing the MRFCO as the 'Rastafarian family' (*famille rastafarienne*), they say that everyone following the ideology of Rastafarianism is part of the same progeny (*kirasta ni kizazi kimoja*: Rastafarianism is one progeny), an expression reminiscent of the relationships of spiritual kinship<sup>196</sup> between members of Jamaa, a charismatic movement that used to be very popular among workers of the UMHK (see chapter 1).

When two Rastafarians meet each other in the streets and want to exchange greetings, they use the formula '*nkambo respect!*' (grandparent, respect!), while holding out their clenched right-hand fist, briefly touching the other person's knuckles and then putting the same hand flatly on their chest. By using the term '*nkambo*', they do not only want to highlight their relatedness, but they also want to indicate that, by definition, they consider every Rastafarian as an elder (*mwenye kukomea*) and as a respectable person (*muntu wa heshima*: a man of respect), because, due to his knowledge of Rastafarian ideology, he is assumed to be a wise person, no matter how old he is in reality.

Although women hardly ever participate in the activities of the MRFCO – they usually do not attend the meetings of the Ecole Jah on Sundays and are rarely given the chance to occupy a high position in the hierarchy of the movement – they are still considered as full members of the Rastafarian family. The female partner of a Rastafarian is called a '*mama Africa*'. She is expected to play the role of a caring housewife, who looks well after her husband (*kuchunga rasta*: to take care of a Rastafarian), makes sure that his house is always spotlessly clean (*kuchunga nyumba yake*: to look after his house) and does her best to command respect (*heshima*) from people in her environment by displaying exemplary behaviour. It should be noted that some Rastafarians take their children with them when they attend the Ecole Jah on Sundays, because they find it important that the latter familiarize themselves with the principles of Rastafarianism. During a visit to the mining camp of Mandumbwila,

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<sup>195</sup> The MRFCO division of Lwambo has its own piece of farming land. While members of the MRFCO take turns at working on the land, the revenues from the sale of the agricultural produce are used to fill the joint Rastafarian money box (*caisse rasta*).

<sup>196</sup> Relationships of spiritual kinship also exist in a number of contemporary churches in Katanga. In a description of marriage practices in Lubumbashi, Kahola has noted that young people belonging to a church community are often pressured to choose their spouse within that same community, in other words amongst their '*Frères et Soeurs en Christ*' (brothers and sisters in Christ). This rule is based on the belief that God has selected a spouse for every human being. Thinking that their future marriage should correspond with the will of God (*la volonté de Dieu*), young celibate christians have the habit of praying for a revelation. It is then up to the pastor or to a (spiritual) brother or a (spiritual) sister to go into trance and to predict who will be the future spouse of the person in question (Kahola 2005: 155).

situated close to the town of Lwambo, I noticed that local Rastafarians had put up a flag with the image of a dreadlocked toddler whom they described as 'Baby rasta'.

The foregoing discussion has shown that the slogan 'no violence' is coupled with several 'technologies of the self'. The first 'technology of the self' that arrests the attention is anger management. Because Katangese Rastafarians want to keep up their reputation as 'peaceful soldiers', they do whatever they can to suppress their own reflexes of anger. Through this form of self-control, they try to prevent themselves from resorting to violence. The reason for this is that, in their opinion, the use of violence is a sign of weakness, just like the overt display of typical feelings of vulnerability such as fear, shame and grief (see Scheff 2007: 16). According to Katangese Rastafarians, every perpetrator of violence deserves to be considered as a weak person, because he or she is obviously incapable of recognizing and breaking out of certain negative patterns of thought and behaviour, due to a lack of self-knowledge. By engaging in violent acts - Rastafarians argue - people admit that they are not in control of the situation in which they find themselves and that they are incapable of controlling their basic instincts.

The second 'technology of the self' associated with the slogan 'no violence' is the expression of what Durkheim has described as 'mechanical solidarity'. The latter type of solidarity typically occurs in relatively simple communities in which people support each other because they consider each other as equals: they know each other well, lead more or less the same lives, carry out the same tasks and have similar outlooks (Durkheim 1893, discussed in Eriksen & Nielsen 2001: 30). The tendency of Katangese Rastafarians to cultivate this 'mechanical solidarity' is in line with their nostalgic longing for an imaginary past in which people supposedly lived together in perfect harmony. Although Katangese society has become so complex that instances of 'mechanical solidarity' are very hard to find, Rastafarians still do their best to generate feelings of unity, trust and reciprocity amongst each other<sup>197</sup>.

The habit of Katangese Rastafarians to treat each other as members of the same family should be seen as a logical consequence of this pursuit of 'mechanical solidarity'. Rastafarians learn to see it as normal that every person who joins the MRFCO automatically acquires the status of a family member and is immediately entitled to family-like solidarity and trust. An additional explanation for the fact that Katangese Rastafarians have developed the habit of creating fictive kinship relationships with

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<sup>197</sup> One could say that their outlook on life is as romantic as that of Durkheim, the inventor of the notion of 'mechanical solidarity'. In her discussion of Durkheim's book 'De la division du travail social' (1893), Cieraad has remarked that his theory is characterized by a flavour of romanticism: '*The nostalgia for the Gemeinschaft, the folksy and 'moral' roots of a coherent and harmonious living community, bespeaks (...) a romantic notion of time: the folksy community is cherished as a primordial a-historical phenomenon*' (Cieraad 1991: 27).

each other is that real family relationships in Katanga have been radically redefined over the past few decades. As a result of the economic crisis, which has gained momentum since the beginning of the 1990s (see the preface of this dissertation), family solidarity has eroded considerably. Whereas, previously, city-dwellers almost considered it an honour to be able to help their relatives in the countryside, nowadays, they are no longer prepared to share their possessions. They often avoid contacts with relatives from the countryside because they fear the latter might try to bewitch them out of jealousy. In addition to this, city-dwellers are increasingly inclined to evade their relatives in the city, because they are afraid these people may also ask them for material support, which they are unable or unwilling to provide. Another symptom of the waning family solidarity in Katanga is the phenomenon of child-witches or *sheges*. Just like in Kinshasa and in other parts of the DRC (see De Boeck & Plissart 2004: 158-189), more and more children are falling victim to witchcraft accusations. As a result of this, they find themselves disowned by their families and turned out into the street. Undoubtedly, the rising number of child expulsions of the last few years is largely due to the intensifying economic crisis (Dibwe 2001: 186-191). The efforts of Katangese Rastafarians to create their own '*famille rastafarienne*' should probably be interpreted as a strategy to cope with the negative consequences of this eroding family solidarity in Katanga.

The third 'technology of the self' associated with the slogan 'no violence' concerns both the expression and the demand of respect. In this context, it is interesting to have a closer look at the way Katangese Rastafarians address each other. It is striking that they use the formula '*nkambo, respect*' (grandfather, respect), which is part of a local gerontocratic idiom. People using this expression implicitly indicate that, in their opinion, senior members of society are entitled to respect from their juniors, in other words, from individuals who have not yet acquired the status of senior. Through the use of a gerontocratic vocabulary, Katangese Rastafarians try to achieve two goals: on the one hand, they want to encourage all members of the MRFCO to respect each other, and, on the other hand, they want to claim the right to be recognized and treated as respectable seniors by the Katangese public.

The first goal is linked with the disappointment of Katangese Rastafarians about what they perceive to be a general drop in moral standards in Katangese society. Rastafarians have the impression that people in Katanga are no longer respecting each other the way they should. In order to put a stop to this trend, Rastafarians use their daily greeting ritual to set a good example to others. As far as the second goal is concerned, it should be taken into account that contemporary Katangese society is going through a phase of intense generational conflict. To an increasing extent, Katangese youngsters are reacting against the fact that elderly men and women appear to take it for granted that they are treated as authoritative and respectable individuals. Many youngsters reject this attitude, because, in their view, seniority is something that should be 'earned' and not something that should remain the exclusive privilege of those who happen to be advanced in age. Following the example of youngsters

elsewhere in the DRC, Katangese Rastafarians claim the right to be prematurely acknowledged as elders. In spite of the fact that they are way too young to be addressed as '*bankambo*' (grandparents), they believe they have already done enough to prove that they are worthy of bearing that title. In many respects, their situation resembles that of young urbanites in Kinshasa, whose position is aptly described by De Boeck: '*The principles of seniority and gerontocracy as such are not being dismantled, but have instead become the ground for a generational conflict (...) in which the (...) young claim for themselves the right to singularize and realize themselves as 'authoritative elders', and to use the syntax of gerontocracy before one's time as it were*' (De Boeck & Plissart 2004: 193).

The fourth 'technology of the self' connected with the slogan 'no violence' concerns the policing of gender roles. Just like male employees of the UMHK during colonial times<sup>198</sup>, Rastafarian men realize that their respectability depends to a large extent on the behaviour of their female partners. They know that, in order to be respected by other members of the MRFCO, they need to make sure that their '*mamans Africa*' behave in a virtuous manner. This means, amongst other things, that they need to verify whether their wives are really carrying out the tasks they are supposed to do according to the (Rastafarian conception of the) 'traditional' division of labour between men and women.

It needs to be emphasized that, in addition to being a call for peacefulness and solidarity, the slogan 'no violence' is also a call for self-discipline. In fact, in the English noun '*violence*', Katangese Rastafarians do not only recognize the French noun '*violence*', which means 'violence', but also the French verb '*violier*', which means '*to violate, to transgress or to rape*'. Hence, when they shout '*no violence*' during the meetings of the Ecole Jah, they also want to encourage each other not to violate the rules of the internal code of conduct of the MRFCO (*règlement d'ordre intérieur*). This code, of which the number of rules rose from 26 to 52 in the course of my fieldwork, is meant to regulate all the activities of Rastafarians, both in public and in private. One of my informants, who worked as a conductor of taxi-buses and as a shoe trader in Lubumbashi before starting a career as an artisanal miner, was convinced that that the meetings of the Ecole Jah were meant to teach Rastafarians a lesson in humility and obedience:

Here, we learn Rastafarianism itself... so that we submit ourselves to that book (*tukuwe paka chini ya kile kitabu*: so that we would be under that book), so that we would not be above it, only under it (*tusikuwe yulu, tukuwe paka chini yake*).

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<sup>198</sup> See chapter 2 of this dissertation

So, Rastafarians are told they should never have the illusion of being above the law, no matter which position they occupy in the MRFCO<sup>199</sup>. A lot of the rules of the internal code of conduct are borrowed from the Old Testament, more specifically from the books Exodus, Leviticus and Numeri. From the book Exodus<sup>200</sup>, Rastafarians have adopted the Ten Commandments, which God communicated to Moses on the Sinai Mountain. Top priority is given to the rules concerning chastity (*busharati bunakatiziwa sana ndani ya mouvement*: indecency is strongly forbidden in the movement). For Rastafarians, it is strongly forbidden to spend the night in somebody else's bed (*découcher / kupasser nuit fwashi ingine*: to spend the night in another place), to lust for somebody else's wife, to commit adultery and to be polygamous. From the books Leviticus<sup>201</sup> and Numeri<sup>202</sup>, Rastafarians have adopted a number of rules with regard to the consumption of food and alcohol and with regard to hairstyle. They try to prevent themselves from eating meat or blood, from getting drunk (*bulevi inakatiziwa*: drunkenness is forbidden) and from having their hair cut, while they also force themselves to grow a beard.

Violations of the internal code of conduct are punished severely. According to the *commandant de district* of Likasi, every person wearing dreadlocks automatically submits to the authority of the MRFCO leadership, just like a soldier wearing a uniform automatically submits to the authority of his military superiors:

As long as you are wearing dreadlocks on your head, you can't be independent. If you are wearing dreadlocks on your head, we have to go after you, even when you are in your own home (*kama uko na dread ku kichwa, hata je, hata uko ndani ya résidence, il faut tukufwatirie*). Even when you are the child of the president, the president has to give us at least five minutes to talk to you because of the things on your head. (...) You can't be independent, that is impossible. You won't find any independent Rastafarians, there aren't any.

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<sup>199</sup> One of the principal rules of the MRFCO is that everyone is equal before the law. Even someone with a powerful position, like a commander, runs the risk of being punished if he commits an offence. To give but one example, Lassa, the *commandant de discipline* of the MRFCO division in Lwambo, found himself expelled after he had been caught handling stolen goods.

<sup>200</sup> See Exodus, chapter 20, 1-17.

<sup>201</sup> See Leviticus, chapter 3, 17.

<sup>202</sup> See Numeri, chapter 6. The reference to the Nazireat is very interesting, because it establishes a link between the cultivation of an ascetic lifestyle and the habit of growing one's hair. This is perfectly in line with the ideology of Katangese Rastafarianism: 'Yahweh spoke to Moses: tell the Israelites: when a man (...) wants to do something special and makes the vow of nazireat to Yahweh, he (...) should not drink wine or other drinks (...). As long as his/her vow continues, a razor blade should not touch his head. Until the time his dedication to Yahwe is over, he is a saint and he should grow his hair'.

Although, occasionally, punishments are administered publicly, on the location where the transgression took place (e.g. on the marketplace), in most of the cases, they are meted out in private, in the building where the sessions of the *Ecole Jah* are held. According to the regular procedure, witnesses to the incident are expected to inform the leaders of their brigade about what happened. Subsequently, during the meeting of the *Ecole Jah*, the latter reads the charge to all the other Rastafarians, asking them to step forward if they know anything more about the circumstances in which the transgression occurred or about the person committing the transgression. Finally, it is up to the leaders of the brigade to fix the penalty. In doing so, they do not only take into account the type of transgression but also the track record of the defendant.

All punishments are carried out by the *commandant de discipline* (cfr. supra). While the lightest punishment concerns the loss of Rastafarian symbols (headgears, necklaces and bracelets in the typical colours of the Rastafarian movement), the heaviest punishment consists of being excluded from the movement altogether. Usually, the defendant is given the choice between two options: either he accepts to be flogged (*kupika fimbo*: to hit with a stick) or he agrees to have his dreadlocks cut off with a pair of scissors (*kukata nywele*: to cut off hair / *kuravir dreadlocks*: to rip off dreadlocks / *kuangusha dreads*: to make dreadlocks fall). Given the high symbolic value of dreadlocks (cfr. supra: 5.2.2.1), most defendants prefer to be spanked.

Before the flogging starts, the defendant has to lie down on his stomach with his arms stretched forward. While the *commandant de discipline* is administering the punishment, another member of the brigade is counting the blows and checking whether the defendant remains motionless. Afterwards, the defendant is expected to stand up and salute the *commandant de discipline* by using the formula '*nkambo, respect*' (cfr. supra). A Rastafarian from the Katuba neighbourhood in Lubumbashi justifies the use of corporal punishments in the MRFCO as follows:

(...) our punishments are not like the ones of the Belgians. The Belgians took off a person's clothes. They would handcuff and beat you until there were wounds showing. In our movement, things are not like that. (...) We won't beat you 20 or 100 times. We will beat you 5 times, for instance. So that you realize: I am a responsible person (*miko responsable*), I have children. Since they are beating me, I must have let my wife and children down. It's not like in the age of the Belgians. (...) Spanking is meant to set an example. It is meant to point out that someone has done something bad (*matendo mabaya*: bad deeds). (...) We read the code (of conduct). We have to forgive each other. We have to live according to God's example. It's like the commandments of Moses. The stick is something similar.

Although the Rastafarian from the Katuba neighbourhood claims that the punishments administered during the sessions of the *Ecole Jah* have nothing to do with the punishments administered during the

colonial period, it is still interesting to have a closer look at the similarities between the two. According to Dembour, who interviewed several former colonial officials on the subject of corporal punishments, the notorious *chicote* was mainly used against prisoners<sup>203</sup>. The latter used to spend their days outside of prison, guarded by a soldier or an African policeman, and were asked to do various types of jobs, such as carrying pieces of wood or repairing roads. Whenever they misbehaved, their misbehaviour would be reported to a so-called *territorial*, a white colonial official who decided how many blows they deserved while also supervising the infliction of the punishment by an African soldier or a policeman. The public flogging took place on a daily basis, during the call-over of the prisoners, after the ceremony of the saluting of the flag, between 6 and 7 in the morning. The prisoner had to lie down on his stomach with his pants down, in order to receive the blows on his buttocks. As soon as trickles of blood became visible, the territorial had to stop the punishment immediately (Dembour 1992: 207-208)<sup>204</sup>.

While, at first sight, it may seem a little strange that Rastafarians apply a form of corporal punishment that many Congolese associate with colonial violence and racial inequality, things become a lot more comprehensible if one takes into account the atmosphere in Congo at the end of the 1990s. In fact, Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who is admired for his revolutionary ideas by Katangese Rastafarians (cfr. supra: 5.2.2), appears to have used the *chicote* intensively during his campaign against the Mobutu regime. It turns out he had the habit of having people flogged in order to carry out a political purge as well as to turn all Congolese into law-abiding citizens (Bayart 2008: 136-147). It seems plausible that the leaders of the MRFCO have introduced the practice of *kupika fimbo*, because they think it is thanks to this particular type of punishment that Kabila has succeeded in establishing law and order in Congolese society.

In order to get a more thorough understanding of the logic behind the disciplinary techniques of Katangese Rastafarians, though, it is necessary to examine them from a Foucaultian perspective. In his book *'Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison'* (1975), Foucault has argued that the introduction of Bentham's panopticon in the late eighteenth century marked a watershed in the ways modern Western states supervised, controlled and disciplined their citizens. The panopticon was a tower that occupied a central position in a prison complex. It allowed guards to observe all the prisoners in their cells

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<sup>203</sup> Most of the Congolese who were spending time in prison during the colonial period were there because they had been found guilty of violating the labour legislation, the legislation with regard to the '*cultures éducatives*' (i.e. forced agricultural labour), the legislation concerning residence and traffic, the legislation concerning theft and extortion, the legislation concerning alcohol consumption or the legislation concerning the use of physical violence (Dembour 1992: 208).

<sup>204</sup> According to Dembour, one of the factors that has helped to turn the *chicote* into an important symbol of Belgian colonial violence is '*Congo belge*', a painting by the Congolese artist Tshibumba Kanda-Matula. This painting, which is very popular in Congo and has been imitated by other artists, shows how a black prisoner is being flogged while a European *territorial* is watching (Dembour 1992: 205-206).

without the latter being aware of it. As a result of the fact that prisoners never knew whether they were being watched or not, they adjusted their behaviour to their uncertain condition. Feeling intimidated by the constant ‘gaze’ of authority, they started monitoring their own bodies, movements and thoughts on a permanent basis in order to make sure that they always behaved in accordance with the rules and regulations of the prison complex. In Foucault’s opinion, it makes sense to consider the panopticon as a metaphor for the way in which disciplinary forces operate in modern societies. Instead of being confronted with violent and repressive state interventions, people are now facing a more gentle form of coercion: they subject themselves to self-surveillance, because they know they may be watched at any moment (Foucault 1975, discussed in Danaher, Schirato & Webb 2000: 46-62; Foucault 1989: 276-288).

Despite his conviction that the arrival of panopticism ushered in a new era in the history of disciplinary institutions and techniques, Foucault has recognized that some older forms of punishment have continued to exist. Referring to the way in which order is maintained in institutions such as armies and schools, he has noted that ‘old’ sanctions such as detentions, floggings and fines are nowadays used to transform ‘*restless, chaotic and useless mass[es] of bodies and forces*’ (Foucault 1989: 237) into well-organized entities of obedient individuals. Under the new disciplinary regime, sanctions are aimed at convincing people that they are permanently ‘*caught in a universe of punishability and punishment*’. Power-holders are eager to show that they are keeping their eye on everyone and that they are ready to punish even the smallest offences (ibidem: 248-249). If certain types of corporal punishment still exist today, it is because they continue to produce the same effects as during the days of the ‘*ancien régime*’. According to Foucault, corporal punishment does not only offer the possibility of reproducing and visualizing crimes on wrongdoers’ bodies, but it also makes it possible to highlight the power and invincibility of the judicial system. Very often, authorities allow people to watch how a corporal punishment is carried out, because they hope that this will deter them from committing the same offence as the person who is being punished (ibidem: 79-82).

There are three indications that a form of Foucaultian panopticism is at work among Katangese Rastafarians. First of all, Rastafarians have the impression that they are constantly exposed to the ‘gaze’ of MRFCO authority. Realizing that their dreadlocks, bracelets, necklaces and t-shirts betray their membership of the Rastafarian movement, they know they have to be extremely careful about what they say and do in public. There is always a risk that other members of the MRFCO are watching them in order to verify whether they are complying with the internal code of conduct. Even if there are no other members of the MRFCO around, Rastafarians are still on their guard, because they suspect that ordinary civilians may also report their misbehaviour to the leadership of the Rastafarian movement. From the testimony of the *commandant de district* of Likasi (cfr. supra), it can be gathered that the MRFCO does not respect the boundary between the public and the private sphere. So, even



when they are in the privacy of their homes, Rastafarians do not feel at ease, because they can always receive a surprise visit from officers of the MRFCO who want to interrogate them about some case of misconduct. Just like the inmates in Bentham's prison, Katangese Rastafarians never know when they are being watched and by whom. Haunted by the intimidating 'gaze' of MRFCO authority, they do their best to keep their behaviour in line with the Rastafarian code of conduct – a form of self-discipline that can be described as a 'technology of the self' in Foucaultian terminology.

Second, the disciplinary system of the MRFCO is organized in such a manner that it runs like a well-oiled machine. Apart from the fact that there is a written code of conduct, there is also a fixed list of potential sanctions, a well-defined procedure for bringing people to court and a clear division of tasks between the officials dealing with disciplinary matters. All these mechanisms, procedures and techniques are like the teeth of the cogs of a machine that constantly engage one another and thereby keep the disciplinary process going. All members of the MRFCO – even those who hold a high position in the movement – submit to the same form of surveillance and, in doing so, they surrender to the disciplinary forces of Rastafarianism that gradually transform them into what Foucault has described as '*docile bodies*' (Foucault 1975, discussed in Danaher, Schirato & Webb 2000: chapter 4). As the testimony of the former taxi-bus conductor and shoe trader from Lubumbashi suggests, Katangese Rastafarians believe that the ultimate source of disciplinary power lies in 'the book', that is, in the movement's written code of conduct. This means that, in Rastafarians' opinion, disciplinary power is not something that is permanently held or owned by a limited group of individuals, but rather an abstract force that uses people like the '*commandants de discipline*' (disciplinary commanders) as its instruments. This view on disciplinary power is almost identical to Foucault's perception of the workings of disciplinary power under a regime of panopticism<sup>205</sup>.

Third, although Katangese Rastafarians maintain order through the use of an old form of corporal punishment (public flogging), they do so in a way that is in keeping with the principles of panopticism. The practice of '*kupika fimbo*' (to hit with a stick) is not meant to highlight the power of a leader who is angry because his rules are being violated, but it is rather intended as an illustration of the strength of the Rastafarian disciplinary system. This can be gathered from the fact that every flogging is preceded by a reading of the Rastafarian code of conduct as well as from the fact that care is taken to keep the punishment within the (locally defined) limits of durability and acceptability.

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<sup>205</sup> In his discussion of the dynamics of hierarchical supervision under a regime of panopticism, Foucault has noted that '*disciplinary power (...) develops into a multifaceted, automatic and anonymous force; because, even though supervision is in the hands of individuals, it is a network that operates from top to bottom, and – to a certain extent – also from bottom to top, and from side to side (...). In the hierarchical supervision of discipline, power is not something that one owns or a property that can be transferred; it works like a machine. And although its pyramidal structure presupposes a summit [i.e. a person in charge], the power that classes individuals in this continuous and permanent structure is produced by the entire apparatus*' (Foucault 1989: 246).

Not only is there a limit on the number of blows, but the flogging sessions are also kept as short as possible, while the offender is always allowed to keep his clothes on. The idea behind the floggings is thus not to humiliate the offender or to make him go through terrible suffering, but to physically remind him of the omnipresence of the MRFCO authoritative 'gaze'. At the same time, the floggings also allow the offender to demonstrate his manhood. By lying still and enduring pain without crying or shouting, he can show that he is capable of 'taking it like a man'.

### 5.2.3 The hierarchy of masculinities among Katangese Rastafarians

So far, I have only paid attention to the levelling trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese Rastafarians. It needs to be emphasized, however, that there is also a differentiating trend in the ways Katangese Rastafarians construct their masculine identities. Realizing that there are several ways of being a Rastafarian man, members of the MRFCO tend to distinguish between different types of masculinity, which they classify in a hierarchical manner. The criterion for this classification is the degree to which people know and comply with the written code of conduct of the Katangese Rastafarian movement.

Using Connell's terminology for the analysis of power relations between different types of masculinity<sup>206</sup>, I am inclined to think that the so-called *rastaman* ideal occupies the hegemonic position in the hierarchy of masculinities of the Katangese Rastafarian movement. This means that those members of the MRFCO who are referred to as real *rastamen* (sing: *rastaman*) tend to enjoy the highest levels of respect and prestige among their colleagues. *Rastamen* are conspicuous for their long dreadlocks, which symbolize a lengthy and uninterrupted period of good behaviour. Everyone in the movement knows that only Rastafarians who live strictly by the rules of the code of conduct are able to spend a long time without having their hair cut. While during the week *rastamen* are obliged to keep their dreadlocks hidden under a headgear (just like the rest of the Rastafarians, cfr. supra: 5.2.2.1), on Sundays they are free to ostentatiously show off their hair to all the people attending the meetings of the Ecole Jah. Apart from strictly complying with the code of conduct and wearing long dreadlocks, *rastamen* also stand out by the fact that they are married with children. It is believed that only Rastafarians who are in charge of a household should have access to authoritative positions within the MRFCO, because they are assumed to be the only ones who have the necessary maturity and moral authority to give advice to other Rastafarians.

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<sup>206</sup> See also chapters 1, 2 and 3 in this dissertation.

Two types of masculinity can be described as complicit on the basis of Connell's theoretical framework, namely the *no dread* and the *dreadman*. The term *no dread* is used to designate a Rastafarian who does not wear dreadlocks, either because he has just been punished for some grave form of misbehaviour, or because he has decided to keep a normal hair style despite his membership of the MRFCO. While there are various reasons why some Rastafarians prefer to stay without dreadlocks, the most often cited motive is that one wants to avoid getting into trouble with one's employer or one's family-in-law. Notwithstanding the efforts of the MRFCO to improve the movement's reputation with the Katangese public opinion, many people continue to think that dreadlocked Rastafarians are just a bunch of annoying troublemakers. It is important to keep in mind that *no dreads* do not oppose or question any aspect of the Katangese Rastafarian ideology. To the contrary, they really enjoy the idea that Rastafarianism has given them back part of their male dignity, while they regret they do not have the courage or the possibility to adorn themselves with dreadlocks, the most important symbol of Katangese Rastafarianism. As for the term *dreadman*, this refers to a Rastafarian who wears dreadlocks but is not considered as a fully-fledged *rastaman* because he lacks one or more characteristics of this hegemonic type of masculinity. In the category of *dreadmen* (sing: *dreadman*), one finds dreadlocked Rastafarians who are unmarried, divorced or incapable of attending the meetings of the Ecole Jah on a weekly basis. Just like the *no dreads*, *dreadmen* are aware of their failure to embody the hegemonic type of masculinity in the Katangese Rastafarian movement, but they are nevertheless strongly in favour of the ideas, practices and values associated with that ideal.

Apart from one hegemonic type of masculinity and two complicit types of masculinity, there are also two subordinate types of masculinity in the Katangese Rastafarian movement, namely the *rasta fou / rasta voyou* and the *cool man*. The *rasta fou / rasta voyou* is a type of masculinity that is associated with the Mobutu era. It is rejected by the majority of Katangese Rastafarians, because they believe it is a threat to the respectability of the MRFCO. Although a *rasta fou / rasta voyou* wears all the Rastafarian symbols and claims to be a true *rastaman*, he does not comply with the written code of conduct at all. Instead of being notable for developing an ascetic lifestyle or performing community service on a voluntary basis, he attracts the attention because of his excessive drinking, his impoliteness and his quarrelsome personality. The *cool man* is another type of masculinity that is strongly disapproved by most of the Katangese Rastafarians. The label of *cool man* is given to Rastafarians who like listening to reggae music and wearing Rastafarian symbols, but who are not interested in attending the meetings of the Ecole Jah in order to receive some ideological instruction. One could say that the *cool man* is a poseur, someone who only feels attracted to Rastafarianism because it gives him the opportunity to attract people's attention. Needless to say, true followers of Katangese Rastafarianism are terribly annoyed by the fact that *cool men* are giving their movement a bad name. Sometimes they are so fed up with *cool men's* insincerity that they rob them of their

Rastafarian symbols. In doing so, they want to make it clear to the public that they refuse to accept *cool men* as members of the MRFCO.

Every person who systematically refuses to follow the rules of the MRFCO's code of conduct is derogatorily referred to as a Babylonian (*Babylon*). This is a reference to the Bible books Jeremiah and Ezekiel, which relate how the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem as well as the temple before carrying a large number of Jews with them to Babylon<sup>207</sup>. While, in Jamaican Rastafarianism, the term *Babylon* refers to the physical and mental oppression of blacks by whites (cfr. supra: 5.2.1), in Katangese Rastafarianism, it serves to designate a bad person (*muntu mubaya*), someone who impulsively acts upon everything that crosses his mind and thereby proves that he lacks the mentality of a true Rastafarian (*hana na esprit ya Barasta*: he does not have the spirit of Rastafarians).

*Babylon* is thus used as a catchall term for all Katangese men who enact forms of masculinity that stand in opposition to the ideal of the *rastaman*. The concept plays a key role in a process of 'othering', in other words, in the creation of a binary opposition between 'us' and 'them', between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', and between 'normal' people and 'abnormal' people (Hatchell 2007: 233). For a member of the MRFCO, it is very humiliating to be branded *Babylon* by fellow Rastafarians, because it comes down to a strong condemnation of one's behaviour. To be called *Babylon* is tantamount to being accused of adopting an anti-Rastafarian attitude. Consequently, a person who is faced with this accusation will usually do everything he can to show that he subscribes to the values of Rastafarianism and that he supports the hegemonic project of the *rastaman*.

To sum up the main lines of argument presented so far, it can be stated that, from the second half of the 1990s onwards, Katangese youngsters have started reinterpreting Jamaican Rastafarianism in the light of their own socio-economic situation. In an attempt to emphasize their shared masculine characteristics, they have presented themselves as a disciplined army of peaceful soldiers struggling to dissociate themselves from their predecessors through the adoption of a joint attitude of orthodoxy, radicalism and determination. By organizing weekly sessions of ideological instruction, they have tried to improve the reputation of the Rastafarian movement vis-à-vis the outside world, while they have also attempted to cultivate an atmosphere of 'ideological communitas' and to give meaning to their shared condition of 'liminality'. I have explained that each of the three central slogans of Katangese Rastafarianism ('*rasta tête*', '*rasta créateur*' and '*no violence*') is connected with a series of 'technologies of the self', which are meant to assist members of the MRFCO in increasing their levels of self-mastery and performative competence. Finally, through the use of Connell's theoretical

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<sup>207</sup> See Jeremiah, chapter 52; Ezekiel, chapter 12.

framework, I have been able to describe and analyze the hierarchy of masculinities among Katangese Rastafarians.

### **5.3 Rastafarian diggers on the move**

In the following sections, I will present a number of case studies on a group of young Katangese men who simultaneously participated in the subcultures of artisanal mining and Rastafarianism. The aim of these case studies is to illustrate the ways in which Rastafarian diggers deal with the masculinity-related challenges associated with their double subcultural membership.

As I already suggested in the introduction to this chapter, the standards for masculine behaviour of the Rastafarian subculture are diametrically opposed to those of the subculture of artisanal miners. The Rastafarian subculture is associated with values such as self-discipline, law-abidingness, maturity, abstinence, concentration, respect, altruism, self-knowledge and responsibility. For its part, the subculture of artisanal mining is connected with values such as wastefulness, lawlessness, juvenile delinquency, instant consumerism, extravagance, impoliteness, individualism, physical strength and irresponsibility.

Before I describe how the members of the abovementioned Rastafarian digging team tried to come to grips with these two opposite sets of standards for masculine behaviour, I will first give an overview of their biographies. This overview is meant to give the reader a clear idea of their socio-economic backgrounds, their outlooks on life, and their reasons for feeling attracted to the subcultures of artisanal mining and Rastafarianism.

#### **5.3.1 The composition of a Rastafarian digging team**

In May 2005, I got acquainted with 7 Rastafarians renting a house in the Toyota neighbourhood on the outskirts of Lwambo. The reason why they lived together under the same roof was that they had decided to form a digging team with the aim of jointly exploiting a pit in the Nimura mine, situated at 5 kilometres from the centre of Lwambo (cfr. infra: 5.3.2). Contrary to what one may think, their motivation to collaborate did not only result from the fact that they were all members of the Katangese Rastafarian movement. As the following sections will show, other elements – including friendship and

kinship ties - also drew them together. While 3 members of the team had a long-standing friendship dating back to their childhood, 4 others turned out to be maternal relatives<sup>208</sup>.

Kamukini, the first member of the Rastafarian digging team, had a thin moustache, while he was relatively short in stature and slightly built. Although he did not grow dreadlocks, he still had the habit of wearing a hat, probably because he did not want to be the odd man out among his fellow Rastafarians. As far as his background is concerned, it should be noted that he was the second in a Catholic family of 13 children. He grew up in a working-class area called Mafuta, which is part of Kikula<sup>209</sup>, one of the municipalities of Likasi. While his Sanga mother tried to supplement her meagre salary as a teacher in a local primary school with revenues from the sale of home-brewed whisky and *munkoyo*<sup>210</sup>, his Kaonde father was working for Gécamines as an ambulance driver. Having dropped out of high school at an early age, Kamukini operated as a trader of second-hand shoes and clothing on several markets in and around Likasi before finding a job on a farm owned by Mwanza Kisumpa, an engineer working for Gécamines. Thanks to the help of Kisumpa, he got a contract with Gécamines, which hired him to work in its Shituru processing plant in 1996. Unfortunately, in 2004, he was fired after being caught stealing cobalt products from the plant. Following his dismissal from Gécamines, he decided to try his luck as an artisanal miner. By that time, he was already married with a Lunda woman from the Mafuta neighbourhood, with whom he had 4 children. As for his participation in the subculture of Katangese Rastafarians, Kamukini admitted that he only started following the ideology of Rastafarianism at a later age. When he was still a teenager, he used to behave like a *cool man*: he loved listening to reggae music and smoking marihuana, but he did not bother following ideological instruction. By the time he started working in the Nimura mine, he had developed into a *no dread*, a Rastafarian who tried to comply with the written code of conduct of the MRFCO but who did not adopt the movement's characteristic hairstyle.

Karlos was the second member of the Rastafarian digging team. Born in 1979 in a family of 11 children, he presented himself as an energetic and cheerful young man. One of the main reasons why

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<sup>208</sup> Vuyk has argued that 'in spite of the frequent predictions about the disappearance of matrilineal organization and the universal advent of nuclear families, matrilineality remains resilient in most of Central Africa' (Vuyk 1991: 35). Basing herself on a comparative study of descent, marriage and gender among the Kuba, Ndembu, Bemba, Pende and Tonga, she has asserted that matrilineal kinship units continue to be of vital importance for the sharing of resources as well as for the arrangement of succession and inheritance issues (ibidem: 36). Although I agree with Vuyk's argument about the resilience of matrilinearity in Central Africa, I believe one has to be careful not to overestimate its importance. As I already suggested in the second part of this chapter, kinship relations are under a lot of strain in contemporary Katanga. Due to the economic crisis, people find it increasingly hard to show solidarity, even with their own relatives.

<sup>209</sup> During colonial times, Kikula used to be a *Centre Extra-Coutumier*, that is, an administrative unit that had its own budget, administration and police force, and that was governed by an 'indigenous chief' (*chef indigène*) appointed by the Belgian District Commissioner (*Commissaire de District*) (Dellicour 1952: 486-487). The people living in a C.E.C. were no longer subject to customary law.

<sup>210</sup> *Munkoyo* is an alcoholic beverage made of corn and roots. See also chapter 2 (2.3.2) and chapter 3 (3.3.7).

he joined the team was that he and Kamukini were maternal cousins<sup>211</sup>. Since the Sanga have a matrilineal system of descent (Munanga 1986: 99), Karlos and Kamukini considered each other as close relatives. While Karlos' Sanga mother earned a living by working as a market woman, his Bemba father - who was an immigrant from the city of Mufulira in the Zambian part of the Copperbelt - was an employee of the petrol trading company Petrocom. Before their divorce, Karlos' parents lived together in Katuba, Lubumbashi's second most populated municipality, which is known for its criminality and its high concentration of religious denominations<sup>212</sup> (Dibwe et al. 2008: 97). Karlos' first girlfriend was the daughter of Luba immigrants from the Kasai region, one of the most numerous population groups in the Katuba neighbourhood. He made her pregnant while he was still in secondary school, and was forced to abandon his studies in order to take care of his new household<sup>213</sup>. Having spent some time working as a shoe trader on the Eureka market in Lubumbashi, he eventually decided to leave his home and family and start a career as an artisanal miner. While, among his fellow artisanal miners, he tried to build up a reputation as a *pomba*, that is, as a hard worker with a muscled body, among his fellow Rastafarians, he did his best to behave as a *no dread*, in other words, as a law-abiding, 'dread-less' member of the MRFCO.

Pande Kyala, the third member of the Rastafarian digging team, belonged to the same matrilineage as Kamukini and Karlos. Being the son of Karlos' elder sister, he had the habit of addressing the latter as *muyomba* (Swahili: maternal uncle). Since, among the Sanga, it is customary for a man to be on friendly terms with his maternal uncle, Pande had no objection to working with Karlos in the same team. Apart from being related through their mothers, the two of them also had another thing in common, namely that they both hailed from Lubumbashi. Born in 1976 in a family of 9 children, Pande grew up in Bel-Air, a neighbourhood that is currently part of Kampemba, one of the biggest municipalities of Lubumbashi<sup>214</sup>. While his Kaonde father drove around with taxi-buses, his Sanga mother tried to make some money through the sale of onions, tomatoes and peppers on the Marché de la Zone in the Kenya municipality. Following in the footsteps of his father, Pande started working

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<sup>211</sup> Karlos was the son of the elder sister of Kamukini's mother.

<sup>212</sup> The reason for Katuba's creation in 1952 was that two other municipalities, those of Albert and Kenya, had become too densely populated and were no longer capable to cope with the influx of new immigrants (i.e. new city-dwellers). In the early years of its existence, Katuba also attracted many workers from the camp of the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga in Lubumbashi (Dibwe, Kahola, Sapato & Kasandji 2008: 97). A major advantage of Katuba was that it offered good opportunities in terms of future expansion. After Congolese independence, the municipality continued growing at a great pace. Successive groups of new immigrants constructed additional settlements such as Katuba Kananga and Katuba Mbuji Mayi (Kibambe 2008: 67).

<sup>213</sup> The girl's parents had left her at Karlos' doorstep, thereby indicating that they were no longer prepared to cover the costs of her education and that they were certainly not willing to pay for the costs of a new baby (see also chapter 4 for more information about the practice of '*kuingia pa fenêtre*').

<sup>214</sup> During colonial times, Bel-Air was part of the white city centre (the so-called '*ville blanche*'). Today, it is still considered as one of the most luxurious neighbourhoods of the Katangese capital (Dibwe, Kahola, Sapato & Kasandji 2008: 101).

while he was still in his early puberty, trying to earn a living as a conductor on one of the many taxibuses that constantly shuttle up and down between the centre of Lubumbashi and the Kenya municipality. Subsequently, with the money he had saved during his time as a conductor, he started working as a shoe trader, visiting markets in Lubumbashi, Likasi and Kipushi. Having entered into relations with a Lunda woman from Lubumbashi - whom he was unable to marry because he could not afford the bride price, but with whom he nevertheless had two children - he got involved in artisanal mining in an desperate attempt to support his household. Being shy by nature, he had difficulties not to be treated as a *bleu* (ignorant novice) by his fellow creuseurs. Luckily, his membership of the MRFCO allowed him to give new meaning and a new direction to his life. Thanks to his good behaviour, Pande was able to grow long dreadlocks, so that he came close to the perfect embodiment of the *rastaman* ideal.

Cédric, the fourth member of the Rastafarian digging team, was maternally related to his teammates Kamukini, Karlos and Pande Kyala, since his mother's grandfather was the elder brother of Kamukini's mother. He had a round face, a spherical forehead and long dreadlocks permanently hidden under a knitted woolly hat featuring the typical Rastafarian colours. Born in 1978, he grew up as the son of a Sanga mother and a Luba father in a family of 4 children. When his father - who worked as an electrician in Gécamines' Shituru processing plant - was fired after accidentally causing the death of one of his colleagues, Cédric's entire family moved to Kikondja, a Luba village in Central Katanga where Cédric's grandfather had established himself after a life-long career with Gécamines. Though, for some time, they were able to live at the expense of Cédric's grandparents, eventually, they were forced to leave Kikondja because the youngest children in the family fell ill. When Cédric's parents divorced as a result of his father's affair with another woman, Cédric gave up his studies once and for all. Going along with his mother, he moved to the village of Mpande, the traditional capital of the Sanga chieftaincy, where his maternal grandfather - a former employee of Gécamines - was spending the last days of his life. When his grandfather died, he moved in with a younger sister of his mother in the Katuba neighbourhood in Lubumbashi. Thanks to a starting capital given to him by a maternal uncle, he was able to start working as a trader, selling second-hand clothing on the Kikula market in Likasi and trading shoes on the Kenya market in Lubumbashi. When he was forced to stop his trading activities due to a concurrence of circumstances, he tried his luck as a creuseur in the mines of Kamwale, Luishia, Tenke Fungurume and Milele, while building up a reputation as a *mubinji*, in other words, as a man who likes to regularly treat his fellow workers to drinks and who loves to wear nice clothes. Around the same time, he fell in love with the daughter of Luba immigrants, whom he made pregnant without respecting the traditional marriage obligations. The relationship came to an end when Cédric found out his girlfriend was making money as a sex worker in a hotel in Lubumbashi. Struggling to come to terms with the unexpected separation, Cédric found comfort in the Katangese Rastafarian movement. Attending the Ecole Jah meetings on a weekly basis and complying strictly



with the MRFCO written code of conduct, he did everything he could to approach the ideal of the *rastaman*.

Gaudace, the fifth member of the Rastafarian digging team, did not belong to the circle of maternal relatives described above. The reason why he joined in was that he had been a close friend of Karlos since childhood. Born in 1976 as the son of a Kongo father and a Malawian mother, he grew up in a family of 7 children in the Katuba municipality in Lubumbashi. During the time his father was still alive, he enjoyed a relatively carefree existence. After all, his father was a bank manager, earned a high salary and had no problems paying the tuition of his children. While two of Gaudace's elder brothers graduated at the University of Lubumbashi – one as a doctor and another one as a master of agricultural science – Gaudace himself was given the opportunity to study at the department of economics of the same institution, after having spent a good part of his adolescence in renowned Katangese secondary schools such as the Collège Imara and the Collège Sainte Bernadette in Lubumbashi and the Athénée Royal in Likasi. Unfortunately, things changed quite drastically after Gaudace's father died in a car accident. The distribution of the inheritance was a very traumatizing experience, because Kongo relatives of Gaudace's father took possession of everything in the house. According to Kongo customary law, Gaudace was not entitled to inherit from his father but only from his maternal uncle (Nanitelamio 1995: 118-119). As he was left empty-handed, he was forced to quit university and fend for himself. In the years following the death of his father, he successively worked as a contract labourer on maize fields in Mukabe Kazadi (in the territory of Lubudi), as a fish dealer in Kyubu (in the territory of Mitwaba), and as a general trader in Kasumbalesa near the border with Zambia. Gaudace's life became even more complicated after he started an affair with the daughter of immigrants from the Lulua region. When he made the girl pregnant, he was not only faced with the task of supporting her and the future baby, but he was also confronted with the obligation of compensating his parents-in-law for the money they had 'wasted' on the girl's education<sup>215</sup>. Seeing that he did not get along with his in-laws, Gaudace packed his bags with the intention of starting a new life as an artisanal miner. During his stay in the mining areas, he found solace in the ideology of Rastafarianism, which was very appealing to him because of its emphasis on self-knowledge and self-mastery. When he found himself in the company of other creuseurs, Gaudace tried to create an image of himself as a *crâne*, in other words, as a street-wise and far-sighted individual with a good assessment capacity. Yet, when he was hanging out with fellow Rastafarians, he tried to behave as a *dreadman*, that is, as a dreadlocked Rastafarian who supports the hegemonic masculinity ideal of the *rastaman* but who realizes that he is unable to enact it himself.

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<sup>215</sup> The girl was forced to leave school as a result of her pregnancy.

Trinita, whose background was already briefly discussed in chapter 4<sup>216</sup>, was the sixth member of the Rastafarian digging team. He was able to get involved in the Nimura mining project, because his mother and stepfather lived on the same avenue as Kamukini's parents. As a result of this, he and Kamukini already knew each other since they were teenagers. Despite being rather small and skinny, Trinita adopted the air of a self-assured and streetwise guy. He had the habit of strutting about, talking in a deep voice and using underworld slang in his daily speech. Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to suggest that his style of behaviour was completely artificial. From looking at his life history, it is clear that he went through a lot during his childhood years and that he was familiar with the tough way of life in the margins of Katangese society. Born in 1978, he was the son of a Ndembo father working for the national railway company SNCC and a Chokwe mother operating as a vegetable trader. During his time in secondary school, Trinita tried to make some extra money by participating in the '*Opération Mitrailles*', a campaign that was launched by the Katangese governor and that gave ordinary civilians permission to enter the factories of Gécamines in order to collect scrap material, which could then be sold to international traders<sup>217</sup>. Teaming up with two friends and working at the service of high-placed military officials, Trinita spent a couple of years working in the so-called *dépotoir*, a Likasi-based warehouse for waste material owned by Gécamines. With the revenues from the scrap sales, he bought himself clothes and shoes, while he also set up a small kiosk in front of his parents' house. Unfortunately, from 1997 onwards, Trinita's living conditions deteriorated rapidly. Not only did he have to cope with the fact that the Kabila government imposed a ban on the trade in scrap material, but he also had to deal with the consequences of his parents' sudden divorce. Although his mother took him with her when she moved in with another man, Trinita soon discovered that he would not be able to count on financial support from his stepfather, at least not as far as his studies were concerned. Realizing that he had no other option but to quit school and look for a new source of income outside the scrap trade. After having tried his luck as a train trafficker<sup>218</sup>, he started working as an artisanal miner in the mines of Kipese, Shinkolobwe, Luishia, Fungurume and Tenke, before moving to the Nimura mine near Lwambo. Trinita became a member of the MRFCO thanks to one of his brothers who had heard about the ideology of Rastafarianism during his studies in Lubumbashi. Although he did his best to regularly attend the meetings of the Ecole Jah and act as a good *rastaman*, he never

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<sup>216</sup> Trinita was one of the narrators of the 'fantastic border tales' analyzed in chapter 4 (see 4.3.2).

<sup>217</sup> For more information about his measure, see the preface of this dissertation (0.3).

<sup>218</sup> Since his stepfather worked for the SNCC (just like his biological father), Trinita had the privilege of being able to take the train for free, buying things in one place and selling them at a substantial profit in another place. Train traffickers take advantage of the fact that, due to the poor condition of the roads throughout the region, it is sometimes very hard for ordinary traders to transport their foodstuffs and other products by car or lorry to towns and villages in the interior. Cheap goods that are abundantly available in Lubumbashi can be sold at very high prices in a place like Bukama, for instance, because they are very scarce in the latter locality.

managed to achieve this ideal because his fellow (non-Rastafarian) artisanal miners liked to lure him into collective drinking sessions after working hours, thereby making him behave as a *mubinji*.

The seventh and final member of the Rastafarian digging team was also the youngest and the only one who did not have any children. Strikingly, he refused to give me his real name but preferred to be called '*Patrick Bolonya, huitième merveille, la couleur d'origine, l'homme de la race rare*'<sup>219</sup>. This nickname and the epithets associated with it were borrowed from a popular song by a Congolese musician, who wanted to honour one of his sponsors by citing him and singing his praises during his performances<sup>220</sup>. Just like Gaudace and Trinita, Bolonya did not belong to the aforementioned circle of maternal relatives. He joined the team because he had already been on friendly terms with Pande Kyala, Karlos and Gaudace when he was still living in the Katuba municipality in Lubumbashi. Being the 7<sup>th</sup> in a family of 17 children, Bolonya grew up as the son of a Tetela<sup>221</sup> father and a Lokele<sup>222</sup> mother. While his father was a school director, his mother operated as a trader of second-hand clothing. For reasons left unexplained, Bolonya gave up his training in car mechanics in Musoshi (territory of Sakania) in 1997, in order to start working as an artisanal miner in the gold mine of Kipese. Following the collapse of mineshaft in Kipese, he spent 7 months working in the uranium mine of Shinkolobwe, before returning to Lubumbashi where he was hired as one of the secret collaborators of a high-ranking officer of the military police, who was trying to make some extra money through the theft of copper and cobalt products from Gécamines. As soon as his collaboration with this officer came to an end, Bolonya switched back to being an ordinary artisanal miner in the mines of Kawama, Kamwale and Kakanda. As far as his membership of the MRFCO is concerned, it should be noted that he seemed to be far less concerned about his compliance with the written code of conduct than the other members of the Rastafarian digging team. This was evidenced, amongst other things, by the fact that he had his hair plaited in a different style than the one prescribed by the MRFCO and by the fact that he made no efforts to be present at the Ecole Jah meetings every week. One got the impression that it did not bother him that some of his fellow Rastafarians thought of him as a *cool man*, in other words, as someone who cared more about how he looked than about how he behaved. Bolonya even had an air of defiance about him: it was as if he wanted to check how far he

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<sup>219</sup> This can be translated as 'Patrick Bologna, the eighth wonder of the world, the original colour, the man of the rare race'.

<sup>220</sup> In contemporary Congolese music, it is customary for artists to sing the praises of their maecenases in their songs, see: '*Le phénomène 'mabanga' ou dédicaces dans la musique congolaise: un phénomène de société ou une société de phénomènes*', Norbert X Mbu-Mputu, [www.congovision.com](http://www.congovision.com), accessed on 16 April 2010. See also Van Reybrouck 2010: 520.

<sup>221</sup> Turner has pointed out that the ethnic label 'Tetela' already existed in the 19th century, but that it did not have the same connotations it has today. According to popular belief, the Tetela used to be a group of warlike cannibals, who assisted the East African slave traders in their slave-raiding campaigns among the Luba in the Kasai region at the end of the 19th century (Turner 1993: 587; 608).

<sup>222</sup> Most members of the Lokele ethnic group can be found in the area around Kisangani.

could go before the MRFCO authorities would punish him for his misbehaviour. Given his defiant attitude, it is not surprising that – of all the members of the Rastafarian digging team – he was the one who identified most with the *kivoyou* style of the subculture of artisanal miners. As a young man without any family responsibilities, Bolonya shared the admiration of many of his fellow creuseurs for the masculinity ideal of the *mubinji*. Although he did not have a lot of money to spend, he seized every opportunity to explore nightlife in the mining areas.

The preceding series of life histories has shown that the 7 members of the Rastafarian digging team had several things in common. To begin with, they were all men with relatively little schooling. There was only one Rastafarian who had managed to make it through secondary school. In all likelihood, this was largely due to the crisis of the Congolese education system during the 1990s, the decade in which the Rastafarian diggers were in their teenage years. As Comhaire has pointed out, in 1994, the Kinshasa government took an emergency measure to secure the continued functioning of Zairian schools. Parents of school-going children were asked to pay the so-called ‘*Frais d’Intervention Ponctuels*’, a special tax that was used to finance teachers’ salaries, amongst other things. Since the level of the FIP fee continued to rise over the years, the number of dropouts increased dramatically (Comhaire 2005: 9-12)<sup>223</sup>. While, admittedly, the consequences of the non-completion of schooling are less far-reaching for individuals living in a highly informalized economy than for individuals living in a knowledge economy, it still remains true that a low level of education limits people’s options on the job market, especially in terms of getting access to well-paid jobs (Gysels, Pool & Nnalusiba 2002: 183).

Another thing that most members of the Rastafarian digging team had in common was the class background of their parents. With the exception of Gaudace and Bologna, all Rastafarian diggers were children of working class parents. Moreover, 4 of the 7 team members were raised by fathers working for big companies and performing their role as male breadwinners by selling their labour in exchange for monthly wages and special benefits such as food rations and free healthcare<sup>224</sup>. During their childhood, the Rastafarian creuseurs had noticed that their fathers found it very hard to live up to the male breadwinner norm. So, on the one hand, most members of the Rastafarian digging team grew up in a working class environment dominated by men, but, on the other hand, they also witnessed the gradual decline of the male breadwinner ideal.

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<sup>223</sup> Apart from the fact that the FIP caused parents to withdraw their children from school, it also often gave rise to interruptions of classes in the middle of the year: when teachers noticed that parents refused to pay the FIP, they frequently refused to continue teaching (Comhaire 2005: *ibidem*).

<sup>224</sup> For more information about the colonial male breadwinner norm in Katanga, see chapter 2 of this dissertation.

In addition to having more or less the same level of schooling and the same class background, the members of the Rastafarian digging team also shared the experience of having gone through a troublesome childhood. As a matter of fact, they had all experienced one or more traumatizing events during their early youth. Either they had been confronted with the divorce of their parents, or they had been faced with the death of a close relative on whom they depended for their livelihoods, or they had made their girlfriend pregnant without having sufficient financial means to be able to build up a household of their own. As a result of these dramatic incidents, their lives had changed drastically. Their living conditions had deteriorated and they had been forced to find their own sources of income.

Finally, in the process of developing a wide variety of livelihood strategies, the abovementioned Rastafarian creuseurs had all reached high levels of mobility and adaptability. Although they had been born and raised as urbanites, living in the impoverished suburbs of Lubumbashi and Likasi, they had taken advantage of their involvement in different types of income-generating activities throughout Katanga to familiarize themselves with a wide range of lifestyles. Over the years, they had become used to travelling around, adjusting themselves to new circumstances, and establishing new contacts.

Thus, using Hannerz' terminology, one can say that the members of the Rastafarian digging team had a 'symmetry of perspectives' (Hannerz 1992: 65). Having gone through similar experiences and having been involved in similar situations, they noticed they had similar ways of dealing with and giving meaning to the joys and hardships of life in the margins of Katangese society. Thanks to this shared outlook on life, they had little difficulties developing an atmosphere of 'communitas' at the level of their digging team.

### **5.3.2 The performance of masculinities under a 'situation of duress' in the Nimura mine**

In the introduction to this chapter, I already explained that Ferguson introduced the concept of 'performative competence' in order to counter the often-held assumption that people are free to adopt and display whatever behavioural styles they prefer. In Ferguson's opinion, it is wrong to believe that everyone has the same capacity and freedom to shift between different ways of behaviour and to adjust to changing circumstances and social environments without experiencing any problems. Instead of considering the enactment of behavioural styles as a smooth and automatic process, researchers should pay close attention to the difficulties people tend to encounter when they learn how to behave appropriately and convincingly in different contexts. According to Ferguson, it takes a lot of time and exercise before people reach a satisfactory level of performative competence. And even after reaching that level, they still need to take into account the political-economic context in which they live and work. Just like Butler (2007), Ferguson is convinced that '*gendered styles are constructed (...) always*

*under a “situation of duress”, which makes the enactment of gender “a strategy of survival within compulsory systems”* (Ferguson 1999: 99).

As the following account will show, Ferguson’s remark about gendered styles being constructed ‘under a situation of duress’ certainly holds true for the members of the Rastafarian digging team. During their stay in Lwambo, they lived and worked in a coercive environment that seriously limited their manoeuvring space. Not only did they have to abide by rules and restrictions with regard to the organization of their mining activities, but they also had to accept limits with regard to the construction of their masculine identities.

To a significant extent, the ‘situation of duress’ in which the Rastafarian creuseurs had to live and work was caused by the involvement of a customary chief in the local mining business. The involvement of Chief Pande, the paramount chief of the Sanga, was not a coincidence. As research in other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa has shown, customary chiefs have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to adapt themselves to rapidly changing political, economic and social conditions, often making a career for themselves as politicians, businessmen or civil servants thanks to their dexterity in combining different registers of power (Odotei & Awedoba 2006; Lentz 2000; Oomen 2000; van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal & van Dijk 1999; Goheen 1992; Lund 2008). In Katanga, customary chiefs have claimed the right to impose taxes on mineral traders, to carry out mining ceremonies in exchange for material benefits and to control the access to certain mining areas (de Hemptinne 1926; Munanga 1986; Herbert 1993).

Pande played a prominent role in the local administration in Lwambo by occupying the position of collectivity-chief (*chef de collectivité*). Not only did he have the authority to supervise the collection of taxes on the local level, he was also legally entitled to coordinate the public services in his chieftaincy and to watch over the chieftaincy's natural resources. This was probably the main reason why EMAK – the semi-official organisation claiming to defend the interests of everyone involved in artisanal mining in Katanga<sup>225</sup> - asked for Pande's support to open up new mines in the Sanga chieftaincy. On 15 January 2005, the sector Lwambo was officially opened and 9 mines were inaugurated<sup>226</sup>.

EMAK officials accorded Pande a couple of favours to thank him for his support during the campaign for the opening up of new mining areas in the Sanga chieftaincy. They gave him the opportunity to

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<sup>225</sup> For more information about the role of EMAK in the business of artisanal mining, see the preface to this dissertation.

<sup>226</sup> These mines included Kalabi, Sumba, Jean I, Jean II, Keyi, Mandumbwila, Kabungu and Nkala.

recommend one of his sons for a coordinating position at their office in Lwambo and allowed him to distribute a number of hills among members of his family, who would be given the liberty to organize their mining activities more or less the way they wanted, without having to explain anything to EMAK.

Pande distributed mining pits among local dignitaries and officials of public services such as the national intelligence service (*Agence Nationale de Renseignements (ANR)*), the national police force (*Police Nationale Congolaise (PNC)*) and the mining police (*Police des Mines*) in order to prevent them from interfering with his mining project. As far as the diggers were concerned, he was very selective: only creuseurs who could prove they had a family relationship or a special bond with him would be allowed to work in Nimura without having to pay an entrance fee. All the others would have to pay 150 USD per team of 6 people<sup>227</sup>.

Jean-Claude Pande, who had been granted the role of superintendent by his father (i.e. Chief Pande, cfr. supra), was so strict with the artisanal miners in Nimura that some of them described their working conditions as 'slavish'. Not only did he play the role of gatekeeper, keeping all undesirables out of the mine, but he also spent very little money on food rations for his workers and forced them to accept a fixed price for their products. Whereas, almost everywhere in Katanga, artisanal miners were paid according to both the quantity and the quality (i.e. the ore grade) of their minerals, creuseurs in Nimura were only paid according to the quantity.

The Nimura case provides a clear example of what Chabal and Daloz have called the 'instrumentalization of disorder', that is, the tendency of powerful actors to take advantage of the confused, uncertain and chaotic state of many African polities to achieve their personal political and economic goals (Chabal & Daloz 1999: xviii-xix). Capitalizing on a situation of state collapse, strongmen at the micro-level of Congolese society have developed strategies to monopolize the exploitation and trade of natural resources, to accumulate personal wealth, and to establish relationships of patronage. They have given their clients access to (part of) their resources, but only in exchange for their loyalty and support (Nordstrom 2007; Schatzberg 2001).

Having described the micro-political-economic context in which the members of the Rastafarian digging team had to operate, I still need to explain how they adapted themselves to this 'situation of duress' and how it affected the construction of their masculine identities. Interestingly, the Rastafarian creuseurs had no problems getting access to Nimura. The reason for this was that there were family

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<sup>227</sup> I was told that one mineral buyer had even gone as far as paying 1000 USD to deploy 3 teams of 7 diggers each.

links between, on the one hand, the group of matrilineal relatives forming the backbone of the digging team, and, on the other hand, the Pande clan. While Pande Kyala was related to chief Pande through the line of his father, Kamukini, Karlos and Cédric were related to chief Pande's personal secretary through the line of their mothers. Consequently, the Rastafarian diggers managed to get exempted from the payment of an entrance fee thanks to their family relations. This proves that they eagerly jumped at the opportunity to become the clients of an influential and powerful patron, in spite of the fact that the ideology of Katangese Rastafarianism strongly condemned such forms of nepotism and clientelism. Apparently, they were prepared to throw their ideological principles overboard in order to secure their livelihoods.

The Rastafarian diggers also adopted an opportunistic attitude vis-à-vis their superiors in the mine. Even though, according to the Rastafarian ideology, they were obliged to follow the Biblical Ten Commandments, they saw nothing wrong with swindling money out of Jean-Claude Pande, a boss who refused to give them decent food rations and who also offered them a low price for their minerals (cfr. supra). The person whom Jean-Claude had chosen to act as the Rastafarians' daily supervisor was a man named Junior. Noticing that Junior was trying to keep in full command of the situation by keeping a close eye on their mining activities, the Rastafarians did their best not to spoil his illusions. In addition to respectfully addressing him as '*vieux*' (=old man, elder), they pretended to make a real effort to excavate as many minerals as possible. Yet, in reality, they kept part of their mineral bags hidden in their mineshaft with the intention of selling them to mineral buyers in the centre of Lwambo. Knowing that outsmarting mineral buyers was part and parcel of life on the mines<sup>228</sup>, the Rastafarians sold a couple of mineral bags for their own benefit, even if this constituted a violation of the Rastafarian ideology, which prohibited every form of theft.

The two examples cited above show that the members of the Rastafarian digging team had a good understanding of the power dynamics in the mine. They also make it clear that the Rastafarian creuseurs sometimes violated the principles of their ideology in order to keep afloat financially. This confirms Ferguson's argument that 'gendered styles' are always constructed 'under a situation of duress'. It is obvious that the Rastafarians did not have the liberty to perform the masculinity practices they preferred, but that they were forced to adapt their masculine behaviour to the working conditions in Nimura. Realizing that they found themselves in an oppressive environment, in which they were only able to maintain their position if they played the game as skilfully and unsparingly as their oppressors, they allowed themselves to occasionally violate the MRFCO code of conduct and to

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<sup>228</sup> See chapter 3 of this dissertation.



borrow masculinity practices from the subculture of artisanal mining such as acting cunningly and fooling one's superiors (*kuona clair*: to see clearly; *kuwa souple*: to be flexible, see chapter 3).

Still, the Rastafarian creuseurs did their best to remain faithful to the ideology of Rastafarianism whenever they could. This strong will to act as true Rastafarians was evidenced, first of all, by an incident that took place in May 2005. I was walking home with the members of the Rastafarian digging team after a long day of work in the Nimura mine when I suddenly noticed that Bolonya had started going in a different direction, moving slowly but determinedly away from the others. While his teammates walked straight on in the direction of Chief Pande's residence, Bolonya made a big detour in order to avoid this building.

It turned out that Bolonya's strange behaviour had something to do with the so-called *kipango*, a semicircular space in front of Pande's house, where all of Lwambo's male inhabitants had to take off their headgears out of respect for the traditional chief. I was told that one of the principle tasks of the chief's bodyguards was to make sure that everyone entered the *kipango* bareheaded<sup>229</sup>. As Van Bockhaven has shown, in many Central African societies, headdresses are worn to express a powerful position or social status (Van Bockhaven 2007). From this perspective, it is easy to understand the rationale of the abovementioned taboo on wearing headdresses inside the *kipango*. By claiming the exclusive right on wearing a hat (usually a baseball cap), Chief Pande wanted to emphasize his supreme power over his subjects in a symbolic manner. For his part, Bolonya wanted to make it clear that he did not want to acknowledge the paramount's authority. Therefore, he refused to cross the *kipango* where he knew he would have to take his hat off.

Interestingly, Bolonya's silent act of resistance vis-à-vis chief Pande allowed him to present himself as a full member of both the subculture of Rastafarianism and the subculture of artisanal mining. While, toward his fellow Rastafarians, he was able to show his attachment to the MRFCO rule of keeping one's dreadlocks safely hidden under a headgear, toward his fellow artisanal miners (who also followed the same route from the mine to the centre of Lwambo), he was able to demonstrate his aversion to the established order in Katangese society. Thus, through the seemingly trivial act of taking a roundabout route on the way home, Bolonya succeeded – if only for a brief moment – in coming across as a convincing Rastafarian and as a convincing creuseur at the same time. Thanks to the application of a Rastafarian technology of the self (growing and jealously guarding dreadlocks), he

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<sup>229</sup> In the old days, the word *kipango* referred to the enclosed area that harboured the group of houses belonging to the wives of the Sanga paramount (personal communication with Koen Bostoen from the linguistic department in the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren). In the Ruund language, the word *chipaang* refers to the courtyard of the paramount. For a detailed analysis of the *chipaang* among the Aluund, see De Boeck 1994: 462-466.

managed to maintain a high level of concentration and to craft his identity in an active manner, despite the oppressive living and working conditions he was faced with.

Another illustration of the Rastafarian diggers' strong will to remain faithful to the ideology of Rastafarianism despite the 'situation of duress' in which they found themselves concerns a dance performance on the occasion of the commemoration of Independence Day on 30 June 2005. The ceremony, which was held in front of Chief Pande's residence, attracted several hundreds of visitors, including high-ranking officials of government services such as the national police force (*Police Nationale Congolaise*) and the national intelligence service (*Agence Nationale de Renseignements*). Due to the fact that the first post-transition elections had just been postponed<sup>230</sup> and that the Congolese government had just foiled a secessionist attempt in Lubumbashi<sup>231</sup>, the atmosphere in Lwambo was very tense. Many people wondered why there were so many soldiers around, while they also wondered what was going to happen on Independence Day.

After one of the officials had praised the virtues of the Kabila regime and had told the audience that riots would not be tolerated, it was time for different groups of performers to come forward and dance for Chief Pande, who attended the ceremony in his capacity of head of the local administration. Though the background of the performers was very diverse, they appeared to have one thing in common: they all represented forms of power that were both feared and admired by the local population. Witchdoctors (*mifumu*) made their appearance in order to emphasize their mastery of occult forces, child soldiers brandished their wooden guns in order to demonstrate their readiness to join their country's armed forces, karatekas showed some of their most spectacular moves in order to prove their fighting skills, and mask dancers appeared on the scene in order to remind the spectators of the power of the ancestors.

For his part, Pande Kyala, one of the members of the Rastafarian digging team, performed a dance to a piece of dub, Jamaican music characterized by long drum and bass sections<sup>232</sup>. His dance performance was not intended as an expression of approval of Chief Pande's dominance in Lwambo. Instead, it was

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<sup>230</sup> On 28 April 2005, the Congolese parliament received a request from the electoral commission to extend the transition period beyond June 2005 as scheduled. The principal reason for this extension was the need to adopt and promulgate a new Congolese constitution as well as new electoral laws (sources: 'Belgian firm to register voters, official says', IRIN, 13 May 2005; 'Electoral process irreversible, Kabila says', IRIN, 17 May 2005).

<sup>231</sup> At the end of April 2005, the Congolese police and army carried out several arrests in Lubumbashi. The arrested people included 30 officials of the Congolese national army (FARDC), a university professor, several businessmen, and, last but not least, André Tshombe, the son of Moïse Tshombe, the mastermind behind Katanga's secession in the beginning of the 1960s. Together with the other detainees, Tshombe was accused of having prepared a new secession and having bought several thousand machetes for an armed struggle (International Crisis Group, 2006a: 11).

<sup>232</sup> Information obtained from the following website: [www.artandpopularculture.com/Dub\\_music](http://www.artandpopularculture.com/Dub_music), accessed on 16 May 2010.

part of the construction of his masculine identity. Pande Kyala wanted to take advantage of the celebration of Independence Day to affirm his membership of the Katangese Rastafarian movement in a public manner. Realizing that many people in Lwambo were aware of his family relationship with Chief Pande, he wanted to prove that he was first and foremost a Rastafarian and only then a relative of the man in power.

To his fellow Rastafarians, Pande Kyala made it clear that he was not afraid of defending the Rastafarian lifestyle in a hostile environment. By taking off his hat and showing off his long dreadlocks during an official state ceremony, he indicated that he wanted to be recognized as a true *rastaman*, in other words, as a member of the MRFCO who had always complied with the internal code of conduct and who had therefore been able to grow long hair. To his fellow artisanal miners, Pande Kyala showed that he had both the courage and the intelligence to criticize powerful actors such as Chief Pande in a subtle manner. As a result, he managed to come across as a *meza moto*, in other words, as a daredevil who was fond of dangerous situations (see chapter 3). So, just like his teammate Bolonya, Pande Kyala used Rastafarian technologies of the self (growing dreadlocks and dancing to dub music) to achieve a high level of concentration and to construct his masculine identity in an active manner.

The preceding account has shown that the members of the Rastafarian digging team did not have the liberty to behave in whatever ways they liked. The authoritarian and neo-traditionalist environment in which they lived and carried out their mining activities curtailed their freedom of expression considerably. Nevertheless, through the use of Rastafarian technologies of the self, they did their best to act in conformity with the principles of their ideology and to retain a certain degree of manoeuvring space vis-à-vis the powers that tried to control them. The cases of Patrick Bolonya and Pande Kyala have shown that some Rastafarian creuseurs construct their masculine identities in a very conscious and active manner. Furthermore, the cases have made it clear that some Rastafarian creuseurs possess a remarkable level of performative competence, which allows them to adapt their behaviour to changing circumstances and to combine the membership of two subcultures in a convincing manner.

### **5.3.3 Commander Bob's visit to the Ecole Jah in Lwambo**

Undoubtedly, the Rastafarian diggers' capacity to display the right masculinity practices at the right time was largely due to the training they received during Ecole Jah meetings. As I already explained in the second part of this chapter, Ecole Jah meetings contribute to the emergence of a levelling trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese Rastafarians. The meetings are intended to turn all members of the MRFCO into a disciplined and respectable group of 'peaceful soldiers' and to instil a sense of 'normative communitas' and 'liminality' into their minds. In addition to this, the gatherings give

followers of Katangese Rastafarianism the opportunity to familiarize themselves with 'technologies of the self' that can help them increase their levels of self-mastery and self-constancy.

Since it was clear that the members of the abovementioned Rastafarian digging team would stay in Lwambo for a couple of months as a result of their work in the Nimura mine, they made it their duty to attend the *Ecole Jah* meetings of the local MRFCO division on a weekly basis. The latter division had a membership of 27 people, including 15 'strangers' (i.e. temporary inhabitants of Lwambo) and 12 'autochthons' (i.e. permanent inhabitants of Lwambo). It organized its meetings in a farm previously owned by the Belgian Vidal and abruptly taken over by a family member of chief Pande in the context of the Zairianization campaign in the beginning of the 1970s<sup>233</sup>.

More than thirty years after Vidal's departure, the farm provided a sorry spectacle. While the square in front of the farmhouse had become overgrown with weeds, the bushes in the stables had shot up so high that they were threatening to pierce the roof. In the living room of the farmhouse, where the Rastafarians gathered every Sunday afternoon, the yellow paint was peeling off the walls and the chimney-piece had taken on a soot-black colour. Nevertheless, despite its dilapidated condition, Vidal's farmhouse was an excellent meeting place for members of the MRFCO in Lwambo. Since it was situated at a considerable distance from the town centre, the Rastafarians could be sure they would be able to hold their *Ecole Jah* meetings without being disturbed by outsiders.

The *Ecole Jah* of 5 June 2005 promised to be a special meeting. This was due to the visit of Kabungu Kabeya a.k.a. Bob de Bongo, Likasi's *commandant de district*. Commander Bob was sent out on a punitive expedition by the president of the MRFCO in Lubumbashi, who had received alarming reports about the misbehaviour of certain Rastafarians in Lwambo and who wanted to restore order as soon as possible.

From the moment commander Bob entered Vidal's farmhouse, he immediately drew the attention of all the people present. Built like an athlete and wearing a casual but elegant outfit composed of a sky-blue football shirt with the superscription '*First Advice*', a pair of black pinstripe trousers and a pair of leather sandals, he proudly displayed his dreadlocks, which reached up to his waist and testified to his long-lasting exemplary behaviour as a *rastaman*.

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<sup>233</sup> In a speech delivered on 30 November 1973, Mobutu announced that '*farms, ranches, plantations, concessions, commerce and real estate agencies will be turned over to sons of the country*' (quoted in Young & Turner 1985: 326). Various factors help to explain the Zairianization: the eagerness to displace foreigners from the commercial sector, the desire for economic independence among members of the Zairian government, the dynamics of clientelism and the ambitions of the Zairian political-commercial bourgeoisie in the 1970s (Young & Turner 1985: 327-328).

Following an opening prayer, a long speech about the importance of the internal code of conduct and a group discussion about various aspects of the Katangese Rastafarian ideology, commander Bob finally entered upon the topic that had been keeping everyone in suspense: the need to impose a severe punishment on those Rastafarians who had brought disgrace on the MRFCO by failing to comply with the internal code of conduct. Ordering one of the brigadiers to fetch a cane and to shut the doors of the farmhouse, he started reading the complaints he had received.

Interestingly, one of the complaints pertained to the misbehaviour of Trinita, one of the members of the Rastafarian digging team that was operating in the Nimura mine. In a letter, the plaintiff described how he and Trinita had started arguing with each other in one of the bars in Lwambo. Apparently, the plaintiff had given Trinita money to buy cigarettes, but the latter had spent it on alcohol and had got drunk. After that, Trinita had started dancing and insulting other people in the bar. As the plaintiff had found this behaviour unacceptable, he had taken a pair of scissors and had cut three dreadlocks out of Trinita's hair.

Strikingly, the plaintiff did not show up at Vidal's farm to back up his allegations. Apparently, he was afraid of a face-to-face confrontation with commander Bob, because he realized he should not have taken the law into his own hands. Trinita, who did not know in advance that someone had filed a complaint against him, made a desperate attempt to refute the allegations, but to no avail. After three witnesses had contradicted his version of the facts, he was convicted of public drunkenness as well as of giving a false testimony. Commander Bob sentenced him to 10 strokes of the cane. Although Trinita was expected to remain quiet and motionless during the flogging, he could not help crying out with pain. Consequently, the *commandant de discipline* felt obliged to repeat the punishment from the beginning, as prescribed by the MRFCO code of conduct.

The scene described above is interesting for several reasons. First of all, it sheds light on the working of disciplinary power in the Katangese Rastafarian movement. It is clear that, just like all the other members of the MRFCO, Trinita was subject to permanent surveillance. As he was constantly being watched - both by his friends and by other people in Lwambo - it did not take long before the news about his misbehaviour came to the attention of the MRFCO leadership. By sending out an awe-inspiring and charismatic figure like commander Bob, a man who embodied the hegemonic masculinity ideal of the Rastafarian movement (i.e. the so-called *rastaman*), the leaders of the MRFCO wanted to emphasize the omnipresence of the Rastafarian movement's 'authoritative gaze', while they also wanted to highlight the impossibility of violating the code of conduct with impunity.

The second reason why the abovementioned scene is fascinating is that it testifies to the existence of a differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese Rastafarians. As I already pointed out

in the second part of this chapter, members of the MRFCO make a distinction between different types of Rastafarian masculinities, which they classify in a hierarchical manner. The case study on Trinita gives us a good impression of the fervour with which members of the MRFCO support and defend the hierarchy of masculinities in their movement. Apparently, the author of the letter about Trinita's misbehaviour was so upset by the fact that one of his fellow Rastafarians was behaving like a *rasta voyou* - a subordinate type of masculinity in the MRFCO - that he tried to rob him of his dreadlocks, which are known to be one of the most important symbols of Rastafarian manhood. In doing so, he wanted to express his indignation over the disgrace brought on the Rastafarian movement by the misconduct of troublemakers who adorned themselves with Rastafarian symbols without making any efforts to respect the ideology of Rastafarianism.

Finally, the story about Trinita's misbehaviour is also interesting because it illustrates the predicament of men participating in two subcultures at the same time and having to deal with two different standards for masculine behaviour. While, on the one hand, Trinita wanted to put up an image of himself as a virtuous *rastaman*, on the other hand, he felt tempted to behave as a merrymaker or *mubinji*, especially when he was in the company of ordinary artisanal miners. Because it was dangerous and difficult to combine these two ideals of masculinity, Trinita realized he had to be very careful with the way he acted in public spaces such as bars. He knew that, every time he joined his non-Rastafarian colleagues for drinks, he ran the risk of being caught and brought before a Rastafarian tribunal. It was this constant punishment threat that made Rastafarian diggers like Trinita do their best to keep their masculine behaviour in line with the MRFCO line of conduct. They knew that, every time they stepped out of line, there was a chance they would be subjected to a form of corporal punishment. The practice of '*kupika fimbo*' (to hit with a stick) was used to turn all Rastafarians into 'docile bodies' and to make them observe a high level of self-discipline, in accordance with the MRFCO slogan of '*no violence*'.

#### **5.3.4 An improvised marriage ceremony**

It should be noted that the ideology of Katangese Rastafarianism had a significant impact on relationships between members of the Rastafarian digging team and women from Lwambo. As I already pointed out in chapter 4 of this dissertation, many artisanal miners conclude 'mine marriages' with women they meet during their stay in the mining areas. Usually, these 'mine marriages' are loose and temporary alliances between two people enjoying each other's company and realizing their relationship is likely to end as soon as one of them decides to move to another mine. Interestingly, however, some Rastafarian diggers experienced the aforementioned 'mine marriages' in a completely different manner than their colleagues. Instead of considering them as short-lived and superficial love affairs, they took them really seriously and tried to give new meaning to them within the framework of

their Rastafarian ideology. Through the use of ‘technologies of the self’ associated with the slogan of ‘*no violence*’, they tried to embark upon these marriages in a spirit of love and harmony.

Cédric, who belonged to the matrilineal core group of the digging team, was one of the Rastafarian creuseurs who started a relationship with a woman from Lwambo. He fell in love with Kapenga Mwesa, a young divorced lady living in the *quartier commercial*. Kapenga Mwesa was two years younger than Cédric and had already lost both of her parents: her mother passed away in 2001, her father in 2003. While her Kaonde mother hailed from the village of Matafu and spent her whole life farming nearby the village of Kapenga, her Sanga father was born in Mpande and spent his entire life working for Gécamines in Likasi.

Kapenga Mwesa married her first husband, a farmer from Mpande, in 1997. In the course of her 6-year long marriage, she gave birth to three children, though two of them died: one at the age of four and another one at the age of 8 months. Before starting a relationship with Cédric, Kapenga Mwesa had been involved in agriculture, first together with her mother, then on her own, tilling a piece of land she had received from a maternal uncle. Given the fact that, after her divorce, she was forced to take care of her 6-year old son Jarcelle all by herself, it was hard for her to make ends meet. Having become a celibate woman, she found herself completely marginalized:

If a woman doesn't have a husband, people call her '*ndumba*' (=prostitute). It is difficult to live on your own as a woman. A woman's respectability depends on her husband. Whether or not you are suffering, have clothes to wear, have food to eat (...) or own a car, you should have a husband in the house. That is human. If you don't have a husband, you aren't human.

In appreciation of Cédric's efforts to rescue her from her social isolation, Kapenga Mwesa took care of him like a real Rastafarian '*mama Africa*', washing his clothes, preparing an evening meal for him and offering him sexual services. In addition to this, she also helped him make a career for himself within the MRFCO:

I learned how to host Rastafarians. Before they promoted Cédric to the rank of commander, they were thinking: 'Let's appoint Cédric as a commander, so that he will take good care of his home and host Rastafarian guests. When they promoted him in Lwambo, I was already involved with him. I hosted several commanders from Lubumbashi and Likasi as well as a number of other guests in order to make it possible for him to obtain his title.

So, Kapenga Mwesa assisted Cédric in embodying the masculinity type that occupied the hegemonic position in the Rastafarian hierarchy of masculinities: the *rastaman*. In the second part of this chapter,

I already explained that it is very important for a *rastaman* to have a wife and children. Only Rastafarians who are in charge of a household are entitled to occupy an authoritative position in the MRFCO. They are believed to be the only ones who have the necessary moral authority to be able to give advice and instructions to other Rastafarians during *Ecole Jah* meetings. According to Kapenga Mwesa, it was thanks to her good performance as a '*mama Africa*' that Cédric managed to be recognized a real *rastaman* by his fellow Rastafarians and that he succeeded in obtaining an appointment as a commander in the MRFCO.

Unfortunately, the happiness of Cédric and Kapenga Mwesa was short-lived. The first factor that put a lot of pressure on their relationship was Cédric's way of money handling. In fact, Cédric found it very difficult to get rid of his old habits, even though he realized he had to provide for Kapenga Mwesa. According to his own account, he was unable to use his money sparingly:

I have to work as a creuseur to obtain a capital. After all, I notice that digging makes it possible to earn a lot of money. On the other hand, the *creusage* is not characterized by a form of saving<sup>234</sup>. Even when you are making a lot of money, you will waste everything. You tell yourself: tomorrow I go back to work and earn money again. I have a pit that allows me to make money. (...) You don't put any money aside for yourself (*caisse privée*). Instead, you place all your hope in your pit. In trading, you only use your profits. But in the *creusage*, you squander all your money. You assume that the next day you can go back to work and earn new money.

Apparently, Cédric had a hard time choosing between two ideals of masculinity: while, as a participant in the subculture of artisanal mining, he had the tendency of behaving like a *mubinji*, in other words, like a merry-maker who squandered all the revenues from his mining activities instantly (see chapter 3), as a member of the MRFCO, he tried to behave as a *rastaman*, in other words, like someone who strictly complied with the rules of Rastafarianism and cultivated an ascetic lifestyle.

The second factor that constituted a threat to the happiness of the young Rastafarian couple was Kapenga Mwesa's worrying state of health. Cédric had managed to make her pregnant, but she had ended up having a miscarriage. After that, she kept complaining about abdominal pains. Cédric was really worried about this and was even afraid she would die. If that happened, he would be in deep trouble, since he had still not discharged his obligations towards his family-in-law. As I already explained in chapter 4, throughout Katanga, there is a rule according to which a widower is only allowed to go through a purification ceremony at the end of the mourning period if he has finalized all

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<sup>234</sup> What Cédric means to say is that it is difficult to save money when you are working as a creuseur.



the payments to his family-in-law. If this is not the case, he runs the risk of being haunted by the *muufu* (erring spirit) of his deceased wife. Because Kapenga Mwesa wanted to make sure that nothing would happen to Cédric in case she would die, she pressured him to get the marriage formalities over and done with as soon as possible:

They have already told him to take care of those things. So far, he has failed to do so. Maybe he feels ashamed, I don't know. Let me just tell you the truth. They have already called him. These things have come up for discussion. Here on earth, death is everywhere. Imagine yourself: your wife dies and you still haven't finished paying the bride price (*mari*). Before the coffin is put into the tomb, the family-in-law will force you to pay your debt.

Cédric's foot-dragging with regard to the marriage ceremonies did not only result from his lack of self-discipline in terms of money handling (cfr. *supra*), but also from his problems on the family level. Even if he succeeded in saving up enough money to make Kapenga Mwesa his wife, he would still have trouble finding people who were able to assist him during the marriage ceremonies. Due to his parents' divorce and his activities as a *creuseur*, he had become alienated from several members of his family.

Eventually, Cédric came up with a remarkable strategy to be able to meet with his in-laws anyway. Instead of putting all his time and energy in trying to locate family members who were willing to accompany him during the marriage ceremonies, he decided to take two Rastafarian friends with him. In doing so, he killed two birds with one stone. While, on the one hand, he showed Kapenga Mwesa that he was serious about their relationship, on the other hand, he made it clear to his colleagues of the MRFCO that he was a real *rastaman*, someone who attached great importance to the principle of spiritual kinship and who therefore treated other Rastafarians as if they were real family members (cfr. *supra*: *kirasta ni kizazi kimoja*: Rastafarianism is one progeny).

On a Saturday night in July 2006, Cédric told his Rastafarian friends that he was going to submit the so-called *kifunga mulango* to his family-in-law the next day. Throughout Katanga, *kifunga mulango* is used as a synonym for the French word '*pré-dot*' (pre-bride price). When a man pays a sum of money to his family-in-law, he indicates that he is planning to get engaged to his girlfriend. From then on, it

is no longer be possible for other men to court her. For her part, the woman no longer has the opportunity to look for other men to marry her<sup>235</sup>.

Freedom, one of the two Rastafarians who accompanied Cédric during the *kifunga mulango* ceremony, told me that he did not find it strange that he had only been informed of the marriage celebration at a very late stage. He knew that it was impossible for Cédric to invite his own family members, so that it was only logical for him to ask to be accompanied by two friends from the MRFCO, a movement that stimulated a form of spiritual kinship amongst its members. When I asked him how the ceremony passed off, he said:

By bringing the *kifunga mulango* to the elders, he (=Cédric) wanted to show that he was ready to proceed to a marriage. I participated in the ceremony and kept their money. It was an amount of 2000 FC. I put it down. In my pocket, I also carried some money of my own: 500 FC. I added it, so that it became an amount of 2500 FC. So, I participated in the ceremony and I put down their money (...). According to local traditions, I played the role of *kilùmè nsòngòjì*. I was the one who concluded the marriage. Cédric did not conclude the marriage, I did. They have to come to see me, should they have a problem. It was me who concluded the marriage with the woman.

Freedom was asked to be the spokesman, because he was known to be an adult (*mkubwa*), someone who knew what it meant to take responsibility for a family and who was experienced in talking to an audience. From the abovementioned quote, it can be gathered that he tried to give shape to his role during the ceremony by drawing on his knowledge of traditional marriage ceremonies among the Sanga. In the old days, the Sanga used the term *kilùmè nsòngòjì* to refer to the person who submitted the marriage request to the family-in-law on behalf of the future groom (Coupez 1976: 13). Usually, this person was the groom's elder brother, one of his maternal uncles or another family member. Originally, the *kilùmè nsòngòjì* also gave advice with regard to the selection of the woman to be married. In addition to informing the future groom of the availability of a nubile girl in the clan of his own spouse, he guided the groom in the negotiations with the family-in-law. When the girl accepted the proposal and when her closest family members – grandparents, parents, paternal uncles – equally gave their go-ahead for the marriage, the *kilùmè nsòngòjì* would publicly give them the so-called *kasoma*, which was composed of pearls, originally, and of money, later on. As soon as the wife's

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<sup>235</sup> Contrary to what one might think on the basis of Cédric's hasty announcement, the ceremony of the *kifunga mulango* is usually prepared along established lines. The family of the husband is expected to announce its visit to the family of the wife well in advance. The rationale behind this announcement is twofold: on the one hand, the family of the husband wants to make sure that the family of the wife will be available at the agreed time, while, on the other hand, it wants to offer the family of the wife the opportunity to clean the house prior to the ceremony and to notify additional guests on their side (Kahola 2005: 156).

relatives had accepted the *kasoma*, the future groom started constructing the hut where he would live together with his wife after their marriage. In addition to this, he started preparing the land he would farm for a couple of years by way of suitor service. It was considered the responsibility of the *kilùmè nsòngòjì* to make sure that the relationship between the two partners persisted and that the two families continued to have a good relationship with one another. If the engagement was broken off for one reason or another, the family of the wife gave back the *kasoma* to the family of the husband (Grévisse 1957a: 99-102; 112).

The case about Cédric's marriage to Kapenga Mwesa shows, first of all, that the ideology of Rastafarianism had a strong influence on the ways in which members of the Rastafarian digging team entered into relations with women from Lwambo. Thanks to the education they received during Ecole Jah meetings, Cédric and his teammates knew that finding a fixed female partner was of vital importance for the construction of their masculine identities in the MRFCO. For those men who dreamed of being acknowledged as exemplars of hegemonic masculinity and of getting promoted to the rank of commander, it was absolutely indispensable to have a wife and children. It was only through the establishment of independent households that they could demonstrate their capacity to act as responsible family fathers, in other words, as men capable of taking care of and giving orders to their dependents. Cédric was eager to shape his relationship with Kapenga Mwesa on the basis of Rastafarian principles, because he knew that this would offer him a double advantage. Not only would he be able to increase his chances of getting access to a powerful position in the MRFCO, but he would also be able to justify his dominant position at the household level. After all, he would be able to refer to the Rastafarian norms and values regarding gender relations, which stipulated that *mamans Africa* had to behave as virtuous and obedient housewives.

A second observation that can be made on the basis of the abovementioned case study is that Cédric's behaviour as a man was not only determined by his membership of the MRFCO but also by his membership of other socio-cultural units. While his way of money-handling was influenced by his involvement in the group of Katangese artisanal miners, his way of getting married was influenced by the norms and values of the Sanga. This proves that Cédric did not simply imitate existing styles of masculinity, but that he tried to build up his own repertoire of masculinity practices, which he collected from various different sources.

Third, the description of Cédric's marriage to Kapenga Mwesa indicates that he had a remarkable level of performative competence. Though he was under tremendous pressure to finalize the marriage formalities as quickly as possible (due to his future wife's health problems), he still managed to remain cool-headed and to come up with a brilliant scenario for the *kifunga mulango* ceremony. His strategic use of the Rastafarian principle of spiritual kinship (*kirasta ni kizazi kimoja*) proves that he

had become very skilful at finding solutions for the many problems he was confronted with during his stays in the mining areas.

Finally, the preceding account suggests that the Rastafarian movement allows disorientated youngsters to bring structure into their lives, to get access to new networks of solidarity, and to achieve upward social mobility. Having gone through some very rough times after the divorce of his parents and having noticed that he was increasingly drifting apart from his family, Cédric found comfort in the idea that the MRFCO offered him a new safety net. He was glad that the movement gave him a whole new education (during the Ecole Jah meetings), that it promised to help him in times of need, and that it offered him the opportunity to climb up in the hierarchy and make a career for himself as a commander.

### 5.3.5 Love child, never meant to be

Cédric was not the only member of the Rastafarian digging team who fell in love with a woman from Lwambo. Karlos, the muscled and dynamic young man from the Katuba neighbourhood in Lubumbashi, also hooked up with a female inhabitant of the mining town. In the Toyota neighbourhood, where the Rastafarian creuseurs were renting a house in view of their digging activities in the Nimura mine, he started a relationship with an albino woman.

Before I explain what was so remarkable about this relationship, I first need to say a few words about the influence of Karlos' double subcultural membership on the construction of his masculine identity. As a participant in the subculture of artisanal mining, he liked to present himself as a *pomba*. He did not miss an opportunity to say that he used to be a member of a well-known gymnastic club of Gécamines in Lubumbashi, was proud to have a stronger body than most of the other diggers in the Nimura mine (cfr. chapter 3: *maungo yangu ni capital*: my body is my capital), and liked to show off his stamina by spending several hours in the mineshaft without asking to be replaced. Moreover, he had five tattoos on his body, three of which were known to symbolize resilience and physical strength: an eagle, a scorpion and a beetle called *kafabubela*<sup>236</sup>. Taking into account Schildkrout's observation that '*tattoos (...) are ways of writing one's autobiography on the surface of the body*' (Schildkrout 2004: 338), it seems plausible that Karlos used the aforementioned body inscriptions to assert his identity as a muscleman to his co-workers.

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<sup>236</sup> In Katanga, it is often said that the *kafabubela* 'pretends to die' (Swahili: *analanda kufwa*). People may think that he is dead, while, in reality, he is just keeping quiet to escape from danger.

With regard to Karlos' membership of the subculture of Rastafarianism, it should be noted that he attached great importance to the slogan of '*no violence*'. Despite being muscular and perfectly capable of sticking up for himself in a fight, he made sure never to get involved in arguments with other artisanal miners for fear he should use physical violence against his opponents. This shows that he used anger management as a technology of the self. The ideology of Rastafarianism helped him to remain in control of his emotions whatever the circumstances.

Karlos also found it important to pay attention to the second meaning of the slogan of '*no violence*', that is, the need to approach all human beings with the same spirit of love (*mapendo*). Already before joining the MRFCO, he had exhibited his preparedness to treat all people equally by starting a relationship with the daughter of Luba immigrants from the Kasai region, a population group that often fell victim to xenophobia in Katanga<sup>237</sup>. Subsequently, during his time as an artisanal miner, Karlos had forced himself to be respectful toward sex workers. While ordinary creuseurs had the habit of treating *ndumbas* with contempt (see chapter 3), Karlos did his best to be kind to them and to avoid rude language in his conversations with them<sup>238</sup>.

Karlos' relationship with the albino woman from Lwambo was not self-evident. In several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa – and especially in Burundi and Tanzania – large numbers of albinos have been killed and mutilated over the past few years. The killings appear to be due to a widespread belief that magic potions with a base of albino organs bring good luck, power and sexual prowess to the individuals drinking them<sup>239</sup>. Throughout the DRC, albino people are subject to various forms of discrimination. Apart from the fact that they often experience serious difficulties on the job market, they also have problems getting access to education and healthcare. For albino women, it proves to be very difficult to find a marriage partner. Moreover, they are often mocked or rejected by other women, who tend to treat them as outcasts<sup>240</sup>.

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<sup>237</sup> This was especially the case in the beginning of the 1990s, when Karlos was still a teenager.

<sup>238</sup> One evening in May 2005, I was sitting next to Karlos while I was watching a movie in one of Lwambo's cinemas when I heard him strike up a conversation with a prostitute called Gracia. Apparently, he already knew Gracia from his time in the mine of Milele. To my great surprise, he had not only been one of her clients, but he had even made her pregnant at some point. While he had encouraged her to keep the baby, she had eventually decided to have an abortion. Of course, it is impossible to tell whether Karlos would really have taken care of the child if Gracia had not terminated the pregnancy. Nevertheless, his reaction to Gracia's unexpected pregnancy had certainly been different from that of the average artisanal miner. Instead of simply running away and moving to another mine, Karlos had showed his preparedness to adopt the role of a responsible family father, notwithstanding the fact that the mother of his child was a known sex worker.

<sup>239</sup> '*Manger le sexe des albinos ne fait pas gagner les élections*', Equipe Signe des Temps, 26 March 2010.

<sup>240</sup> '*Albino people in DR Congo suffer discrimination and exclusion*', 8 August 2008, UN News Centre. In Katanga, albinos are designated with the derogatory Swahili term '*bitokatoka*' (sing: *kitokatoka*).

Even Karlos' own teammates were surprised he was having an affair with an albino woman. When I asked them what they thought of the relationship, they jokingly said: '*It was dark. He probably thought he was having sex with a muzungu (white woman)*'. This statement shows that the other members of the Rastafarian digging team did not take Karlos' relationship seriously. Clearly, they were convinced that he would never have considered getting involved with an albino woman under normal circumstances. While they understood that many Katangese men dreamed of sleeping with a white woman<sup>241</sup>, they found it very hard to imagine that someone would spend the night with an albino woman by his own free will.

It would be incorrect to say that Karlos did not care about other people's opinions concerning his love life. Fearing he would lay himself open to ridicule if he made his relationship public, he only visited his lover after sunset. Moreover, unlike his teammate Cédric, he never took any initiative to talk to the albino woman's parents and relatives about the possibility of getting married and neither did he make any efforts to introduce her to his own friends and family members.

When, in the beginning of July 2005, the members of the Rastafarian digging team decided to end their activities in the Nimura mine due to the low level of mineral production, Karlos moved to another mine close to Kambove. For a moment, it looked as if this was also going to be the end of his relationship with his albino girlfriend in Lwambo. However, a couple of months after his departure from the Nimura mine, one of Karlos' fellow artisanal miners in Kambove told him that he had left his girlfriend in Lwambo pregnant. At first, Karlos chose to pretend as if nothing happened. But some time later, when news reached him that his girlfriend had given birth, he changed his mind.

Feeling guilty for having abandoned his girlfriend during her pregnancy, Karlos left Kambove and went to Likasi in order to buy some clothes for the newborn child. Subsequently, he climbed on board of a truck that transported goods from Likasi to Fungurume. When the truck made a brief stopover in Lwambo, he quickly ran to the house of his girlfriend, dropped off his gift and raced back to the truck in order to continue his journey.

Karlos' reticence to bring his relationship with his albino girlfriend into the open can be seen as a confirmation of Ferguson's argument about gendered styles being constructed under a '*situation of duress*' (Ferguson 1999: 99). While, on the one hand, Karlos felt very strongly about the Rastafarian values of peace, love and understanding, on the other hand, he still hesitated to put his ideas into practice because he felt intimidated by the climate of intolerance vis-à-vis albinos in Katanga.

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<sup>241</sup> There was a widespread popular belief that sexual intercourse with a *muzungu* was a gateway to success and financial wealth.

Consequently, Karlos did not really succeed in becoming the man he wanted to be. He admired Rastafarians who did not care about what other people thought of them, but he realized he was unable to show the same level of bravery. Failing to approximate to the ideal of the '*rastaman*', he settled for being a '*no dread*'. As I already explained in the second part of this chapter, the expression '*no dread*' refers to a complicit masculinity in the Rastafarian hierarchy of masculinities. It serves to designate a law-abiding Rastafarian who does not wear any dreadlocks and who also lacks other qualities that are characteristic of a genuine *rastaman*. Karlos supported the ideas, practices and values associated with the hegemonic masculinity ideal of the '*rastaman*', but he knew he was unable to embody this ideal, because he lacked the courage to build up a household of his own with his albino girlfriend.

### 5.3.6 A drunken man is always dry

So far, I have only paid attention to the experiences of those members of the Rastafarian digging team who did not consider leaving the MRFCO any time soon. Bolonya, Pande Kyala, Cédric and Karlos were all very much at ease in the Katangese Rastafarian movement. They felt relieved to be able to bring order and structure into their lives thanks to the use of Rastafarian 'technologies of the self'. Even Trinita continued to organize his life according to Rastafarian principles, despite the fact that he had been severely punished for his misbehaviour on the occasion of commander Bob's punitive expedition to Lwambo.

There was, however, one team member who gradually grew tired of Katangese Rastafarianism. Kamukini, the former Gécamines employee from the Mafuta neighbourhood in Likasi, found it hard to accept that he was constantly being watched and that he always had to justify his actions to the leaders of the MRFCO. He hated the obligation to announce every movement outside his town of residence to his superiors:

It became like a kind of debt, like a service you had to perform. The Rastafarians didn't understand that, every once in a while, there were problems back home. They said that, every time I came to Likasi (from Lwambo), I first had to report myself to the Ecole Jah. How can you expect someone to spend more time with the Rastafarians than with his own family and children?

From this quote, it is obvious that Kamukini was unable to put up any longer with the panopticism that was so characteristic of the Rastafarian disciplinary system. In his opinion, it was unacceptable that the Rastafarian movement tried to control every aspect of his life, including the way he managed his wife and children. Whereas the MRFCO expected him to behave like a soldier on duty, prepared to give priority to defending the movement's interests at any moment, Kamukini himself attached great importance to the dividing line between his public and his private life. For Kamukini, being a member

of the Rastafarian movement was like being a member of a church. Though he liked to attend Ecole Jah meetings on Sundays and though he loved to listen to speeches of people like commander Bob, he still felt he had a right to some privacy. It disappointed him to see that the Rastafarian movement was developing more and more into a totalitarian organization, adopting features such as authoritarianism and meddlesomeness, which he thought were more typical of a Congolese state service than of a grassroots social movement. In Kamukini's view, it was a sad thing that a group of youngsters pretending to be capable of creating an alternative reality on the basis of self-chosen norms and values ended up displaying the same bad habits as the people they sought to dissociate themselves from.

Given Kamukini's disappointment about the evolution of the MRFCO, it is hardly surprising that he left the movement as soon as his Rastafarian digging team in Nimura disbanded (cfr. supra: 5.3.5). Since he did not have the courage to join another digging team in Lwambo, he decided to go back to Likasi where he could help his mother with her agricultural activities.

For people in Likasi, urban agriculture has become a very important livelihood strategy since the beginning of the 1980s. Many city-dwellers have started growing crops such as cassava, maize and beans on small pieces of land inside the urban area with a view to securing their own food supply in times of economic crisis (Kyantubu 2006)<sup>242</sup>.

Marie-Christine, Kamukini's mother, owned a piece of land that was situated at 7 kilometres from her residence in the Mafuta neighbourhood in Likasi. She had inherited it from her father, who used to be an employee of the electrical power concern SOGEFOR during colonial times. It was largely thanks to this inter-generationally transmitted physical capital that she and her family members managed to keep afloat. Not only were they able to cut down on their food expenses (as they were growing their own vegetables), but they also had the opportunity to produce substantial quantities of cassava, which they needed to brew artisanal whisky. As I already explained during my discussion of Kamukini's life trajectory (cfr. supra: 5.3.1), Marie-Christine sold artisanal whisky at her house in the Mafuta neighbourhood in order to supplement her salary as a teacher in a local primary school.

For Kamukini, the return from Lwambo to Likasi was a humiliating experience. Although he was glad to have finally escaped from the 'authoritative gaze' of the Katangese Rastafarian movement, he felt bad that his relatives considered him a failure. Contrary to what he had promised them before leaving

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<sup>242</sup> Kyantubu has noted that, already during colonial times, the inhabitants of so-called '*centres extra-coutumiers*' and of compounds established by big companies practiced a form of small-scale agriculture. Making use of the alluvial pieces of land situated deep in the valleys, they laid out small, fenced-off gardens where they planted banana trees and cassava (Kyantubu 2006: 44).



for the Nimura mine in Lwambo, he had never managed to send them remittances on a regular basis and neither had he been capable of raising enough money to get involved in other, more lucrative economic activities outside the business of artisanal mining. The second reason why Kamukini found it degrading to return to Likasi was that he did not have enough money to pay for the accommodation of his household members. Since the landlord had evicted his wife and children from their house due to their inability to pay the rent, he had no other option but to ask his parents if he and his family could stay in one of the *boyeries*<sup>243</sup> adjacent to the parental home. By moving in with his parents again, Kamukini seemed to admit that he was not strong enough to build up a household of his own. It was as if he recognized that he was unable to shoulder the responsibility for a group of dependents and that, therefore, he did not deserve to be treated as a fully fledged adult (*mkubwa*). The third reason why Kamukini felt uncomfortable about his return to Likasi was that he was obliged to follow the orders of his mother again. Just like his (unmarried) sisters and their children, he was forced to accept his mother as the chief coordinator of all agricultural activities on the family plot. Finally, the fourth reason why Kamukini was not keen on going back to his parents' house was that his relatives had a very negative idea about life in the mining areas. Mami, Kamukini's sister, made it clear that she would never consider living in a camp for artisanal miners:

There is a huge difference between life in the mines and life in the *cité*. Many people living close to a mine do not show respect. Many of them are impolite (*bamingi baimpolis*), and many of them are crooks (*bamingi bavoyous*). Age is not taken into consideration. It does not seem to occur to anyone that some people may be older than others, so that they deserve to be treated with respect. People act as if everyone has the same age. In situations like these, it's not good to be in the company of your wife. It's better to go to the mine on your own and to leave your wife behind in the *cité*. After all, that place (=the mine) is Sodom.

From Mami's testimony, it is clear that she despised the lifestyle of people living in mining camps. She found it disturbing that the latter deliberately transgressed the established norms and values in Katangese society, trying to create an image of themselves as juvenile delinquents. What bothered her most was their lack of respect. According to Mami, it was an absolute disgrace that inhabitants of mining camps consistently violated the principle of seniority. She reckoned that, if the latter refused to respect their elders, they would probably also refuse to respect the dignity of women. Therefore, she believed it was advisable for respectable women to stay away from the mining areas. Mami's use of the word 'Sodom' is very significant. It shows that, in her opinion, an artisanal mine had to be

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<sup>243</sup> The term '*boyerie*' refers to a small shack that used to be built at the back of a white man's house during colonial times. African servants working for white people were allowed to spend their nights in '*boyeries*' (see also chapter 2, footnote 16).

considered as the present-day version of the Biblical city that was destroyed by God because of the sins of its inhabitants.

If Kamukini's return to Likasi was already painful because of the abovementioned reasons, it became even more painful due to the difficult integration of his wife and children into the household of his parents. This was due - first of all - to the fact that Kamukini's wife Berthe did not get along well with her mother-in-law and her sisters-in-law. In what was de facto a female-headed household, Berthe presented herself as an un-enterprising person, who never showed any initiative and who failed to respect the division of labour. Her lack of adaptability and solidarity irritated the other women in Marie-Christine's household and gave rise to a lot of squabbling. Another element hampering the smooth integration of Kamukini's wife and children was the shortage of food at the household level. During the time they stayed with Kamukini's parents, Berthe and her 4 children only had one meal a day. Moreover, contrary to what was customary, they were not allowed to eat cassava porridge (*bukari*) from the same pot as the rest of the female household members. Instead, they had to content themselves with one small ball of porridge each. This confirms a point I made earlier in this chapter, namely that the economic crisis has an eroding effect on solidarity mechanisms at the household level. Apparently, Berthe and her children were not considered as belonging to the core of Marie-Christine's household and therefore they were not believed to have the right to receive the same quantities of food as the other household members (see also De Herdt 2007).

By immersing himself in 'forbidden activities' such as excessive drinking, Kamukini tried to rid himself of bottled up frustrations about the omnipresence of the Rastafarian 'authoritative gaze', the failed mining project in Nimura and the humiliating return to his parental home. Having spent several years avoiding the consumption of alcohol for fear of being punished by the MRFCO, he was glad he could finally go out with his old friends in Likasi again. Spending almost all his money on drinks, he started displaying the behaviour of a *mubinji*, in other words, of a man who loves to party with his friends and who wants to forget about his household obligations. Loosing every sense of self-control, he turned into exactly the type of man that most Katangese Rastafarians disdained and that his own sister Mami associated with the unrestrained way of life in the mining areas.

After a while, Kamukini's drinking problem became unbearable for his relatives. The relationship between him and his mother reached rock bottom when, one evening, he came home drunk and was told that the *boyerie* in which he wanted to spend the night had already been rented out to someone else. When it became clear to him that his mother would not change her mind, he started to rant and rave, calling her all sorts of names. What made things even more embarrassing was that Berthe did nothing to calm her husband down. Instead, she just stood there watching him and when he finally left the compound, she went back inside the house of her parents-in-law without comforting Marie-

Christine or offering her an apology for her husband's behaviour. It was only thanks to a diplomatic visit from Berthe's mother to Kamukini's mother a couple of days later that an explosion of the conflict could be avoided. This proved to be only a temporary reprieve, however. Some time later, when Kamukini got frustrated because he was getting short of cash, he decided to sell all his furniture. To make things worse, he stole his mother's bicycle and abandoned his wife and children in order to try his luck as a fish trader in Kapolowe.

As I already pointed out in chapter 3 of this dissertation, the fish trade is an attractive business to work in because fish has become a vital component of the Katangese diet due to the scarcity of meat (Petit 2002, see also: 3.3.4). Kapolowe, which has a small railway station connecting Ndola with Ilebo, is situated in the territory of Haut-Katanga, along the road between Likasi and Lubumbashi (Mudimbe 1994: 42). The town is well known for the quality of its schools (some of which used to be run by Catholic missionaries of the Benedictine order), but is especially famous for its fish. Large quantities of fish originating from the Changalele Lake near Kapolowe are traded at several markets in Lubumbashi, including the Commune market and the Luwohoshi market (which is also called the Zambia market)<sup>244</sup>.

In theory, Kamukini had everything he needed to become a successful fish trader. Not only did he have a starting capital at his disposal (thanks to the sale of his furniture), but he also had his own means of transport. In addition to this, he had a considerable level of trading experience, as he had already worked as a vendor of second-hand shoes and clothing during his adolescence (cfr. supra: 5.3.1). In practice, however, the fish trade required more self-discipline than he was able to muster. As a result of his continuing alcohol problem, he did not manage his money wisely enough to be able to continue his trading activities. In the end, he was even forced to sell his mother's bicycle because he had completely run out of money.

After a number of failed attempts to regain his lost money by working as an artisanal miner in Mununu and Mulungwishi, Kamukini decided to return to his paternal home in order to see if he could save his marriage and restore the relationship with his parents. To his great surprise, restoring the peace with his relatives in Likasi turned out to be easier than he had expected. The only person who was not as forgiving as he would have wished was his mother. Marie-Christine was furious that Kamukini had stolen her bike and that he had even gone as far as selling it. The loss of the bike had made it very hard for her to commute between her house and her agricultural land, and had indirectly

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<sup>244</sup> Sources: 'An inventory of fish species at the urban markets of Lubumbashi, DRC', W. Mujinga & J. Lwamba & S. Mutala & SMC Hüskén (2009), pp. 7-12; 'Les poissons de Kapolowe menacés d'extinction', Katanga Infos, 29 October 2007.

undermined the stability of her household's food supply as well as the continuation of her activities as a whisky trader.

Eventually, it was decided that Kamukini, Berthe and three of their children would leave Likasi in order to start a new life in Katanga, a farming village close to Luishia. Kamukini was optimistic about the future because one of his maternal cousins had already moved to Katanga a couple of years earlier. The cousin had promised to help him find a house, while he had also offered him a job as a bicycle repairman. Remarkably, Kamukini's eldest son was given permission to stay with his grandparents. The reason for this was that the boy had just started primary school and had been exempted from paying school fees thanks to the fact that his grandmother Marie-Christine held a job as a teacher in the same school.

The Kamukini case shows that subcultural membership can be of short duration. It is not because people decide to join the Katangese Rastafarian movement at a certain point in their lives that they automatically continue to think and act as Rastafarians until the day they die. Just like a British youngster may temporarily become a punk because the punk lifestyle makes it easier for him to get through the phase of adolescence, a Katangese youngster may temporarily become a Rastafarian because the Rastafarian lifestyle helps him to get through a difficult period in his life. Kamukini became a member of the MRFCO because he thought it would enable him to satisfy some of his emotional, social and material needs. He was convinced that, by taking part in the Rastafarian movement, he would be able to give new meaning to his life, make new friends and receive assistance in times of trouble. However, when he discovered that, in exchange for these benefits, he had to submit to the MRFCO's system of permanent control, he realized that the game was not worth the candle.

From the Kamukini case, it is obvious that there are significant differences between Rastafarian creuseurs in terms of the degree and the duration of their involvement in the MRFCO. Whereas his teammates in the Nimura mine happily accepted the pervasion of the Rastafarian ideology into every nook and cranny of their lives, Kamukini was unable and unwilling to show the same level of devotion. Although he tried to behave like a '*no dread*' (i.e. as a dreadless Rastafarian exerting himself to comply with the Rastafarian code of conduct), he never had the ambition to develop into a real *rastaman*, the hegemonic type of masculinity in the MRFCO. Therefore, he was not prepared to make great personal sacrifices for his Rastafarian beliefs and neither was he willing to give up his freedom of action.

Finally, the Kamukini case illustrates the difficulties of migrant labourers going back home after a long period of being away. Coming from an artisanal mine in Lwambo, an environment dominated by

men, Kamukini could not conceal his uneasiness when he suddenly found himself under the necessity of re-entering his parental home, an environment dominated by women. Moreover, he felt awkward having to go back to Likasi and knowing that he had neglected his kinship relations during his time in the mining areas (see also Gugler 2002; Cliggett 2005). Sensing that he would not be able to take away his relatives' suspicions vis-à-vis artisanal miners, he started behaving like the type of man they thought he had become: a selfish and impolite juvenile delinquent who did not shy away from biting the hand(s) that fed him. So, in an ironic twist of fate, Kamukini started leading the life of a merryman (*mubinji*) and a daredevil (*meza moto*), two types of masculinity that were very popular among Katangese artisanal miners, but that were strongly condemned by the MRFCO, the social movement of which he used to be a member.

### 5.3.7 Rising from the ranks

Just like Kamukini, Gaudace was an outsider in the Rastafarian digging team. Yet, while Kamukini's outsider status was due to his noncommittal attitude towards the MRFCO, Gaudace's outsider status resulted from his relatively wide outlook on life. As I already pointed out in my discussion of his biography (cfr. supra: 5.3.1), Gaudace had a much higher level of schooling than his teammates. He was the only one who had made it through secondary school and who had even spent a couple of years at the University of Lubumbashi. Thanks to his broad Hannerzian horizon, he drew his ideas from many different cultural sources, while he crafted his masculine identity in a very creative and active manner.

Rastafarianism had a strong impact on the way Gaudace constructed his masculinity. During the time I spent with him in Lwambo, I noticed that he used various Rastafarian 'technologies of the self' to regulate his body, thoughts and conduct. First of all, he did not only grow dreadlocks, but he also made sure to find time for reflection. Doing his best to act upon the slogan of '*rasta tête*', which served as a call for introspection, self-knowledge and concentration, he regularly withdrew into himself to meditate. Furthermore, before entering a mineshaft, he always prayed to God and to his ancestors for protection.

Second, Gaudace attached great importance to anger management, a 'technology of the self' associated with the slogan of '*no violence*'. When I asked him what he felt when he was inside in a mineshaft, he told me:

When I enter the mineshaft, it's like I'm attacking someone. It's like a combat down there. Victory really has to be mine. Yes, it's then that I really crush the ore vein.  
(...)

**And the aggression that you feel inside of you, do you ever use it against people?**

No, not at all. I don't use it against other people. That wouldn't be in line with my Rastafarian principles. We are fighters for 'no violence'. If I used it (i.e. aggression) against people, I would violate (the code of conduct), they would punish me, they would condemn me... the (Rastafarian) movement would.

From Gaudace's statements, it is clear that he tried hard to keep his feelings of anger and aggression under control. Apparently, he forced himself to channel his negative energies into useful activities such as excavating minerals. Feeling intimidated by the omnipresence of the Rastafarian movement's 'authoritative gaze', he never took the risk of physically attacking people, because he was afraid that he might end up getting punished for it during an Ecole Jah meeting.

Third, Gaudace was convinced of the importance of creativity, a value connected with the slogan of '*rasta créateur*'. While most of his fellow Rastafarians interpreted '*rasta créateur*' as a call for community service (*salongo*), Gaudace placed his own interpretation on it. In his view, '*rasta créateur*' had to be considered as a call for creative expression. The way he saw it, Rastafarians had to use their creative talents to wake people up and to open their eyes for what was happening in Katanga and in Africa at large. One way of doing this – according to Gaudace - was by writing and singing protest songs. In May 2005, I had the opportunity to attend a jam session in front of the house of the Rastafarian digging team. After Gaudace's teammates had spent half an hour singing reggae and religious songs, he stepped forward himself to perform the following rap song:

C'est l'histoire de l'homme Kagame	It's the history of the man Kagame
Pendant la guerre en Afrique	During the war in Africa
Ecoutez maintenant	Listen now
Yo man	Yo man
Je suis là	I'm here
(...)	(...)
Faire face	Standing up
Aux occidentaux	To the Westerners
Sans souci de l'Afrique	Without concern for Africa
Qui rendent comptent de nos frics	Who give us an account of our money
(...)	(...)
ces marionnettes	Those puppets
(...)	(...)
se disent prêts à négocier	Say they are ready to negotiate
avec nous	With us
tête à tête	In private

Gaudace told me he wrote these lyrics in 1999, less than a year after the outbreak of the second Congo war<sup>245</sup>. He claimed that a Lubumbashi-based radio station used to play the song quite regularly and that former Congolese President Laurent-Désiré Kabila liked it so much that he even granted him an audience at the Presidential palace. According to Gaudace, the President was so pleased that he gave him 300 USD as a mark of honour.

For my arguments in this chapter, it is not really important whether the meeting between Gaudace and the former Congolese President actually took place or not. The interesting thing about the rap performance and the story related to it is that it tells us something about Gaudace's political views and the way in which he used rap music to give shape to his masculine identity. Just like the majority of the Katangese Rastafarians (cfr. supra: 5.2.2), Gaudace held Kabila in great admiration. However, as opposed to his fellow members of the MRFCO, he admired him less for his prominent role in chasing Mobutu than for his courage in standing up against the demands of powerful Western countries. In the song mentioned above, Gaudace imagined himself in the precarious situation of the former Congolese President, who was faced with foreign aggressions and a rampant national debt. According to Gaudace, Kabila showed a lot of courage by fighting against his opponents in a David-against-Goliath-like fashion. As Petit and Mutambwa have pointed out, many Congolese sympathize with non-Western political leaders challenging Western superpowers. They like people such as Osama Bin Laden and Moammar Khadafi, because the latter do not appear to be afraid of the military strength of a great power such as the United States (Petit & Mutambwa 2005: 481).

It is probably not a coincidence that Gaudace chose the genre of rap to express his admiration for Kabila. McLeod has pointed out that, from the earliest days of its existence, rap has been an art form dominated by men (McLeod 2009: 218-219). Young Afro-American males have used rap music to denounce their precarious living conditions and to express their resistance against white supremacy and oppression (Gondola 1999: 36). When, in the course of the 1990s, rap music became popular in Sub-Saharan Africa (Auzanneau 2001; Stroeken 2005; Perullo 2005), young African men started using it *'to project themselves as creative and empowered individuals in society'* (Perullo 2005: 75). So, by fabricating and performing his own rap song, Gaudace probably wanted to come across as a creative Rastafarian with a critical mind and a good knowledge of the latest developments in national and international politics.

Having said this, although Gaudace applied several 'technologies of the self' associated with the Rastafarian slogans of *'rasta tête'*, *'rasta créateur'* and *'no violence'*, he realized he had no chance of

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<sup>245</sup> For more information about this war, see the preface to this dissertation.

being considered as a real '*rastaman*', the hegemonic type of masculinity in the MRFCO. The reason for this was that he did not possess certain features that were inextricably connected with the latter ideal of masculinity. Not only did he lack a household of his own (after having abandoned his girlfriend and child in Lubumbashi, cfr. supra: 5.3.1), but he also lacked long dreadlocks, which were known to be the most important symbol of a long and uninterrupted period of good behaviour in the MRFCO. Since Gaudace's dreadlocks were relatively short, it was clear to everyone in his environment that the MRFCO had recently punished him for having violated the movement's code of conduct. Consequently, he had no other option but to resign himself to being a *dreadman*, a complicit type of masculinity in the Rastafarian hierarchy of masculinities.

Whereas, among his fellow Rastafarians, Gaudace exerted himself to behave like a *dreadman*, among his fellow artisanal miners, he did his best to act like a *crâne*, in other words, like a smart, perceptive and forward-looking individual. When I inquired about his plans for the future, he replied:

I hope to become a *négociant* (mineral buyer) soon. It will depend on the evolution of the country. If things change in the days to come, I would like to finish my studies, so that, one day, I can work for society, because I am a man who is useful for society.

So, Gaudace had no intention of remaining an artisanal miner for the rest of his life. He had set his mind on climbing up to the rank of mineral buyer in the short-term and on graduating at the university in the long-term. From talking to him, it was obvious that he was working towards the achievement of these two goals in very focused and disciplined manner. Gaudace was not a naïve dreamer, but a self-conscious young man who knew what he was capable of and who carefully planned every step along the route he intended to follow.

In December 2007, more than two years after Gaudace had expressed his desire to become a mineral buyer, I met him at the entry of the Kamwale mine, which was situated a couple of kilometres southeast of Likasi. To my great surprise, he had changed his looks completely. Not only had he discarded his Rastafarian symbols, but he had also changed his way of dressing. Whereas, previously, he always walked around in his workman outfit, which consisted of a dirty pair of trousers and a torn t-shirt, he now looked like a rich and fashion-conscious youngster from one of Lubumbashi's upper class neighbourhoods. Wearing a green uniform cap, a leather jacket, a colourful t-shirt and a brand new pair of jeans, he was clearly eager to show how well he was doing for himself. Gaudace told me that, although he had continued to work as an artisanal miner during the first months after the disbandment of the Rastafarian digging team in Nimura, he had eventually managed to start a career as a mineral buyer (*négociant*) thanks to the money he had been able to save over the years.



In an article on the so-called *sapeurs*, a group of Congolese youngsters living in the streets of Kinshasa, Brazzaville, Paris and Brussels, Gondola has argued that fashion can be a powerful instrument for the construction of a new social identity. By wearing fashionable and high-priced clothes or *griffes*, Congolese young men are able to show – or create the impression – that they are leading successful lives. Fashion allows them to escape from the harshness of everyday life and to dream about being elsewhere and becoming someone else (Gondola 1999: 23-31).

Contrary to what one would assume on the basis of Gaudace's changed clothing style, however, he had not become a completely different man. As the following sections will show, his involvement in the subcultures of artisanal mining and Rastafarianism had left a number of traces. Gaudace continued to fall back on behavioural styles with which he had become acquainted during earlier phases in his life.

To begin with, Gaudace's way of operating as a mineral buyer in Kamwale was clearly inspired by the *crâne* style of behaviour, which he had adopted during his time as an artisanal miner. I noticed that, thanks to his earlier experiences as a creuseur, he had become very skilled in bargaining with mining officials and in deceiving them. Gaudace informed me that the situation in Kamwale forced him to act shrewdly. The reason for this was that the mine, which was situated 18 kilometres east of Luishia<sup>246</sup>, was owned by the state company Gécamines. Consequently, all the copper diggers working there were obliged to hand their minerals over to the state company. Since they received a daily wage for their services, they were not allowed to conclude contracts with external buyers. Agents of Gécamines' *Garde Industrielle* (Industrial Guard), the mining police, and two private security firms kept a close eye on all the minerals leaving the mine, making sure that none of them ended up in the wrong hands.

In spite of the fact that Kamwale was closely supervised by the abovementioned security services, mineral buyers such as Gaudace did succeed in setting up illegal mineral deals. They entered the mine under the pretext of wanting to work as day labourers, looked around for people interested in making some extra money, and instructed the latter to work according to a two-shift system: while those working on the day shift were expected to hide a number of mineral bags under the ground, those working on the night shift were expected to dig up the hidden mineral bags and transfer them to secret locations inside the mining camp. Finally, the mineral buyers took care of the transport of the minerals from Kamwale to buying houses in Lubumbashi and Likasi. In order to make things run smoothly, they made arrangements with certain members of the security services, whom they promised part of the profits from the mineral sales in return for their silence. For his part, Gaudace fooled the security

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<sup>246</sup> 'Technical report Luisha copper cobalt project for San Anton Capital', Strathcona Mineral Services Limited, July 2009: p. 32.

services into believing that he only stayed in Kamwale because he was the owner of a hotel in the mining camp. Meanwhile, he allowed a group of artisanal miners to stay in his hotel for free on condition that they sold their minerals exclusively to him<sup>247</sup>.

Apart from being inspired by the *crâne* style of behaviour, Gaudace also drew inspiration from other styles of masculinity. In his interactions with artisanal miners, Gaudace sometimes made use of masculinity practices associated with the ideology of Katangese Rastafarianism. Although he was no longer an active member of the MRFCO – he was not wearing any Rastafarian symbols anymore and he was no longer attending the Ecole Jah meetings on a regular basis – he did cooperate with a group of creuseurs who considered themselves Rastafarians. In order to create a relationship of trust with these people, Gaudace regularly referred to their joint Rastafarian background: he used the Rastafarian way of greeting and punctuated his language with Rastafarian expressions. Moreover, he made it clear to his workers that he strongly believed in the Rastafarian principle of ‘*no violence*’. When, during my visit to Kamwale, a drunken creuseur wanted to start a fight with me because he refused to accept that a foreigner like me had received permission to enter the mining camp, Gaudace helped his Rastafarian workers to keep the man at bay in a non-violent manner.

Finally, Gaudace was also guided by the *mubinji* style of masculinity during his stay in the mining camp of Kamwale. Almost every day, he went out for a few drinks after working hours. Barhopping allowed him to meet new people who could help him with the illegal evacuation of minerals, while it also helped him to maintain good relationships with the mining officials who were prepared to protect him in exchange for some form of financial compensation. Gaudace had two ways of showing that he was familiar with the *mubinji* style of masculine behaviour: on the one hand, he treated his friends and acquaintances to a couple of beers every once in a while, and, on the other hand, he regularly took part in the daily billiard competition in the biggest bar of the mining camp. In fact, in Kamwale, playing pool was one of the activities through which artisanal miners could demonstrate their manliness to their fellow workers. Realizing that a lot of people in the bar were watching the game while getting tanked up on beer, creuseurs knew they could win a lot of prestige by playing skilfully, aggressively and daringly. Moreover, they also knew that their involvement in the pool competition testified to their spending power and competitiveness. All the participants were expected to buy a (relatively expensive) token, put it on the edge of the pool table and wait their turn. The competition itself was based on the principle ‘the better you play, the longer you stay’: when a player beat his opponent, he was allowed to stay at the table in order to confront the next person in line. So, by spending a lot of his

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<sup>247</sup> Gaudace collected all the mineral bags in his hotel. He told his artisanal miners to hide the bags under their beds.

free time at the pool table, Gaudace showed that he had enough money to engage in a costly form of amusement, while he was equally able to show off his skilfulness and guts.

The preceding account has shown that Gaudace constructed his masculine identity in a very ingenious manner. Instead of simply imitating certain masculinity styles available in the subcultures of artisanal mining and Rastafarianism, he built up his own repertoire of masculinity practices. His open-minded and eclectic disposition made him combine aspects of the '*dreadman*' style of masculinity with the '*rapper*' style of masculinity, while it also made him combine aspects of the '*sapeur*' style of masculinity with the '*crâne*' and '*mubinji*' styles of masculinity. So, the case study on Gaudace proves that masculine identities among Rastafarian artisanal miners should not be conceived of as stable and fixed, but rather as inherently fluid and always 'in the making'.

Another thing that has been illustrated by the case study on Gaudace is the importance of 'performative competence'. Gaudace's ability to behave as a convincing '*dreadman*' when he found himself in the company of Rastafarians, and to act as a convincing '*mubinji*' when he was playing pool in a bar full of drunken artisanal miners did not appear out of thin air. It was the result of years of hard training and rehearsing. Over the years, Gaudace had thoroughly familiarized himself with different ways of being a man and it was thanks to this acquaintance with a wide variety of masculinity styles that he knew how to adjust himself to changing circumstances and environments.

Finally, the case study on Gaudace has pointed out that the Rastafarian 'technologies of the self' associated with the slogans of '*rasta tête*', '*rasta créateur*' and '*no violence*' can help Rastafarian creuseurs to develop a remarkable level of self-control, self-knowledge and self-constancy. During the time he was an active member of the MRFCO, Gaudace did not only learn techniques to keep himself under control, but also techniques to find out who he was and what he wanted to do with his life. While, on the one hand, he was determined to become a mineral buyer, on the other hand, he did his best to remain faithful to certain behavioural principles such as the principle of 'no violence' or the principle of looking a long way ahead and planning things in advance.

The preceding series of case studies on the members of a Rastafarian digging team allows us to make a number of general observations. First of all, it is clear that all the people on the team experienced difficulties in the process of constructing their masculine identities. As a result of the fact that they participated in two different subcultures at the same time, they were forced to take into account two different standards of masculine behaviour. Striking cases in point were those of Trinita and Cédric. Both men had a hard time reconciling instant consumerism and excessive drinking – two characteristics of the subculture of artisanal mining – with self-discipline and asceticism – two features of the subculture of Rastafarianism. The case of Kamukini suggested that the pressure of having to come

up to different sets of expectations was so high that some people cracked up. Kamukini felt so anxious about the need to fulfil his obligations vis-à-vis the MRFCO that he left the movement and lost himself in drinking.

A second observation that can be made on the basis of the preceding series of case studies is that there was both a levelling and a differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of the members of the Rastafarian digging team. The levelling trend manifested itself in the fact that the Rastafarian creuseurs attended Ecole Jah meetings on a regular basis and in the fact that they did their best to comply with the Rastafarian code of conduct. The differentiating trend showed itself in the fact that the Rastafarian diggers identified themselves with different types of masculinity. Kamukini and Karlos presented themselves as ‘*no dreads*’, Pande Kyala and Cédric considered themselves as ‘*rastamen*’, Trinita and Gaudace belonged to the category of ‘*dreadmen*’, and Bologna identified himself as a ‘*cool man*’. In addition to this, the differentiating trend also manifested itself in the fact that some Rastafarian diggers gave their own interpretations to the three Rastafarian slogans that summed up the basic tenets of the Rastafarian lifestyle (i.e. *rasta tête*, *rasta créateur*, *no violence*). While Pande Kyala associated the slogan of ‘*rasta tête*’ with dancing to dub music, Gaudace interpreted the slogan of ‘*rasta créateur*’ as a call for creative expression through the performance of rap songs.

Finally, the third observation that one can make on the basis of the foregoing chain of case studies is that ‘performative competence’ should be conceived of as a set of acquired social skills and not as an inborn quality. Unlike chameleons, which automatically change colour when they enter into a different environment, Rastafarian creuseurs have to learn how to behave appropriately in different social contexts. Their behavioural adaptability is not something that arises automatically. It is not because Rastafarian creuseurs participate in two subcultures that they automatically know how to act as convincing members of those two subcultures. The cases of Bolonya, Pande Kyala, Cédric and Gaudace have shown that true ‘performative competence’ reveals itself under circumstances of constraint and pressure. Just like soccer players can only really demonstrate their skills and their ‘feel for the game’ when they play a match against a strong team of opponents, Rastafarian creuseurs can only really demonstrate their ‘performative competence’ under a ‘*situation of duress*’, as Butler (2007) and Ferguson (1999) would put it.

## 5.4 Conclusions

The most important thing to remember from this chapter is the importance of paying attention to the large amount of variation in terms of the construction of masculinities within subcultures. In an article on the Ducktail movement, a subculture that enjoyed some popularity among White youngsters in

South Africa at the end of the 1950s, Mooney has argued that '*subcultural analysts need to go beyond simply mentioning that subcultures are vehicles for the expression of masculinity and begin to show how these masculine identities are formulated, sustained and practised whilst revealing how they conflict and co-exist with other forms of masculinity which exist at the same historical conjuncture*' (Mooney 1998: 756). Following the example of Pascoe (2003), who studied the ways in which Californian teenage boys deal with the coexistence of different types of subcultural masculinities in a high school environment, I have demonstrated that Katangese men straddling two subcultural groups show a remarkable tendency to build up their own repertoire of masculinity practices borrowed from different types of masculinity. Some of these men have become so good at displaying the right masculinity practices at the right time that one could even describe their performativity as a form of art. As Burkitt has noted, '*the great artist is a masterful technician, in that her or his technique is fused with thought and feeling so that the technique does not dictate the performance but aids it*' (Burkitt 2002: 227-228).

## 6. General conclusions

*Gentlemen, a man's home is everywhere*

*Take up your stick and ramble*

*(source: Coplan 1994: 125)*



Artisanal miners sharing a bottle of lutuku after working hours

### 6.1 Introduction

I started this dissertation with the observation that, in Katanga, there is a strong connection between work and masculinity. As a result of the fact that the Central African Copperbelt went through a process of intense industrial development during colonial times, several generations of Katangese boys grew up with the idea that, in order to be recognized and treated as real men, it was absolutely essential for them to get access to paid work or *kazi*. They were taught that men's dignity and respectability depended to a very large extent on their ability to secure the livelihoods of their household members. Paid work was generally considered as a safeguard for material welfare, as an avenue for social mobility and as a source of prestige.

From this perspective, it is hardly surprising that one of the most favoured garments among Katangese women used to be an expensive waistcloth called '*mon mari est capable*' ('my husband is capable'). By wearing this waistcloth, women were able to show off their relationships with men having good

jobs and being capable of taking care of them (Nawej Kataj 2005: 147). From the following song by the Katangese singer Jean-Bosco Mwenda wa Bayeke, it is obvious that unemployed men used to be treated with contempt during the colonial period (Nyembo & Buleli 2003: 146-147):

Bulofwa nabo	Unemployment too
Ni bubaya sana sana	is a very bad condition
Hautakula hautavala	You will not be able to eat and dress
Sana sana	properly
Watu wengine	Some people
Ni wasenji sana sana	are real idiots
Wanaacha kazi	they give up their work
Wanakaa paka bure	and idle about for no reason at all
Umutazame na bilato bapati zote	you can see them shoeless
Usifwate ile mifano ya wasenji	Don't follow the example of these idiots
Uzima wetu mpaka kazi	Our life depends on the work
Ya wazungu	of the whites

Mwenda wa Bayeke's song suggests that, during the time when the Katangese economy was still booming as a result of the expansion of industrial mining, jobless men were considered brainless loafers. They were blamed for failing to realize that participating in the wage labour economy was the only way of getting access to a decent lifestyle. According to Mwenda wa Bayeke and his contemporaries, to be a good man was to be a good wage labourer. Employees of the *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* in the Kolwezi area who were interviewed by Fabian during his fieldwork in 1966-67 proudly described themselves as '*bantu wa kazi*' (working people). In doing so, they made a distinction between themselves and '*the masses of unemployed hangers-on*' (Fabian 1973: 300).

Unfortunately, due to the gradual decline of the state mining company Gécamines during the Mobutu era and the economic crisis that gained momentum from the beginning of the 1970s onwards, Katangese men have been forced to redefine the relationship between work and masculinity. The collapse of the formal economy has made it increasingly difficult for them to play the role of reliable male breadwinners. The anxiousness and despair of Katangese men faced with a wide range of unemployment-related difficulties is nicely illustrated by '*Mambo inanipita*' (*I am overcome with problems*), a play by the Lubumbashi-based troupe of Mufwankolo. The Mufwankolo Theater is very popular in Katanga because the plays are performed in Shaba Swahili and because they portray local life in a comic but realistic manner, thereby helping spectators to put their own problems into perspective (Povey 1975; Fabian 1990b; Dibwe 2010). In '*Mambo inanipita*', Mufwankolo impersonates Mufwa, a company worker who has just been fired. When he tells his wife the bad news, she freaks out completely:

eeeeeh! Mina kufwa!	Eeeeeh! I'm dying!
Na hii muzululu ya batoto,	With this long train of children
tuta ishi je?	How will we be able to survive?
Nyumba ya ku ripiya, mayi ya kuripiya, moto ya kuripiya,	A house to pay, water to pay
Moto ya kuripiya	Electricity to pay
batoto masomo paka kule ku campus.	What are we going to do with our children at the university?
Uyu mwingine njo mwaka ya mwisho	And with the one who is in the graduation year of secondary school
ya kupata nini diplôme.	It is...Mufwa, how are we going to live?
Ni... Mufua wangu, tuta ishi je? <sup>248</sup>	

Much to his dismay, Mufwa notices that his sudden dismissal causes an avalanche of financial problems. His children are expelled from school because he is unable to pay the school fees, his wife – who has just given birth – is not allowed to leave the hospital because he fails to defray the expenses, and his household is out of power and running water because he continues to pile up unpaid bills. While one of Mufwa's daughters is so desperate that she restores her relationship with a wealthy ex-boyfriend (who she thinks is capable of taking care of her financially), Mufwa himself decides to sell several expensive electrical appliances to a friend in order to be able to satisfy the most urgent financial needs of his household members.

The interesting thing about '*Mambo inanipita*' is its ambivalence. On the one hand, the play has the typical characteristics of a comedy. The playwright exaggerates the magnitude of the main character's financial problems in order to produce a comical effect. On the other hand, however, the play also has a sad undertone. Katangese citizens going through difficult times themselves know that '*Mambo inanipita*' gives a fairly realistic picture of the types of problems unemployed men are facing. As Petit and Mutambwa have pointed out in their analysis of the current living conditions in Lubumbashi, the economic crisis '*brought tremendous effects on everyday life, especially on gender and age relations, since heads of households lost their central role in the economic activities of the household*' (Petit & Mutambwa 2005: 471).

In this dissertation, I have argued that artisanal mining is one of the activities through which thousands of Katangese men have been trying to come to grips with the collapse of the formal economy and the concomitant decline of the male breadwinner ideal. I have contended that artisanal mining has not only been employed as an economic survival strategy, but that it has equally been used as a strategy to

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<sup>248</sup> The transcript of this play was found on the website of the '*Archives of Popular Swahili*' ([www.lpca.sosci.uva.nl/aps/vol.6/mufwankoloentretiensketch.html](http://www.lpca.sosci.uva.nl/aps/vol.6/mufwankoloentretiensketch.html)), accessed on 20 August 2010.



experiment with new ways of being a man. In the following sections, I will discuss the relevance of my findings for the research on artisanal mining and masculinity.

## **6.2 Relevance of the research findings**

### **6.2.1 For the research on artisanal mining**

Until now, very little research has been done on the issue of masculinity among artisanal miners. This neglect of masculinity is rather strange given the growing awareness among researchers that it is important to study artisanal mining from a gender perspective (Heemskerk 2003; De Boeck 1999; Werthmann 2009; Moretti 2006). Indeed, it is increasingly acknowledged that gender roles influence the division of labour in artisanal mining communities, and that there are important differences between men and women in terms of decision-making capacity, power, control over resources and access to knowledge about resources (Hinton, Veiga & Beinhoff 2003). Furthermore, it is increasingly recognized that studying mining activities through a gender lens may help to increase the economic and social sustainability of mining projects (Eftimie, Heller & Strongman 2009).

Why is it, then, that the issue of masculinity has received almost no attention from scholars investigating artisanal mining? In all likelihood, the disregard for masculinity is due to the fact that most advocates of a gender approach to artisanal mining have tended to equate gender with women (see for instance Labonne 1996; Dreschler 2001; Hayes 2008; Yakovleva 2007; Amutabi & Lutta-Mukhebi 2001). This tendency is due to a widespread indignation over the lack of attention for the impact of mining activities on women. Ballard and Banks have denounced the fact that mining frequently makes women lose their access to land, that mining-related male absenteeism increases the pressure on women to take care of all sorts of social obligations single-handedly, and that the influx of cash into local communities often goes hand in hand with increased levels of domestic violence as well as with changing patterns of marriage and sexuality (Ballard & Banks 2003: 302). In a volume on women miners in developing countries, Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre have stated that '*women's work in the mines has remained obscure and hidden, forgotten and devalued*' (Lahiri-Dutt & Macintyre 2006: 3). For their part, Hinton, Veiga and Beinhoff have remarked that initiatives and programmes aimed at transforming or reforming the business of artisanal mining have tended to neglect women, even

though the latter are known to make up nearly 30 % of the world's artisanal mining population (Hinton, Veiga & Beinhoff 2003)<sup>249</sup>.

In order to correct this injustice, several authors have made it their mission to shed more light on the crucial roles of women in artisanal mining communities. Researchers of the Bureau for Gender Equality of the ILO have shown that, in African countries such as Ghana, Niger and Tanzania, large numbers of girls have been taking part in hazardous mining activities, thereby exposing themselves to serious health and security risks (ILO 2007). Werthmann, who has conducted fieldwork among artisanal gold miners in Burkina Faso, has demonstrated that mining camps have been attracting more and more girls and women from the countryside. In her opinion, this phenomenon of female migration is due to the fact that mining camps offer a certain level of economic and social independence to the women involved (Werthmann 2009: 18). Finally, research carried out by Perks in the DRC has revealed that, although very few women engage in digging activities, it is important to bear in mind that most of the service work at the mining sites and in the neighbouring mining camps is carried out by women. Women are not only the ones washing ores, but they are also the ones trading goods at the market and running restaurants and small kiosks (Perks 2008: 4).

Of course, it is a good thing that the presence of women in artisanal mining communities has been receiving more attention lately. Not only has it made researchers and policy makers abandon the assumption that mining areas are almost exclusively inhabited and dominated by men, but it has also given rise to a number of initiatives to improve the living conditions of women in mining areas. Oxfam Community Aid Abroad - the Australian arm of Oxfam International - has made efforts to promote the empowerment of women affected by mining operations in countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea (Macdonald 2003). In Peru, NGOs such as the Instituto de Salud y Trabajo (ISAT) have tried to improve the position of women in artisanal gold mining communities by providing support to women's rights movements and by offering training programmes in leadership, conflict management, self-esteem and environmental health (Lujan 2004). Finally, in Katanga, the American NGO Pact International has joined hands with the mining company Tenke Fungurume Mining to work towards sustainable social and economic development, with a particular focus on female emancipation<sup>250</sup>. These and other examples show that researchers and activists looking at artisanal mining from a gender perspective have done a lot to improve the position of women in mining communities and to promote people's understanding of the complicated lives these women are leading.

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<sup>249</sup> In some African countries such as Guinea, the proportion of women in the artisanal mining force even amounts to 75 % (Heemskerk 2003: 63).

<sup>250</sup> Information from the website of Pact International ([www.pactworld.org](http://www.pactworld.org)), accessed on 1 September 2010.

That being said, it should be noted that the tendency of equating gender with women also has significant disadvantages. First of all, it creates the impression that the gender identities of male artisanal miners are simply not worth studying or taking into consideration. As Gutmann (1997) has noted, it leads scholars to take men and manhood for granted, and to assume that masculinity is the known factor in the gender equation. Yet, this assumption is erroneous. It is not because men play the leading parts in the majority of newspaper articles, documentaries and scientific reports about artisanal mining that we know a lot about their gender identities. Moreover, Connell has pointed out that *'masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other'* (Connell 1995: 44). Consequently, even if one chooses to focus one's attention on what it means to be a woman in an artisanal mining community, one still needs to collect information on people's ideas and feelings about manhood in that same community.

A second disadvantage of equating gender with women is that it creates the risk of treating male artisanal miners as a homogeneous group of individuals, sharing the same ideals of masculinity and displaying the same type of masculine behaviour. Hilber has rightly remarked that the inclination to treat men and women as homogeneous groups *'distorts social reality'* and *'perpetuates stereotypical views of both genders'*. She regrets that *'in such discourse, differences along the lines of class, race, sexuality and locality disappear in favour of a flat and analytically sterile approach'* (Hilber 2007: 15). Writing in a similar vein, Finn has deplored the habit of portraying miners as a certain *'breed'* of men. She finds it disturbing that miners are frequently depicted as *'men with strong backs and weak brains'*, who drink a lot, tell stories in bars, have a hard time dealing with feelings of loss and intimacy and prove their masculinity day in day out by crawling into incredibly deep tunnels (Finn 1998: 110). The remarks of Hilber and Finn draw our attention to the fact that not only the gender identities of women but also those of men deserve to be analyzed with precision, detail and subtleness. Researchers making the mistake of overlooking or downplaying the complexity and diversity of artisanal miners' gender identities run a very high risk of producing reports filled with stereotypical figures instead of with real men of flesh and blood.

Finally, a third disadvantage of equating gender with women is that it incites scholars to suspect all male artisanal miners of being involved in the oppression and exclusion of women. Researchers are led to consider male artisanal miners as *'the bad guys'* or *'the oppressors'*, in other words, as those who are guilty – or at least capable of committing - gender-based discrimination and violence. Yet, by concentrating too much on the oppression and exclusion of women one runs the risk of paying insufficient attention to the various forms of exclusion to which male artisanal miners may fall prey themselves. As Fisher has noted in an article on artisanal mining in Tanzania, *'equating gender with women in mining' disregards evidence of the way men's involvement in mining is linked to complex changes in identity and exclusion within the context of rural transformation (...). Mining itself can be*

*a means for men to find new forms of inclusion within non-traditional social networks and new locales*' (Fisher 2007: 741). So, in Fisher's view, adopting a gender approach to artisanal mining should not be seen as synonymous with studying the position of women in the artisanal mining sector. She believes that researchers investigating artisanal mining should keep their eyes and ears open for instances of men using their involvement in the mining business as a strategy to escape social exclusion and to build up a new life in a completely new environment.

In this dissertation, I have argued in favour of an alternative gender approach to artisanal mining, a line of research characterized by a strong interest in masculinity. By bringing creuseurs into the picture as gendered human beings - in other words as individuals who have their own understandings of the categories 'male' and 'female', of the roles men and women are supposed to play, and of the meanings and values of male and female activities (Stone 2006: 1) – I have tried to encourage the reader to look at the Katangese artisanal mining business from a different angle. Instead of treating artisanal mining as merely an economic activity, I believe it is necessary to consider it as a gender-specific lifestyle, a way of life that is currently very popular among Katangese men because it allows them to rethink and reshape the relationship between work and masculinity.

My research has shown that older notions of manhood and what it means to be a 'real man' have come under enormous pressure as a result of the ongoing crisis in Katanga. At the same time, the findings presented in this dissertation have also suggested that men are actively searching for alternatives, for new ways of being a man in a highly unstable political and economic environment. Just like the youngsters from the Alexandra Township near Johannesburg, whose experiences have been examined by Walker, artisanal miners working in Katanga's copper and cobalt mines '*want and need to be different (...) different from their fathers, different from many of their peers – young men attempting to reclaim and remake their lives*' (Walker 2005: 236).

### **6.2.2 For the research on masculinity**

As I already indicated in the introduction of the present chapter, this dissertation has revealed a dramatic shift in the relationship between work and masculinity in Katanga. Whereas, during colonial times and the early independence period, Katangese men were able to derive prestige and respect from their involvement in the formal economy, from the beginning of the 1970s onwards, they have been forced to redirect the focus of their attention to the informal section of the economy. Given the growing importance of the informal economy for Katangese livelihoods, it is only logical that some informal economic activities have been re-evaluated and have gradually acquired positive connotations over the years.

This dissertation has made it clear that artisanal mining is one of the informal economic activities that Katangese men have used to regain a sense of masculine working pride. Throughout the chapters, I have explained that several factors help to explain why men feel attracted to the activity of artisanal mining. I have pointed out that working in the mines gives them the opportunity to demonstrate their physical strength and technical skills, while it also allows them to prove their courage: they can show to their fellow workers that they are not afraid of engaging in dangerous situations. An additional reason why artisanal mining is so appealing to them is that it requires no investment and that it is believed to give instant access to cash.

The increasingly positive evaluation of informal economic activities such as artisanal mining is evidenced, amongst other things, by a number of advertising campaigns of multinationals operating in the DRC. A first example is a campaign launched by Vodacom in 2006. The South African telecommunications company came up with the idea of posting billboards in the entire province of Katanga showing the picture of a creuseur taking a call on his cell phone while standing on the edge of a mine pit. Of course, Vodacom's primary aim was to reassure its future customers that they would be able to be reached everywhere, even in a faraway artisanal mine. Yet, at the same time, the company also communicated another message, namely that creuseurs were part of its target group due to their reputation as dynamic youngsters making money through the performance of manual labour. A second example is a campaign set up by Heineken International in 2009. The Dutch owner of the Kinshasa-based brewery Bralima made an attempt to boost the sales of a brown beer called Turbo King by spreading billboards with the picture of a group of sturdy-looking manual labourers, including a muscled creuseur carrying a pickaxe. Significantly, the slogan of the campaign was '*njo bwanaume*', which means 'this is manhood' in Shaba Swahili.

To a certain extent, the situation of Katangese men is similar to that of men in other African countries faced with a decline of the formal economy. In an article on a coloured township in Cape Town, Jensen has described how young South African men consider their ability to survive in *die agterbuurte* (i.e. the backstreets) and their capacity to earn a living in the informal economy as key elements of their new masculine identity (Jensen 2006: 277). Agadjanian has observed that a lot of men in Maputo started working as street vendors in the course of the 1990s. Although street commerce used to be considered as a typically female activity in Mozambique, male street vendors have re-conceptualized their occupation in an attempt to turn it into a masculine pursuit (Agadjanian 2002). Cornwall has pointed out that male youths living in the town of Ado-Odo in south-western Nigeria have been showing a remarkable tendency to get involved in risky informal sector employment, thereby trying to construct new masculine identities against the backdrop of political instability and economic malaise (Cornwall 2003: 231-232).

One of the most interesting articles about the interplay between slackening formal economies, growing informal economies and the construction of new masculine identities in Sub-Saharan Africa has been written by Cros and Mégret (2009). According to the authors, the Lobi area in south-eastern Burkina Faso has been invaded by thousands of artisanal gold miners since 2004. The invasion is said to have gone hand in hand with the emergence of a new ideal of masculinity: the *orpailleur* (i.e. the gold digger), a man attracting attention because of his propensity for risky behaviour, ostentation and extravagance. In the opinion of Cros and Mégret, the *orpailleur* is the last in a long series of masculinity ideals in the region. Before the ideal of the gold digger came into vogue, other ideals of masculinity were very popular, such as the ‘*honorary killer*’, the ‘*great cultivator*’, the ‘*generous migrant*’ and the ‘*official*’ (Cros & Mégret 2009: 149-152).

There are several positive things about the analysis presented by Cros and Mégret. First, the authors deserve praise for highlighting the changeability and transience of masculinity ideals in the area under investigation. They have rightly emphasized that, although certain styles of masculinity may be very popular at a certain place and at a certain point in history, scholars should always be aware of the fact that things can change quite rapidly. It is not because the *orpailleur* is currently being recognized as an ideal of masculinity that it will continue to be recognized as such in the future.

Second, Cros and Mégret have succeeded very well in describing the impact of the mining subculture on the rest of society. They have indicated that ideas and practices of artisanal miners travel around very fast as a result of the fact that people working in the artisanal mining industry constantly move from one mine to the next. Due to the crisscross migratory movements of gold diggers in south-eastern Burkina Faso, elements of the mining subculture have spread all over the region.

A third and final positive aspect of the work of Cros and Mégret is that it provides a beautiful illustration of how the construction of masculine identities in a Third World Country can be affected by processes of economic globalization. As the authors have rightly pointed out, the high level of gold prices at the international level has given rise to a spectacular growth of artisanal gold mining in Burkina Faso, which, in turn, has provoked the emergence of a new subculture characterized by an alternative style of masculinity.

Having said this, the study of Cros and Mégret also has a number of shortcomings. To begin with, it creates the impression that there is only one style of masculinity among artisanal miners in the Lobi area. The reader is led to believe that all artisanal gold miners in the area glorify the same ideal of masculinity and that they also display the same type of masculine behaviour. The authors fail to leave open the possibility that there may be different ways of being a man in the gold mining areas of south-eastern Burkina Faso.

Another shortcoming of the study carried out by Cros and Mégret is that it ignores the existence of dissensions, disputes, arguments and fights among artisanal miners. One is left with the impression that *orpailleurs* are one big happy family supporting the same ideas and values. While Cros and Mégret draw the reader's attention to the high incidence of tensions between groups of gold diggers and ordinary people in the Lobi area, they do not provide any information on the frequency of tensions inside artisanal mining communities.

Finally, a third flaw of the research of Cros and Mégret is that it portrays the '*orpailleur*' as a style of masculine behaviour that men can display just like that, without putting any effort into it. The authors create the impression that people can adopt and change behavioural styles with the same ease as when they are getting in and out of their clothes, so to speak.

In this dissertation, I have tried to avoid portraying Katangese miners as a group of like-minded individuals who are always united in their views on what it means to behave like a 'real man', and who are capable of displaying new styles of masculinity without the slightest difficulty or hesitation. The leitmotiv of my study has been the importance of making a distinction between two trends in the masculinity practices of Katangese miners: a levelling one and a differentiating one. Throughout the various chapters, I have argued that the levelling trend expresses itself in the fact that miners present themselves as a special category of men vis-à-vis the outside world, while the differentiating trend manifests itself in the coexistence of several styles of masculinity inside the mining subculture.

This implies, first of all, that the construction of masculine identities among artisanal miners is a lot more complicated than one would think at first sight. Researchers who want to make sense of how creuseurs think and act as gendered human beings have to do a lot more than just scratching the surface. They should not restrict themselves to putting together a list of gimmicks and behavioural characteristics ostensibly shared by all men digging for minerals. Instead, they should look beyond the image creuseurs try to create of themselves vis-à-vis outsiders. Thus, although many Katangese creuseurs are inclined to behave like deviant juvenile delinquents in their interactions with people from outside the mining subculture, it would be a grave mistake to believe that every man working in the mines automatically embraces *kivoyou* as the only style of masculine behaviour available to him. Thanks to a lengthy immersion in the world of artisanal mining, I have been able to discover a multiplicity of masculinities, which are enacted and identified with in different ways by different men, in accordance with the circumstances and challenges they are confronted with at different points in their lives (see also Cornwall 2003).

The second implication of the existence of a levelling and a differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese artisanal miners is that there is a dialectic in the latter's gender identity

constructions. On the one hand, creuseurs seek to emphasize the distinctions between themselves and those who do not belong to their group. They do this by underscoring what they believe to have in common with each other in terms of masculine behaviour. The pursuit of intra-group sameness constitutes the first component of the dialectic of gender identity constructions. On the other hand, creuseurs also seek to underline the distinctions between different ways of being a man within their own group. They do this by accentuating their dissimilarities in terms of masculine behaviour. The search for intra-group differences constitutes the second component of the dialectic of gender identity constructions.

The recognition and assertion of inter- and intra-group similarities and differences are characteristic of all processes of identity formation (Ybema et al. 2009: 306; Suurpää 2002: 175). Writing about the workplace experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered employees in the United States, Creed and Scully have noted that some of their informants used a two-pronged strategy to make their sexual inclination acceptable to the people they were working together with: on the one hand, they emphasized the things they had in common with their colleagues, but, on the other hand, they also made sure to highlight the distinctiveness of their sexual orientation. According to the authors, this strategy proved to be quite successful:

This mix of sameness and difference might be a search for optimal distinctiveness with enough similarity to enable connection and enough difference to preserve the spirit of claiming a distinct identity (Creed & Scully 2000: 399).

One could say that artisanal miners in Katanga construct their gender identities in a similar way. Just like the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered employees mentioned above, creuseurs try to find the right balance between foregrounding likeness and highlighting distinctiveness. Although they are eager to assert their membership of a special group of men who are known for their deviant masculine behaviour, they also want to make it clear to their fellow workers that they cherish their masculine individuality. So, the construction of masculine identities is probably best conceived of as a never-ending yo-yo movement between blending in and standing out: much as Katangese creuseurs enjoy the feeling of being 'one of the lads', they still like to preserve a sense of masculine uniqueness.

The third and final implication of the coexistence of a levelling and a differentiating trend in Katangese creuseurs' masculinity practices is that there is a need for a theoretical framework that is sufficiently sophisticated to do justice to the complexity of the topic under investigation. It is probably appropriate, at this point, to make a short evaluation of the analytical tools I have used in the course of this dissertation. I would like to remind the reader that I made use of two sets of concepts. While



Turner's notions of 'liminality' and 'communitas' were used to make sense of the levelling trend, Connell's notion of 'hegemonic masculinity' was used to shed light on the differentiating trend.

In my opinion, the concept of liminality has been very useful to highlight the maverick status of Katangese miners. There are several reasons why it is fitting to say that these miners find themselves in a condition of 'betwixt-and-betweenness', as Turner would put it. In my analysis of the working and living conditions of UMHK employees during colonial times, I have explained that all those who went to work in Katanga's copper and cobalt mines found themselves subjected to the same treatment from their employer, at least in the early stages of their employment. Following their enrolment by one of the company's labour recruiters, they were transported to mining compounds, which were usually situated at considerable distances from the places where they had been staying until then. Subsequently, they were given the same initial contract, the same accommodation and the same starter kit, while they were also forced to pass the same medical tests. I have argued that, by taking these measures, the UMHK put its labour recruits in a liminal condition. Upon joining the UMHK's labour force, men were expected to forget about their previous lives and to develop new lifestyles that were in line with the needs of the company.

As far as the liminality of contemporary artisanal miners is concerned, I have shown that the latter possess several features that, according to Turner, are characteristic of 'liminaries' or 'edgemen'. I have pointed out that today's creuseurs usually work in places far away from their homes and their families, that they constantly migrate from one mine to another, that they are under tremendous pressure to give up their previous roles and statuses, that they enter into new social environments in which a number of special rules and taboos apply, and, finally, that they are expected to treat their co-workers as equals.

The most important reason why Katangese artisanal miners deserve to be considered as 'liminaries' is that they are constantly floating in a twilight zone between life and death. I have demonstrated that, day in day out, they expose themselves to enormous risks, so that it is not really surprising that they like to think of themselves as a group of reckless daredevils, who take pride in not feeling intimidated by the idea of possibly digging their own graves. My dissertation has pointed out that the permanent exposure to extreme hazards helps to explain why creuseurs consider themselves as exceptional men to whom normal rules and regulations do not apply.

Although Rastafarian artisanal miners are trapped in the same condition of liminality as their non-Rastafarian colleagues, I have argued that the former distinguish themselves from the latter by conceptualizing their liminality in a more elaborate fashion. Instead of restricting themselves to superficial statements about the need 'to do a *maquis*' in order to keep afloat financially, they use

elements from the Bible and from Jamaican Rastafarianism to give new meaning to their liminal condition and to turn it into a period of self-chosen reflection.

Having enumerated the benefits of liminality for this dissertation, I have to admit that the use of the concept has also had a number of downsides. First of all, Turner's theory is based on the assumption that liminality is a temporary condition. The theory takes for granted that the liminal phase will be followed by a post-liminal phase, during which the individual will reintegrate into society (Turner 1967: 93-94)<sup>251</sup>. However, this dissertation has made it clear that some creuseurs do not consider their involvement in artisanal mining as a provisional occupation. They prefer to think of the *creusage* as a way of life, rather than treating it as a temporary activity. So, although the concept of liminality serves well to describe the position of 'betwixt-and-betweenness' of creuseurs, it also arouses false expectations about their reintegration into Katangese society.

Another disadvantage of Turner's theory on liminality is that it is based on a functionalist way of thinking (Berry 2006: 277). Turner has argued that temporary liminal behaviour is socially accepted because liminal processes have a certain function in society: they serve as outlets for negative behaviours that would undermine peace and stability if they were given free rein in everyday life (Gilead 1986: 184). Personally, I do not believe that artisanal mining should necessarily be understood as a phenomenon that is allowed to persist because it serves as a kind of safety valve through which all sorts of tensions and negative behaviours can escape without endangering the status quo in Katangese society. In my opinion, it is too early to tell what will be the long-term effects of artisanal mining on social life in Katanga. While it may be true that the *creusage* is like a sponge sucking up negativity in Katangese society and thereby contributing to social stability, it is also possible – and perhaps even more likely - that the artisanal mining business plays a catalyzing role in various processes of social change.

A final disadvantage of Turner's theory on liminality is that it postulates the automatic adoption of new identities by 'liminaries'. Turner wants us to believe that, during the time people find themselves in a liminal condition, they get rid of their old identities in order to be able to take on new identities. The idea is that they prepare themselves for their return to society, where they will have new statuses and where they will play different roles than before<sup>252</sup>. While I believe there is certainly some truth in Turner's argument about liminal spaces serving as laboratories for experiments with new identities, I

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<sup>251</sup> Weber has pointed out that '*Turner's social imagination is compelled by the scene of re-incorporation, of re-aggregation as the telos of rite of passage*' (Weber 1995: 530).

<sup>252</sup> As Matshinhe has noted in a discussion of Turner's work, '*the neophytes emerge from the zones (of liminality) with new identities. Going through the liminal zone is to be born again, as it were, as a new subject*' (Matshinhe 2009: 121).

think it is wrong to assume that every liminary is bound to come back to society as a completely different person.

In an article on the construction of gender identities among transgendered persons in Perth, Australia, Wilson has pointed out that the sustainability of liminal identities is problematic (Wilson 2002: 427). According to Wilson, members of The Butterflies, a Perth-based organization for transgendered people, feel very much at ease when they are in each other's company during private meetings. Yet, as soon as they enter public spaces, they tend to drop the identities they were experimenting with during their secret gatherings. Hence, *'identity goes from being liminal and multiple where males can be females, females can be males, and public gender categories are temporarily and spatially suspended, to being ultimately singular, recognizable and stable (as demanded by wider medical, socio-cultural and public understandings of gender)* (Wilson 2002: 425). In my view, Wilson is right in arguing that one has to be careful not to overestimate the lasting consequences of a process of liminality for a person's identity. It is not because someone spends a considerable period of time in a liminal space that he or she will automatically develop a new identity, which he or she will continue to hold on to after returning to society.

In sum, the concept of liminality has allowed me to underline a number of factors that have a uniformizing effect on Katangese artisanal miners. I have been able to explain that creuseurs feel like close-knit group of outsiders because of their separation from the rest of society, their daily confrontation with death, and their involvement in a social environment where people are more or less on an equal footing. Nevertheless, in the course of my research, I have also noticed that the concept of liminality is slightly problematic due to its functionalist connotations, and due to the fact that it is based on unwarranted assumptions about liminaries' adoption of new identities and their reintegration into society.

Apart from making use of the notion of liminality, I also used another concept to make sense of the levelling trend in creuseurs' masculinity practices, namely the notion of 'communitas'. As I explained in the first chapter of this dissertation, communitas refers to the tendency of people in a liminal condition to create a rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated community, while interacting in a spirit of spontaneity, friendliness and equality (Turner 1992: 138; Buitelaar 1994: 74).

Turner's concept of communitas has enabled me to throw into relief artisanal miners' feelings of togetherness, solidarity and harmony. I have demonstrated that creuseurs sometimes really feel like 'a band of brothers', who share the joys and hardships of life in the mining areas and who are prepared to stand up for each other in times of trouble. I have explained that creuseurs tend to describe this intense atmosphere of male bonding by using the expression *'kazi ya creusage ni mapendo'* which can be

translated as 'the work of digging is a matter of love'. When creuseurs are digging narrow tunnels tens of metres under the surface, or when they are attending the funeral of one of their fellow workers who just died in a mining accident, they seem to be struck by a sense of 'spontaneous communitas': all of a sudden, they experience a deep feeling of interconnectedness and interdependency.

I have indicated that creuseurs are not so naïve as to believe that these occasional sentiments of communion are sufficiently strong to make their lives bearable and their work feasible. In order to avoid unnecessary disputes and to guarantee a smooth organization of the mining process, they have created a set of informal rules for financial arrangements. Furthermore, they have also developed a number of taboos with the aim of bringing more order and structure into their lives. Using Turner's terminology, I have argued that, thanks to the invention of all these rules, creuseurs have been able to experience a sense of 'normative communitas'. Finally, I have shown that Rastafarian diggers go one step further than their colleagues by stimulating their feelings of togetherness through the organization of weekly sessions of ideological instruction. Therefore, it is appropriate to say that they strive for the achievement of what Turner has described as 'ideological communitas'.

In spite of all its merits, the concept of communitas has also received some criticism. Several authors have suggested that the notion refers to an ideal rather than to a reality: while people may sometimes have the impression that they are all the same and they 'are in it together', eventually, they find out that their relationships are less harmonious and conflict-free than they originally thought. In an article on her experiences as a rave deejay in Sweden, Gavanoas has argued that there is more to the rave subculture than egalitarianism and communitas. In her opinion, it is of vital importance to take into account the power relations as well as the processes of inclusion and exclusion governing the interaction between Swedish rave dancers (Gavanoas 2008: 128-129). In a similar vein, Bilu, a scholar investigating pilgrimage experiences, has asserted that pilgrims do not always deal with each other in a spirit of brotherhood. According to Bilu, '*the pilgrimage setting, in addition to fraternity-fostering features, may also constitute a fertile matrix for germinating negative sentiments of vying and animosity*' (Bilu 1988: 305).

So, in short, Turner's concept of communitas has helped me to explain how occasional feelings of intense closeness have the effect of making Katangese artisanal miners behave like a seemingly homogeneous group of men. However, in the process of writing this dissertation, I have become increasingly convinced of the need to combine the notion of communitas with other conceptual tools that compensate for its unsuitability to account for the many occurrences of competition, inequality and conflict in artisanal mining communities.

Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity has been of great value to overcome the handicap associated with Turner's notion of *communitas*. As I already pointed out in the first chapter of this dissertation, hegemonic masculinity does not refer to a fixed character type, but to a configuration of practice that is culturally exalted at a certain point in history (Connell 2005: 77; Beynon 2002: 16). The major advantage of this concept for this study was that it made it possible to make sense of the differentiating trend in creuseurs' masculinity practices. Hegemonic masculinity has proved to be an excellent instrument to highlight the existence of different ways of being a man among today's artisanal miners as well as among their predecessors during colonial times: the employees of the *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga*.

In the chapter that dealt with the masculine identities of the workers of Armand Hedo, I explained that the project of social engineering of the UMHK went hand in hand with the institutionalization of a hegemonic form of masculinity: those succeeding best in displaying the type of behaviour expected by the company were given the largest number of benefits, while they were also the ones who were most likely to get promoted. I demonstrated that the members of the African elite in Hedo's mining compound used the institutionalized form of masculinity as a standard to evaluate the masculine behaviour of their closest colleagues. At the same time, they also did their best to distinguish themselves from compound dwellers enacting inferior forms of masculinity.

In my discussion of the money handling tactics of contemporary creuseurs, I showed that the subculture of artisanal mining is characterized by the coexistence of various masculinities, which are classified in a hierarchical manner and which can be analyzed through the use of Connell's theoretical framework. I have pointed out that it is possible to distinguish between two hierarchies of masculinities: one hierarchy based on the criterion of money handling and another one based on the criterion of improvisation skills, in other words, on the capacity to deal with unexpected events in the mining areas. It has become evident that Connell's critics are right in emphasizing the inherently hybrid and context-dependent nature of masculinity practices. Creuseurs tend to combine practices from different origins, while they also have the habit of changing their position vis-à-vis ideals of masculinity according to the circumstances they find themselves in. Rastafarian artisanal miners have proved to be particularly skilful at combining and switching between different styles of masculine behaviour. Their ability to adapt themselves relatively smoothly to changing circumstances can be attributed to the Foucaultian 'techniques of the self' with which they are able to familiarize themselves during their weekly sessions of ideological training. If I would be asked to name one positive aspect of the phenomenon of artisanal mining in Katanga, I would definitely refer to the remarkable impact this business has had on creuseurs' capacity to improvise and to cope with unforeseen circumstances and setbacks.

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## 8. Summaries

### 8.1 Summary in Dutch

Dit proefschrift behandelt de problematiek van de artisanale mijnbouw in Katanga, de zuidoostelijke provincie van de Democratische Republiek Congo. In het voorbije decennium zijn duizenden mensen naar de Katangese mijnbouwgebieden getrokken om er nieuwe bronnen van inkomsten te vinden en op die manier het hoofd te kunnen bieden aan de aanhoudende economische malaise. Met eenvoudige werktuigen zoals schoppen en pikhouwelen graven artisanale mijnwerkers of creuseurs naar koper- en kobaltertsen die gretig aftrek vinden bij nationale en internationale ertsenhandelaars en metaalproducenten. Terwijl de koperprijs de laatste jaren fors de hoogte is ingeschoten ten gevolge van infrastructuurwerken in groeielanden zoals China en India, zijn de kobalt prijzen eveneens sterk gestegen, onder meer door de toenemende vraag naar kobalt voor de productie van herlaadbare batterijen voor gsm's, laptops en camcorders.

Het valt op dat artisanale mijnbouw in Katanga een hoofdzakelijk mannelijke aangelegenheid is. Hoewel men in de onmiddellijke omgeving van de mijnen ook wel kinderen en vrouwen aantreft, die meestal in hun levensonderhoud trachten te voorzien door middel van activiteiten zoals het sorteren en reinigen van ertsen, het uitbaten van winkeltjes of restaurants, het verhandelen van allerlei consumptiegoederen en kledij, of het aanbieden van seksuele diensten tegen betaling, ontmoet men in de mijnen zelf alleen mannen. Het zijn uitsluitend mannen die mijnschachten graven, ertsen bovenhalen en zakken koper of kobalt versjouwen.

Doordat de Katangese artisanale mijnbouw een echt mannenbastion vormt, leent de sector zich uitstekend voor een onderzoek naar de relatie tussen werk en mannelijkheid. Deze relatie is in de loop van de twintigste eeuw sterk veranderd. Tijdens de koloniale periode ontwikkelde Katanga zich tot een van de meest geïndustrialiseerde regio's van Sub-Sahara Afrika. Verschillende generaties Katangese mannen groeiden op met het idee dat ze respect, bewondering en prestige konden afdwingen door in loondienst te gaan bij grote koloniale bedrijven zoals de Union Minière du Haut-Katanga (UMHK). Wie toegang had tot betaald werk (*kazi*), wist zich niet alleen verzekerd van een maandelijks salaris, maar ook van voedselrantsoenen, onderwijs en gezondheidszorg voor het hele gezin. Zo ontstond het ideaal van de mannelijke broodwinner. Bij de Katangese bevolking leefde het idee dat mannen hun mannelijkheid konden bewijzen door in het levensonderhoud van hun gezinsleden te voorzien via loonarbeid.

Vanaf het begin van de jaren zeventig kregen Katangese mannen het alsmaar moeilijker om het ideaal van de mannelijke broodwinner te verwezenlijken. Verschillende factoren zorgden ervoor dat de

motor van de Katangese economie begon te sputteren. De slecht getimede nationalisatie van de UMHK, de zaïrisatie-campagne, de Shaba-oorlogen, het economische wanbeleid, en de corruptiepraktijken van het Mobutu-regime veroorzaakten een scherpe daling van de levensstandaard. De toestand werd ronduit rampzalig tijdens de jaren negentig. Het Katangese bedrijfsleven lag op apegapen, het staatsbedrijf Gécamines ging bijna bankroet, en Congo gleed af in een jarenlange burgeroorlog. Terwijl in 1973 maar liefst 63 procent van de huishoudelijke inkomsten in Lubumbashi afkomstig was van loonarbeid, bedroeg dat aandeel in 2000 nog slechts 20 procent (Geschiere 2003: 5). Doordat mannelijke gezinshoofden steeds minder geld in het laatje brachten, verloren ze veel van hun vroegere gezag en respectabiliteit.

De centrale stelling van dit proefschrift is dat Katangese mannen zich massaal op de artisanale mijnbouw hebben gestort omdat ze de relatie tussen werk en mannelijkheid een nieuwe invulling willen geven. Katangese mannen trekken naar de mijnbouwgebieden om zichzelf in leven te kunnen houden, maar ook om te kunnen experimenteren met nieuwe manieren van man-zijn. Anders dan hun vaders en grootvaders, die hun mannelijkheid konden bewijzen door in loondienst te gaan bij een van de vele Katangese bedrijven, hebben de jongeren van vandaag geen andere keuze dan hun geluk te beproeven in de informele economie. Velen voelen zich aangetrokken tot de artisanale mijnbouw, omdat ze geloven dat ze in de mijnen op korte tijd veel geld kunnen verdienen. Bovendien zijn ze ervan overtuigd dat ze door het verrichten van mijnarbeid typisch mannelijke kwaliteiten kunnen ontwikkelen, zoals fysieke kracht, durf en technische kennis. Men kan dus stellen dat Katangese mannen van hun verblijf in de mijnbouwgebieden gebruik maken om nieuwe mannelijke identiteiten te construeren.

Hoofdstuk 1 bevat een presentatie van het theoretisch kader van deze dissertatie. Het kader is gebaseerd op een tweedelige literatuurstudie. In het eerste deel van de literatuurstudie wordt aangetoond dat men in de antropologische lectuur over metallurgie en mijnbouwactiviteiten in Sub-Sahara Afrika weinig concepten en theorieën aantreft die een grondig onderzoek toelaten van identiteitsconstructie bij Afrikaanse mijnwerkers. In het tweede deel wordt duidelijk gemaakt dat dit euvel verholpen kan worden door een ander domein in de sociaal-wetenschappelijke literatuur te verkennen, met name de literatuur over gender. In de loop van de twintigste eeuw hebben verschillende scholen van Westerse sociale wetenschappers zich verdiept in het fenomeen van de zogeheten ‘mannelijkheids crisis’ (*crisis in masculinity*). Psychoanalytici, rol-theoretici, feministische wetenschappers en mannelijkheidsonderzoekers hebben onderzocht wat de gevolgen zijn van diverse maatschappelijke veranderingen (zoals bijvoorbeeld vrouwenemancipatie) voor de positie en gevoelens van eigenwaarde van Westerse mannen. Door concepten en inzichten uit de hierboven vermelde literatuurgenres met elkaar te combineren kan men een stevig theoretisch kader creëren voor de analyse van identiteitsconstructie bij Katangese artisanale mijnwerkers.

Het theoretisch kader van deze dissertatie heeft tot doel inzicht te verschaffen in de mannelijkheidspraktijken<sup>253</sup> van Katangese artisanale mijnwerkers. In deze praktijken kan men twee trends onderscheiden: enerzijds een nivellerende trend (*levelling trend*) en anderzijds een differentiërende trend (*differentiating trend*). De nivellerende trend komt tot uiting in de inspanningen van creuseurs om zich te profileren als een aparte groep van mannen die verschillende mannelijke eigenschappen met elkaar gemeen hebben. Door op een collectieve manier deviant gedrag te vertonen trachten ze zich te onderscheiden van andere mannen in de Katangese samenleving. De differentiërende trend komt tot uiting in het feit dat creuseurs zich ondanks alles toch bewust blijven van hun onderlinge verschillen. Ze ontwikkelen elk hun eigen stijlen van mannelijk gedrag en positioneren zich elk op hun eigen manier ten opzichte van de mannelijkheidsidealen die in de mijnbouwgebieden circuleren.

Voor de analyse van de nivellerende trend in de mannelijkheidspraktijken van Katangese creuseurs wordt in dit proefschrift gebruik gemaakt van Victor Turner's theorie over liminaliteit. Creuseurs blijken verschillende eigenschappen te bezitten die volgens Turner typerend zijn voor 'liminaries' of 'edgemen' (Turner 1969: 95; 106-107). Zo leven ze letterlijk en figuurlijk aan de rand van de Katangese samenleving, geven ze tijdelijk hun vroegere sociale rollen en statussen op, besteden ze nauwelijks nog aandacht aan hun vroegere familierechten en -verplichtingen, bevinden ze zich ten gevolge van hun gevaarlijk werk constant in een soort van schemerzone tussen leven en dood, en respecteren ze een hele reeks taboes. Bovendien beleven creuseurs tijdens hun verblijf in de mijnbouwgebieden gevoelens van 'communitas': over het algemeen gaan ze met elkaar om in een geest van spontaniteit, kameraadschappelijkheid en gelijkheid (Turner 1992: 138).

De differentiërende trend in de mannelijkheidspraktijken van Katangese creuseurs wordt in dit proefschrift geanalyseerd met behulp van Connell's theorie over machtsrelaties tussen verschillende vormen van mannelijkheid in een gegeven socio-culturele setting. Een belangrijk element in deze theorie is het concept van 'hegemonische mannelijkheid' (*hegemonic masculinity*). Connell gebruikt dit concept om de vorm van mannelijkheid aan te duiden die in een bepaald milieu en in een bepaalde periode door de meerderheid van de mannen verheerlijkt wordt. Naast de 'hegemonische mannelijkheid' kan men volgens Connell ook andere vormen van mannelijkheid identificeren, die lagere posities bekleden in de hiërarchie van mannelijkheden<sup>254</sup>. In de loop van het proefschrift wordt aangetoond dat Katangese creuseurs een onderscheid maken tussen verschillende mannelijkheidstypes en dat ze ook geneigd zijn om deze types op een hiërarchische manier te rangschikken. Connell's

<sup>253</sup> Mannelijkheidspraktijken zijn handelingen die mannen aanwenden om gestalte te geven aan hun mannelijke identiteit.

<sup>254</sup> Het gaat dan met name om 'medeplichtige mannelijkheden' (*complicit masculinities*), 'ondergeschikte mannelijkheden' (*subordinate masculinities*) en 'gemarginaliseerde mannelijkheden' (*marginalized masculinities*) (Connell 2005: 76-81).

theorie blijkt dus bijzonder geschikt om de machtsrelaties tussen verschillende mannelijkheidstypes bij Katangese creuseurs te beschrijven.

Nadat in hoofdstuk 1 het theoretisch kader van deze doctoraatsstudie uit de doeken is gedaan, wordt in hoofdstuk 2 ingezoomd op een cruciale fase in de arbeidsgeschiedenis van Katanga, namelijk de periode tussen 1920 en 1960. In deze periode geraakte de industrialisering van de provincie in een stroomversnelling. Duizenden mensen trokken van het platteland naar de steden om er in dienst te gaan bij een van de vele koloniale ondernemingen. De UMHK ontpopte zich tot de belangrijkste werkgever van Katanga. Het mijnbouwbedrijf ontwikkelde een zogeheten ‘stabilisatiepolitiek’ om werknemers voor lange tijd aan zich te binden. Het bood zowel de arbeiders als hun gezinnen allerlei sociale voordelen aan in de hoop dat ze dan bereid zouden zijn om in de arbeiderskampen van de UMHK te blijven wonen. Wat de stabilisatiepolitiek bijzonder interessant maakt, is dat ze gepaard ging met een ingrijpende vorm van ‘social engineering’. De UMHK probeerde haar normen en waarden op te leggen aan haar werknemers, zodat zij zouden uitgroeien tot ‘moderne werklieden’, die het bedrijf op de best mogelijke manier zouden dienen. De stabilisatiepolitiek gaf aanleiding tot het ontstaan van een geïnstitutionaliseerde vorm van ‘hegemonische mannelijkheid’: de werknemers die er het best in slaagden om het mannelijke gedrag te vertonen dat door de UMHK werd verwacht, kregen de meeste extraatjes toebedeeld, terwijl ze ook de beste kansen hadden om een promotie in de wacht te slepen. Hoofdstuk 2 besteedt vooral aandacht aan de differentiërende trend in de mannelijkheidspraktijken van de toenmalige mijnwerkers. Het hoofdstuk tracht de lezer een concreet beeld te geven van de manier waarop werknemers van de UMHK omgingen met de politiek van ‘social engineering’. Dit gebeurt via de analyse van verhalen van voormalige werknemers van Armand Hedo, een Luxemburgse onderaannemer van de UMHK, die tijdens de jaren veertig en vijftig een aantal mijnen uitbaatte in de omgeving van Likasi.

Hoofdstuk 3 maakt een sprong in de tijd. Ongeveer een halve eeuw nadat de werknemers van Armand Hedo dankzij hun werk voor de UMHK verschillende materiële en sociale voordelen konden verwerven voor zichzelf en hun gezinnen, worden Katangese mannen geconfronteerd met een diepe economische crisis. Toch blijft geld een belangrijke graadmeter voor mannelijk succes. Mannen die er ondanks de crisis in slagen om veel geld uit te geven worden met de nodige egards behandeld. Artisanale mijnwerkers zijn er zich van bewust dat geld van vitaal belang is voor de constructie van hun mannelijke identiteiten. De nivellerende trend in hun mannelijkheidspraktijken komt tot uiting in het feit dat ze elkaar aanzetten tot pronk- en spilzucht. Roekeloos geld uitgeven aan alcohol, dure kleren en prostituées vormt een belangrijk onderdeel van de zogeheten *kivoyou*-stijl: creuseurs hangen graag een beeld op van zichzelf als losbollen die zich van niets of niemand iets hoeven aan te trekken. Wie echter de moeite neemt om het geldgebruik van individuele Katangese mijnwerkers van dichterbij te bekijken, stelt vast dat niet iedereen in dezelfde mate aan het *kivoyou*-gedrag deelneemt. Sommige

creuseurs doen hun best om een meer spaarzame levensstijl te ontwikkelen, om een deel van hun mijnbouwinkomsten naar hun familie op het thuisfront op te sturen, of om hun geld te investeren in andere economische activiteiten buiten de mijnbouwbusiness. Dit toont aan dat er naast een nivellerende ook een differentiërende trend waarneembaar is in de mannelijkheidspraktijken van Katangese creuseurs. Om op een concrete manier te illustreren hoe creuseurs via hun geldgebruik hun mannelijke identiteiten trachten vorm te geven, gaat hoofdstuk 3 dieper in op een incident dat plaatsvond in de mijn van Kalabi in 2006. Een graversteam bestaande uit 3 personen viel toen uiteen nadat een van de teamleden opeens met de noorderzon verdween en de anderen met een pak onbetaalde schulden achterliet. De gedetailleerde beschrijving van de manier waarop elk van de drie betrokkenen zijn geld beheerde in de periode na de split werpt een interessant licht op de relatie tussen geld en mannelijkheid bij Katangese creuseurs.

Hoofdstuk 4 vertrekt vanuit de vaststelling dat creuseurs ten gevolge van hun onderaardse graafwerken telkens weer opnieuw de confrontatie moeten aangaan met de dood. Elke keer dat ze in een mijnschacht afdalen hebben ze het gevoel dat ze misschien wel nooit meer het zonlicht te zien zullen krijgen. De dagelijkse strijd die ze leveren tegen de dood helpt verklaren waarom ze zichzelf beschouwen als liminale figuren die zich permanent in een toestand van ‘betwixt-and-betweenness’ bevinden (Turner 1969:95). Creuseurs hebben het gevoel dat ze op de drempel staan tussen de wereld van de levenden en de wereld van de doden, waardoor ze zich niet hoeven te houden aan de wetten en regels die op gewone stervelingen van toepassing zijn. Ze hebben de indruk dat ze een speciale groep van mannen vormen, omdat ze leven en werken in bijzonder harde en gevaarlijke omstandigheden waar buitenstaanders zich niets kunnen bij voorstellen. Een van de manieren waarop creuseurs betekenis proberen te geven aan hun moeilijke leef- en werkomstandigheden is door elkaar verhalen te vertellen over vrouwelijke mijnbouwgeesten, die volgens hen toezicht houden op de koper- en kobaltvoorraden in de ondergrond. In deze verhalen beschrijven ze hoe geesten allerlei taboes aan hen opleggen teneinde de grens af te bakenen tussen de ruimte van de mijn en de ruimte erbuiten. In de ogen van de mijnwerkers spelen de geesten de rol van poortwachters. Ze geloven dat de geesten hen aansporen om de mijnen te beschouwen als bolwerken van mannelijke macht en dominantie, die beschermd moeten worden tegen de vervuilende invloeden van vrouwen. Hoofdstuk 4 maakt duidelijk dat creuseurs in hun verhalen over vrouwelijke mijnbouwgeesten oude lokale ideeën over mijnbouw, gender en de dood recyclen en herinterpreteren in het licht van hun eigen socio-economische situatie. De gewoonte van mijnwerkers om deze verhalen aan elkaar te vertellen is zonder twijfel een van de opvallendste uitingen van de nivellerende trend in hun mannelijkheidspraktijken: het toont aan dat ze actief op zoek gaan naar manieren om hun gemeenschappelijke mannelijke kenmerken extra dik in de verf te zetten.

In hoofdstuk 5 wordt de aandacht toegespitst op de mannelijkheidspraktijken van een speciale groep van mijnwerkers, met name de rasta-mijnwerkers. Het gaat om mannen die niet alleen deel uitmaken van de subcultuur van creuseurs, maar ook van de subcultuur van rasta's. De Katangese rastabeweging ontstond in de tweede helft van de jaren negentig toen gemarginaliseerde jongeren uit de Kenya-buurt in Lubumbashi hun eigen utopische blauwdruk creëerden voor een betere samenleving. Ze deden dit op basis van een herinterpretatie van het Jamaicaanse rastafarisme en een potpourri van lokale culturele ideeën, praktijken en symbolen. Het Katangese rastafarisme heeft zich in een mum van tijd vanuit Lubumbashi naar het binnenland verspreid. Momenteel oefent het een bijzondere aantrekkingskracht uit op jonge mannen die op een alternatieve manier betekenis proberen te geven aan de moeilijke omstandigheden waarin ze zich bevinden. In hoofdstuk 5 worden twee stellingen verdedigd. Ten eerste wordt er betoogd dat er in de mannelijkheidspraktijken van Katangese rasta's zowel een nivellerende als een differentiërende trend kan worden onderscheiden. Terwijl de nivellerende trend geanalyseerd kan worden met behulp van Turner's concepten van liminaliteit en communitas, kan de differentiërende trend geanalyseerd worden door middel van de toepassing van Connell's theorie over 'hegemonische mannelijkheid'. Ten tweede wordt er gesteld dat rasta-mijnwerkers hun mannelijke identiteiten over het algemeen op een erg bewuste manier construeren. De verklaring hiervoor is dat ze wekelijks bijeenkomen om ideologisch onderricht te volgen. Tijdens deze sessies leren ze verschillende Foucaultiaanse 'technologies of the self' aan, waardoor ze een betere controle bereiken over hun gedachten, lichamen en gedrag. Door deze 'technologies of the self' regelmatig te oefenen bereiken ze geleidelijk aan een hoog niveau van 'performatieve competentie' (Ferguson 1999): ze slagen erin om op een overtuigende manier de juiste mannelijkheidspraktijken tentoon te spreiden op het juiste moment.

Hoofdstuk 6 geeft een overzicht van de voornaamste conclusies die uit deze doctoraatsstudie kunnen worden getrokken. Er wordt niet alleen aandacht besteed aan de implicaties van de onderzoeksbevindingen voor toekomstig onderzoek over artisanale mijnbouw, maar ook aan de consequenties voor toekomstig onderzoek over mannelijkheid.

## 8.2 Summary in French

Cette thèse de doctorat traite de la problématique de l'exploitation minière artisanale au Katanga, province située au sud-est de la République Démocratique du Congo. Au cours de ces dernières décennies, des milliers de gens sont venus chercher dans les régions minières du Katanga de nouvelles sources de revenus afin de pouvoir tenir tête au malaise économique incessant. A l'aide d'outils simples tels que des pelles ou des pics, les artisans mineurs creusent à la recherche de minerais de cuivre ou de cobalt vendus facilement sur le marché national et international aux négociants en minerais et aux producteurs de métaux. Alors que le prix du cuivre a connu ces dernières années une forte augmentation suite aux travaux d'infrastructure de pays émergents tels que la Chine et l'Inde, le prix du cobalt a également connu une hausse et ce à cause de la demande croissante du cobalt employé dans la production des batteries rechargeables des GSM, laptops et camcorders.

Il est frappant que cette exploitation minière artisanale au Katanga soit principalement une activité réservée aux hommes. Quoiqu'on rencontre dans l'environnement immédiat de ces mines aussi des enfants et des femmes qui essaient de pourvoir à leurs besoins par toutes sortes d'activités telles que le tri et le nettoyage des minerais, l'exploitation de petits magasins ou de restaurants, le commerce de toutes sortes de biens de consommation ou de vêtements, l'offre de services sexuels contre paiement, on ne rencontre dans les mines que des hommes. Ce sont uniquement les hommes qui creusent les puits miniers, remontent le minerai et transportent les sacs de cuivre ou de cobalt.

Comme l'exploitation minière artisanale au Katanga est une activité exclusivement masculine, ce secteur se prête très bien à une étude sur les rapports entre le travail et la masculinité. Ce rapport a beaucoup changé au cours du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Pendant la période coloniale, le Katanga s'est développé en une des régions les plus industrialisées de l'Afrique sub-saharienne. Plusieurs générations de Katangais ont grandi avec l'idée qu'en travaillant pour les grandes entreprises coloniales telles que l'Union Minière du Haut-Katanga (UMHK) ils pouvaient obtenir le respect, l'admiration et le prestige. Celui qui avait accès à un travail rémunéré (*kazi*), se savait non seulement assuré d'obtenir un salaire mensuel, mais aussi les rations alimentaires, l'enseignement et les soins de santé pour toute la famille. Ainsi a été créé l'idéal de l'homme gagne-pain. La population du Katanga estimait que les hommes pouvaient prouver leur masculinité en subvenant aux besoins de leur famille par le biais d'un travail salarié.

A partir des années soixante-dix, les Katangais avaient de plus en plus de difficultés à réaliser l'idéal de l'homme gagne-pain. A cause de différents facteurs, l'économie katangaise commençait à connaître des difficultés. La nationalisation mal programmée de l'UMHK, la campagne de zaïrisation, les

guerres de Shaba, la mauvaise gestion économique et la corruption du régime Mobutu ont provoqué une forte baisse du niveau de vie. La situation était devenue franchement catastrophique au cours des années quatre-vingt-dix. La vie économique au Katanga était agonisante, la société d'état Gécamines manquait faire faillite et le Congo s'enfonçait peu à peu dans une longue guerre civile. Alors qu'en 1973, 63 pourcent des revenus ménagers à Lubumbashi provenait du travail salarié, il ne s'agissait en 2000 plus que de 20 pourcent (Geschiere 2003: 5). Comme les chefs de famille rapportaient de moins en moins d'argent, ils perdaient beaucoup de leur autorité et respectabilité d'antan.

La position centrale de cette thèse est que les hommes katangais se sont jetés en masse sur l'exploitation minière artisanale parce qu'ils voulaient donner un nouveau contenu à cette relation travail-masculinité. Les hommes katangais partent pour les régions minières pour pouvoir se maintenir en vie, mais aussi pour pouvoir expérimenter de nouvelles manières d'être homme. Contrairement à leurs pères et grands-pères qui pouvaient prouver leur masculinité en travaillant comme salarié pour une des nombreuses entreprises katangaises, les jeunes d'aujourd'hui n'ont pas d'autre choix que de tenter leur chance dans l'économie informelle. Beaucoup se sentent attirés vers l'exploitation minière artisanale parce qu'ils croient pouvoir gagner beaucoup d'argent en peu de temps. En plus ils sont convaincus qu'en accomplissant ce travail de la mine, ils peuvent développer des qualités typiquement masculines telles que la force physique, l'audace et la connaissance technique. On peut donc affirmer que les hommes du Katanga se sont servis du séjour dans les régions minières pour se créer une nouvelle identité masculine.

Chapitre 1 contient une présentation du cadre théorique de cette dissertation. Le cadre est basé sur une étude littéraire composée de deux parties. Dans la première partie de l'étude littéraire il est prouvé que dans la lecture anthropologique concernant la métallurgie et les activités minières en Afrique subsaharienne on trouve peu de concepts et de théories permettant une recherche approfondie de la construction identitaire des mineurs africains. Dans la deuxième partie il est montré qu'on peut remédier à ce manque en explorant un autre domaine de la littérature en sciences humaines notamment la littérature concernant le genre. Au cours du vingtième siècle différentes écoles occidentales de chercheurs en sciences humaines ont approfondi le phénomène de ce qui est nommé crise de masculinité (*crisis in masculinity*). Les psychanalystes, les théoriciens de rôle, les scientifiques féministes et les chercheurs sur la masculinité ont étudié quelles sont les conséquences de changements sociaux divers (comme par exemple l'émancipation féminine) pour la position et les sentiments de dignité des hommes occidentaux. En combinant les concepts et idées des différents genres littéraires mentionnés ci-dessus on peut créer un solide cadre théorique pour l'analyse de la construction identitaire des artisans mineurs du Katanga.



Le cadre théorique de cette dissertation a pour but d'essayer de comprendre les pratiques de masculinité<sup>255</sup> des artisans mineurs du Katanga. Dans ces pratiques on peut distinguer deux tendances : d'une part la tendance de nivellement (*levelling trend*) et d'autre part la tendance de différenciation (*differentiating trend*). La tendance de nivellement s'exprime par les efforts des creuseurs à se profiler comme un groupe à part d'hommes qui ont différentes qualités masculines en commun. En se comportant collectivement d'une manière déviante, ils essaient de se distinguer des autres hommes de la société katangaise. La tendance de différenciation s'exprime par le fait que les creuseurs ont malgré tout conscience de leurs différences internes. Chacun développe son propre style de comportement masculin et chacun se positionne à sa façon par rapport aux idéaux de masculinité qui circulent dans les régions minières.

Pour l'analyse de la tendance de nivellement dans les pratiques de masculinité des creuseurs katangais il est dans cette thèse fait usage de la théorie de Victor Turner sur la liminalité. Les creuseurs semblent posséder différentes caractéristiques qui d'après Turner sont typiques pour les '*liminaries*' ou '*edgemen*' (Turner 1969: 95 ; 106-107). Ainsi vivent-ils au littéral comme au figuré en marge de la société katangaise, abandonnent-ils momentanément leurs rôles et statuts sociaux antérieurs, attachent-ils à peine de l'importance à leurs anciens droits et devoirs familiaux, balancent-ils suite à leur travail dangereux entre la vie et la mort et respectent-ils toute une série de tabous. En plus les creuseurs ressentent pendant leur séjour dans les régions minières des sentiments de '*communitas*' : en général ils se côtoient avec un esprit de spontanéité, de camaraderie et d'égalité (Turner 1992 :138)

La tendance de différenciation dans les pratiques de masculinité des creuseurs katangais est dans cette thèse analysée à l'aide de la théorie de Connell sur les rapports de force entre différentes formes de masculinité dans un milieu social donné. Un élément important dans cette théorie est le concept de 'la masculinité hégémonique' (*hegemonic masculinity*). Connell emploie ce concept pour désigner cette forme de masculinité encensée par la plupart des hommes dans un milieu précis à un moment précis. A côté de la 'masculinité hégémonique' on peut selon Connell aussi identifier d'autres formes de masculinité qui occupent des positions plus basses dans la hiérarchie des masculinités. Au cours de cette thèse il est démontré que les creuseurs katangais font une distinction entre les différents types de masculinité et qu'ils ont aussi tendance à classer ces types de façon hiérarchique. La théorie de Connell semble donc particulièrement adapté pour décrire les rapports de force entre les différents types de masculinité chez les creuseurs katangais.

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<sup>255</sup> Les pratiques de masculinité sont des actions que les hommes adoptent pour former leur identité masculine.

Après le chapitre 1 qui a développé le cadre théorique de cette thèse de doctorat, le chapitre 2 traitera d'une phase cruciale dans l'histoire du travail du Katanga notamment la période entre 1920 et 1960. Pendant cette période l'industrialisation de cette province était en plein essor. Des milliers de gens partaient de la campagne vers les villes pour y travailler dans une des nombreuses entreprises coloniales. L'UMHK devenait le principal employeur du Katanga. L'entreprise minière développait une soi-disant 'politique de stabilisation' de façon à s'attacher les employés pour une période plus longue. Elle offrait aux ouvriers et à leurs familles toutes sortes d'avantages sociaux dans l'espoir qu'ils seraient disposés à continuer à vivre dans les camps de travail de l'UMHK. Ce qui rend la politique de stabilisation si intéressante, est qu'elle va de pair avec une forme radicale de '*social engineering*'. L'UMHK essayait d'imposer ses normes et valeurs à ses employés de façon à ce qu'ils deviennent des 'ouvriers modernes' qui serviraient l'entreprise de la meilleure façon possible. La politique de stabilisation donnait lieu à la formation d'une forme institutionnalisée de 'masculinité hégémonique' : les employés qui arrivaient le mieux à présenter l'attitude masculine souhaitée par l'UMHK, obtenaient le plus d'extras et avaient en même temps le plus de chances d'obtenir une promotion. Le chapitre 2 prête surtout attention à la tendance de différenciation dans les pratiques de masculinité des mineurs de l'époque. Le chapitre essaie de donner au lecteur une image concrète de la façon dont les employés de l'UMHK se servaient de cette politique de '*social engineering*'. Cela se fait au travers d'analyses d'histoires d'anciens employés d'Armand Hedo, sous-traitant luxembourgeois de l'UMHK, qui pendant les années quarante et cinquante exploitait un certain nombre de mines dans les environs de Likasi.

Le chapitre 3 fait un bond dans le temps. Environ un demi-siècle après la période où les employés d'Armand Hedo ont pu s'acquérir grâce au travail pour l'UMHK toutes sortes d'avantages matériels et sociaux, les hommes du Katanga sont confrontés à une profonde crise économique. Pourtant l'argent reste un indicateur important du succès masculin. Les hommes qui réussissent à dépenser beaucoup d'argent malgré la crise, sont traités avec certains égards. Les artisans mineurs sont conscients de l'importance vitale de l'argent pour créer leur identité masculine. La tendance de nivellement dans leurs pratiques de masculinité se sent dans le fait qu'ils se stimulent dans le goût de la dépense et de la frime. Dépenser de l'argent de façon irréfléchie à l'alcool, aux vêtements chers, aux prostituées forme une part importante de ce qu'on appelle le style *kivoyou* : les creuseurs aiment se faire passer pour des noceurs qui ne doivent se soucier de rien ni de personne. Mais celui qui s'efforce de regarder de plus près la façon dont les mineurs katangais servent de l'argent, constatera que pas tout le monde adopte dans la même mesure le comportement *kivoyou*. Certains creuseurs essaient de développer un mode de vie plus économe pour envoyer une partie de leurs revenus obtenus par le travail minier à leur famille ou pour investir de l'argent dans d'autres activités économiques en dehors du commerce minier. Cela prouve qu'à côté de la tendance de nivellement il y a aussi une tendance de différenciation dans les pratiques de masculinité des creuseurs katangais. Pour illustrer de façon concrète de quelle façon les

creuseurs font usage de l'argent pour prouver leur identité masculine, le chapitre 3 s'attarde à un incident qui a eu lieu dans la mine de Kalabi en 2006. Une équipe de creuseurs formée de 3 personnes s'est décomposée lorsqu'un des membres de l'équipe a disparu mettant la clé sous la porte et abandonnant les autres avec une série de dettes. La description détaillée de la façon dont chacun des trois hommes concernés a géré son argent pendant la période qui a suivi cette séparation, illustre de façon intéressante la relation entre l'argent et la masculinité chez les creuseurs katangais.

Le chapitre 4 part de la constatation que les creuseurs sont toujours à nouveau confrontés à la mort et ce à cause de leurs travaux de creusement souterrain. Chaque fois qu'ils descendent dans le puits, ils ont le sentiment de peut-être ne jamais revoir le soleil. Le combat quotidien qu'ils livrent contre la mort aide à expliquer la raison pour laquelle ils se considèrent comme des figures liminales qui sont en permanence dans une situation de *'betwixt-and-betweenness'* (Turner 1969: 95). C'est parce que les creuseurs ont l'impression de balancer entre le monde des morts et celui des vivants, qu'ils croient ne pas devoir se conformer aux règles et aux lois destinées au commun des mortels. Ils ont l'impression de former un groupe spécial d'hommes parce qu'ils vivent et travaillent dans des conditions particulièrement dures et dangereuses, difficiles à être imaginées par des profanes. Une des manières employées par les creuseurs pour donner un sens à leurs circonstances de vie et de travail difficiles est de raconter des histoires d'esprits miniers féminins qui d'après eux surveillent les réserves de cuivre et de cobalt dans le sous-sol. Dans ces histoires ils décrivent comment des esprits leur imposent toutes sortes de tabous afin de délimiter la frontière entre l'espace minier et l'espace extérieur. Aux yeux des mineurs les esprits jouent le rôle de portier. Ils croient que les esprits les poussent à considérer les mines comme un bastion de puissance et domination masculines devant être protégé contre les influences polluantes des femmes. Le chapitre 4 fait comprendre que dans leurs histoires d'esprits miniers les creuseurs recyclent et réinterprètent à la lumière de leur propre situation socio-économique d'anciennes idées locales concernant la mine, les rapports de genre et la mort. L'habitude des mineurs de se raconter ces histoires est sans aucun doute une des expressions les plus marquantes de la tendance de nivellement dans leurs pratiques de masculinité: cela montre qu'ils cherchent activement des façons de bien mettre en valeur leurs caractéristiques masculines qu'ils ont en commun.

Dans le chapitre 5 l'attention se porte principalement sur les pratiques de masculinité d'un groupe spécial de mineurs appelés mineurs rasta. Il s'agit d'hommes qui ne font pas seulement partie de la sous-culture des creuseurs mais aussi de la sous-culture des rastas. Le mouvement katangais rasta a été formé dans la deuxième partie des années quatre-vingt-dix quand des jeunes marginalisés de la commune Kenya à Lubumbashi ont créé leur propre projet utopique pour une société meilleure. Ils faisaient cela en se basant sur une réinterprétation du rastafarisme jamaïquain et un pot pourri d'idées, pratiques et symboles culturels locaux. Le rastafarisme katangais s'est propagé en un minimum de temps de Lubumbashi vers l'intérieur du pays. En ce moment, il attire plus particulièrement de jeunes

hommes qui essaient de façon anticonformiste de donner un sens aux conditions très difficiles dans lesquelles ils vivent. Dans le chapitre 5 deux positions sont défendues. En premier lieu il est prouvé par des arguments qu'on peut distinguer dans les pratiques de masculinité des rastas katangais aussi bien une tendance de nivellement qu'une tendance de différenciation. Alors que la tendance de nivellement peut être analysé à l'aide des concepts de Turner concernant la liminalité et la communauté, la tendance de différenciation peut s'analyser en appliquant la théorie de Connell concernant 'la masculinité hégémonique'. En deuxième lieu, on affirme que les mineurs rasta forment en général leur identité masculine de façon très consciente. Ceci s'explique par le fait qu'ils se réunissent toutes les semaines pour suivre une instruction idéologique. Pendant ces sessions ils apprennent 'des techniques de soi' de Foucault par lesquelles ils peuvent obtenir une meilleure maîtrise de leurs pensées, de leur corps et de leur comportement. En exerçant régulièrement ces 'techniques de soi', ils atteignent peu à peu un niveau élevé de 'compétence performative' (Ferguson 1999): ils réussissent à exposer de façon convaincante les pratiques de masculinité appropriés à l'instant propice.

Le chapitre 6 donne un aperçu des principales conclusions qu'on peut tirer à partir de cette thèse de doctorat. On ne consacre pas seulement son attention aux implications qu'auront les résultats de recherche sur les futures recherches concernant l'activité minière artisanale, mais aussi aux conséquences pour les recherches futures concernant la masculinité.

### 8.3 Summary in English

This dissertation deals with the phenomenon of artisanal mining in Katanga, the southeast province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the course of the past decade, thousands of people have moved to the Katangese mining areas with the aim of finding new sources of income and developing new strategies to be able to cope with the continuing economic depression in their country. Making use of simple tools such as shovels and pickaxes, artisanal miners or creuseurs have started digging for copper and cobalt ores, which are in great demand among mineral traders and metal producers. While copper prices have been on the rise as a result of expanding infrastructure in rapidly developing countries such as China and India, cobalt prices have also boomed, largely as a result of the growing demand for cobalt-based rechargeable batteries, which are used in various electronic devices such as cell phones, laptops and camcorders.

Strikingly, artisanal mining is a predominantly male affair in Katanga. Although, in the immediate vicinity of the mines, one can also find large numbers of children and women, who usually try to earn a living by engaging in activities such as sorting out and cleaning minerals, running shops and restaurants, trading consumer goods and clothing, or selling sexual services, in the mines proper, one can only find men. Men are the only ones digging mineshafts, excavating mineral ores and transporting heavy bags with copper or cobalt.

Due to the fact that, in Katanga, the artisanal mining sector constitutes a genuine male stronghold, artisanal mining is an excellent field to examine the relationship between work and masculinity. This relationship has changed considerably in the course of the twentieth century. During the colonial period, Katanga developed into one of the most industrialized regions of Sub-Saharan Africa. Several generations of Katangese men grew up with the idea that they could earn respect, admiration and prestige by performing wage labour for big colonial companies such as the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga (UMHK). A man with paid work (*kazi*) could rest assured that he would not only receive a monthly salary, but also food rations, education and healthcare for all the members of his household. This is how the ideal of the male breadwinner came into existence. Among the Katangese population, the conviction grew that men could prove their manhood by securing the livelihoods of their household members through the performance of wage labour.

From the beginning of the 1970s onwards, more and more Katangese men started experiencing difficulties to achieve the male breadwinner ideal. Due to a combination of factors, the motor of the Katangese economy began to sputter. The badly timed nationalization of the UMHK, the zairianization campaign, the Shaba wars, and the economic mismanagement and corruption practices

of the Mobutu regime caused a sharp decline of the standard of living. The situation became outright disastrous during the 1990s. Katanga's formal economy was at its last gasp, the state company Gécamines almost went bankrupt and Congo got dragged into a long civil war. Whereas, in 1973, 63 per cent of household revenues in Lubumbashi still originated from salaried employment, by the year 2000, this figure had dropped to 20 per cent (Geschiere 2003: 5). As male household heads were no longer capable of generating enough money to secure the survival of their household, they lost a lot of their authority and respectability.

The main argument of this dissertation is that large groups of Katangese men have engaged in artisanal mining because they are eager to redefine the relationship between work and masculinity. Although, primarily, they go to the mines to earn themselves a living, they also use their stay in the mining areas to experiment with new ways of being a man. Unlike their fathers and grandfathers, who were able to prove their manhood through the performance of wage labour for one of the many companies in the region, contemporary Katangese youngsters are forced to try their luck in the informal economy. Many of them feel attracted by artisanal mining, because they believe that, in the mines, they will be able to make a lot of money within a short period of time. Moreover, they are convinced that, thanks to their work in the mines, they will be able to develop typically masculine qualities such as physical strength, bravery and technical knowledge. Thus, it can be argued that Katangese men use their stay in the mining areas to construct new masculine identities.

Chapter 1 outlines the theoretical framework of this dissertation. The framework is based on a literature review in two parts. The first part of the review shows that, in the literature on metallurgy and mining in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are few concepts and theories that allow for a thorough investigation of processes of identity construction among African miners. The second part of the review points out that the exploration of another field in the socio-scientific literature - the literature on gender - can help to solve this problem. In the course of the twentieth century, several schools of Western social scientists have examined the issue of the so-called '*crisis in masculinity*'. Psychoanalysts, role theorists, feminist scientists and masculinity scholars have tried to find out what have been the consequences of various social changes (such as the emancipation of women) for the positions and feelings of self-worth of Western men. By combining concepts and insights from the two categories of literature mentioned above, it is possible to build a solid theoretical framework for the analysis of identity construction among Katangese artisanal miners.

The aim of this dissertation's theoretical framework is to provide insight into the masculinity practices of Katangese artisanal miners. In these practices, two trends can be distinguished: on the one hand, a levelling trend, and, on the other hand, a differentiating trend. The levelling trend manifests itself in the efforts of creuseurs to present themselves as a distinctive group of men having several masculine

characteristics in common. By displaying deviant behaviour in a collective manner, they try to distinguish themselves from other men in Katangese society. As for the differentiating trend, this shows itself in the fact that, in spite of everything, creuseurs are still aware of their internal differences. They all develop their own styles of masculine behaviour and they all have their own ways of positioning themselves vis-à-vis the ideals of masculinity circulating in the mining areas.

In this dissertation, the levelling trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese creuseurs is analyzed through the use of Victor Turner's theory on liminality. As it turns out, creuseurs possess several features that, according to Turner, are characteristic of 'liminaries' or 'edgemen' (Turner 1969: 95; 106-107). Apart from the fact that, both literally and figuratively, they live on the fringes of Katangese society, they also temporarily suspend their previous social roles and statuses, they hardly pay any attention to their previous family rights and obligations, they constantly find themselves in a kind of twilight zone between life and death as a result of the dangerous nature of their work, and they respect a whole series of taboos. Furthermore, during their stay in the mining areas, creuseurs appear to experience feelings of 'communitas': most of the time, they interact with each other in an atmosphere of spontaneity, comradeship and equality (Turner 1992: 138).

As for the differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese creuseurs, this is analyzed through the use of Connell's theory on the power relations between different forms of masculinity in a given socio-cultural setting. An essential component of this theory is the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity'. Connell uses this concept to refer to the form of masculinity that, in a specific environment and in a specific period, is glorified by the majority of men. Connell's theoretical framework does not only make it possible to identify the hegemonic form of masculinity, but also other forms of masculinity, which occupy lower positions in the hierarchy of masculinities. In the course of the dissertation, it is shown that Katangese creuseurs make a distinction between different types of masculinity, while they are also inclined to classify these types hierarchically. Consequently, Connell's theory proves to be very useful to describe and analyze the power relations between different types of masculinity among Katangese creuseurs.

While chapter 1 is dedicated to the presentation of the theoretical framework, chapter 2 zooms in on a crucial phase in the labour history of Katanga, namely the period between 1920 and 1960, the era in which the industrialization of the province gained momentum. Thousands of people moved from the countryside to the cities with the aim of joining one of the many colonial companies. The UMHK revealed itself as Katanga's most important employer. The mining company developed a so-called 'stabilization policy' in order to lure its employees into long-term employment. It offered both its workers and their families various social benefits in hopes that this would convince them to continue living in the mining compounds of the UMHK. The interesting thing about the stabilization policy is

that it went hand in hand with the development of a far-reaching form of ‘social engineering’. The UMHK imposed its own norms and values on its employees, so that they would develop into ‘modern working men’ who would serve the interests of the company in the best possible way. The stabilization policy gave rise to the emergence of an institutionalized form of ‘hegemonic masculinity’: those employees who succeeded best in displaying the kind of masculine behaviour the UMHK expected from them were given the largest number of benefits, while they also had the best chances of getting promoted. Chapter 2 concentrates mainly on the differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of the miners at that time. The chapter tries to give the reader a concrete image of the multiple ways in which employees of the UMHK dealt with the policy of ‘social engineering’. This is done through the analysis of stories told by former employees of Armand Hedo, a Luxembourg subcontractor of the UMHK who used to run a number of mines close to Likasi during the 1940s and 1950s.

Chapter 3 makes a leap in time. Almost half a century after the workers of Armand Hedo were able to obtain various material and social benefits for themselves and their families thanks to their work for the UMHK, Katangese men are confronted with a deep economic crisis. Nevertheless, money is still an important indicator of male success. Men who are capable of spending a lot of money in spite of the ongoing crisis are treated with a lot of respect. Artisanal miners realize that money is of vital importance for the construction of their masculine identities. The levelling trend in their masculinity practices expresses itself in the fact that they incite each other to ostentation and wastefulness. Recklessly spending money on alcohol, expensive clothes and prostitutes is an important component of the so-called *kivoyou* style: creuseurs like to present themselves as a group of loose livers who do not need to care about anything or anyone. However, when one makes an effort to take a closer look at the monetary habits of individual Katangese miners, one finds that not everyone participates in the *kivoyou* behaviour to the same degree. Some creuseurs do their best to develop a more parsimonious lifestyle, to send part of their mining revenues to their family back home, or to invest their money in other economic activities outside the mining business. This shows that, apart from a levelling trend, there is also a differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese creuseurs. In order to provide a concrete illustration of the way in which creuseurs use money to shape their masculine identities, chapter 3 presents a detailed analysis of an incident that took place in the mine of Kalabi in 2006. A digging team of 3 people fell apart after one of the team members suddenly took off and left the others with a large number of unpaid debts. The detailed description of how each of the three diggers involved used his money in the period after the split sheds an interesting light on the relationship between money and masculinity among Katangese creuseurs.

Chapter 4 starts from the observation that creuseurs are constantly confronted with the possibility of death as a result of their dangerous subterranean digging activities. Every time they go down the



mineshaft, they have the feeling that they might never get to see sunlight again. Their daily fight against death helps to explain why they consider themselves as liminal figures who permanently find themselves in a condition of 'betwixt-and-betweenness' (Turner 1969: 95). Creuseurs have the feeling that they stand on the threshold between the world of the living and the world of the dead, which is why they think they are exempt from laws and regulations applying to ordinary mortals. They have the impression that they constitute a special group of men, because they live and work in very hard and dangerous circumstances of which outsiders do not have a clue. One of the ways in which creuseurs try to give meaning to their difficult living and working conditions is by telling each other stories about female mining spirits, who they believe to be the guardians of the copper and cobalt reserves. In these stories, they describe how spirits impose all sorts of taboos on them with the aim of marking the boundary between the space of the mine and the space outside of the mine. In the eyes of the artisanal miners, spirits play the role of gatekeepers. They believe that spirits encourage them to consider the mines as bulwarks of male power and dominance, which need to be protected against the polluting influences of women. Chapter 4 shows that, in their stories about female mining spirits, creuseurs recycle and reinterpret old local ideas about mining, gender and death in the light of their own socio-economic situation. Undoubtedly, the habit of artisanal miners to tell each other these stories is one of the most conspicuous expressions of the levelling trend in their masculinity practices: it shows that they are actively searching for ways to highlight their shared masculine characteristics.

In chapter 5, the focus of attention lies on the masculinity practices of a special group of artisanal miners, namely Rastafarian creuseurs. The latter are men who do not only take part in the subculture of creuseurs, but also in the subculture of Rastafarians. The Katangese Rastafarian movement came into being in the second half of the 1990s, when marginalized youngsters from the Kenya neighbourhood in Lubumbashi created their own utopian blueprint for a better society on the basis of a reinterpretation of Jamaican Rastafarianism and a mix of local cultural ideas, practices and symbols. In no time, Katangese Rastafarianism spread from Lubumbashi to the interior. Currently, it seems to have a special attraction for young men looking for alternative ways to give meaning to the difficult circumstances in which they find themselves. The arguments defended in chapter 5 are twofold. First, it is argued that there is both a levelling and a differentiating trend in the masculinity practices of Katangese Rastafarians. While the levelling trend can be analyzed through the use of Turner's concepts of 'liminality' and 'communitas', the differentiating trend can be analyzed through the application of Connell's theory on 'hegemonic masculinity'. Second, it is asserted that, generally speaking, Rastafarian creuseurs construct their masculine identities in a very conscious manner. This can be explained by the fact that they come together on a weekly basis in order to follow ideological training. During these sessions of ideological training, they acquaint themselves with Foucaultian 'technologies of the self', which help them to gain a better control over their thoughts, bodies and conduct. By regularly rehearsing these 'technologies of the self', they gradually reach a higher level of

'performative competence' (Ferguson 1999): they succeed in convincingly displaying the right masculinity practices at the right time.

Chapter 6 gives an overview of the most important conclusions to be drawn from this dissertation. It does not only pay attention to the implications of the research findings for future research on artisanal mining, but it also concentrates on the consequences for future research on masculinity.

## DOCTORATEN IN DE SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN

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