TYING THE SPIRITUAL KNOT

African Cosmology
OF THE
Bântu–Kôngo

Principles of
Life & Living

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An African leader who considers as tribalism our national diversities commits a national crime because, by doing so, he himself denies the existence of the nation itself. Are not ethnic diversities that made USA, Russia and China, great nations! Ethnicity is not a disease, it is, in its diversity, a national pride. Nations are forests—“Nsi mfinda” says a Kôngo proverb. A forest of one type of trees is not a forest, it is a “n’dma” (orchard) no matter how large it is, for a forest is always an ensemble in diversity. Our national cultural, linguistic, artistic, and economic diversities are also our national pride on which our national African Constitutions should be based. These ideas are discussed, especially those based on Kôngo culture, a Bântu ethnic group in the center of west Africa. Let’s now briefly talk about this cultural zone and its historical background.

III

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE KÔNGO CULTURAL ZONE

Certain parts of Ex-Belgian Africa, as well as certain others of the Angolan Popular Republic and that of the Congo Popular Republic were constitutional parts of the Ancient Kingdom of the Kôngo that was destroyed by the Portuguese and its allies in 1482. The Berlin Geographical Conference in 1884–85 divided this Kingdom into three imperialistic zones: One part, part of the present Angola, went to the Lusitanian imperio-dictatorial system; the second, part of the present Congo, to the imperialistic system of France, and the third, part of the present, undemocratic Democratic Republic of Congo, was made the private property of Leopold II, the King of Belgium.

Unable to develop his private territory within what the colonists called the “dark continent” (a point of view that opposes that of the ancient Greeks who knew that Africa was the source of their scientific progress), Leopold II gave up the Congo at the consent of the Belgian people in 1908. The Congo of Leopold II then became the Belgian Congo. Since then the Congo entered a period during which its important traditional institutions were sys-
tematically destroyed. Boko, the most popular and most important school was destroyed; social and political institutions were prohibited. Kânda, the structural base of the African community life as well as its organizational patterns were disorganized. “Those who were people became apes,” says a popular folk song which shows how colonial tortures transformed African people. We were people, but by exploitation we are made apes, working in corvee [Twabèdi kwèto bântu twayikidi bankewa; salanga! o kiniemo!].

The word Salongo, in lingala, is a deformation of kikôngo, “salanga”, which had in that case negative connotations during the colonial epoch. It signified dictatorship, wicked authority, forced work, exploitation, and many other similar meanings. Today, it is a political motto, pure and empty pretension of certain African governments used to lead their countries if not to the first, to the second or to the third position of economic development, but never to the fourth one.

African authorities, because of their lack of collaboration with their well informed countrymen and scholars, tend to reverse the national historical truth. This is the case of Salongo in Mobutu’s “Zaire”, and many other cases. Salongo was a popular folk song among civilians as well as among militiamen. This folk song was the strongest popular song criticizing and insulting the Belgian colonial authority in Congo. This song is a veritable monument of attack against colonialism, the leopoldian one in particular, in central Africa during the time of what is known as “Effort de Guerre” (war effort). I produce here the lingala version of the song after corporal Bandi-Makaya, a veteran of

WWI (1914–1918), one of our best informants about our national oral history collected by our efforts at Luyalungunu lwa Kûmba-nsi Institute.

Salongo
E e e
Salongo
Alinga mosala
Biso tokoma bakoko na bino
Kosalela bino
Mosala ya mbongo
Lokola ebende (machine)

Salongo
E-e-e
Salongo
Alinga mosala
Biso tokuma baumbu na bino
Kotekisa biso
Na Saki ya mungwa
Lokola mosolo

Salongo
E e e, etc.
Biso tokoma banyama na bino
Kokengela bino
Na porte ya ndako
Lokola bapaya

Salongo
Biso tokoma bangamba na bino
Komemaka bino
(Na) Mapeka na biso
Lukula ba mpunda
Mondele mobomaka biso
Lokola ba niama zamba
Likolo mabele
Bakoko batikila biso
Salongo

Opposition against colonialism and exploitation led the country to fight for and win its freedom in 1960. The people's main goal at that time was to build the country upon traditional positive cultural values of all our regions' particularities. Values deeply rooted in our social organizations, in our traditional unwritten legislatures, the fu-kia-nsi, the national socio-structural systems.

Social Organization

The Kôngo society, as well as most African societies, are and still are, communalistic, i.e., each community self-determines the social, political, economic organization and leadership. "The Kôngo had a king up until the time of colonization, but his position was decidedly titular" and the same author continues "The mode of production established a minimum dependence between different community segments and there was no private ownership of the means of production." (Kajsa, 1972:3)

Each local community or Vata, which is relatively independent, has two or more Belo. Each belo has two or more

Mielo-nzo (sing Mwelo-nzo/mwelonzo). The Mwelonzo is divided into Miyo (singular Môyo). The Môyo is also termed as Buta. The Buta is the smallest but most important institution in Kôngo social and organizational structure. It is here that basic family education is carried out: language, parenthood relationships, a general knowledge concerning local plants as an introduction to popular medicine, community or ethnic history (law, migrations, ancestors), etc. Each of these divisions is a social and political entity which meets to discuss or to regulate community problems under the leadership of the wisest and strongest of the group.

The most important and powerful institution within the community, vata, is the Belo. The Belo is symbolized by its public house where social, political, economic and organizational issues are discussed before being discussed by the community assembly. This public house is called Bojo [mbongi, yenda, lusango, kioto], a word that literally means "house without rooms", i.e., a house in which privacy has no room. I give here certain proverbs related to that basically very important Kôngo social institution, the BOKO:

1) "Boko wabokudisa nkuni mu vata." It is the bokò that orders the collection of firewood in the village (to make a fire circle for a public hearing).

2) "Vata dikondo mbongi diafwa." A village without a boko is dead. A society without institutions where public freedom is warranted is straight to its fall.
3) “Boko wabokula mámbu.” It is the boko that breaks (cuts) the affairs in the community. All decisions in the community are public agreements made in public at ku boko, the public house.

4) “Boko wábúka mu vata…” It is the boko that calls for meetings in the village. Boko, the entire community, decrees a state of emergency in the community.

5) “Mbila boko ni bēto kulu,” the call of boko belongs to all of us. Public institutions are public; individuals cannot make them private affairs. The public call makes us all stand.

6) “Mbóngi wabonga mámbu,” variant “Mbóngi wabókila mámbu.” It is the mbóngi that takes care, investigates, all affairs in the political, economic, social, and diplomatic matters, in order to discuss them publicly in the view and the hearing of all community members. Community alone can do what is best for its members.

7) “Lusânga wasangumuna mámbu.” It is the boko that raises problems and issues of all orders, be they of yesterday, today, or the future. The community alone is aware of the problems of its members. The Boko/mbóngi can undertake any project for the welfare of its members.

8) “Lusânga didi dia kivuka.” The lusanga/boko is the center, think tank of community activities (mvemono). Outside of this “didi dia kivuka,” man’s activities are sterile.

9) “Yèmba wayembamana mámbu ma kànda.” It is the boko that covers community affairs. The community covers more than what one can say.

10) “Nsamu katoma ku kioto; kabiyà ku kioto.” All solutions are possible at ku boko. Conflicts are not discussed outside of the community institutions.

11) “Kioto kioko kia kànda kalândanga.” It is the boko that cooks community inhalation. The community healing meal is made at the boko. The boko is the healer of community diseases, problems of all orders.

The short list of these Kôngo proverbs shows how the Boko is an important social institution among the Bântu-Kôngo, where only public and community affairs are discussed. To speak about private affairs in this public institution, yèmba, is a public crime. One does not plot inside Kôngo public institutions. It is interesting to notice here that the external part of a house, veranda, among the Kôngo is called yèmba, i.e., the public part of the house. This part is for public use, to sit, work, gather, take shelter or even sleep under it. The owner of the house has no right against those acts. Another very interesting Kôngo proverb/principle says “What you think belongs to you, but what you say belongs to the public,” [Ma ku nsia n’tíima, màku; matèle, ma ku mbazi.]. Inside you are you;
outside you are not. You are only a tiny part of a huge and coherent body, the community within the universal totality.

The community council of elders [mfundu a mbuta za vata] meets in the boko. Their duties are to review and discuss all questions related to the community life and submit their proposals to the community assembly of honored elders [fongo dia mfumu ye nganga za vata]. Members of the community council are sent to the community assembly. The boko is also the center, didi, of cultural information. It is here that research or study on social problems is done. It is here also that new members in the community, visitors, make their first step toward integration in the community. All personal and political alliances are made in the boko in public view and by public accord. All decisions made ku boko have “force de loi” (force of the law).

When the community assembly [fongo dia vata] meets, delegations from other communities are free to participate in the assembly in the interest of their own communities. Here each belo, as a delegation, carefully handles all pertinent questions concerning the community life.

In any assembly, the community delegations can discuss all issues pertaining to community except the three issues of community/clan, land, taboo (Kanda, N’tooto, Kina). The community land is untouchable, it is considered taboo [Kina or n’longo] because it belongs first to the eternal community roots, the ancestors, (the real living gods) as well as to the people in the living community. Traditionally every assembly must start with alternatively repeated mottoes called “bikumu” (Fu-Kiau 1973):

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**Historical Background of the Kongo Cultural Zone**

- **Kumbisi:** Kina kia n’tooto!
- **Kumbi:** Kina kia nsi
- **Kumbisi:** Kina kia nsi!
- **Kumbi:** Kina kia nk’angu!
- **Kumbisi:** Kina kia nk’angu!
- **Kumbi:** Ndefi tuka mu bakulu!
- **Kumbisi:** E n’singa-dikanda!
- **Kumbi:** Ninga ka tabuka ko!

- **Leader:** The land taboo!
- **Audience:** Country’s taboo!
- **Leader:** Country’s taboo!
- **Audience:** People’s taboo!
- **Leader:** People’s taboo!
- **Audience:** Infallible oath!
- **Leader:** What about the community’s bio-string!
- **Audience:** It must be strengthened, not be cut down (weakened)!

These very powerful dialectical aphorisms and chants are used by the Bantu-Kongo when publicly dealing with serious situations menacing a structurally fundamental, social organization or institution, such as boko or a public good such as land. Such “Kumu”, dialectic aphorisms, are considered to be public legal oaths, and at the same time, become social taboos, i.e., as Balikci states, “The first automatic defense mechanism against uncontrollable and unpredictable dangers” (Balikci, 1970:223). Defense mechanism values of N’singa-dikanda’s accumulate by the community in the course of time. The n’singa-dikanda is the moral, social,
spiritual, cultural, and physical link between community members, but also between them and their ancestors, the eternal root not only of life, but also of the law. The n'singadikanda is the biological string that links all community members, dead or alive, to both ends of the rope.

Through its community council and community assembly, the Kongo society makes its laws and trains its youth for national and community defense. Because the army had to serve the community's interest, it was the responsibility of all people to educate their young men and women. "In the Kongo there was no real standing army. Soldiers were recruited by general mobilization" (Kajsa, 1978:79). The army in the old Kongo was by and for all people. The main mission of such a populist army was to kick all enemies out of the ancestral taboo lands. The defense of the land was and still is the cornerstone of oral and unwritten legislation. One who knows the Kongo land holding system, knows its social organization, and therefore its concept of law and crime in the past as well as the present.

The Ancestral Land

One of the essential characteristics of the Kongo system of property is its inalienability. There is no valuable condition that could change this inalienability of the ancestral land. "Land was not a commodity to be bought and sold. Land was inalienable in the traditional system. Each domain was owned by a certain matrilineage which could indeed grant the use of a part of its area to a relative or even foreign matrilineage, but this did not mean that it gave up its land rights." (Kajsa, 1978, p 71). In their fu-kia-nsi, the unwritten law, the traditional land system, the Kongo say to sell community land is to carry a mortal yoke [Wateka n'oto wa kanda neti ngoro/vangu]. Malengreau also wrote about this same concept of the inalienability of the land among other Bantu people of the Congo basin. He says that the African communalistic concept of society was based on a very strong law, that of "the indivisibility and the inalienability of the land" (cited by Muller, 1956:13). Whoever does not have access to land is dead; no matter how rich he/she is.

Contrary to what is happening in the Modern African puppet states, with a few exceptions among the more progressive countries, "The chief of the community is not the landlord, but only a manager of the interests of the community of which he is the head, (Muller, 1956). That is why it was almost impossible to corrupt a true African societal leader as the Kongo will say the community leader is incorruptible for he knows kinswékila, corruption, is a pitfall to the community and to the country. M'umu-dikanda katambilanga kinswékila ko, n'tambu kwa kanda ye nsi]. Today, kinswékila (embezzlement) has become current money among leaders in Africa. When Africans talk about what oral traditions say about land ownership, most scholars, bought by capitalist-imperialist companies and corporations, often reply that they do not trust unrecorded traditions; they totally ignore what their friends, other fellow scholars, have recorded about the African concept of land ownership. There are many documents by western writers and reporters on African oral traditions related to the issue of land ownership. Most of them point out the upholding of
this concept throughout most African societies and communities as one Africanist scholar writes, “The clan possesses lands in title of occupation and of use, i.e., to live on it and for it. The right of occupation and the right of use belong, not to the chief of the clan but to the entire collectivity” (DeCleene, 1946:25).

Capitalist-imperialist forces did not understand the African concept of the land holding. European colonial exploitation introduced the theory of “vacant land” in Africa ignoring totally, as Malengreau (cited in Muller, 1956:10) states that “The territory is the property of the community ... vacant territory does not exist.” The uncultivated lands left in the natural process of refertilization according to the African traditional rotary system were seen by Europeans as wasted and vacant lands. The African rotary system was instituted in order to avoid the impoverishment of the soil in a continent, such as Africa, with a very harsh and drastic climate. Without knowing the reason for what they saw and believed as a precarious abandonment of the land, they seized it because they had firearms and made it “vacant.” Due to the possession of arms and agressive technology, the colonization ordered the expropriation and relocation of native communities. They declared all of what was believed to be vacant land the state’s land, i.e., the property of European settlers, the colonialisists. It was by this process that the illegal and minority governments of Southern Africa seized the lands they occupy today, where they built the most inhumane governmental system that man has experienced since the beginning of time: the western, Christian, apartheid system (in Zimbabwe and in Azania).

The Congo Free State, freed from western penetration through an ordinance on July 1, 1885, gave the mining company of UMHK (Mining Union of Higher Katanga) an area larger than half the size of Belgium. Many other domains and concessions were also freely distributed to other allies of imperialism (Kaja, 1972:73). Lemarchande states the same view “Thousands of acres were given to missionaries, private companies and settlers.” (Lemarchande, 1964:11). Only good and fertile land was expropriated. Land was also automatically expropriated at any time once a mineral was found on it. This expropriation of good, fertile, and rich soil, between 1910 to 1930, became the principal cause of malnutrition, disease, the increase of the death rate, and a rural exodus. The transfer of African community land to capitalistic and private ownership was the key to the destruction of the traditional African institutions of law and justice. This same factor became, since 1950 to the present, the main cause of struggle on the African continent, the struggle to free taboo ancestral land from the hands of corporations and their allies.

The existing legislature in Africa cannot free the African people because that legislature is sterile and alienated from its true cultural and environmental milieu. It is not rooted within the people’s culture. As Yabila says “The law becomes sterile when one separates it from its milieu” (Yabila, 1974:78). Its primary goal is to defend existing and future adventurists’ properties and interests in African land, the people’s land which is a taboo ancestral land. There needs to be a radical change in this legislature today because “The law is not only a science, a set of
techniques of analysis, but a vehicle of culture" (Yabila, 1974:79). That law, in order to be take root in African society and serve as a cultural vehicle, must rise from within the people's culture. The law must speak the same language spoken by the people and be written in that language. All modern African constitutions and laws are written in foreign languages—the fact that they are written in languages unknown by the majority of the African populations, is already depriving the African masses of one of their most important rights, that of knowing their law. To understand the law fairly, exactly and completely is a human right. African laws are not, in that case, written for the African people, they are written for those who are interested in exploiting Africa and its people in order to facilitate their tasks, that of underdeveloping Africa.

In certain countries only 1% of the entire population could read and understand the official language in which laws are written (Fu-Kiau, 1969a:12). In many African countries, documents, newspapers, and books related to governmental activities often are not allowed to be sold in the country. They are kept in secrecy from the citizens, but exploitative companies and corporations have all rights of access to them. This fact shows and proves that most African governments work as agencies of foreign governments.

Changes in matter of law are almost impossible in Africa because of the state of African parliaments existing there today "The parliament as it is . . . retards the application of vital decisions and does not play its role of guardian of the public interest" (Young, 1965:355).

African parliaments cannot function with efficacy for the people's well being because of the external influences which always try to "buy" all sons of the continent who are supposed to be responsible for it. This situation has gotten worse for the case of Zaire since the withdrawal of the UN army forces in 1963. The removal of the international forces from the Congo (Zaire) gave way to a new situation: Neo-colonization and its intensification. The country found itself in a situation where it could find no solution to its problems. As Young says "There are no doubt solutions, but no one among them leads automatically to success because in all circumstances the external influence became again more and more important since the retreat of the UN forces (Young, 1965:356). As such, internal struggles will continue in Africa until change in the interest of the masses occurs.

The African masses fight today because their present leaders continue to follow the path of a very negative capitalism, which is not their way of life. This capitalism results in crimes against innocent and peaceful people by preventing them access to their ancestral tabooed land and the joy of liberty; the liberty of political participation. The African masses see the behavior of their leaders as a public crime. They will be judged as well as their supporters.

Crime

One talks about "committing a crime" in western juridical language. But in most African cultures, and that of the Kôngo in particular, one says "Nata n'kanu," bearing
a crime. One must discuss the contrast between these two concepts in order to more easily understand the African concept of crime. This distinction is basically linguistico-cultural. Understanding “les-jeux-des-mots”, wordgames, is very important in any study of two or more distinct cultures. A wordgame is a key word to intellectual or scientific understanding. In English one “feels a pain”; in Kongo-Kikongo, one “sees a pain” [monampasi]. When an Englishman “smokes a cigarette,” a Mukongo will “drink a cigarette” [nwa sake/nsunga]. In English one “smells a certain perfume,” the Mukongo will “hear it” [wa nsunga]. When western school defines man as “an intelligent animal, an imperial animal” or as a “toolmaker,” as do the non-initiated African scholars, the westernized, i.e., the “kìyìnga” in the African way of thinking; the “Ngànga,” the initiated African man in the African way of thinking, who is a specialist of perceiving the world’s things, will, himself prefer to say that the human being is a system of systems [Muntu i kimpia bimpia]. He is also variably called “n’kìngù a n’kìngù”—a principle of principles, i.e., the pattern of patterns. Because “muntu,” the human being, is the key system of systems, he is able as such to produce materially and technologically other mechanical systems1. For the Bantu, in accordance to the concept expressed in the Kongo language, man is not an animal, nor is he comparable to one, “muntu,” the human being has the dual [mvëla-nginda]

1 For more information about Bantu-Kongo thought, read the forthcoming book by Fu-Kiau, Makuku Matatu.

soul-mind that distinguishes him from the rest of the things of nature2 [ma-bia-nsemono].

When the physical body dies, says a Muntu, the dual [mvëla-nginda] of that being remains within the community or out of it. The dual of the being [Mvëla-nginda], continues to act and to talk to and among the community’s members as well as to the world’s community, through dreams and visions, waves, radiations, and through monumental acts: the biological, material, intellectual and spiritual treasures accumulated in scrolls [ku mpëmba], the past, i.e., the perpetual bank of the generating/driving forces of life. (See figure 17). There is no end in the dingo-dingo process, the perpetual going and coming back of life as well as in the Muntu’s [mvëla-nginda]. Life is a continuum through many stages (as discussed in Makuku Matatu). For the Bantu, there is no death and no resurrection; for them life is a continual process of change. An animal’s life [zingu kia bulu/moyo a bulu] does not have the dual [mvëla-nginda] soul-mind. It does not follow the process because the animal is not a system of systems [kimpia bimpia]; it’s not a vertical being, it is a prostrated being. Animals are horizontal beings, they move and act instinctually. The muntu human being, is a V-H-being [kadi kiatelama lwimbangango va lukôngolo]. He stands vertically on his feet first, he thinks and reasons before moving horizontally to meet the challenges of life and of the world.

These differences in feeling, thinking and perceiving are

2 The translation of Muntu as a person or human being is more accurate than the word “man,” which has its equivalents as “bakala, mobil, jedo” in certain Bantu languages.
similar to the concepts of social and structural organization. Outside of the expressions “drink tobacco” [nwa saka], pull tobacco [benda fumu], suck tobacco [wela nsùnga], and [tompisa fumu] smoke or fire tobacco, it is almost impossible to find in English the correct conceptual meaning a Mukôngo gives to the term smoke in his or her tongue. This tells us how impossible it is to impose a new system that cannot possibly fit on a people who already have their own system of thought. In the west one believes that he/she is born with his knowing power (IQ). The African individual who is initiated to principles of life and living will say no. Knowledge (IQ) is not in us. Knowledge is outside of us. The only thing we have in us is the power to shelve the information or data in us and reproduce it at will. One cannot dance with ease in a borrowed wrap (N’ele ansômpha ka utominanga makinu ko). It is wrong for one system to try to manipulate or impose one’s way of thinking upon other systems. Such an attempt only worsens the world’s relationships, a confirmation of the total lack of know how in the area of, knotting (coding) and unknotting (decoding) in one’s own life [kânga ye kutula mu luþingu]. But let us go back to the concept of crime.

In the western concept, the individual seems to be responsible for his crime. He is either conscious or unconscious of it; it is only committed by him. The western expression “to commit a crime” does not seem to have any historic or cultural implication. But in the case of the Kôngo, the expression, to bear a crime [nata n’kanu], there are cultural, linguistic, social, environmental, and genetic/biologic roots. The individual, before committing any crime, carries a certain set of learned criminal concepts, images, expressions, symbols, discussions, words, habits, and facts upon diverse social scenes. In other words, for the Bântu; a crime is the result of an internal psychological state carried by an individual since his childhood, mainly accumulated during the period of growth when the child acquires social patterns. That state is given to him by his social, cultural, physical, and systematic environment within which he is bathed by negative as well as positive waves/radiations [minika/minienie].

Crimes are not individual acts. They are, in many cases, earlier social creations which do not appear until later, at the moment they are committed by an individual who only is the symptomatic furuncle of the criminal radiations accumulated within the society.

Crimes are found within social and cultural patterns; in the food and in the way a society eats that food; in its taboos; in its language, and the vocabulary used to communicate concepts, ideas, and values; in the way alien cultures are interpreted, and in the way social, cultural and ideological discrepancies are understood.

Before he goes to initiation [ku kânga, ku kôngo or ku
lônde) (Africa) or to school (other societies), the child learns such concepts as steal, kill, lie, sin, rich, poor, minority, foreign, mine, yours, illogical people, reserved for green people only, etc. It is through this kind of socialization that the concept of crime is transmitted to members of a particular cultural system. Societies as well as systems prepare their own foes and their own underminers. Crimes are foes and underminers of societies and systems. They are the conduct of societies and systems. The repetition of a criminal act shows how bad a system is. Crime, for the Bânzu-Kôngo, is a learned behavior, and it is possible to eradicate it from human society.

To teach young men any word that has a negative connotation for the community is regarded as injecting criminal roots within the community. The African people and the Kôngo in particular, believe that the reason for committing a crime is relative to the crime and social or cultural system in which he lives. In other words, a social system either favors or does not favor crime. In pouring war-like toys in our communities, children are engaged in the easiest process of learning how to commit crimes. In other words, the war-like toys’ industry has industrialized crimes within human society.

When a crime is committed, judgment should not only be passed on to the criminal, but also on to the entire community in which the crime found its roots. A community in which a man or a woman poisons his or her spouse would have trouble finding new alliances with other communities, and one will say to such a community: Be aware that that community gives poison by all means [kânda diôdio ndikila bâvananga]. As a consequence, nobody will shake hands anymore with someone from that community; nobody will politically deal with such a community; nobody will seek water in such a community; nobody will dream to marry in such a community no matter how beautiful the youngsters are in that community; and nobody will seek a good friend in that community. Such a social behavior among the Kôngo tells how the crime is not seen as an individual act, but as a social one. If the poison used was developed within the community for other reasons other than killing, the community, its holders of the community [sîmbi bia kimvuka], will develop a strong social and legal ethic about the use of that poison.

In a society in which people believe in the concept of bearing crimes before possibly committing them, punishment is first considered communal before being an individual matter, and as a consequence the elders discipline on the young is very important.

The Kôngo society is a good example of a society whose entire social structure is basically a taboo system. The most important taboos are those related to the land, goods from that land, and all matter related to the community name. As such, most of what are considered crimes are related to the issue of land, the source of all goods for the survival of life.

a) Crimes concerning the land

We have already said above that the right of land ownership belongs only to the community. No one in the community could claim private ownership to any position of the land. To own or sell land is considered one of the most serious crimes that an individual may commit, crimes for
which he may not be forgiven by community members. Land, because it is an inviolable taboo, should remain in the service of all community members.

During his lifetime a community member has the right to harvest his fields and fruit trees, but after his death, the land and all property on that land, i.e., fruit trees, houses, industries, farms, etc. go back to community ownership. This kind of property inherited by the community, according to the basic concept and taboo of the inalienability of the land, is called fwa-dia-kânda. The fwa-dia-kânda is an accumulated heritage that enforces community control of land and all properties related to it. These properties constitute the basic sources of kânda's common-wealth [mwîlu a kânda] also called kimvwâma kia kânda or mayudukwa ma kânda used to solve kânda's diverse problems [lînda n'samu mia nsi ye mia kânda] or to assist community members in time of need.

b) Individual wealth is an abominable crime

Individual wealth of all kinds above the accepted standard of necessary goods, is considered a crime. One says that this kind of wealth could not be accumulated without exploiting [wuka/yiba] other members of the community. In that case, the wealth itself is called kimvwâma kia muyeke, wealth that betrays, yekula, the community and its members. The owner of such excessive properties was often killed or hoodooed [lokwa]. African communities believe strongly that the individual accumulation of property has always had negative effects on the traditional social structure and on policy-making institutions.

The traditional social system of the Kôngo does not permit rich people to lead national or community institutions because a proverb says a rich man never talks or fights for other people's interest unless it is to further his own interests. [Mvwâma nsusu; kanwâna, máki mändi käntùntù]. That is why traditionally, wealth does not play a role in either the social ranking system or alliance making among the Bântu (Muller, 1956:8). This situation is changing today because the same rich individuals have the power to buy guns which give them not only more power, but the license to kill whoever they declare as dangerous. Firing squads are increasing throughout the African continent, not of criminals, but of innocent individuals who are challenging corrupt practices of politicians.

c) To misrepresent his kimvuka is a political crime

A Kôngo proverb says politics is a community matter, the individual does not make community policies, for individual policy was unknown since the time of the ancestors [Kinzônzi kia kânda; kia kingenga bakulu (ka) basa kio kòl]. The individual does not make community policies says another Kôngo proverb one mouth is an empty calabash [N'nda mòsi tutù]. Kôngo traditional thought explains clearly that all people develop and direct community policies. Individuals do not make policy even though they are allowed to represent the community by delegation. An individual who is going to represent the community policy is publicly tested before being sent on any diplomatic mission. If he fails by misrepresenting the community he is buried alive in a public place, generally in the market place, zându (Munzele, 1965).